

Humanitarian Intervention: A look at Rwanda, Srebrenica and the Responsibility to Protect

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Abstract

This essay looks at the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty's The Responsibility to Protect, a new report attempting to create a successful policy for humanitarian intervention. The pertinent question addressed in this analysis is whether or not this report could have prevented tragedies such as Rwanda and Srebrenica. I first analyze The Responsibility to Protect, examining the elements that distinguish it from past intervention policies. I will then look at what historically happened during two conflicts; Rwanda and Srebrenica, and continue with an examination of the reasons behind their failure. This essay will present the Responsibility to Protect as a relatively well-explained and representative policy idea, with its fundamental flaw being that it does not address the underlying problems existing at the heart of these catastrophes. The root causes explored here include a lack of state political interest, a lack of financial aid from wealthy countries, error, as well as inaction from the UN, its branches and many of its member states.

There has been much controversy over "humanitarian intervention" when is it okay to intervene in another sovereign state? What methods should be used, and who should be authorizing these actions? Looking at failed past interventions such as those in Srebrenica and Rwanda, it becomes clear that intervention policies have to change. This is well known to states as well as the United Nations. In September 1999, during a meeting of the UN General Assembly, Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed this issue:

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"If humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity But surely no legal principle not even sovereignty can ever shield crimes against humanity"¹

Annan then went on to challenge the members of the UN:

"It is essential that the international community reach consensus not only on the principle that massive and systematic violations of human

¹ Gareth Evans, "Intervention and State Sovereignty: Breaking New Ground." *Global Governance* 7 (Apr-Jun 2001): 119-125.

rights must be checked, wherever they take place, but also on the ways of deciding what action is necessary, and when, and by whom”²

The Canadian government, under the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy, took up this policy challenge. On September 14th 2000, the government announced the formation of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS). This commission, made up of members from around the globe, produced a report on the issue *The Responsibility to Protect*. This report attempts to answer all the fundamental questions circling state intervention. But is this report actually feasible?

Is the ICISS’s *The Responsibility to Protect* realistic, and can its key idea(s) be effectively practiced or implemented? Could the UN possibly take this report as their new policy to replace the old policy of humanitarian intervention, or is it, by proposing simple resolutions to complex issues, overly idealistic? Will this report be approved globally, or solely by the permanent five members of the Security Council and the developed nations in the UN is it internationally representative? Does the ICISS really address the problems at the heart of the debacles of Srebrenica and Rwanda? Most importantly, what happened in Rwanda and Srebrenica what important element does the ICISS fail to address?

The Responsibility to Protect raises numerous questions over and above the issue of feasibility. It also raises questions about whether it actually brings forth an idea that could have prevented tragedies such as Rwanda and Srebrenica and potential similar tragedies in the future. There is no question that the *Responsibility to Protect* is a well-explained policy idea one that is representative, attempts to redefine humanitarian intervention, and plots out what is to be done when a human rights catastrophe is occurring. This report, however, does not address the fundamental problems that were at the heart of the worst post-Cold War human rights catastrophes. It is unrealistic and avoids the root problems (about to be explored), of past failed attempts at intervention. Although it may impress policymakers, and is under serious consideration by the UN as a new policy of intervention, the steps outlined in this report do not identify these core problems. *The Responsibility to Protect* is not an idea that will help prevent future genocides. Failed interventions can be attributed to a lack of state political interest, a lack of financial assistance from wealthy countries, error, and plain ignorance on the part of the UN along with its branches, and many of its member states. The ICISS’s *Responsibility to Protect* is too idealistic to be successfully applied to modern intervention problems. This essay will first analyze the *Responsibility to Protect* by examining the elements that distinguish it from past intervention policies, and continue by looking at the historical facts on the conflicts in Rwanda and Srebrenica. A step-by-step approach will be taken in an effort to analyse the failure of these interventions and the reasons behind them reasons that are not addressed in the new policy idea, therefore making it unable to prevent such tragedies from occurring again.

The Responsibility to Protect differs from current intervention policy in two main ways. The first is the introduction of new terminology; the ICISS wanted their new idea to be looked at with fresh eyes. The past use of the term ‘humanitarian intervention’ carries a lot of baggage, and as far as the committee is concerned, does not accurately describe the aims of the policy

² Ibid.

idea. In the report, the ICISS explains the change to the novel term, 'the responsibility to protect': "[the report's] central theme, reflected in the title, is 'The Responsibility to Protect', the idea that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe from mass murder and rape, from starvation but that when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states."³

The second main difference is the setup of the three new elements or responsibilities of the commission. There is also enhanced emphasis on the first element:

1. The responsibility to prevent: to address both the root causes and direct causes of internal conflict and other man-made crises putting populations at risk.
2. The responsibility to react: to respond to situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures, which may include coercive measures like sanctions and international prosecution, and in extreme cases military intervention.
3. The responsibility to rebuild: to provide, particularly after a military intervention, full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation, addressing the causes of the harm the intervention was designed to halt or avert.⁴

There is a new profound emphasis on the first of these; the responsibility to prevent. The ICISS has named this the single most important dimension of the responsibility to protect. This is a positive step toward preventing events such as Srebrenica and Rwanda: if the problem can be detected early, then something can be done before a population suffers greatly. Also, this means that the UN would not have to get into the discussion of state sovereignty an extremely delicate issue among the international community. This idea could be put into practice; its feasibility however rests on a few assumptions concerning the behaviour of international actors. These would include: an in-depth and serious consideration of the problem in aiding nations, as well as their willingness to help those at risk. The political willingness of other states is the all-important issue that the ICISS fails to address. If that willingness is not present, then the report is rendered useless. Willingness is the fundamental requirement for the success of such an endeavour. This is the reason behind the occurrence of such genocides. It was not because of any issue that is analyzed in this report, but because states were not willing to perform what was needed in order to avoid these tragedies. This can be seen in these, two of the worst failed interventions. As Brian Urquhart has written: "not since the Second World War has violence been more widespread, and international institutions and regional coalitions less able to control it."⁵

Between early April and mid-July 1994, members of the Hutu majority in the tiny central

³ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. *The Responsibility to Protect*. 2001, <http://www.iciss-ciise.gc.ca/Report-English.asp>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Brian Urquhart, "The Rusty Tools of Peace." *World Policy Journal* 17 (Winter 2000/2001): 2-7.

African state of Rwanda systematically gunned down or hacked to death with machetes up to 800,000 Tutsis.⁶ Other sources estimate that the number of Tutsi murdered is actually closer to 1 million. Such figures are difficult to confirm because of the inability to distinguish Hutu and Tutsi corpses. The two tribes live in the same country, sharing the same language and the same customs.⁷ While this massacre was occurring, the UN was 'effectively silent' despite what one report (from the Organization of African Unity, the OAU, holding the US, France, Belgium, and the Vatican responsible for the 1994 genocide) calls "incontrovertible" evidence that Western powers were wary of the dangers before and during the slaughter.⁸ As seen through the turn of events which took place in 1994, it is evident that the steps outlined in the ICISS's *Responsibility to Protect* would not have saved the Tutsis in Rwanda. This is primarily because the West had no interest in the area. Information concerning the massacre in Rwanda was known to the UN and the West before the genocide. Unfortunately, both the nations of the West and the United Nations made the decision to ignore this information for reasons of self-interest until it was too late.

The Tutsi had long dominated politics in Rwanda, and made up approximately 17 percent of Rwanda's population. With less than one percent of the population being of aboriginal Twa descent, the remaining 82 percent of Rwanda's population consisted of Hutus. The three groups lived intermingled in the country, without uprising. This ended in 1959, during the independence of the country, when the Hutus violently seized control in a struggle that left about half of the Tutsi populations fleeing to neighboring states.⁹

The Hutus then divided themselves into two groups. The first lived in the southern and central part of the country. They supported the *Parti du mouvement et de l'émancipation des Bahutus* or the PARMEHUTU. This group was the majority, and had gained power during independence. The second group was found in the northwest, and remained a minority. Power struggles, invasions, and small massacres followed, ending with the coup of a northwestern Hutu, Juvenal Habyarimana, which shifted not only the political power of Rwanda, but its economic and military power as well. The minority Hutu group soon dominated all these areas.

After the coup, there was a 15-year period of relative peace until October of 1990. At this time, a rebel force composed mostly of Ugandan Tutsi refugees of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) along with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (PRF) invaded northern Rwanda. They made substantial progress against the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), which consisted of Hutus. In August 1993, the Arusha accords were signed a peace agreement laying the foundation for a government of national unity and the integration of the two armies.¹⁰ Because of Hutu extremists, there was a delay in the implementation of the accord. Then, a plane carrying Rwanda's president, Habyarimana, was mysteriously shot down on April 6, 1994. Violence erupted the next day. Government radio stations in Rwanda began telling Hutus to 'take vengeance against the Tutsi' for their alleged murder of the president.¹¹ Hutus began ransacking

⁶ D'Arcy Jenish, "Preventable Genocide." *Maclean's* 113 (Jul 2000): 24.

⁷ Timothy P Carney, "United Nations Bills U.S. for 1994 Rwandan Genocide." *Human Events* 56 (Jul 2000):6

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⁹ Alan J. Kuperman, "Rwanda in Retrospect." *Foreign Affairs* 79 (Jan/Feb 2000): 94-118.

¹⁰ The World Bank Group. "Countries: Rwanda." 2002 <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/rw2.htm>

¹¹ Alan J. Kuperman, "Rwanda in Retrospect." *Foreign Affairs* 79 (Jan/Feb 2000): 94-118.

once the actual genocide began. There was evidence of the Hutu aims, and the great powers chose to look away."²⁵ Only on April 28th did the issue of the Council avoiding the massacres appear on the public scene. They had spent countless hours discussing their plan to pull out peacekeepers, and a small amount of time discussing how to achieve a ceasefire, but no discussion on the genocide was taking place. When murder of this magnitude occurs, the UN simply cannot maintain their habitual neutrality. They need to choose a course of action and act quickly. "Neutrality may be fine when UN members are exercised about border disputes, but not when one side starts the mass obliteration of the other. Then it is time to take sides."²⁶

In the United States the issue was also virtually ignored, and thought of as something which was of no interest to the United States. Clinton, along with Madeleine Albright (the UN Ambassador at then time) "ordered America to do nothing to stop the killing, even though at the end of April 1994, a State Department secret intelligence report unequivocally called what has happening 'genocide'."²⁷ Why? Intervention in Rwanda was not in the interest of the United States. There was nothing at stake for the US; they had no national interest to protect in Rwanda. The pressing issue for the government was the upcoming congressional election. After losing soldiers in a failed intervention in Somalia, if Clinton was to admit that genocide was actually occurring, and he was not acting on it he knew it would only mean lost votes for the Democrats.²⁸ To Clinton, votes in the congressional election apparently meant more than saving hundreds and thousands of innocent victims in Africa. Colin Powell, the former chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff for the US had said "As long as I am chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I will not agree to commit American men and women to an unknown war, in an unknown land, for an unknown cause, under an unknown commander, for an unknown duration."²⁹ The US was unwilling to send soldiers into Rwanda without more information information that had started to be sent to them months earlier. Dallaire had military plans that were rejected time and again by the UN, since they simply did not believe that Rwanda was about to face the crisis that Dallaire knew was coming.

The United States also had a huge impact on the UN not taking adequate action. Stephen Morris of Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies has stated that when the UN finally did discuss "the horrific killings that were taking place, it was the US that refused to allow the UN to call these events 'genocide'; so as to avoid triggering any serious military intervention."³⁰ None other than Albright herself delayed the vote at the UN on this topic. At this point, 500,000 Tutsis had already met their fate.

Why were troops not sent to Rwanda? Is it simply that American troops would not have been able to prevent the genocide? Morris touched on this issue: "Stopping the genocide would not have required a major military operation. The killers were militarily incompetent mobs armed mostly with clubs, spears, and machetes. The then commander of the UN Assistance Mission claimed that 5000 men and a mandate to act would have been sufficient to stop the

²⁵ Bruce Wallace, "The Rwanda Debacle." *Maclean's* 113 (Jan 2000): 34.

²⁶ Leaders: Rwanda revisited 1999, S6

²⁷ Nat Hentoff, "The Holocaust Without Guilt." *The Village Voice* 44 (Mar 1999): 28.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Linda Melvren, "Behind Closed Doors." *The World Today* 56 (Aug/Sep 2000): 9-11.

³⁰ Nat Hentoff, "The Holocaust Without Guilt." *The Village Voice* 44 (Mar 1999): 28

killings.”³¹ It is clear that the US would not have wanted to send in troops, after having their men killed earlier in Somalia. Would this have been a problem? Considering that the bulk of peacekeepers do not come from the US, this could have easily been accomplished. American troops would not have been necessary. Alan Kuperman reported in *Foreign Affairs* that “Belgium had asked the UN for more support to reinforce its own soldiers in the UN component there. But, the United States vetoed Belgium’s request, so not only that country was forbidden to protect its own soldiers, but no country could help.”³² Belgium had pleaded for reinforcements, along with a new mandate from the Security Council in January and February of 1994 on the grounds that UNAMIR could not maintain order. Based on the additional cost of having additional troops and the fact that the soldiers would be subject to excessive danger, Britain and the United States blocked this initiative before it could even reach a vote.³³ The UN took no action, meanwhile indicating that it viewed the shedding of Rwandan blood as a serious matter. It is clear that many countries did not feel that the funds should be dedicated to peacekeeping in Rwanda at the time.

Following the Rwandan genocide, it was apparent that the UN and the West were, at the very least, partly responsible. This is a sentiment felt by everyone including high officials from both groups. Kofi Annan stated: “the failure to intervene was driven more by the reluctance of Member States to pay the human and other costs of intervention, and by doubts that the use of force would be successful, than by concerns about sovereignty.”³⁴ This readily admits that the issue was not the West or the UN’s concern about sovereignty one of the very things that the *Responsibility to Protect* states needs to be looked at and changed within the current intervention policy. Rwanda was not in the interest of the UN member states, particularly the US. There was no economic interest in Rwanda, nor was it of any strategic relevance. There was no oil or other precious resources in Rwanda. There was nothing the US desired.

It is difficult to understand how these innocent victims dying at an alarming rate could not be in the ‘interest’ of the United States, or of several other states. For any intervention policy to be effective, whether it is the *Responsibility to Protect* or any other policy, the interest of states has to be present. States have to be willing to be attentive to early information and warning signs. The UN and member states have to possess the ability to take into account that two catastrophes can be occurring simultaneously in the world. They need to realize that one cannot be temporarily ignored, or put on the back burner. States also have to be willing to devote aid to these situations, whether in the form of peacekeepers or funds. Rwanda was not an issue of the ethics of sovereignty, as the *Responsibility to Protect* tries to solve. It was an issue of selfish states unwilling to listen, unwilling to give, and unwilling to take seriously genocide in a small, distant African state.

A second blatant case of failed intervention is that of Srebrenica, a town in the Serb republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Only two years after the United Nations declared the city a safe

³¹ Ibid.

³² Alan J. Kuperman, “Rwanda in Retrospect.” *Foreign Affairs* 79 (Jan/Feb 2000): 116

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

zone, the worst massacre of the Bosnian war occurred here. The incident would also become the worst massacre in Europe's history since the Second World War. In July 1995, up to 8,000 Muslim men and boys were slaughtered by Bosnian Serbs.³⁵ The remains of close to 2,500 men and boys have been found in mass grave sites, yet there are thousands more men who are missing, most likely in additional grave sites not yet exhumed. The tragedy surrounding these killings in the Bosnian war is that these victims were not soldiers killed in combat, but males murdered by a conflicting ethnic group. This is apparent in the exhumed bodies, found blindfolded with their hands bound, or shot behind the head or in the back.³⁶ In Sarajevo and Srebrenica, we saw the inability of peacekeeping forces under UNPROFOR command to bring this ethnic cleansing, or even the massacre of innocent civilians, to an end.³⁷ The killing in Srebrenica was much different than that of Rwanda. The latter genocide was coined as genocide in 'fast-forward'; at its height pulling in a death rate of 5.5 people per minute. In Bosnia, however, the killing took place in slow motion.³⁸ Why was it that only a year after the shame of Rwanda, the UN was unable to intervene successfully? Had they learned nothing?

The intervention was a failure fundamentally because of the "error, misjudgment, and an inability to recognize the scope of the evil confronting us", as expressed by the United Nations in the *Srebrenica Report*.³⁹ The conflicts had been continuing for quite some time in Bosnia, and the UN simply did not take the protection of the city of Srebrenica seriously after the commander of the UN mission to Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Philippe Morillon, labelled it a 'safe zone' in 1993. The UN also failed to explain to the people relying on their protection what a 'safe zone' actually implied.

There had been so much fighting that the importance of repeated threats aimed at the Muslims, began to decrease in the concerns of the international community. The massacre took place under "the cover of a negotiating effort and a United Nations relief effort whose officials kept insisting that progress was being made on both the humanitarian and the political level."⁴⁰ In hindsight though, it is well known that no real progress was taking place.

The UN felt it had achieved this 'progress' through naming Srebrenica a 'safe zone', though it became one of the most dangerous places in which to be located. After naming the city a safe zone, an agreement was made between the Bosnian Serbs and the Muslims. The Muslims were to disarm, while the Serbs were to halt all attacks on the city. This idea appeared to be sound, but it was a known fact that none truly expected the plan to work. Nick Cameron, the winner of the Military Cross in Bosnia, spoke out about this very issue. He said there was never a serious prospect of this agreement being enforced, and that they "never intended to fight for this place. That was never the plan."⁴¹ The UN never really planned on intervening. This was apparent with the naming of Srebrenica as a safe zone and not a safe haven. The

³⁵ Dragan Petrovic and John Philips, "Dutch Promise Aid to Bosnia Massacre Town." *The Times* (Jun 2002):18.

³⁶ "The Whole and Awful Truth." *The New Republic* (Dec 1999): 9.

³⁷ Shirley Williams, "Should NATO Stop the Bombing?" *The Times* (May 1999): 21.

³⁸ David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

³⁹ "The Whole and Awful Truth." *The New Republic* (Dec 1999): 9.

⁴⁰ David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

⁴¹ "Testament of Betrayal" *Sunday Times* (Jul 2002): 16

critical difference is that military intervention is only applied to threats on a safe haven not to a safe zone. Had the Muslim population been aware of this difference in terminology, they probably would never have given up their arms and left their lives in the hands of the blue beret peacekeepers.

Soon, Bosnian Serbs had driven the majority of the Muslims into centers, such as Srebrenica, reducing the city to a 'glorified holding pen'⁴² for the Muslims. This is when the vicious attacks on the Muslims began. There were only about 110 lightly armed Dutch UN soldiers in Srebrenica at the time, who made no effort to halt the Serb force. Cameron saw the oncoming Serbs, and knew something needed to be done to save the Muslims inside the city. He desperately called the UN at its headquarters in New York, asking them to send NATO planes for an air attack, similar to the air attacks that had occurred over other parts of Bosnia. He noted he "(waited for) swarms of angry aircraft diving and destroying the attacking Serbian targets at will. There was nothing."⁴³ Was it simply that the UN didn't know about the Serbian force, advancing on Srebrenica, and therefore did not have the means to send in such an air force? Unfortunately, the answer is no. The UN did have warnings of the attack, and chose to undertake no action. The UN also had, at its disposal, the military firepower that would be necessary for an air attack on the Serbs.⁴⁴ Again, nothing was done, and the UN remained idle while it witnessed thousands of Muslims murdered by the Bosnian Serbs. Allegedly, local forces were under orders to use "the necessary measures, including the use of force" to protect Srebrenica.⁴⁵ Why then, were no such forces used?

There are two main possible explanations for this course of events. The first is that the local commander in Bosnia, General Bernard Javir, was at fault. Either he was incompetent in following these instructions and putting what military power he controlled into use, or he simply ignored the cries of help from Cameron. The second possibility is that the Security Council members, who were entrusted with the safety of the Muslims, decided that the requirements for the safe areas were overly expensive and required too much effort. They made the decision, secretly, to abandon these areas.⁴⁶

As Wim Kok, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands stated after the massacre, "The international community has fallen short in offering sufficient protection to the people in the so-called safe zone [of Srebrenica]," he declared. "The international community, in which the Netherlands played a special role in this respect, appeared unable to prevent the enclave from falling and the genocide by the Bosnian Serbs that followed."⁴⁷ It was not only the UN in New York who ignored the call for assistance from Srebrenica, but also the Dutch peacekeepers who virtually stood back and watched the Serbs during the killings.

The UN could not have prevented this massacre if the ICISS's new policy idea had previously been put into place. No part of the new idea states that the UN and member states need to 'try harder' to recognize when a threat to innocent people is taking place. The UN did

⁴² David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

⁴³ "Testament of Betrayal" *Sunday Times* (Jul 2002):16

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Richard Beeston, "Dutch Cabinet Resigns Over Massacre Report" *The Times* (Apr 2002): 18.

not take seriously the threat to Srebrenica until it was too late, and no written policy will change that. It is evident that the UN realized it was their own negligence in stopping the Serbian forces that led to such a massacre. Following Srebrenica, a similar attack occurred in a marketplace in Sarajevo. This time however, the UN knew better they intervened, ultimately ending, for a period of time, the war in Bosnia. The new policy idea also mentions nothing concerning the difference between safe zones and safe havens. It seems unreasonable that one can be supported militarily while the other cannot. Safe areas can be attacked, whether they are labeled zones or havens and either label will not be a predictive factor on the magnitude of an attack in the area. If it is severely attacked, as was the case during the summer of 1995, the standing military needs to have the mandate to intervene. They cannot simply stand to the side and observe thousands of men and boys be massacred.

Despite this all, the principal issue, once again, is money. Politics and economics cannot be separated. The UN did not want to financially support an air force operation after it was made apparent that the Serb forces were moving in on Srebrenica. They had the military power to do so (through possibilities such as the US and NATO), yet failed to make use of it principally because of the cost. Member countries have the financial ability to help but they are putting a price on human life, once which wealthy developed states consider too high. In order for intervention to have any possibility for success, states need to willingly support the missions of the UN and its peacekeepers financially. This has been one of the leading problems in both the Rwanda and Srebrenica cases. This is another issue which is not properly addressed in the *Responsibility to Protect*.

The *Responsibility to Protect* is a systematic and representative idea for new humanitarian policy. This could potentially be adopted as the new policy of the United Nations, however this would not solve the problems of intervention faced in the past. The report seems to be overly idealistic, as it approaches the concept of intervention simplistically, without addressing the deeper causes. It does not bring attention to the root problems of failed interventions such as financial aid, lack of state political interest, error, ignorance, and underestimation of the scope of detrimental factors; all elements found at the core of such failed interventions as Rwanda and Srebrenica.

As Linda Melvern of *The World Today* has noted, "The failure of the international community to act while some one million people in Rwanda were slaughtered, was one of the greatest scandals of the twentieth century."⁴⁸ Intervention did not happen in Rwanda due to the lack of Western interest, the lack of financial aid, and ignorance regarding the gravity of the issue. Rwanda did not hold any political interest for the United States (or any other state in the West) and therefore the US was not anxious to act, even after having knowledge of the terror occurring. They had nothing to protect, and there was no political or economic benefit to be gained from intervening. Many states were ignorant of the fact that something disastrous was taking place while individual states, especially the permanent member states of the UN, had some prior knowledge of the massacre, yet chose to ignore the warning. They were preoccupied with the Bosnia situation, assumed that nothing more than a civil war would occur in Rwanda, and were timid to act aggressively after the events in Somalia. Governments cannot be timid

⁴⁸ Linda Melvern, "Behind Closed Doors." *The World Today* 56 (Aug/Sep 2000): 9-11.

when at every second, human lives are being lost. The UN was not attentive to obvious warnings, and was ignorant of the fact that the Hutus were to commit a full-fledged massacre on the Tutsis. The biggest reason though, was lack of financial aid. The soldiers were prepared enter Rwanda, yet no state was willing to provide the required financial assistance.

Again in Srebrenica, financial aid was the critical issue in the failed intervention. There were peacekeepers willing to work within the conflict, yet no state wished to spend the funds for the intervention. This was because they did not perceive the small town of Srebrenica as a threat for the Muslim people. They made an error in believing that since the town was named a 'safe area', the Bosnia Serbs would refrain from any attacks. They did not take the responsibility to ensure safety for the town seriously. The UN needs to recognize the volatility of these conflicts and realize that it is not always fully aware of when and where there will be ethnic conflict, nor can it predict the scope or gravity of the event. The international community cannot afford ever again to be late, as they were in Srebrenica.

Looking at the reasons why Srebrenica and Rwanda were failed attempts at humanitarian intervention, it is evident that the ICISS's *Responsibility to Protect* is not an idea capable of preventing such atrocities from reoccurring. Although it is well structured and innovative, it does not address the root causes of failed intervention. It seems that the will of states to aid in humanitarian intervention missions had nothing to do with morals or ethics; rather, it had everything to do with the realist notions of self-interest of states. This is the root problem with contemporary humanitarian intervention. Policies must focus on ways to make states politically willing to assist in such instances, not concentrate on what needs to be achieved when political will is present. Therefore, the *Responsibility to Protect* is not feasible or realistic, and does not deserve to be adopted by the United Nations or the international community, as their new humanitarian intervention policy.

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