

GREAT DECISIONS DISCUSSION GROUP
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February 5, 2013

10:15 A. M. – 12:30 P. M.

Humanitarian Intervention

Topic Leader: Howard Jacobs

AGENDA

10:15: Kickoff

- Welcome and Introduction of Guests & New Chapter Members
- Briefing Book Distribution
- Contact List Follow-up
- Current Events Module – Alternatives
- Ken Krieger's follow-up paper on our last session has been posted at www.bedfordny.com/greatdecisions/
- Topic Leader Presentation
- Group Discussion

CHAPTER MOTTO - "DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT FONDNESS FOR DISPUTE OR DESIRE FOR VICTORY" – BEN FRANKLIN

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- March 5, 2013 -- **Myanmar and Southeast Asia**
Topic Leader: Charles Kimball
- March 19, 2013 -- **Threat Assessment**
Topic Leader: Gary Wenglowksi
- April 2, 2013 -- **Egypt**
Topic Leaders: Mike Kornfield and Peter Kuniholm
- April 16, 2013 -- **Iran**

Topic Leader: Fred Piker

- April 30, 2013 -- **NATO**
Topic Leader: Tyler Beebe
- May 14, 2013 -- **China in Africa**
Topic Leader: Joe Adams

TODAY'S TOPIC

Our conversation this morning centers on R2P (Responsibility to Protect), the United Nations initiative established in 2005. It consists of an emerging norm, or set of principles, based on the idea that sovereignty is not a right, but a responsibility. R2P focuses on preventing and halting four crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, which it places under the generic umbrella term of, *Mass Atrocity Crimes*.

The Responsibility to Protect has three "pillars:" 1) A state has a responsibility to protect its citizens from mass atrocities; 2) The international community has a responsibility to assist the state to fulfill its primary responsibility; and, 3) If a state fails to protect its citizens from mass atrocities and peaceful measures have failed, the international community has the responsibility to intervene through coercive measures, but military intervention is considered the last resort.

The scope of R2P is often questioned beyond that of its impact on national sovereignty, namely: Should it apply to more than the four crimes, e.g., protection of civilians in peril following natural disasters? Should military intervention be allowed under any set of circumstances? Should the UN Security Council permanent members agree not to use their veto when proven mass atrocities are taking place?

In addition to these questions, more specific issues arise in connection with our foreign policy, for example:

1. What should our country's role be in respect to the situation in Syria?
2. How do you view the Atrocities Prevention Board?
3. Do you believe that under the umbrella of R2P, Palestine has a legitimate case to make against Israel?

4. Is "humanitarian intervention" in the context of the Arab spring just sugar coating for regime change?
5. What lessons can be learned from the intervention in Libya that can be applied to the situation in Syria?
6. What were the unintended consequences of the intervention in Libya?
7. How do you view the Atrocities Prevention Board?
8. What evidence - if any - do you see on the world stage that R2P is an "emerging norm?"
9. Do you share the belief of the author of the article in your book of readings that "human abattoirs are not inevitable?"
10. If "state sovereignty is no longer absolute," then what follows?
11. Is "humanitarian intervention" just a sugar coating for regime change?
12. Is NATO the de facto military arm of the U.N.? If so, what are the implications for R2P?

SUGGESTED READING

Great Decisions 2013 Briefing Book, Chapter Five, **Humanitarian Intervention and U.S. Policy.**

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