

The **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** has come a long way in a relatively short space of time. From inauspicious beginnings, the principle was endorsed by the General Assembly in 2005 and unanimously reaffirmed by the Security Council in 2006 (Resolution 1674). However, the principle remains hotly contested primarily because of its association with humanitarian intervention and the pervasive belief that its principal aim is to create a pathway for the legitimization of unilateral military intervention.

This article sets forth the argument that a deepening consensus on **R2P** is dependent on its dissociation from the politics of humanitarian intervention and suggests that one way of doing this is by abandoning the search for criteria for decision-making about the use of force, one of the centre pieces of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001 report that coined the phrase

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Criteria were never likely to win international support, the article maintains, and were less likely to improve decision-making on how best to respond to major humanitarian crises. Nevertheless, **R2P** can make an important contribution to thinking about the problem of military intervention by mitigating potential 'moral hazards', overcoming the tendency of international actors to focus exclusively on military methods and giving impetus to efforts to operationalize protection in the field.

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