

Conservative vs Liberal

Part 4

Foreign Policy and the Military

(And a little about human nature)

There are some significant differences between conservatives and liberals when it comes to how the United States should get along with other nations of the world. These differences spring in part from how liberals and conservatives view human nature (actually this different interpretation of human nature accounts for many of the disagreements among libs and cons). You need to decide which view you subscribe to.

The conservative view of military force

Most conservatives view the military as a tool that sometimes must be used. Conservatives are much more likely than liberals to support spending money on national defense. It is probably true that conservatives are more willing to use the military when necessary than liberals are. Because conservatives are more likely to take a more pessimistic, non-trusting view of human nature, they are more likely to say something like “sometimes force must be met with force” and “war is a necessary evil” It is important to realize I am not saying conservatives are war mongers (although liberals like to paint them that way, and sometimes conservatives *can* come across that way). Conservatives tend to take a realistic (rather than idealistic) view of human nature and the role of military force more so than liberals. Conservatives generally are more OK with using the military to protect the interests of the USA.

The liberal view of military force

Most liberals view military use as something to be avoided at all costs. Liberals tend to say the United States is too ready to use the military to accomplish certain things. Liberals are much more likely to prefer less military spending and more spending by the government on other things. There are varying degrees of opinion among liberals concerning the use of the military. Overall, liberals prefer to use diplomacy (talking) to solve problems. Since liberals are more likely to take a positive view of human nature they are more likely to say something like “war never solves anything” or “the rest of the world hates the USA because we use the military too much.” Liberals like to believe that Americans have evolved beyond the use of force to solve problems. Liberal folks are usually uncomfortable using the military to protect the interests of the USA.

A great example of how libs and cons view the military differently is the **Vietnam war**. Especially telling are the different lessons that liberals and conservatives take from this particular war.

Human Nature

Conservatives generally take a more cruelly realistic view of human nature. Ex: war is necessary because human nature is fundamentally bad. Humans are greedy, untrustworthy, opportunistic beings who *are still* animals that can only be perfected so much. Liberals tend to take a more idealistic view of human nature. Ex: humans have evolved (or should be evolving) past the point of needing to resort to violence to solve conflict. Human nature is fundamentally good, people can learn to be sharing, community minded and trustworthy beings far advanced beyond the animal world. Wow, this is some heavy stuff. Think and decide for yourself.