

Cooperation vs. Interventionism

Henry J. Gomez of BuzzFeed recently wrote an article about libertarianism. To his credit, he mostly describes libertarian foreign politics as non-interventionist – except for one awful passage: “libertarians believe [...] less-interventionist, more-isolationist themes.”

No, no, a thousand times no. I realize that Rothbard used the word “isolationism,” but he was wrong. It is not a synonym for non-interventionism. It’s not even in the same ballpark.

The libertarian – or classical liberal, which is much the same thing – philosophy is about peaceful cooperation. Instead of intervening in the affairs of other nations, instead of engaging in war, libertarians engage in peace. They engage in commerce. They engage in cooperation.

Nobody would ever accuse Switzerland of isolationism; they are home to globe-spanning corporations. This is perfectly compatible with their long-standing policy of non-interventionism; they go not abroad in search of monsters to slay. They’re happy enough to trade peacefully with you and your neighbors.

That’s what libertarian foreign policy is about. Instead of making enemies, make friends. Make trading partners. Make profits without recourse to the violence of trade barriers, tariffs, sanctions, and bombs. Let us wage peace, not war.