

While much of the country's attention is on other issues, a serious situation is developing in Pakistan that threatens to plunge us into another fruitless and bloody war. It is very frustrating to see that many who were so vehemently against the wars of the last administration have suddenly lost interest in foreign policy simply because we were promised change.

Those still paying attention know that nothing could be further from the truth. Very little has changed, except perhaps rhetoric, but what does that matter when the bombing missions are only getting deadlier? Rather than drawing down violent military interventions into the affairs of other countries, the new administration is escalating the foreign policy of the previous administration.

In Pakistan that entails the continuation and even escalation of military interventionism just across the border with Afghanistan. The targets are believed to be enclaves of Taliban militants, however, many innocent civilians have been caught in the deadly crossfire, severely damaging our image in the region.

Many ordinary Afghans and Pakistanis that never had

cause to take up arms against us are being provided with motivation as family and friends are killed and maimed by our clumsy and indiscriminate bombs.

Is it worth it for us to be involved in this way at such a high cost of blood, treasure and goodwill?

Is there anything to be gained by this policy?

We are helping the Taliban and other enemies to actually gain numbers and strength, while driving them down from the mountains in the border regions deeper into Pakistan, where they have been making a menace of themselves. As our bombings follow them, beleaguered villagers have little choice but to leave their homes and join the swelling numbers of refugees or take up arms and join the fight against us.

Nonetheless, instead of recognizing the cascading unintended consequences of trying to deal with Pakistan's problems, all signs in Washington point to further escalation. Both the House and Senate have newly introduced bills to triple foreign aid to Pakistan, from \$500 million to \$1.5 billion, with every indication that the leadership in Pakistan is taking advantage of the situation with the Taliban to milk more aid from the US taxpayer.

We are broke.

This is money we don't have, and it is an insult to the American people to run up the national credit card for this type of military adventurism after many Americans thought they were voting for peace.

The bottom line is our involvement in Pakistan's internal problems is not making us safer. In fact, we are adding to the numbers of our enemies and increasing the threats to our security here at home.

We are inciting the very terrorism and extremism we are trying to stop.

Every dollar we send, even if it is for humanitarian purposes, frees up resources to make war and potentially prop up unpopular leaders.

The factions and politics of the Middle East are irrational and dangerous.

We play with fire when we meddle in their affairs, and we isolate ourselves diplomatically by making more enemies than friends.

We need to bring our troops home, end all foreign aid, and maintain a neutral stance on the world stage.

It, in fact, is the only foreign policy we can afford right now, and it would gain us more friends and trading partners than our bombs ever could.

Besides, that's what the Constitution permits and our founders strongly advised.