

Almost all Americans advocate our nation's intervening in other nations' external and internal affairs and, at their convenience, hypocritically preach against it. This Thinksheet is about that **hypocrisy**, all the more dangerous when it is unwitting.

1. The contradiction is as American as apple pie. The Pilgrim-Puritans were a **principled** people, else they'd've gotten along with the King and wouldn't've had to come here; and they were a **pragmatic** people, else they'd not have survived here.

2. In our history, when principle has overwhelmed pragma (as in the Salem witch-trials), the result has been **oppression**; and when pragma has overwhelmed principle, as today, the result has been **permissive corruption** of both private and public life. This Thinksheet addresses that corruption vis-a-vis foreign policy, an area largely ignored in the current Presidential campaigns--both because it's easier to excite the electorate on domestic issues and because our "foreign policy" is a byzantine mess.

3. In our structural church/state standoff, often called America's contribution to political theory, an only partly true distribution is widespread in the public mind: the church is supposed to be **principled** and the state, the government at all levels, **pragmatic**. The balancing fact is that, as we church professionals know, decisions in religion are often pragma-dominated; and if you've an eye to notice it, many in government frequently courageously act on principle (though the press, unprincipledly, gives more space/time to instances of mendacity, which the public finds more entertaining).

4. Both strands of our heritage, the Hebraic and the Hellenistic, inform **our ideas** of both principle and pragma. An educated electorate will have a working grasp both of both: both of the two sources and of the two dimensions--the philosophical (ie, principle) and the existential (ie, pragma). So far in the public-education debate over "values," nobody to my knowledge has spelled this out clearly, though Wm. Bennett has come close to it. Since the roots of both strands are in religion, eliminating religion from public education eliminates the possibility of an educated citizenry, an informed-intelligent electorate.

5. Geo. Washington's warning against "entangling alliances" with other nations included, on principle, entangling **interferences** in the affairs of other nations. Excluded are points at which they interfere with us: resistance to such interference cannot properly be called interference.....Our history of interfering shows two **forms**, viz expansionist (eg, against Mexico) and stabilizing (eg, against Tripoli); and two **types**, viz military and economic (often both together). In this Thinksheet I've in mind all four realities: the hypocrisy I speak of applies to all four.

6. The very idea(I) of principle is corrupted, cynically defamed, when principle is appealed to in an **unprincipled** way. While political rhetoric is often guilty of this, private rhetoric, esp. that of religious and educational forces, is more guilty. I'm tempted to despair when I read and hear the principle of nonintervention in the "internal affairs" of other nations preached in the case of Nicaragua and preached against in the case of South Africa, and vice versa.

7. Consider the possibilities (principled arguments, ie arguments based on principle, are in the first column; pragmatic arguments are in the second column--seldom does a speaker/writer self-confine to only one column--the grid can be used for a **rhetorical analysis** of past and present foreign-policy utterances):..."A" dominates the radical sanctionists against Pretoria, which they hope to help collapse. Almost all of them stand over against another group in "A," viz Contra-supporters who hope to help collapse Managua.... Some in both those camps hypocritically preach "C" (a principle) while drawing supports from "B" and/or "D."....If you stay in column "B"- "D," you avoid hypocrisy at the cost of being opportunist, a condition leading you and others to cynicism.

	principle	pragma
interfere	A	B
don't interfere	C	D