

The “Obligation to Intervene”

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Well, there are challenges of speaking to a group right after lunch or speaking to a group before a delayed lunch. I am not too sure what is best or what is worse but we are going to work with that situation and also with the time constraint. I have to warn you though that as a retired general who has also been an apprentice politician, brevity is not my strength but I am going to do my best this afternoon to achieve the aim of this conference. Eminence and Excellencies thank you very much for inviting me here. I also want to particularly thank Mr. Lorenzo Rossi di Montelera who has become a friend during our meetings in Montreal and for opening up this invitation tonight. I thank him for the opportunity to be with all of you today.

Poverty and development, in fact we are seeing poverty as being a source of rage and even extremists while we are seeing development as too often turned into or being undermined by greed and corruption. That in sense ensures the dominance of the wealthy elites and imposes a continuum of poverty which results to mass abuses of human rights through the expressions and results of rage of the affected populations.

I am going to speak to you as a soldier who has field experience and who comes from not a very diverse background because I'm from a military family. In fact when my eldest son who was a captain of an infantry returned from Haiti after the terrible problem at **Thiotte**, I met him at the airport at Quebec City which is a garrison city. The journalists who were there came up to me and said “General, your son is also in the army?” My son said before I could respond, “**Yes, I am 4th generation army on my father's side and I am 3rd generation on my mother's side** and we are a family that lacks imagination” (laughter). He was doing pretty well for a while there.

The title of the portion of this conference is “The Obligation to Intervene”. As an example, it is rather interesting how the international community responded to Indonesia when it was affected by a tsunami in the mid 2000s. They were tripping over each other, trying to respond from schools, to communities, to churches and to all kind of groups to meet that requirement. Extensive efforts were given and sustained in order to meet that crisis and they did their best to reduce the impact on the population and they also helped reconstitute the infrastructure. However at exactly at the same time, there is a genocide going on in Darfur. In fact there were more people killed, were injured, internally displaced, refuged and raped nearly the same amount

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of time and yet nobody went to Darfur. We couldn't get anybody to go Darfur. We can't even get Darfur on the front page and yet a year later, everybody went back to the tsunami area to see how well they have done with the investment of their intervention and there was of course significant efforts that have been done. Nobody went back to Darfur. Not a plug nickel went into Darfur and yet we are talking about 2 ½ million people that were internally displaced and refuged and over 200,000 people were killed. The rape, pillaging and killing is still ongoing until today.

The obligation to intervene seems to have a certain nuance to it. There is a certain perspective to when and why we would and why we should. I seat as a member of the genocide prevention advisory group for the Secretary General of the United Nations with people like **Gareth Evans** and Desmond Tutu who offer us great humility and great sense of humor and certainly with that subject it is needed. The interesting dimension why I bring up genocide prevention is because finally the United Nations has built a capability of trying to get ahead of the game and potentially intervening by actually preventing something from happening. In so doing, this subject got looked at and was able to get approval in 2005 for a whole new conceptual framework which was called and is still called "R2P responsibility to protect". We introduced the concept of the responsibility to protect to the world and it got accepted in the general assembly this September. We actually finally made a massive reform to the **most valiant concept** of nation's state of sovereignty. Sovereignty has been an extraordinary tool for people to keep you out and for people to be able to work within their framework and to abuse massively as they wish their population as well as other countries to of course protect their population and permit them to thrive. This responsibility to protect, this change of the absolute nature of sovereignty has moved sovereignty of the state to the sovereignty of the individual, of the human being. This essentially states that if the leadership of a nation is massively abusing the human rights of its people or if the leadership of a nation cannot stop the massive abuses of human rights of its own people, then the rest of the international community has a responsibility to go in and protect those civil rights.

This triggered the establishment of 4 pillars of which prevention is the first one and the last one which is the most extreme is the use of force. To be able to do that, there are a **series of 4, 6 criteria** to be consider before using it. That has been the only real tool to try to talk about in a structured way, that we have a conceptual framework of intervention. It also brought forward the obligation and the responsibility that we have to intervene when other human beings are being massively abused which leads to mass atrocities and even genocide. That concept is the result of the catastrophic failure of the Rwandan genocide and the international community in 1994. It is true that the subtitle of my book, "The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda" is an indication of the international community's response to the crisis. Their response was nil, they did not respond. There was absolutely no response throughout the 3 months of the genocide and the 6 months leading to it even when there was ample information provided. However, once again we have an interesting dilemma in how even international bodies and sovereign states that make them up, look at intervention as an obligation to do so. There were more people killed, injured, internally displaced, refuged and raped in 100 days in Rwanda than the 6 years of the ex-Yugoslavian

campaign which was also going on at the same time. We could not keep 450 soldiers that were left behind in the field nor sustain them or even provide ammunition for them. Yet, in ex-Yugoslavia we deployed 67,000 troops. Again the question came up, we intervened but what criteria that we used? What was the ultimate criterion used by the international leadership that was expressed through the United Nations? Why we went here and we didn't go there? Who is establishing that criteria? What are they basing it on in order to protect individuals and to permit societies to continue?

For this reason, I joined the Montreal Institute of Genocide Studies at Concordia University where a study was conducted. The study is called "The Will to Intervene" which we published and is an ongoing program. What we did because I wanted to understand the leaderships that were making those decisions and what nurtured them to ultimately make those decisions, was studied and interviewed the bulk of the leaders of the United States and Canada who at that the time intervened in Kosovo to prevent the situation from going catastrophic but did not intervene in Rwanda. We went with them to observe how they came up with their decisions and recommendations at different levels and apart from actually having the opportunity of interviewing President Clinton or **Prime Minister Chrétien** who declined, we got to talk to pretty much the bulk of the major players. In the end the response came down to something very simple, very close to home which overrides so often so many of the values and so many of the ethical references that we should have.

It was self-interest, what's in it for us? What are the risks? Why should we? That dominated and I was not surprised to think back in the first weeks of the Rwanda genocide, when the major nations of the world were sending reconnaissance teams to see what was up. Should they do anything? Every one of them particularly those nations that had the capabilities would debrief me before they left because they had to. Every one of them said "Sir we are going back and we are recommending that we don't intervene." I asked "Why not?" They said "Sir there is nothing here; there were no strategic resources, no oil or anything. The country is not even in a strategic location and it doesn't have any strategic infrastructure; there's really nothing here for us." One nation's representative, without even blushing or blinking, said that the only thing that was there are human beings and there are too many of them anyway. It is overpopulated. Humanity did not even enter the radar screen of the decision process. **It was not a factor, it was an interest but not a self interest** and so the killing went on.

In this era of enormous complexity and ambiguity in conflicts of which we have stumbled into, I mean we have actually stumbled into this era in the post cold war of these imploding nations and failing states and mass abuse of human rights, mass atrocity and even genocide. We didn't expect it. We thought as George Bush Sr. said, "We are entering a new world order." Well, we seemed to have stumbled into a new world disorder and we are sort of on the job training, still trying to figure out what to do. I guess it is not surprising that politicians don't get a warm and fuzzy feeling of wanting to intervene because we are not too sure exactly what to do and what tools to use. Do we use the classic use of diplomacy or the classic use of military force? Do we

use the concept of the previous era where when nation's state against nation's state had frictions and would end up having to go to war?

The diplomats and politicians would turn into generals and the generals would then take the youth of the nations and proceed to fight and hopefully win. At the end of that, we would then go in and help rebuild and reconstitute the nation. It was a very sequential series of events but as we stumbled into this new area, of these imploding nations, these civil wars, we discovered that it is not sequential anymore because everything is happening at the same time. The diplomatic is trying to rebuild or reconstitute a political process, bringing in human rights, rule of law, **gender equality** and education, trying to reconstitute a bureaucracy and trying to build infrastructure. We are doing that at the same time as we are fighting off a potential enemy who is trying in fact to undermine the process. So how do these different disciplines work together? How do they integrate their efforts in order to bring new solutions, a new methodology? Well, we have been doing very well because we seemed to be continuously caught off guard and seemed to be continuously responding. It is one thing to say "okay we are going to throw a whole rack of money at a problem after" and hopefully as in Rwanda when we "Pontius Pilate" our way out of our responsibility and washed the blood off our hands of 800,000 humans killed and over 3 million injured, sick and internally displaced and refugeeed.

That is one way of doing it and another way is to intervene during the crisis which is often too late and the situation has gone catastrophic. The Syrian conflict is an example where we could have intervened early on but did not. We started to intervene then only to realize that it had intermingled the military and the civilians in urban areas, which is one of worse type of conflicts and where we never ever want to intervene because it turns into an urban warfare. It is impossible to separate them and we let it go catastrophic. In fact these are the movements we see that are going on right now. Another option is trying to get in when the thing goes catastrophic and hopefully not too late that we might be able to pick up some of the pieces and curtail it. However, there has not been anybody who demonstrated so far in this era of international politics and not an era of international statesmanship because there is a terrible dearth of international statesmanship of people who got the flexibility, humility and have the willingness to take risks to want to intervene and intervene early before it goes catastrophic. To prevent it politically is probably the most difficult one to do because if you go in and you prevented something from happening, the questions will obviously be "Why we have to go in?", "Why did we use all those resources?" and nothing happened. The simplistic analysis that so much of our electronic media are really treating us all as grade 9 students and these will be the type of questions you get. The other question is "What happens if the thing went catastrophic while you were there trying to prevent it and then you get accused of maybe aiding and abetting the problem? This is a horrible risk and responsibility to carry.

So the idea of preventing the use of an intervention is not even being yet considered, let alone our learning of how to handle right now conflicts that are ambiguous, complex and exceptionally difficult. Why? It is because they are built on a whole set of rules, a set of rules in which the

belligerents are not playing by the rules. The extremists are essentially not in any way, shape and form playing by any kind of rules that have taken centuries for us to build. Humanitarian law, the law of conflict and the basic premise of humanity, all of these have been spoken of so far this morning. It is just not on their plate at all. They are operating totally outside of that which is completely foreign to us who have worked under the guise of a possible belligerent. If you remember the cold war, we knew what their philosophy was, we knew what their doctrine, we knew what their ethos was and we knew what rules they would fashion under. Now we face somebody who doesn't play by any of those rules. One of the new dimensions of that is we even introduced in this new era of complexity, new weapons that throws another curve to our ethical, moral and legal dilemmas in the field of trying to respond through our interventions.

One of these new weapons is the use massively of children. We used children in previous wars in spite of their age because that was the only thing that was left. We certainly looked at the Hitler's youth scenario which is the extreme use of children. In fact now we use children because of their youth, because they are children and we are using them massively, in hundreds of thousands of which 40% are girls. **They only showed 47 boys in picture posters.** There are girls also used from the whole spectrum as crooks, as spies and ultimately as sex slaves and bush flies. This is the most sophisticated and low technology weapon system of our era, turning children into weapon systems, into weapon platforms making them the choice weapon of conflict in our era and yet we have not revolted against that. We don't want nuclear war and we don't want biological war. How is it that we permit to have conflicts based on this weapon called children and permit these conflicts to sustain themselves because the demographic of those countries are such as and eluded to where you can have under 18 year olds representing well over 50% of the population? We brought in rules and we brought in conventions in the international commission of children's rights and the optional protocol, parish principles, a whole series of shaming and by other means but it hasn't really stopped there. We see right now in Central African Republic where the **ISIL** are recruiting and using children. We saw in Nigeria where they took those 200 girls. While they also took a whole bunch of boys, the girls were not there simply because they want to rape them and use them and sell them. The girls were there to be trained because they are building up their force. They are turning them into child soldiers. So we can prevent that if we intervene. The question is "Do you intervene and how do you so intervene?" That brings me closer to home, to all of you here and I would like to read a small passage if I may and I will read it in this fashion. "Hostilities around the world have dominated the global conscience throughout **2014 in particular.** The horrific feature of too many of these conflicts is the increasing use of children as weapons of war. Presence of children within armed groups test international policies and the will to act." I believe though that it was expressed extremely because of this abuse of children that we are obliged to intervene. I am working towards an argument that the presence of children as weapons of war is an obligation to intervene. If we are looking for a reason to intervene that goes beyond the self interest demands, the use of children, that concept of adults using children as weapons of war is enough reason to do so. In reference to the conflict in Iraq, his holiness Pope Francis [I must say and I hope I don't insult anybody but within my military

community we are sort of enamored with the fine Pope and the troops have started calling him “Big Frank” but anyways we won’t go down that route.] He said and he spoke poignantly about the military intervention of the United States in particular. He said the following, “In these cases where there is an unjust aggression, the question of just and unjust war, I can only say this it is licit to stop the unjust aggressor. I underlined the verb “stop”, I did not say bomb or make war, but said “stop” by some means. With what means can they be stopped? These have to be evaluated. To stop the unjust aggressor is licit.” He said that on August the 14th. I am in full agreement with him and I would go even further in saying that certain unjust actions especially the recruitment and use of children as weapons of war must oblige nations to act early and not wait until a full blown conflict breaks out.

The catechism of the Catholic Church which brings us closer to home, laid out the conditions for a just war. I would like to examine each of these conditions as they relate to the use of child soldiers and the need to take early and prevention oriented action as a just response to the crime against humanity. Because of time constraints, I won’t read all the definitions. There are 4 conditions to a just war.

The first one, the damaged inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community or nations must be lasting, grave and certain. Using the youth of the nation as instruments of war, to conduct some the most horrific atrocities is mortgaging that country for decades to come. I think that meets the first criteria.

Second condition, all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective. We have demonstrated that we are lacking in a new concept of conflict prevention, of even conflict resolution. We are using the old **contract**, the old diplomatic, the old military and the old development. We are keeping them separate and we are not trying to integrate them. Even the 3 D’s: defense, diplomacy and development don’t seem to be able to get it together. With all these separate bodies going around, it is not surprising that we are not bringing solutions to the field and we are making it horribly complex for politicians to engage. We asked General Patraeus when he was in Afghanistan and I was the deputy chair of the defense committee, what he was doing with the NGO community, the different NGO’s, both religious and non-religious that are running around in Afghanistan in the thousands. What is he doing with the campaign? He said, “I am not doing anything with that.” He said “I can’t do anything with them because they don’t want to talk to me.” The NGO community has created sort of a humanitarian space, their neutrality as an instrument to keep them separate from the security forces. As such, they are sustaining the operations because the belligerents are using one against the other and the information is not being passed on. We haven’t figured out how to bring the NGO community in that neutrality and the security forces and their responsibilities together in synergy. On the contrary, they keep fighting among themselves because it is very personality based. **There’s no fundamental doc**, no final change in those disciplines to make them multi-disciplined and integrated into something completely new. We haven’t invented anything new to intervene. We are still horribly caught up in on the job training from Afghanistan to the reactions

we are doing now and to what we have seen ever since the catastrophic failure of Rwanda which has been 20 years now.

The third condition is there must be serious prospect of success. Well, getting into preventing the recruitment and use of children in conflict can be critical to a mission's success since it is a security problem. Even identifying them in the mandates where they were used massively might be an instrument that you can use in order to intervene early. The mere fact that you know they are using children. We knew they were recruiting children in Central African Republic nearly a decade ago. We are arguing that the recruitment of child soldiers by adults is an indication, an early warning that they were prepared to go to extreme of mass atrocities, even genocide because there is no limit to what they do with children. The whole construct of right and wrong can be so significantly influenced. The mere fact of seeing that should be a trip wire for us to want to intervene, to want to engage early on and to prevent it going catastrophic.

The fourth condition and now that we come to a close, is that the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders greater than the evil to be eliminated. This is rather extraordinary because some have been using this argument to not intervene. So the whole construct as you remember Libya, people said that they intervened. The Russians and the Chinese argued that by intervening, we made the situation worse. My question is what can be worse than what is what and did we intervene properly? Did we know how to intervene? Did we know how to make those different disciplines work together? Did we go in early enough? Did we go in appropriately enough? Did the middle powers participated or was it only the world powers who participated in spite of having so many stigmas attached to them when they decide to intervene. Why not use all those middle powers? Why not use countries like my own, Canada to push it to the forefront? What we are seeing right now is a reason to attempt and even undermine. The only major reform that the world has come up with since Rwanda genocidal 20 years now is we are seeing it being attrited and prevented from being operational because it was so ineptly applied once. When Kadafi said "I will crush these cockroaches", those were exactly the words used by the extremist militia in Rwanda and that's how they turned human beings into insects and slaughtered them with impunity. So when Kadafi said that, **we stopped dropping bombs from 10,000 feet. Today, when we responsibly put boots on the ground we are prepared to pay maybe the ultimate price in some of the blood of our own in order to protect others.** That is part of intervention in this complex and difficult era. The slaughter in Rwanda 20 years ago was done not by adults but by a youth militia. Young people are indoctrinated into a political party nurtured by a radio station who was brought in and given opportunities to empower and slowly affect their minds to the extent that in that 90% Catholic country where the Pope have visited 2 years before, they are turned into primary instruments with machetes to slaughter other 800,000 Catholic youths.

So, ladies and gentlemen the obligation to intervene is evident. The tools are complex. The solutions don't seem to be coming very rapidly but shooting from the hip, these spontaneous responses and the overreactions and maybe even the catastrophic failures are indications that we

have an enormous amount of work to be done in order to establish an atmosphere of security and serenity. There cannot be any development and there cannot be any elimination of poverty if there is not an atmosphere of security. You will never have sustained security if you continue to have poverty and no developmental capabilities of increasing the quality of life of the people.

Thank you very much!