

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM  
COMMITTEE ON CONSCIENCE

"GENOCIDE & HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE"  
AN ADDRESS BY DAVID RIEFF

Washington, D.C.  
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Bridget Conley:

I want to thank everyone for coming. If people want there are plenty of seats available at the table so please feel free to join us. My name is Bridget Conley. I'm a research associate with the Committee on Conscience.

The Committee on Conscience is the department of the museum that works on preventing genocide and alerting the national conscience to threats of contemporary genocide. It was created as part of the President's Commission in 1979. In order to honor the past, as the President's Commission stated, a memorial to Holocaust victims had to address contemporary threats of genocide.

You can learn more about our work and also about our coming events and join in the listserv announcing our events on our web site, which is [www.committeeonconscience.org](http://www.committeeonconscience.org).

To address current and future threats of genocide we need to understand how various nations and international organizations have historically responded to genocide. Humanitarian action is one aspect of this response and it has been one of the more problematic responses dating from the decision of the International Committee of the Red Cross not to publicize what it

knew about concentration camps during World War II, to the massive effort to feed Bosnians during the war there without actually protecting them, to Rwanda where the genocide was blurred into the humanitarian crisis that followed.

We are very pleased then to have David Rieff speak on the subject of genocide and humanitarian response. He has served as a consultant for several humanitarian organizations and written on a range of topics, including war, human rights, humanitarian assistance in Africa, Third World immigration, and the United States as well as cultural issues.

He is the author of five books. Among them is *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*, he co-edited with Roy Gutman *Crimes of War: What The Public Should Know*, and his newest book is *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis*.

One of the great contributions of David's analysis is that he steadfastly -- and I suppose some people would say obstinately -- refuses to work with the same set of assumptions that generally guide discussion. The result, whether or not one agrees with his analysis or with his conclusions, is a more complex understanding of the issues. And we invite you to engage in the discussion after David makes his presentation.

David?

David Rieff:

Thank you. It's always odd to be introduced as a contrarian because then one doesn't know whether to be more or less conventional — I don't know which way I'll go today, it has something to do with the ozone layer.

I want to start, actually, by proposing to you that humanitarian relief is, on the face of things, not necessarily a very useful context in which to think about genocide or about responses to it or prevention of it. I'd like to do that because although the conventional wisdom is that all good things go together.

The Kofi Annan vision of the world, exemplified by the phrase "putting people in the center of everything the UN does," which is one of the standard tropes in the Secretary General's rhetoric, assumes that there is a basic toolkit of good things, democracy building, civil society, humanitarian relief, human rights, conflict resolution, conflict prevention, et cetera. Depending on the crisis in question, and in the absence of larger and conventional structures, we deploy various interesting ad hoc recombinations of these good things (rather like cocktails or

drugs for cancer), and hope that if we get the right mix together we can accomplish something.

I am going to propose a much more somber view of these good things without attacking any of them — although I have had several run-ins with both the human rights movement and the humanitarian movement. I am going to propose Hegel's very somber assertion that **the definition of tragedy is the conflict of two rights.**

I would actually go far enough to say that was true even of the International Committee of the Red Cross in what was ultimately disgraceful behavior in Europe in 1942 and 1943. I would insist that the ICRC was acting tragically out of a sense of maintaining a right thing.

It is not an accurate reflection of reality to posit that dilemmas can be reduced to hard choices, defined not as meaning equally bad choices, but as meaning hard choices, which in the end you perhaps have to choose the lesser of evils or sacrifice something. In the case of humanitarian assistance my view is, very reluctantly and mournfully but nonetheless steadfastly, that actually humanitarianism is something that should be apart from these solutions.

Let me start by proposing to you a couple of reasons for this. The first is that a human rights activist is by definition an absolutist. You do not say as a human rights activist that you understand the context. Once you start doing that all credibility is lost. You must be an absolutist, a fundamentalist, whatever you want to call it. You can't say of a Palestinian suicide bomber -- even if you support the Palestinian cause -- well, it's understandable because the occupation on the West Bank is so awful. Once you do that any claim you have to being, it seems to me, a human rights activist in the proper sense of the term is vitiated.

On the other hand **it is the job of humanitarian relief workers to work with monsters.** That's the job. The job is: how does a 26-year old water or sanitation engineer from Petaluma, California, get a boring device through the check point full of 15-year old monsters stoned out of their minds and armed to their teeth?

The answer is, in the absence of military intervention and I'll come back to the issue of military intervention, by making friends with them, by making deals with them, by giving them some of the aid.

One of the devices in Washington is that everyone is always talking about wastage. It's a trope in Congress. It's the thing that Congress most likes to do is talk about how much stuff is wasted. And isn't it a kind of parallel rhetoric in humanitarian terms? Some humanitarian aid didn't get through to the beneficiaries. It went to the warlords. The fact is that is the name of the game.

If you can keep the wastage down to a reasonable proportion, say, a quarter, you're already in incredibly good shape. I think 75 percent of your aid getting through to people who will die without it is an excellent proportion and a lot of aid workers I know would agree. Obviously that's not the ideal, that's not what we want to happen, but that is what happens, and the monsters have to be paid off.

And let me say, not to foreshadow too strongly what I'm going to go on to say, that the only real alternative to this is colonization, is invasion. It is perfectly true that once you, the humanitarian aid worker, are part of some colonial or mandatory context as in, for example, Kosovo today under the UN, then you can have much higher standards because you have force of arms to back you up.

If you are as a humanitarian an adjunct to a military occupation -  
- what are euphemistically known as humanitarian military  
interventions, a phrase only slightly more disgusting in my view  
than 'regime change' or 'collateral damage' in its euphemistic  
barbarism -- you can indeed set any set of standards you want.

Indeed the only real danger is not so much the local peoples'  
demands, but the demands of the occupying force. In Afghanistan,  
for example, the American special forces used a lot of those air  
drops to bribe militia commanders. This was the standard thing  
that they did and perhaps given their aims, which were not  
humanitarian but war making, they were right to do so. I am not  
necessarily criticizing them for doing so. I am simply trying to  
elaborate the degree to which humanitarian purposes and military  
purposes, at least in the short run, are very different.

Aid workers are by definition people who cohabit with the  
butchers. Human rights workers are people who make demands. Now  
obviously I am well aware it is more complicated than that in the  
sense that aid organizations, in large measure out of disgust,  
revulsion, and the wish to do things differently from the way the  
ICRC did it in Nazi-occupied Europe, do include testifying and  
giving information as part of their mandate.

I suppose the first thing one might say, a positive line about what humanitarian action can contribute to the prevention or exposure of either genocides or genocidal acts under the law, would simply be that as people on the ground over the long term aid workers are in a position to get information to other kinds of activists.

Indeed Human Rights Watch, the American group, has signed memoranda of understanding with the International Rescue Committee, a mainline sector of the US humanitarian NGO, precisely with a notion of sharing information on that basis. And there is an increasing independence, at least among some human rights groups, on the activities of aid workers.

The American organization Mercy Corps allowed several human rights workers to go into Kosovo as investigators pretending to be humanitarian workers. That posed tremendous problems for neutrality. These are rather difficult issues. I myself am rather critical of Mercy Corps' decision, to put it charitably.

I saw recently a Human Rights Watch internal memorandum that complained about the fact that humanitarian airlifts to South Sudan had been cancelled over the preceding four weeks meant that Human Rights Watch had not been getting the information it was

accustomed to getting. There are synergies or collaborations on the ground, which are for better or worse well entrenched.

But whether the actual activities of humanitarian relief are really all that consistent with what is required to prevent genocide, to the extent anything is possible to stop genocides before they happen, is for me very much an open question.

However, as I have argued in my book, **humanitarian relief workers are increasingly thinking of themselves as human rights activists.**

They have, to put it very simplistically, the incumbent view that the only proper way to do their jobs is to think in terms of rights rather than needs alone. That is to say, you don't say just these people over here need things. You say that according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the people in place X have a legal right to be sheltered and to food, in other words the economic and social parts of the Universal Declaration. This is the justification.

As a moral stance it is perfectly defensible. As a practical stance, everyone at least privately knows its limitations. The humanitarian goal is not truth, the goal of the human rights activists, but effective delivery of services. If you really want them to be human rights investigators then why would you saddle

them with all this logistical duty to get food in and build latrines and all the things that actually comprise the daily activity of the humanitarian relief worker?

A human rights worker can really be interested in the truth. A humanitarian worker has to be interested in staying, has to be interested in remaining on the ground. Certainly in this Museum I do not need to underscore the point to you, I am sure many of you know it better than I do, the degree of moral compromise that staying in such wars always involves.

That is the dilemma.

The problem for me is the increasingly imperial rhetoric about human rights. I have said many times that I think the Bush administration and the left-wing human rights movement in this country have far more in common than either would be comfortable admitting. I am more and more troubled by this imperial rhetoric that the only way to enforce human rights, prevent genocide, allow humanitarian relief workers to do their work, is to invade and re-colonize. Because let's be very clear you can use any amount of euphemisms you want but when you send soldiers into battle to do these things you are making war not just on a few villainous war

criminals but on whole sectors of these societies for reasons I will come back to.

And, second, in order for the invasion to work you must stay there. You must in effect establish protectorates along the model of Kosovo or if you're incredibly lucky East Timor, where you get to leave in relatively short order. As someone who spent a good part of the wars of the South Balkans in the South Balkans, I do not see how the occupation force can leave for a generation and I don't know anyone who does.

So that is what you are talking about. You say we want to enforce human rights — in Sudan or Angola or all the places in desperate need of it. If you really mean it, you really have to think about the issue of force and the issue of re-colonization. I find, to use the phrase from Italian politics of the 1950s and 1960s, an historic compromise going on between the radical conservatives in the administration and the liberal humanitarians of the relief movement and the human rights movement. I think that is in fact of what is going on.

I will not give you a boring history lesson, I am sure you all know as well as I do, that **humanitarian justifications have long been used for all colonial projects.** Leopold of the Belgians, to

give you the most obvious example, was given the right to own as a private person the Congo Free State at the Congress of Berlin because he promised to wipe out Arab slavers who were moving into the territory. He was in fact commonly referred to in the European press of the day as a "humanitarian." That was the word used.

Humanitarian action has been a classic accompaniment of all colonial ventures. I am probably most familiar with French colonial history and I put to you the example of the great West African colonial doctor Jean Jameau who did more probably to wipe out sleeping sickness in his time in West Africa than anyone else. His great slogan in his hospitals was, "I will awaken Africa." He did a fantastic job. The history of colonialism is self-evidently not just the history of Leopold, one of the great mass murderers in human history. Ten million Congolese died under the Free State at a conservative estimate.

I want to be very careful in this context to say that when I use a word like "genocidal" in the context of Leopold's crimes, I am well aware that technically speaking it may not have been genocide. I would call it a genocide. The Cambodian genocide may not have been a genocide under the convention, nor was perhaps the Stalin terror famine of the 1930s for the reasons that it didn't qualify in terms of an ethnic group or religious group or cultural

group once it spread across the various class and social and ethnic lines. In terms of the convention you're in trouble.

There's a very brilliant essay in the *London Review of Books* by American political philosopher Steven Holmes, who attacks people like Samantha Power, who luckily has spoken here, precisely for their inability to see the complexity of what the genocide convention does and doesn't do and perhaps their credulity in it in certain ways.

But to return to the problem of so-called humanitarian interventions, I do insist that there is a kind of easy acceptance of the right of the United States to use military force wherever it wants in the name of humanitarian or human rights causes in this town and in this country to promote it. I think this is profoundly worrying and to me very, very frightening.

I am frankly too historicist in my thinking or perhaps simply too skeptical about my own country to believe that we the United States in 2002 are the exception. The fact is that Britons and French people and lots of other people who thought themselves quite civilized in their day used the same rationales. Well, they were wrong because they were them, but we are right because we're us.

Leaving that to one side, the question, I think, is whether these good things go together. Whether humanitarian workers -- apart from informational questions and perhaps legal testimony post-genocide -- can play a great role in these kinds of preventions.

My hunch is, to be more analytic and less polemical and ideological for a moment, that it will be on a rather limited and informational basis. Many of you will have read the decision of the ad hoc tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague this morning saying that war correspondents are exempt from testimony except in the most extreme circumstances. I suspect that any sensible court would hold the same thing for aid workers if practicalities are at play because once aid workers start to testify they won't be allowed to deploy. The fact is you can't go testify about folks and then say oh, incidentally, we want to come back into your territory. It simply is not going to happen.

Unless you buy the imperial version of the humanitarian enterprise where what you really say is that the ideal situation is to deploy the 82nd Airborne. All the rest is a comparatively less satisfactory solution. Unless, of course, these governments see reason.

My friend Lindsay Hilsum, a British journalist who's covered some of the worst places in the world, has a wonderful phrase. She says if you come to a place and you think you are seeing anarchy you are not understanding what you are seeing. I think that is quite a profound thing, certainly something all of us who cover wars need to remind ourselves of.

It is also something that people thinking about these issues need to remind themselves of, for the simple reason that what seems to an outsider like a humanitarian crisis, might, to an insider, seem like a power struggle of a perfectly legitimate kind solved by war. This is something Sir Henry May pointed out a century ago and Michael Howard has admirably pointed out in a recent small book: war is the norm for human history, not peace.

Let me give you the example of Somalia. In Somalia in 1991 when the famine started we outsiders thought there is a humanitarian crisis. There is this anarchic banditry going on. They are all at each other's throats. And the people, as if "the people" had nothing to do with the people doing the fighting, are suffering.

As a morality tale it goes along the same lines with all victims being innocent -- as if all victims were, as if so many victims weren't yesterday's victimizers, as if there were a moral content

to being a victim. There can be, of course, but there is no guarantee.

The Somalis thought, we are fighting it out. The dictator Siad Barre has fallen and we other factions are fighting now to see who dominates. The clan leaders thought they were doing what you did and what in all of human history people have done.

That was why the UN backed by the United States and Mohammed Farah Aideed, the militia commander in South Mogadishu, could never even talk about the same subject. Farah Aideed thought that he was the successor to Siad Barre and we thought he was a bandit getting in the way of our aid efforts. That situation has been repeated over and over again all over the world.

The aid worker, in order to actually look after victims, innocent or otherwise, needs to be on the ground. Unless there is a military intervention, impartiality and a sense of not crossing the people with the guns would seem to be essential.

So the humanitarian role here is not large, apart from feeding information in a quiet way, testifying at war crimes tribunals after the fact, because you can't testify during because you'll

get thrown out and then you have a tremendous moral dilemma confronting you.

Take the Ivory Coast, if you are an aid worker in one of these towns that has been see-sawing back and forth between the various guerilla factions and the government and its mercenaries, you want to stay. You want to give that relief. **You really can't be perceived as an enemy of one of the factions or your chances of giving relief, your chances of doing the thing you really want to do, are very small.**

Aid groups can be useful and probably are already useful in advocacy campaigns at home. If done with some discretion and done with enough cover for the field so that you don't totally imbricate the field in the declarations, you could probably pressure governments.

The American model, oddly enough, is quite useful in that. Most of you know that American aid agencies tend to be much closer to the government than their European counterparts. In a sense the American model of the aid agencies was a collaborator with government. It is rather a cold war model and it still obtains to this day.

It is unimaginable that Doctors Without Borders would have the French equivalent of Henry Kissinger on its board, as does the International Rescue Committee. That is a fundamental cultural difference. But, oddly enough, the American model, as someone largely critical of the American model I say this with some regret, is probably the more effective model. Their aid officials can give the information they're getting from the field privately to governments and can do things without taking out ads in the newspaper, organizing campaigns on street corners, doing demonstrations in front of embassies, all the tools of anti-government humanitarian aid work. This more bureaucratic and official style may actually be better in terms of preventing genocide or getting responses from government.

I say this reluctantly and regretfully but I suspect it's a better model because obviously the more public we go the more compromised your field status is. It is really a practical consideration.

I don't mind ending on a completely downbeat note - I have never understood the American conception that the only moral stance is optimism. I do think that in those very, very limited but essential way of comprehensively acquiring information and discretely disseminating it, there is a role for humanitarianism in this subject.

I thank you for your attention.

Bridget Conley:

I will now open the floor now to questions and comments, Greg?

QUESTION:

I'm Greg Stanton, Genocide Watch. I was in the State Department right after the Rwandan genocide. And what you said clearly rings true about that situation where we had the Interahamwe and the ex-Rwandan army essentially controlling the refugee camps in Zaire. Because there the humanitarian workers' job was to stay in there and work with the structure as it was and they had a very, very rigidly structure.

The same thing happened in Cambodia, as you know. The Khmer Rouge controlled a lot of those camps and so those became bases in fact for continuing to attack the government that had taken power and in fact became protective places for genocidaires.

So the dilemma that you talk about, these tragic choices are very real. I think one of my teachers in law school, Guido Calabresi, even wrote a book called *Tragic Choices*, very much agrees with your view on that.

I remember I wrote a memo in the State Department and it was entitled "Drifting Toward Cambodia." I wrote it in August of 1994 essentially saying if we don't take control of these camps and let these people come home, if we don't get them out of the grip of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, they will become bases for more attacks which is, of course, what happened for three years until eventually the Rwandan government had enough. It was a failure of political will by the international community to take charge of those camps in a way they could have been useful.

In that sense your model of colonial occupation was the alternative. It was opposed. I mean, the Canadian government offered a force to take the camp. It was too late and then we had this huge war. In the Congo it was too late largely because the US wouldn't support it.

David Rieff:

Well, I think it was too late although I think the Canadian proposal — obviously in the interest of time and going faster, as you know perfectly well, the Canadian proposal was also controversial on the Rwandan side for a lot of reasons that were not wrong.

I do think the choice is often imperialism or barbarism. It is just that I think imperialism is also barbarous and we delude ourselves if we imagine otherwise. So you can put this down to having read too much history of something and therefore I don't see why America is exceptional even in this, but I don't think so. I think all wars leave one debased, even just wars. I am more skeptical of that.

I also think that there are real issues of not doing these things unless one is really prepared to stay and since I don't really see any evidence in that, what I see in the imperial movement is the worst of both worlds. That is, disrespect for other people's histories and timelines, if you will, fused with the belief that a short intervention will do, which it almost never will.

Rwanda would have been a perfect example of this. I was there during that period or at least for a lot of that period. I do not believe that that Canadian deployment unless it had been massively underpinned and involving basically the occupation of the Kivu provinces for a fairly open-ended period would have worked.

And knowing that terrain, having driven on any number of bumpy tracks and any number of clapped-out old discoveries, I can tell you it's just beautiful ambush country. I don't see why we

wouldn't have had Vietnam in 20 minutes. And did people want to do that? I doubt it.

So, again, there is a moral reason, I think, to be skeptical of intervention but there is also a pragmatic reason, which is how many wars of altruism -- particularly when you're talking about phenomenon, which you know better than I do... I hate medical images, my mother's son in that way, but I will say a kind of pandemic of genocidal behavior in the world. We're not going to engage in endless wars in altruism. We're not. It's always going to be a combination of interests.

And the people who actually call for the endless wars of altruism like the Canadians and the Dutch are precisely the people who are allowing their armed forces to dissipate. The Canadian Senate just issued a report basically saying the military was no longer fit to fight. They just cut the defense budget by 20 percent from an already fairly low level.

So what we're saying is the great imperial powers, you're saying, ourselves, the Chinese, the Russians, the Indians, those are the people who can do this kind of fighting. And none of us like to do it. Hell, the Indians withdrew from Sri Lanka with a bloody nose after taking a lot of casualties.

We certainly don't enjoy it, to put it mildly. The Russians are more into a different kind of colonial business, to put it charitably. So I do think there is an issue of whether you start these things given these realities.

There is nothing worse than a war engaged on that people haven't thought through the consequences - talk about roads to barbarism. Yes?

Question:

One question I had in particular, you described the ICRC's response to the Holocaust in 1942 and 1943 as disgraceful, but weren't they doing essentially what you suggest as the resolution of the dilemma?

David Rieff:

Yes.

Question:

And if so why would you say it was disgraceful?

David Rieff:

Because I think there are limiting cases, as you learn in Philosophy 101, there is a limiting case for everything. I am an anti-interventionist on humanitarian grounds. I think Rwanda was the exception.

Am I inconsistent? Absolutely, but I think there are places where you would say - Ivo Daalder, who was involved in the Kosovo decision, and had a wonderful description of German, American, and French justifications for the Kosovo war and he said the Americans were legalists. They kept poring through the relevant tomes of international law to find the precedent. And the Germans were Lutheran and they simply said they believed there was textual authority. And the French were Catholic, and they said well, of course, it's wrong but we all sin occasionally. And I'm French on these matters.

And I'm being quite serious. Of course, I'm trying to amuse you and lighten the mood, but I also am quite serious. I don't think this is the right policy to intervene, and yet, faced by what was the fastest slaughter that I'm familiar with, at least post-World War II, 800,000 people killed in six weeks with the prospect of perhaps an equal number being killed in the remaining six weeks had on the one hand the RPF not won the war and on the other hand the French not deployed -- and I'm actually a defender of

Operation Turquoise, not, again, perhaps sounds inconsistent to you, but I think they did the right thing even if it was for the wrong motives.

But I think that was the exception. In the ICRC's case I think the ICRC's practice is largely correct, but that the horror they were confronted with was simply so exceptional that they should have broken their own rules. Now, we know from the Favez book and all the work done on the ICRC, that there were complex motivations. The only thing I would say, and here I agree with the ICRC, as I said earlier, is I really do not take, from my reading, and I have done a little bit of research, that I really believe principle played a much bigger role than either Swiss strategic interests or anti-Semitism.

But yes, you were perfectly right to note the inconsistency. The problem is that what I would argue in defense of my inconsistency is that were the ICRC to behave consistently as I wished them to behave in World War II it would be useless as an organization.

The only way the ICRC can function is by this promise of discretion. If you wanted it to behave all the time as you would have wanted it to behave in Germany in 1942 then you're telling me

they should disband. I mean, that's actually the message, disband in terms of what it actually does.

No one is going to let it near prisoners if it thinks it's going to be calling Neue Zürcher Zeitung, it is just not going to happen. Yes?

Question:

You contrasted the willingness of the Dutch and the Canadians who advocate forces and contrast that with their actions in diminishing their military resources. Is there something similar with Americans who would advocate an imperial force but would be the people least likely to ever actually move in with a rifle or fire a machine gun? Where actually nobody is involved in a military venture?

David Rieff:

Pat Buchanan used to say this at the time of the Bosnian war and I don't mean your own view is necessarily connected to his, but I am rather skeptical historically with this argument. It seems to me like a great generation argument. Because World War II is a war in which everyone fought, I think we have a somewhat distorted sense of how wars are fought.

It seems to me that most wars both in American history and in world history are not fought by people who make the decisions and some of them are just. I do think one in the end has to talk about the justice of the war, not the question of whether the people ordering it have or haven't served.

The number of wars in which you really have a total mobilization of people seems to me historically in the West comparatively small. Our own Civil War, for example, as you know, people could buy their way out of conscription — just to give you one example. I don't think that made it an unjust war.

I would really think there's a mood of bellicosity. I think being the sole remaining superpower is a morally extremely dangerous position for people to be in. There is a belief that we can do what we like, where we like. I also think, as far as the casualty thing goes — people think these things are going to be cost free. On our side I think people think we're going to kill a lot of Iraqis but such a small amount of Americans are going to be killed.

I'm not so sure even the people who never served or whose children have no chance or likelihood of serving really if they thought thousands of Americans would die, they would have been a little

more circumspect. At least they wouldn't use words like "regime change."

Question:

I'm very sympathetic to your notion of looking at things through a just war tradition and seeing humanitarian rescue as a rare thing, the default position is you don't intervene, but that does seem to preclude the possibility of acting in time to prevent; that is, you're always waiting until the evidence is there and you always have to have so many dead bodies that the conscience of mankind is so offended that you now try to do something. So it prevents stopping Rwanda before it starts.

How can you reconcile the position which in general you hold and I'm sympathetic to with the need sometimes to act before the pile of bodies is too high to prevent a genocide before it begins?

David Rieff:

Let me say that I think the only chance of this working in a moral way is through regional organizations. I think if the model is going to be American power it's not going to work because, first of all, I think with the best will in the world even if you had a more benign view of American power that I do, America is not going to do this all over the place. And if you're talking about

prevention, there are at least 30 or 40 places where the possibility of genocide exists at the moment. There's no way that the United States or the most powerful countries are going to deploy preventively in even a quarter of them. It's not going to happen so what are we talking about? And there's no chance of real diplomatic pressure being exerted on more than a few lucky places.

The debate among human rights activists and humanitarian relief workers and the like is always can we get the one we think is the worst?

The campaign around Congo Brazzaville was like that. There was an effort to say look, this is really the worst forgotten war right now and lots of delegations went to Brussels in particular to try to get the European Commission to get involved.

And who knows if [Javier] Solana had been there at the time, it might have worked. But it failed, and the French were bound and determined not to permit it because the oil company was on the side of one of the combatants who, surprise, surprise, prevailed. But it was a war to make a primitive Marxist happy in a sick way, the Brazzaville war.

I think the only way out of this dilemma is for burden sharing around regional organizations which, of course, means that the principle of multi-lateralism that the United States, at least in its current orientation, is not willing to accept and which actually actively opposes. As you see with the opposition of the administration to the extension of ISAF's [International Security Assistance Force] mandate in Afghanistan. Not only does the administration not want to do it itself, it wants to prevent any military force that might be willing to do it. Here, at least, you have military forces willing to do it.

I know the regional stuff has a bad odor because of what a dog's breakfast of things the Nigerians made of Sierra Leone. I'm well aware of why you, those of you who are familiar with this argument, think it doesn't work, or are, should we say, more than skeptical.

I still think in the long run it's the only hope because you could actually get regional organizations — on the initiative of the African leaders. Obviously the jury is out as to whether that NEPAD [The New Partnership for Africa's Development] initiative is sincere. But at least in what's stated there is an argument to be made that regions can take care of regions in a more comprehensive way. Also that in terms of lobbyists for people at NGOs in this

room, you can lobby the regional organizations about their own region and not be fighting with great powers that are saying well, Yemen is on the map but, to use the very correct thing in your position paper on Cote d'Ivoire, Cote d'Ivoire is very low on everybody's radar at the moment. You don't have that same degree of the problem in regional organizations.

The only other thing I can say about conflict prevention is like everything else, *caveat emptor*. There's a brilliant book which I hope some of you have read and I recommend it to all of you by a Belgian scholar called Peter Uvin called *Aiding Violence*. It's a very brilliant account of how in fact civil society in Rwanda, far from having been a vehicle for emancipation, was actually the context of the genocide. But what Uvin points out in his account is that actually the Arusha process, that is, conflict resolution may under the circumstance promote the genocide. I don't think he's the only one to point it out but I believe he is the first. That is to say that the hard boys within the Hutu power movement thought, Christ, if we don't do something now, we're going to lose power so let's launch the apocalypse. And they did. And there's considerable evidence for this.

In 1993 before the genocide everyone talked about the Arusha Accords as the holy grail. It was if only we could get everyone

to sign on the dotted line. So one has to be rather careful, I think, about what one wishes for in these matters and not to put too much store in these deployments, which is, again, a reason why I believe that neighborliness is a sounder possibility at this moment than some kind of what Michael Ignatieff called 'revolution of moral concern' in which you have people in San Francisco really care as much about Burundi as people in Johannesburg might reasonably be expected to.

That's as far as I get. The alternative vision, if you're serious, is recolonization. It is: we're going to deploy trip-wire troops and if something goes wrong we'll reinforce them. So a kind of humanitarian/human rights equivalent of our forces on the Korean peninsula. That seems to me very problematic. Yes?

Question:

I have a couple of questions. Your analysis seems to recommend on the one hand total passivity and it seems to me that the United States did have this stance relative to Bosnia and Kosovo. Clinton was very, very reluctant to send American troops.

And that leads into your second point, which is regional powers should deal with it. And I wonder why in your opinion Bosnia and Kosovo were not handled effectively by Europe? Why did we need to

intervene? I support our intervention but it was very troubling to me that the Europeans did need American force.

Finally, if you could address the Medecins sans Frontieres, the Doctors Without Borders, stance against the neutrality of the Red Cross, are they just naive or is there a stance that is more effective in the work that they do?

David Rieff:

Let me go backwards. Medecins sans Frontieres started in opposition to the Red Cross in the sense that what became Doctors without Borders was based on a bunch of French doctors, notably Bernard Kouchner, who volunteered to work with the Red Cross in Biafra, saw what they believed to be a genocide in Biafra taking place and were horrified that the Red Cross was again keeping silent.

Many of them, and I don't know how relevant this was but I believe it was relevant, were Jews themselves and had relatives who died in the camps and the like - Kouchner for one -- and I think this resonated a lot. I don't think today that Doctors without Borders would consider itself as far from the Red Cross as it did then. In fact I know that to be the case.

The late Francois Jean, who was perhaps the leading theoretician of MSF France, remember there are very big differences in the various Doctors without Borders groups and Ed Rackley whom you saw is very much a figure who speaks for the human rights-based approach of the Belgian and Dutch sections of Medecins sans Frontieres whereas the French have tended to be rather more skeptical of this. Although they, too, go along — and there are great divisions obviously within.

But as Francois Jean said at the end of his life a few years ago, he felt closer and closer to the ICRC. Actually I think there are many tendencies within MSF and I wouldn't be quite so sure that — Kouchner, for example pretty much lost out inside MSF in a power struggle really as much about principle and what humanitarian action should do and very much on the basis of intervention.

Kouchner, and I am a great opponent of Kouchner - although certainly in no sense a private enemy. We have been on good terms. Kouchner is a man who has believed in military intervention on human rights and humanitarian grounds his whole life. He's been utterly consistent. He's been utterly principled. You can't take anything away from him on this basis. He's been impeccable in this.

MSF has opposed Bernard Kouchner, where people like Francois Jean and Rony Brauman and others took it over, has tended to be anti-interventionist and at the very least very skeptical of these interventions with the one exception of Rwanda, which, again, shows you perhaps how I am in fact a puppet of MFS, only partly true.

I'm sorry. I would be much harsher than that. Europe just did the wrong thing but it acted. The Europeans had three choices at the beginning of the Bosnian crisis. They could allow the Serbs to win just completely, they could intervene on behalf of the Bosnia government, or they could contain the crisis. Those were their three policy options.

They chose containing the crisis. It was an active policy and the use of humanitarian assistance was anything but an innocent gesture even though people like me who covered the humanitarian aspect of the war didn't actually understand it sufficiently at the time. It was an absolutely conscious policy and it was an absolutely successful policy up to Srebrenica. Because there was a level that this containment couldn't go past.

But the idea was to say we're doing something, humanitarian relief, and that precludes us from doing the other things and that's what happened.

So it was an absolutely active policy. I actually think, frankly, that what really happened in Kosovo was simply that there was a kind of payback. It was a revenge. Milosevic, as I like to say, used that get out of jail free card which Dick Holbrooke had given him at Dayton. And people were sick of him and they decided to do him in. In that sense President Clinton was in the lead in that, he really did feel that's enough of this. As he said to a friend of mine, we should have intervened in Bosnia. We won't make the same mistake twice.

There were other issues, of course, the 50th anniversary of NATO, various other elements at play. But I would insist that the Europeans had a policy. As far as I'm concerned, however, just to make my own position clear lest you misunderstand, here I'm, like, perhaps with the Red Cross. I'm not being inconsistent because I've only supported a humanitarian military intervention once in my life and that was Rwanda.

I supported the intervention in Bosnia because I thought a democratic Bosnia deserved the support of democratic countries in

the West. It was entirely a political judgment. It had nothing to do with humanitarian concerns. I've been in places like Lobito in Angola and Kabul in Afghanistan while it was being completely destroyed. I didn't think Sarajevo was the worst place in the world, to tell you the truth, even though I lived there and I almost died there.

But it was never on a humanitarian basis that I supported it. It was purely on the basis of a just war based on a democratic state, my own, supporting a nascent democratic state. It is the same basis that I oppose the Iraqi venture because I'm for supporting democratic states and not for attempting to create them. I think that's quite wrong.

Question:

So Iraq is a democratic state?

David Rieff:

No, the reason I oppose intervention in Iraq is because I think we have no business trying to create a democratic state. That really strikes me as John Adams' old warning about not going out to fight monsters. Yes?

Question:

Let me ask you two questions. If one would agree with you that the regional approach is a good one and I'm going to use a term that I think, not why *should* people intervene, but why would they. The "should" is too easy because one throws around moral imperatives [indecipherable] so why would they do it if it wasn't for a certain self-interest or something with clear political reasons as opposed to humanitarian?

The second question is what is it about this Museum that you think is important? Now, if you want to know why I'm asking that question it's because there are some people, some of us who work here don't believe this, but there are some people here who actually believe there are lessons that coming out of the study of the Holocaust and the way in which the permanent exhibition has been mounted. I don't happen to think so but I'm very interested to know what you think given your politics and theoretical position?

David Rieff:

I don't know what lessons there would be, I really don't. I mean, on the one hand, meaning no disrespect to either the people who invited me or the other people in this room who work here, I have reservations about this place. There's a part of me that agrees with a statement I saw attributed to Lucy Davidowicz

that she'd rather American kids study the Constitution and not be taken through this chamber of horrors.

There's a part of me that thinks this is one of the most terrible things about human history that it's noble in and of itself to commemorate it here, as it's commemorated in Jerusalem, and now in Berlin and that doesn't seem wrong. But I don't know that I ever thought of this museum as a transformative institution, I have to say.

Also, if I may put in a plug, I'll take this museum more seriously as emblematic of our country when there's a museum to the middle passage on this mall. That's a little closer to home, isn't it? It's very easy for us to condemn the Nazis, the blood isn't on our hands. Perhaps we're not quite so ready to make that a slave ship. I could say that it's a small step and ... what was the regional...?

Question:

Why would people want to intervene...?

David Rieff:

Oh, because order is an interest. Here I think there's a very brilliant guy who works for Javier Solana in Brussels, a British diplomat, and some of you may know, who really impressed me as one

of the smartest people writing today called Robert Cooper. He's a Foreign Office official. While I don't agree with him he's made the best case for these kinds of interventions that I've ever seen.

He's actually the guy said to be behind the British decision to go to Sierra Leone. He fell out with Blair and was picked up by Solana and is now the director general of one of Solana's two concessions, the military extension and so on. Cooper basically says look, if we're going to have a successful globalization we have to have those laws intact — human rights laws as well as trade laws— and that basically in that sense the people who want their countries to do well have an interest in maintaining that kind of order.

That seems to me the best case you could make for this. It is a case for interest and it's much more likely to be a case, if you will, for regional interest. In other words let's be frank. Most of the crises we're talking about at the moment take place in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa could fall off the map tomorrow and the world economy wouldn't know the difference. Except for the oil. It's absolutely true. It contributes three percent of world trade.

It is of no compelling interest once it gets costly. In other words you could make an interest in Sierra Leone but the minute you're arguing a place where soldiers are going to get killed in big numbers, a Sudan, an Angola, a Congo. Look at the way in which MONUC's deployment was conditioned on basically MONUC doing nothing to make it likely that people would get killed.

It was the most minimalist deployment the UN has ever thought up. And they knew it. So I'm not faulting the UN. They did it because they knew that was all there was going to be support for. The Secretariat was to their credit privately horrified by the terms of the MONUC deployment.

I think we need states in the region that think their prosperity is tied in to maintenance of certain standards of decency. I think that is an argument of interest you could make to regional states that you're never going to be able to make on a consistent basis to more distant countries.

For example, if you take West Africa. There's a real argument that we can't seriously address the problems of Sierra Leone or Ivory Coast or Liberia individually, that there has to be some kind of general resettlement, particularly given the migratory patterns

over the last ten years. That's something that only regional negotiations, it seems to me, is likely to do successfully.

It's not just chucking out Charles Taylor or Robert Guei, the guy who overthrew [Ivory Coast President] Henri Konan Bedie. It's not going to do any good. It's got to be on a more systematic basis. Yes?

Question:

I want to ask about one of the projects that you worked on that I've always been a great admirer of and also that Roy Gutman worked on, who is here, the crimes of war project. Especially the volume, *Crimes of War*, which as I understood it one of the goals of that was to familiarize journalists covering conflicts with the laws of war, international humanitarian law, crimes against humanity, genocide and obviously thinking that it's important that they know that. I was also thinking about one the terms that Diane Orentlicher used at this museum one time, she was a contributor to the volume, and that is the law of universal conscience. It is a law that has a certain moral component, like all law does, but a special moral component.

And so I always thought that one of the purposes of this crimes of war project was suggesting that there's a certain moral dimension

to journalism in covering conflicts. One important way of indicating that is to make sure journalists understand the implications of the facts on the ground that they see.

I wondered first if you think that's an accurate interpretation of the project and how that accords with the view that you're laying out here which would seem to me why would there be a moral component to journalism in those situations.

David Rieff:

Well, first of all speaking personally, I haven't risked my neck to make money -- I mean you don't make any money, I assure you, volunteering to go cover a war in Congo Brazzaville. So obviously if I didn't think there was some moral content to what I did I wouldn't risk my neck, thank you very much. I don't like getting shot at. I am not a cowboy despite the boots. Of course, I think there's a moral content.

This is very much Roy Gutman's project, who is sitting over there and I was honored and pleased to be part of it. But it's Roy's conception. We may not agree about everything. My own view, however, is that what I have said is not inconsistent. I would say about the laws of war roughly what Locke said about reason. I

think we may be able to use this — which is it's a poor light, but all we have.

What you've heard me say is the degree to which it's a poor light. The 'all we have part' is also a part of my understanding of the world.

As far as journalists go, however, at least it's my impression that Roy thought -- Roy can speak for himself if he disagrees -- that we were getting the story wrong by not knowing this. It wasn't just that we were thinking we were missionaries, but that we were betraying our own trust and authority by not knowing it. Because that was our experience -- that we would go to these places and we would look at stuff and we'd get it wrong.

We didn't know what we were seeing in terms of the law, particularly the laws of war. It was essential to journalists, not only journalists, aid workers, reporting in the sense that I was describing earlier, or international civil servants whether or not from national governments or international institutions also be able to look and tell the truth. You can't tell the truth if you don't know how to look, if you don't understand what you're seeing.

So I hope the enterprise is moral but the enterprise was about giving us what seemed to be an essential missing tool for telling the truth. I don't think there's anything that I've said that contradicts those convictions.

Question:

Where I'm not quite following you is the truth is a set of facts and the law is the framework for understanding those facts. The framework for understanding those facts when you're talking about international humanitarian law suggests that there's right and wrong, and that the difference between right and wrong is important to your reaction to the event.

And what I'm taking I'm oversimplifying the general message that you have that --

David Rieff:

Well, I don't have a message. I think you want a message. Let me be a little bit contentious — I try to reply to most questions with either humor or politeness -- but I am not selling anything. If I have anything to contribute is that I am not trying. I am not Francis Fukuyama, or Fareed Zakaria, I don't have a number that I'm coming to do for you.

A lot of what I say is inherently contradictory because I think reality is contradictory and if people don't like it, well.

Question:

It's difficult to follow up on that. There are a lot of people who would say that to observe that the world is contradictory is a commonplace but we have to try to do something about it. We can either live in the world and address the contradictions as best we can and try to recognize the contradictions or what, we do nothing and --

David Rieff:

Those are good choices, but the something we do needs to have content, too. The place where you and I might differ is that I would probably reply to you by saying the fact that you say you want to do something doesn't prove to me you've done anything. It's just a pious sentiment.

And I think the point of the contradiction is -- the thing I started out saying is if I had a message is maybe the only message I have which is not all good things go together. Is that clear?

There's an epigraph that I use from the German-Marxist philosopher Walter Benjamin, and the epigraph is "every document of

civilization is also a document of barbarism." Therefore, when you say to me do something or, to put it in the terms of my generation, if you're not part of the solution you're part of the problem, I say rubbish. You are both part of the problem and part of the solution at any given time and what you do is always good.

That's what's so ridiculous about Mary Anderson, the Quaker thinker about aid, when she writes a book called *First Do No Harm*. I mean, you do harm by getting up in the morning.

There is no gesture that is unambiguous. There are better and worse things to do, that we would agree on. As far as the book goes, to come back to that, nothing in my account is in contradiction with saying that it's important that reporters know something about law of war. Those of us who cover war are indeed impelled by a moral sense of wanting to tell the truth about what we see and understand it accurately, not just in terms of some high, grand idea like truth but in terms of actually the law, which I accept and about which I'm not critical.

I'm not Robert Unger. I'm not a post- structuralist. I accept the law for what it is. It seems to be a valuable thing. Come back to my Locke quote. If we could do that, and there are a number of people in this room, who are working constantly and I occasionally

to try to get this stuff understood in many countries and many languages. That's something to do, but I don't feel that I have to then be Diane Orentlicher to have a right to be a part of this project. I mean I am not an international human rights activist and never was. But it seems to me this subject actually is broad enough and essential enough and matter of fact enough to permit people with a number of views to fairly be part of the project without doing violence to it. Yeah?

Question:

I just want to say, and I'm very taken by your estimation -- particularly on the complexity and the contradictions and the paradoxes. What I'm wondering is given your observations what role do you see for the absolutist position with regard to human rights and particularly what are you suggesting about this need for more of a regional effort?

I mean, to my mind, even though I definitely understand what you're saying as far as the paradoxes go. I would apply the same Locke quote to the absolutist position in regards to human rights, it's a poor light but it's all we have.

So I'm wondering if you've see what sort of place you might see for the absolutist position if you see a place with regard to --

David Rieff:

Well, I thought I made that clear but I'm glad to have the chance to do so now. I think human rights must be absolutist. I've never doubted that for an instant, never argued any other thing. I've criticized the human rights movement on a philosophical basis.

I'm not the only one with somewhat heterodox views involved with the crimes of war project. Our legal expert, Kenneth Anderson, a professor here at Washington College of Law at AU, is a guy who's actually far more critical of the whole international do-good structure than I am in the most dyspeptic day of my life.

I mean, if you read over the TLS or the ASIL or any of the places he publishes, if you read his debates with Diane Orentlicher or Anne Marie Slaughter, this is a guy who has taken the side with John Ashcroft on a lot of matters. So I mean I think it's a wide church, the church of IHL.

As far as the human rights movement goes, I think if it strays an inch from its absolutism it would be making a grave mistake. I don't think it has any intention of doing so. Where I would probably argue is that there are tactical conversations to be had

whether the tactics of the human rights movement, above all shaming, the thing that it did so well in the seventies and eighties and nineties is still working. Someone like Aryeh Neier, the former head of Human Rights Watch current president of the Soros Foundation, thinks it won't work any more. They have to find a new paradigm. There is a crisis in the human rights movement having to do with the increasing irrelevance of that shaming paradigm, also having to do, as Neier points out, with the increasing unpopularity of the United States in this world, which is also a fact of life for a human rights activist.

I wouldn't suggest that human rights activists should change anything of what they do. Having said that I don't believe we're going to have military interventions on purely human rights grounds. So the human rights movement will be what it's always been, a useful pressure group doing important work if it remains true to its values.

I wish there were a little more constituency building on the Amnesty International principle. I must say the hierarchical, not to say totalitarian, quality of groups like Human Rights Watch rather pisses me off. I wish it wasn't run by four or five rich donors plus the leadership. I do think the Amnesty model is morally preferable even operationally problematic.

But, having said that, I think it must go on as it's been. But as far as my view at least as these interventions, these interventions are always going to be at least part of the matrix and my attempt to bring a regional organization was the sense there would be more interest there. I mean interest in both senses of the term.

Whereas precisely if we have to come back to Washington or to Brussels for this, it's so far removed that the interests become harder and harder to maintain except on the human rights basis. Or when the human rights thing is just a pretext or you really want to do — national interest issue — which might be entirely legitimate but has nothing to do with what we have been talking about.

Question:

Maybe I didn't ask my question all that clearly. I just wonder is if within the absolutist human rights family, if you see support within that quarter for these kinds of regional-based organizations. If you would see that as somehow compromising the role of pressure groups that you have been describing.

David Rieff:

Well, I think so far at least this is not a trap in fairness to them, that the human rights program has fallen into. The mainstream human rights organizations have been extremely cautious about calling for interventions publicly. There are only a few instances that I know of. I think people have been pretty good about that.

Look, the human rights movement is not about its guile. I mean, there have been certain issues that mainline human rights groups have simply not touched, because even if they conformed to the principles they know that they're just third-rail issues for some powerful constituency or certain ways in which reports get put out together — the politics of the Middle East being the obvious example of this.

I don't think that's a danger for them. I think they're quite realistic about those issues. It would surprise me if Bill Schulz at Amnesty or Irene Khan really thought that Nigeria might invade the little West African countries in the name of human rights and not also expect to benefit by it. I don't think anybody is naive in that way.

And the advantage of the absolutist position is that you can denounce them. In a sense you preserve your freedom of maneuver

at least to some extent. As happened in Rwanda, in fairness. I mean, the human rights movement to its credit was very active in trying to mobilize support to do something about the genocide. Then the RPF started committing atrocities it was very quick to denounce those.

I don't think there's anything to reproach them for in that context, not to me.

Bridget Conley:

Maybe we should bring Roy into this conversation since his name has been tossed about?

Question:

Well, I just wanted to breach two points. One was as Jerry's question about the effort of our project to disseminate humanitarian law and get people interested in it. And the lady's question about the Holocaust Museum and the function it plays.

I disagree with David on this Museum, because I see the two things in parallel. The humanitarian role to my mind is the law of never again. It's the law that doesn't really on the whole except that it's got such moral content and power by virtue of being based on the horrors of the previous war that even if there seems to be no

way to implement it half of the times, most of the times, it's something that is moral at all points. It does have the additional function of — in war time — guiding us in covering it. Also everybody else in the international community who is there as to what should not happen in war. When you should ring the alarm bell. Because we know very well how often we failed in our coverage to ring the alarm bell in a timely way. It is, as you say, this dim light is better than nothing, but I think that the Holocaust Museum is in its way, for people who come from way away from here, who have no other interest in and no previous knowledge of the Holocaust come away transformed. I believe it's the most popular single museum in Washington right now — it has been at times — but anyway it's right on the tour list — which is quite remarkable.

The point about both international law and the Holocaust Museum is that when an individual comes along, they can be affected by the law or by the exhibits in a way that can motivate them maybe 10 or 20 years down the road to do the right thing at a moment which nobody really expected to come along.

And it seems to me that's why these educational projects really are investment of a kind — in the unknown and the unknowable. And

members of the general public, one of whom may at some point speak up and do the right thing.

I share your general pessimism on the efficacy of unfortunately of human rights and humanitarian law and humanitarian organizations -- because at the very moment in Europe when finally after five years the United States begins to try to organize its allies into preventing yet another debacle in Kosovo and actually did something in an effective way.

It took so much energy by the administration, especially by the Secretary of State, that almost everything else was ignored. At that very moment that they were organizing for Kosovo, Afghanistan was on its rapidly accelerating slide down to chaos, anarchy, hell. The intervention to prevent the genocide and certainly this total expulsion of the Albanians from Kosovo, it seemed to me, it was the right thing.

But at that very moment Afghanistan was off the radar completely and was heading towards hell. And so you realize that at the most governments and humanitarian groups and -- almost no humanitarian agents were there, but not human rights groups. Human Rights Watch wasn't even active in Afghanistan for the longest time.

The International Crisis Group, one of these great new NGOs that focuses on world crisis, didn't focus on it until this year or last year in Afghanistan. There was a crisis in the works which got ignored. So there was a real problem in that there are so many problems going on out there that at the most you can deal with one or two.

But I do think on the whole it's better to deal with those one or two than not to deal with any.

David Rieff:

The only thing I would say is it depends on what you mean by "deal."

I mean, I come back to this problem of American triumphalism and American militarism. I'm 50 years old. I'm a television watcher from six and I don't remember seeing as many stars and stripes, fighter aircraft, shows in which the CIA or the military are being eulogized as in the last period. Of course, I'm sure it was true in World War II. But it does seem to me that there are real problems with the current mood and I mean it not in a Chomskian sense, but in the sense of hubris that we seem to be heading, to use the obvious Thucydidean parallel, sooner or later toward that Sicilian expedition -- one place or another.

You can say it's better than nothing, but is it? I mean, humanitarianism has already served, as you know better than anyone, as a flag of convenience for a lot of very nasty stuff, and I'm worried that this humanitarian military intervention may serve in the future a similar purpose.

So I'm reluctant to simply say well, on an ad hoc basis this may be useful and that's all we need to talk about. You're talking about defense budgets. You're talking about the consent or consensus needed for support for budgets.

Liberal internationalists may not be numerically very important but they're certainly important on op-ed pages and in building opinion. We know that from Bosnia. We know that from other places. This is not a joke, folks.

These consequences, you can't just say well, Saddam Hussein is a bad guy and therefore — Maybe you support it anyway. I'm not literally trying to present it as what's obvious — take the other position, but what is obvious to me is that simply saying one does what one can, omits whole levels of analysis and implication and at the very least need to be teased out before we go forward.

In the nineties there was a consensus about among certainly internationalists, the problem was that we hadn't done the right thing in Bosnia, we hadn't done the right thing in Kosovo. Now it seems to me that the pendulum has swung. Apart from a few left wing lunatics on college campuses, everyone is saying well great. Isn't it natural that the fleet is deploying in the Gulf and the aid budget to Colombia has just been spiked up, the military budget.

I worry that these ideas, human rights, are being used. It is something that I often say and I think it's worth remembering - there are very few ideas in human history that remain the property of the people who invented them. Christianity is the great example of this. How did the religion of women and slaves become the official religion of the Roman Empire?

I wonder whether that is not what is happening to the human rights movement. That far from being what its originators and what probably most of its actual practitioners imagine it to be, it is becoming as it were, the secular religion of America.

(Interruption)