In Conversation with the Agora
Commentary

Perspectives on Foreign Intervention in Contemporary Politics

Compiled by Kevin Lee Pinkoski

The world of politics is a fast moving one; what is true one moment may not be true of the next. Unfortunately, the full scholarly process is not always well suited to dissecting swiftly moving issues, as good scholarship is based upon careful reflection and critical review—time consuming processes. However, sometimes it is necessary for scholars to provide advice on the go, as situations evolve and develop in real time. These judgments may lack the meticulously researched analysis that is possible when events are viewed in hindsight. However, these judgments are no less important, as they will often determine how political actors respond to changing events.

With the current state of global affairs, it is almost impossible not to address the variety of perspectives on the place and polices of foreign intervention. Such dialogues are contrasted between an understanding of the moral rights of the state. These two camps are contrasted in the following way. The first, arguing for intervention, believes that the state has a moral obligation to represent its idealized values in the global environment. As a result, intervention is required to promote and maintain these values. The second, arguing against intervention, believes that the state has a moral obligation to respect the sovereignty of foreign nations. Such positions are only made more complicated by the faith placed in institutions and other non-state actors to address such issues. However, the reality of global politics requires that states make decisive choices on such matter, and bear the consequences these choices can have on both international affairs and domestic politics. This is not merely a simple question of two perspectives, but rather, how these perspectives balance and effect actual policy.

Table of Contents

L'internationalisation de l'éducation canadienne : un trajet propice ?
Par: Emerson Csorba

Selling Interventionist Values to the Self-Interested State
by Kevin Lee Pinkoski

A New Era for the Responsibility to Protect?
By Graeme Archibald

When the Canadian-established International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty tabled its final report in the December of 2001, it fell largely on the deaf ears – the world was a changed place with the attacks of September 11th. Every international relations expert and foreign policy analyst had their attention focused on the invasion of Afghanistan, and the upcoming invasion of Iraq. The ICISS report, which proposed a new regime of conditional sovereignty under the "responsibility to protect", failed to gain any traction in the early days of the new 'war' on terrorism.

For much of the first decade of the 21st century, the idea of the responsibility to protect, or "R2P", seemed destined for nothing more than an academic dream. R2P, put simply, asserts that states have the responsibility to protect their citizens from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other crimes against humanity. When a state fails to do so, the responsibility is shifted to the international community to intervene. In 2009, R2P finally found its place on the international stage, when it was formally adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Many supporters of R2P have identified the 2011 Libya intervention by NATO as perhaps the first real-world application of R2P. Detractors have pointed out that the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 – which authorized the no-fly zone over Libya following the outbreak of civil war – does not make reference to the responsibility to protect. However, many of the ideas behind NATO's intervention – the protection of Libyan civilians against the Gaddafi regime – are consistent with the core ideas of R2P. While the Libyan operation has had questionable success, it seems to have revived R2P, at least in the minds of some scholars.

The next great challenge for R2P seems to have come with France's recent intervention into Mali. At the request of the beleaguered Malian government, France – with the support of a few other Western nations – has launched air strikes against Islamic extremists who have led a brutal and violent campaign in northern Mali with the intent of bringing the entire country under their control. Additionally, the French have deployed a sizable ground force to assist the Malian army. Although the outcome of intervention in Mali is yet to be seen, the fundamental idea behind R2P – that when a state is unable or unwilling to protect its citizens from atrocity – is very much at play in Mali.

The responsibility to protect as a precedent in international law has undoubtedly grown in the past few years with interventions in Libya, Cote d'Ivoire, and most recently Mali. However, its usage has not been evenly applied across crises, the most notable example being the ongoing crisis in Syria. It is also highly controversial in itself – the idea of conditional sovereignty and Western interventionism is vigorously opposed by many. Whether or not R2P becomes more established as a doctrine of international law or not, it is clear that it has certainly become a defining concept in this recent era of intervention.

Intervention in a Borderless World.
By Carsen Mayer

The 1648 Peace of Westphalia established the notion of state sovereignty as we understand it today and the modern 'international sphere' could not truly exist without this treaty. Key to this Westphalian concept of sovereignty is the idea of territorial integrity and definitive state borders, a norm that seems to have been blurred in the last decade and most recently in the conflict in Mali.

Currently in West Africa a group of extremist Islamist militants has slowly been taking over the country of Mali. In an attempt to rid the country of these militants, the democratically elected government of Mail has given its consent for the French government to intervene and grant military assistance to the resistance effort. However simple this scenario may seem at first glance, a further look reveals many intricacies that put the likelihood of success in this traditional intervention in question.

Following the ousting of the Gaddafi regime in Libya, the deposed leaders (largely) mercenary army scattered and hundreds of mercenaries formerly employed by the Libyan colonel returned to their home country of Mali heavily armed and formed one of the more powerful rebel groups West Africa has seen in recent years, bolstered by apparent ties with al-Qaeda's Saharan branch. This rebel group seized several key northern cities within two months of their arrival in early 2012 and have since slowly made their way south, prompting the government of Mali to seek French assistance. Even more recently a group of militants seized a gas plant and took hostages in Algeria, the militants having entered Algeria via their shared border with Mail with the apparent intent of taking any hostages back into Mali.

This scenario, or rather group of scenarios seems to highlight the ever-blurring norm of state sovereignty and the idea of definitive state borders. Essentially the remnants of a mercenary army of a Libyan leader returned to their home in Mali, prompting a response from the French, and now Canadian and American states, which has most recently spilled into the neighboring county of Algeria. This conflict highlights the interconnectedness of the modern era, for better or worse.

The inherent problem seems clear: how can a traditional interventions, such as the French are undertaking, truly end the rebellion of a group that has no respect for national boundaries? Any attempt to 'corner and eliminate' such a group seems bound to end up in further proliferation in neighboring state - as can already be seen in Algeria. The NATO intervention in Libya itself can be understood as a reason for conflict in Mali. As such we must ask ourselves if our current understanding of intervention is still a viable one. A quick look at this conflict seems to signal that as the idea of sovereign borders changes, so too must our ideas on foreign intervention. Definitive state borders and territorial integrity are no longer legitimately limiting factors in the international realm, and accordingly our notions of foreign intervention and more largely state sovereignty, need to change as well.

Seeking Practical Consensus in Human Rights
By Dongwoo Kim

Human rights have become an almost religious and universal point of consensus in conducting international affairs. For instance, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) operates with the moral legitimization that it works to ensure the observance of human rights alone, devoid of underlying political motives. As a result, the Red Cross and Red Crescent

has become the most widespread humanitarian movement, operating everywhere from Occupied Europe during the Second World War and in Syria at the present moment. As exemplified by the works of the ICRC, human rights, its universality that seeks to transcend political and cultural differences, are increasingly gaining recognition and acceptance in public discourse.

Indeed, the seeds were planted in the twentieth century and, today, human rights have become a fundamental part of our generation's political, social, and even cultural identity. Furthermore, human rights are growing in its importance outside of the "developed world." Despite grim projections and apocalyptic tones towards the future, this century will see more leaders whose respect for human rights will be nearly absolute.
International organizations and state-actors have recognized the utility of human rights in legitimizing their actions and thus have used it in order to justify military interventions.

Oftentimes, these interventions are driven by legitimate motives to protect human rights of the civilians, but in many occasions, they are muddled with political motives, the pursuit of raison d'état. For instance, Western countries that participated in the Libyan intervention in 2011 faced the allegations that they participated for economic interests, not the responsibility to protect. The lack of consensus in identification of violation of human rights prevents agreements in international organizations for engaging in military intervention. In short, inconsistency has caused difficulties in establishing consensus for intervention.

Thus, the duty of today's leaders in international organizations and national governments is to ensure that military intervention is performed with consistency in identification of violation of human rights abuses. The international society needs to come to a clearer consensus in regards to the policy implementation based on human rights. As an idea, it has already gained legitimacy in the public discourse. The next step is to find consensus in its practical implementation in international affairs.

Intervention: The Crossroads of Idealism and Pragmatism
By Neekoo Collet

The decision to intervene in or to refrain from intervening in the domestic affairs of another state is never easy, and comes at the intersection in which what ought to be done and what practical capabilities allow often do not align. For me personally, the former corresponds to the moral imperative that is the basis for human rights, and more basically, the affirmation that everyone, everywhere holds and equal right to life, safety, among other things. The latter, however, is defined completely outside of abstracts such as belief or ethical frameworks – instead, it has to do with concretes such as military capabilities, funding, and strategies. While I consider myself to be a supporter of interventionism in the name of human rights, I recognize that there are many places that qualify for intervention by my standards, and that my state (or, really, any state) is simply unable to attend to them all.

In any introductory politics course, politics is first defined as 'who get what, when'. This simple statement defines not only the basic premises of power and notions of politics, but the intervention debate as well. The question then becomes: in the face of near-unlimited need and finite resources, who gets what?

In answering this, it is important to look at the established criteria as found in various UN statues and international law precedent, which Nikolai Krylov outlines in his article Humanitarian Intervention: Pros and Cons. First, there must be a threat to lives and large scale atrocities. While this might seem straighforward, it becomes complicated very quickly when one considers preventative intervention, or, intervention before sufficient evidence of large scale

atrocities already occurring. In what ways does imminent danger factor into the equation? How imminent must danger be? Second, intervention must be absolutely necessary – necessity being judged on two elements: (1) the existence of a danger, and (2) the nonexistence of reasonable peaceful alternatives. Related to this is the third element of consideration, the exhaustion of peaceful measures. Article 2 of the U.N. Charter provides that "all members shall settle their international disputes,'188 and Article 33 requires that member states actively utilize peaceful means to settle any dispute likely to endanger international peace. Fourth, motives must be demonstrated as being humanitarian. This attempts to restrict countries from operating invasions in the guise of intervention out of pure-self interest. In judging motive, a states openness to collective measures and principles of proportionality may be indicators of motive.

Even if all of these criteria are met, however, intervention might still not be possible due to financial or military constraints of potentially intervening nations who would be forced to act as the UN has no standing army (and, let's face it, intergovernmental organization are made up of states, so really when we talk about the UN we are not speaking of an entirely distinct entity from the major power).

So, what are we left to do? Do we follow the path of idealism or pragmatism? I have no answers. I am left with a quote from Theodore Roosevelt: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." How we operationalize these words, however, remains to be seen.

L'internationalisation de l'éducation canadienne : un trajet propice ?
Par: Emerson Csorba

Au cours des deux dernières décennies, l'éducation est devenu de plus en plus global, surtout en Australie, aux Etats-Unis et en Europe. L'Australie attire des milliers d'étudiants d'Asie et en particulier, de la Chine. Les Etats-Unis, avec des institutions telles que Yale, Harvard et Stanford sont une destination internationale. Et l'Europe, avec le Processus Bologne, essaie de faciliter la mobilité entre étudiants de pays européens, en standardisant la durée des trois niveaux de l'éducation postsecondaire. Certes, l'éducation transforme rapidement, ce qui est claire quand on lit des rapports comme celui d'Ernst and Young, *University of the future*, où les auteurs affirment que "Over the next 10-15 years, the current public university model in Australia will prove unviable in all but a few cases". Bien que ces changements ont lieu, le Canada n'est pas aussi impliqué dans l'internationalisation de l'éducation que ces voisins américains et européens.

Mais ça commence à changer. Au 15 août 2012, le Comité consultatif sur la Stratégie du Canada en matière d'éducation internationale a publié un rapport phare ayant comme but de doubler le nombre d'étudiants internationaux par 2022 (vers 400,000) et d'envoyer 50,000 Canadiens par année scolaire aux destinations étrangères. Par ailleurs, les auteurs tentent à créer environ 8,000 bourses pour les étudiants internationaux de premier cycle, de consacrer davantage de fonds aux recherches scientifiques et technologiques et de recruter 2000 étudiants d'études supérieures et environ 1000 étudiants postdoctorales à l'aide de 3000 bourses. Le marketing mettra l'accent sur l'*Education canadienne* - et non pas sur des universités individuelles, comme l'Université de Toronto, le UBC ou le McGill - en vertu du fait que les étudiants internationaux choisissent *un pays* de destination avant de choisir une institution postsecondaire. Bref, les changements proposés sont impressionnants ; il est certain que le Canada veut promouvoir l'éducation global.

Toutefois, en lisant les 14 recommandations des auteurs, je vois un langage entièrement influencé par le marché capitaliste. La vision des auteurs ? D'assurer la *prospérité*, d'insister sur

les *échanges commerciaux*, le *capital humain* et le *marché du travail*. Les auteurs notent que dans son discours à Davos, le Premier ministre Stephen Harper a souligné l'importance de l'éducation postsecondaire surtout en ce qui concerne les sciences. Par ailleurs, il est admirable que le Canada investissent plus d'argent dans son système d'éducation. En accueillant des milliers d'étudiants internationaux de plus, il est probable que les étudiants canadiens vont devenir plus acceptants et ouverts à l'étranger. Cependant, le rapport manque de la discussion quant aux *valeurs* canadiennes, surtout dans le sphère de l'éducation postsecondaire. Comment le Canada va-t-il développer des "alliés" dans la *diplomatie des connaissances*, si point d'accent est mis sur l'identité canadienne, les valeurs d'un éducation *canadienne* ? Le rapport du comité situe l'éducation postsecondaire comme étant *étroitement* associé à l'économie, comme un moyen et non pas un fin.

En augmentant les liens dans l'éducation postsecondaire entre le Canada, la Chine, la Corée du Sud, le Brésil, l'Inde et l'Australie, les étudiants canadiens et les étudiants internationaux vont sans doute bénéficier. Ces collaborations vont encourager des compétences culturelles qui auront des conséquences positives sur la scène internationale au futur. En revancher, il importe d'adhérer aux mots de Ronald Barnett, chercheur à l'Université de Londres : " […] it is implied that the university can now secure its future only by marketing its knowledge wares ; in in process, its knowledge becomes performative in character and loses its power to enlighten". Nous ne devons pas suivre ce cours. Sinon, l'éducation postsecondaire canadienne perdra sa valeur, devenant rien de plus qu'un produit à consommer, le nouveau McDonald's sur la scène internationale.

Selling Interventionist Values to the Self-Interested State
by Kevin Lee Pinkoski

"A country that demands moral perfection in its foreign policy will achieve neither perfection nor security"
— Henry Kissinger

Related to foreign intervention, the self-interested state can express its interest in two different ways. The first is by committing to intervention for a direct benefit, one which is often critically labeled as intervention an economic gain. The second is by commit to intervention for an interdict benefit, by intervening to promote a set of moral and ethical values. Such is often the nature of the calls for humanitarian intervention. However, I believe it is crucial to recognize that a connection between both expressions of self-interest is required for most interventions.

Ultimately, international law limits the possibility of any form of intervention. The U.N. Charter prohibits its members from taking any action without the approval of the U.N. Security Council. In the current case of the Syrian regime, for example, China's and Russia's refusal to sanction any intervention has made it unlawful for any U.N. member to use direct military force against Syria, including informal intervention such as no fly zones or arming the opposition.[1] International law therefore becomes a potential limit to a states actions.

The developing trend has been to outline intervention on the terms of humanitarianism. As Jon Western and Joshua S. Goldstein point out, such a doctrine has become integrated into the conflict management toolbox of international affairs.[2] However, the nature of a humanitarian

---

[1] John B. Bellinger III, "U.N. rules and Syrian intervention." The Washington Post January 17th, 2013.
[2] Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon Western. "Humanitarian Intervention Comes to Age" in Foriegn Affairs Essay November December 2011.

intervention itself is dangerously flawed, as it could easily become a tool facilitated by abusive aggressors. Therefore, the possible development of such interventions policies is limited in the future application of politics. Humanitarian intervention is founded on the belief that a state will act only on moral grounds, for the interest of the population of another state. This is contradictory to the purpose of the state itself, which acts of the interest of its own population.

To measure the potential case for foreign intervention in modern politics, is is important to measure the benefits of a state self-interest against the consequences. As Syrian evidence proves, this self-interest must be beneficial enough to forgo international law and the consequences associated with such a breach. The benefits associated with spreading democracy and globalization may be beneficial. It is even more difficult to deny the benefits associated with opening foreign markets and promoting resource extraction. While such benefits are not often the in the arguments made for foreign intervention, they prove to benefit the reality of the self-interested state. When intervention provides for such obvious negative effects as loss of life and detrimental political effects, it is important to find away to justify intervention as beneficial to the state that commits such an action. This requires an altering of the common criticism of intervention. Intervention should not be criticized as only done for the benefit of an intervening state, but instead should be promoted as a future benefit both an intervening state and an state subject to intervention can gain from. This would justify the obvious consequences such actions contain.

The idea that a state should intervene for humanitarian reasons is a noble dream. However, the real limitations and consequences of such possibilities haunts the conscience. The illusion of intervening only on humanitarian grounds does not create the required benefits a state needs to justify such actions. There is, however, a unique possibility to sell an appropriate intervention to a state, promoted on such economic terms. It is important to recognize that, for a self-interested state, intervention provides an opportunity to establish economic development within a nation. We often ask for the spread of the ideals of democracy and equality, but perhaps we should address the important connections between these values and both economic prosperity and development. The spread of financial wealth is often associated with the development of more liberal socities. While this reverses much of the logic of the traditional political theorist, it addresses the reality of current politics. Moral perfection is a strange limit to force on a state that will undoubtedly suffer consequences from foreign intervention.

Bibliography

John B. Bellinger III, “U.N. rules and Syrian intervention.” The Washington Post January 17th, 2013.

Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon Western. “Humanitarian Intervention Comes to Age” in Foriegn Affairs Essay November December 2011.