

The “Responsibility to Protect” Doctrine. Justifying the “Right to Project Power”?

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Frankly, it's not easy defending the Ba'ath regime in Syria, after all not so long ago the Communist Party in Syria and other left groups were suppressed by the ruling Ba'ath Party, its members thrown in jail and even killed[1]. But I make no apology for defending the Assad regime's right to independence and to resist foreign subversion and an attempted takeover by the Empire under the guise of the 'Responsibility to Protect'.

The doctrine of the 'Responsibility to Protect' [*sic*], is a stroke of PR genius that originated as the brainchild of a British colonial settler descendent in Australia, Gareth Evans, and a former Labour Party minister. The history of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine is, according to its 'official' website 'The Responsibility to Protect' (formerly known as the Right to Intervene, more on this below) as follows:

Led by Gareth Evans, former Foreign Minister of Australia, and Mohamed Sahnoun, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General, the Commission issued its report in December 2001. Focusing on the “right of humanitarian intervention”, this report examined when, if ever, it is appropriate for states for take coercive – and in particular military – action, against another state for the purpose of protecting populations at risk. In essence, the group concluded that when a group (or groups) of people is suffering from egregious acts of violence resulting from internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state where these crimes are taking place is unable or unwilling to act to prevent or protect its peoples, the international community has a moral duty to intervene to avert or halt these atrocities from occurring. — [History and Timeline of R2P](#)

This is the same Gareth ‘Biggles’ Evans, Australian former ‘Labour’ foreign minister who in 1991,

“...during a political storm over Indonesian military violence in East Timor, in his capacity as Australia's foreign minister, Evans defended the Indonesian military junta's actions by describing the Dili massacre as ‘an aberration, not an act of state policy’.

This was despite growing evidence (both within Australian intelligence and the international media) of increasingly violent Indonesian military efforts to protect and extend their business interests in East Timor interests that included coffee plantations, marble mines and large oil contracts by utilizing starvation, napalm, torture and death camps...Oil contracts that Evans himself had co-signed with the Indonesian military junta that enabled Australian

companies to share with the Suharto family in what would later be established as clearly East Timor's oil.

This connection was highlighted during an extensively publicised video recorded in a private jet over the Timor Sea. Senator Evans, replete with champagne...offered an astonishingly naive toast, characterising the Timor Sea oil contract as "... uniquely unique".... Later, in a coincidental occurrence, when carriers of a secretly-filmed video exposing the [Dili massacre](#) [in E. Timor] arrived in Australia, they were inexplicably strip-searched by customs officials.[citation needed] Fortunately, they had passed the massacre footage on to another carrier on the same flight, who brought it through customs unhindered.... Evans' diplomatic failures regarding East Timor were directly linked to his failures to procure senior positions in the United Nations, including his ill-fated attempt to become the Secretary-General. — [Wikipedia](#) [my emph. WB]

Evidently as far as 'Biggles' Evans was concerned the R2P didn't extend to the East Timorese people, any more than it currently does to the Syrian or Palestinian people. Clearly the R2P doctrine is very selectively applied and applied by people and governments who are, by their own definition, themselves war criminals.

It's all in the name

Later, in 2004 Right to Intervene was 'refined' somewhat, as 'Responsibility to Protect' which sounds so much more benevolent than the 'right to intervene' with all of its colonial/imperial connotations and history, especially in the Middle East. And what 'civilised' person would not agree with such a 'civilising' mission, crusade even, to protect the weak and defenceless from an evil "Medieval" state?

"...There is a growing recognition that the issue is not the "right to intervene" of any State, but the "responsibility to protect" of every State when it comes to people suffering from avoidable catastrophe – mass murder and rape, ethnic cleansing by forcible expulsion and terror, and deliberate starvation and exposure to disease. And there is a growing acceptance that while sovereign Governments have the primary responsibility to protect their own citizens from such catastrophes, when they are unable or unwilling to do so that responsibility should be taken up by the wider international community – with it spanning a continuum involving prevention, response to violence, if necessary, and rebuilding shattered societies.

We endorse the emerging norm that there is a collective international responsibility to protect, exercisable by the Security Council authorizing military intervention as a last resort, in the event of genocide and other large scale killing, ethnic cleansing or serious violations of international humanitarian law which sovereign Governments have proved powerless or unwilling to prevent." (Report: A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility, paras 201 and 203) [my emph. WB] (ibid)

A "growing recognition" indeed. Tell that to the people of Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen, to mention just a few of the countries, all of whom could have done with a good dose of the *Right to Protect Themselves* which is precisely what the Syrian government is doing.

The other disingenuous comment is the "[w]e endorse the emerging norm". But this 'norm'

emerged from nowhere other than the people and institutions that dreamt up R2P in the first place. And they can say this precisely because instead of 'intervening' it was 'protecting'. However, there is a caveat as far as the Western public is concerned as the USUKNATO destruction of Libya demonstrates. In the UK, the majority were opposed to UK 'boots on the ground'. Boots in the air was okay though.

MacShane's 'Tsunami of Hatred'

Another Labour Party MP, this time in the UK has picked up the R2P cudgel that 'Biggles' dropped, a cudgel to beat, very selectively, those who do not respect R2P. His name is [Denis MacShane](#), who by the way is a member of the UK Parliament's Labour Friends of Israel club and a staunch advocate of R2P. I only mention this because the R2P doctrine as expressed above would seem to fit the Palestinian people exactly:

"...the "responsibility to protect" of every State when it comes to people suffering from avoidable catastrophe - mass murder and rape, ethnic cleansing by forcible expulsion and terror, and deliberate starvation and exposure to disease."

But just as with 'Biggles' Evans, MacShane too speaks with forked tongue as this short exchange amply demonstrates:

A Labour MP is at the centre of a RACE ROW after appearing at the Cambridge Union.

Dr Denis MacShane, MP for Rotherham, ordered an Egyptian student to "apologise for all Jews killed by Hamas."

MacShane was participating in a debate on the Middle East last Thursday (October 29th) when he came out with the SCANDALOUS SLUR.

The student, Ossama el Batran, a post-grad at Darwin College, made a point of information from the floor requesting the sympathy on behalf of the Palestinian humanitarian plight, which prompted the comments.

Pro-Israeli MacShane was putting to the floor whether a "Jew's life is worth anything", when el Batran spoke.

El Batran said, "What about an Arab's life?" At this point MacShane walked towards el Batran, pointing aggressively at him, saying "your Arab life is worth as much as a Jew's life and until you denounce the killing of Jews. This is the Cambridge Union. You are not a Hamas representative." — '[Denis MacShane defines racism](#)', Jews sans Frontières 4 November 2009

Obviously it's a case of 'do as I say, don't do as I do'. This is how 'Labour' politician (and Israel firster) MacShane described the BDS movement across Europe:

"The call to boycott Jewish commerce is Europe's oldest political appeal.

Kauft nicht bei Juden "Don't buy from Jews" is back. The call to boycott Jewish commerce is Europe's oldest political appeal. Once again, as the tsunami of hate against Israel rolls out from the Right and the Left, from Islamist ideologues to Europe's cultural elites, the demand is to punish the Jews." —

‘[Kauft nicht bei Juden](#)’ will worsen the conflict’ By Denis MacShane,
Ruthfully Yours

Note how Jew and Israel in MacShane’s universe are totally interchangeable. It’s not *Jewish* commerce but *Israeli* commerce that is being boycotted (nobody is saying that we should boycott your local Kosher deli), much of it originating from the illegally Occupied Territories. And BDS is *not* boycotting Jews but Israel. I’m Jewish but not Israeli and indeed I cherish the day the imperialist, Zionist project is no more and the land gets handed back to its rightful owners, the Palestinian people. “Tsunami of hatred against Israel”? But judging by MacShane’s venom directed against an Arab, it would seem he has his own personal ‘Tsunami of hatred’. And these are the people who urge us to invade, invade, invade all in the name of the Responsibility to Protect. Has the world gone totally mad? Apparently so as it’s sociopaths who run the place.

Thus you have to ask yourself what kind of R2P does MacShane and his kind have in mind for the Palestinian people which in turn leads me to ask, what kind of R2P did MacShane and his gangster accomplices have in mind when they destroyed Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and now want to inflict the same kind of ‘protection’ on Syria?

Whether we like it or not, the issue is *not* the Assad regime no matter what we think of it, but of course this is entirely the point of the massive propaganda campaign that has been unleashed on the Western public. As long as we are led to focus on a “medieval” Syria and its brutal Assad dynasty as our glorious leader David Cameron asserts, the motives behind a rapacious imperial power’s real objectives in the world will forever remain hidden behind a facade of protecting with one hand and blowing them away with the other.

Note

1. The ups and downs of Syrian Communist Party’s relationship with the Syrian state are convoluted and contradictory, one minute up and the next down, and generally reflect the ups and downs of the Cold War and of course Israel’s role in everything Middle Eastern. There’s a decent potted history of the SCP (and its various flavours) on [Wikipedia](#)

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