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The Obama Doctrine?

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Distinctly Catholic

Does President Obama's decision to intervene in Libya, and the rationale for that intervention he set forth in his speech Monday night, amount to an "Obama Doctrine?" That is the question posed to a group of analysts at the New York Times.

It is difficult to discern the kind of sweeping vision in the President's words that we normally associate with the word doctrine. This President, to his great credit, seems to recognize that enshrining a doctrine runs the risk of becoming doctrinaire. Indeed, you could say that the Obama Doctrine is that we should avoid doctrines. We should look at the facts on the ground. We should analyze the threats to our security, our interests and our values posed by problems in the world, and posed, too, by the prospect of intervention itself which always brings a host of unintended consequences. We should assess our ability to affect positive change, e.g., is an American fleet nearby and do local political conditions favor an intervention?

In short, the President has proposed that we make our actions fit the situations in which we find ourselves, not try and force those situations into a set of preconceived notions worthy of the name "doctrine." That suits me.

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