

**SPEAKING POINTS FOR MPH - WOODROW WILSON CENTRE -  
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## **INTRODUCTION - THE HUMAN SECURITY**

### **FRAMEWORK**

**10 years ago the West 'won' the Cold War.**

**Against this background of peace and growing prosperity in many countries around the world, the persistence of horrific wars and mass displacements can no longer be countenanced.**

**Most such wars are now internal and are often characterized by a massive victimization of civilians.**

**In World War I, civilian casualties were predominantly incidental.**

**Now they are deliberate.**

**Civilians make up approximately 90 per cent of all casualties in these wars.**

**In light of this reality, the protection of civilians in armed conflict is emerging as an important principle of international behaviour.**

**It is also integral to Canada's human security agenda.**

It is a foreign policy approach aimed at putting people first by developing new concepts, adapting diplomatic practice and updating the institutions on which the international system is based.

Human security, can perhaps best be characterized as the diplomatic equivalent of microeconomics.

We are no longer living in a world that can be characterized as empire versus empire.

Instead our world is fractious and atomized.

More and more our foreign policy work is at the micro and not the macro level.

Canada's human security approach, and our focus on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, provides the impetus behind our efforts to create an International Criminal Court, to curtail the proliferation and abuse of small arms and light military weapons, and to help war affected children.

It was also the inspiration behind the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

**In the most extreme cases of human suffering and loss of life, the protection of civilians requires strengthening our disposition to intervene - with force if necessary.**

**RATIONALE - MORAL AND POLITICAL**

**The rationale for forceful intervention has perhaps best been phrased by Czech President Vaclav Havel.**

**Last year, in an address to the Canadian Parliament, he stated:**

**"...decent people cannot sit back and watch systematic, state directed massacres of other people.**

**Decent people simply cannot tolerate this, and cannot fail to come to the rescue, if a rescue action is within their power."**

**I want to be very clear on this point.**

**When I talk about humanitarian intervention, I am not talking here about minor violations of human rights.**

**There are other ways to censure such misgovernance.**

**Instead, the threshold should be set high.**

**Humanitarian intervention is called for only in severe cases – genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and massive and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law.**

**I also want to make clear that preventive and non-coercive action is best – mediation, confidence building, promoting good governance, democratic institution building, preventive deployment or sanctions.**

**Indeed, we should put a premium on improving capacity, increasing resources and acting sooner in these areas in order to avoid the necessity of stronger measures.**



**It remains true, though, that these actions are not always feasible and they don't always work.**

**There is also no certainty that the most severe cases of abuse, such as Rwanda, will not happen again.**

**Indeed, there is ample evidence to the contrary.**

**In these types of exceptional situations, the protection of civilians requires strengthening our disposition to intervene - with force if necessary.**

**All-too-often in the post-Cold War world we have seen the human costs of inaction or delayed response.**



**Consider the findings of the independent inquiries on  
Rwanda and Srebrenica.**

**These reports are a catalogue of failure and inaction by the  
world in the face of enormous human suffering.**

**We cannot simply let wars burn.**

**To those who argue that staying out of violent intrastate  
conflicts may ultimately bring peace about more quickly, I  
would counter that there is no guarantee that such a peace  
will be just and that the rights - and even lives - of people  
living within the borders of that state will be protected.**

Many critics, of course, argue against putting the protection of civilians front and centre on the foreign policy agenda asserting that such an approach will invariably come at the expense of efforts to promote regional/international stability.

I disagree with that assumption.

The security and basic rights of people are fundamental to stability and peace.

Preventing abuse, stopping atrocities and dealing with the impacts of war on non-combatants are all critical to ensuring the stability and security of the state.

**Conversely, non-intervention can have a destabilizing effect on regional/international security.**

**Non-intervention in Rwanda, for example, has contributed to the spread of atrocities and civil conflict in central Africa.**

**Simply put, protecting civilians in armed conflict from massive atrocities is not only driven by our values, but it is in our interest and it is an important factor in ensuring longer term regional/international stability and peace.**

## INTERNATIONAL OBSTACLES

**This brings me to a number of important concerns regarding obstacles we currently face and the lessons we have learned in Canada based on our experiences during the post-Cold War period.**

**Political will is multifaceted and relates to a country's assessment of national interest in deciding whether to involve itself in a particular conflict, confidence in the organization or multinational force leading it, and confidence that the military strategies chosen are appropriate to the task.**

**Absence of political will, however, to use force to protect civilians in the face of massive suffering and loss of life will continue to be a key obstacle.**

**Closely related to political will is the issue of capacity and resources.**

**At a time when requests for troops to help keep the peace or resolve conflicts are growing, the capacity of many countries is shrinking, as is the capability of the UN itself to manage complex missions.**

**The amelioration of UN capacity and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is a major concern at a time when new functions are being considered and traditional expectations remain unfulfilled.**

**In Canada's view, a significant gap in the UN's ability to effectively respond to a crisis is the absence of a rapid reaction capability - the capacity to deploy quickly to fill political/military vacuums and to prevent massive violations of human rights and loss of life.**

**Rwanda, and more recent operations, have highlighted the paradox; those who are willing to contribute are unable to react quickly.**



**I note that Ambassador Holbrooke has also talked about the need to improve and update the workings of the DPKO.**

**In recent remarks to the UN he argued that if the DPKO is not reformed "the very future of the United Nations is endangered" and he has called for a substantial expansion in DPKO staff and management capabilities as well as reforms to the ancient system for financing peacekeeping operations.**

**In light of more recent events in Sierra Leone, I would also like to highlight growing efforts by the United Kingdom to garner international support over the need to be able to put combat-ready forces with state-of-the-art command and control structures into trouble spots - quickly.**



Canada has promoted the idea of a rapidly deployable military headquarters within the UN; a group that would be able to jump start the planning for UN missions.

But even on this modest goal we have been stymied.

Countries cannot continue to starve the UN and then blame it for being unable to carry out its mandates.

In any multilateral enforcement operation, whether through the UN, regional organizations or coalitions of the willing, achieving a consensus on the objectives and the means of achieving those objectives can be extremely difficult.

**In the midst of a crisis, each member of a coalition or alliance may have divergent interests, dissimilar capabilities and differing perceptions of events on the ground. In this context, consensus, and coherent action, are difficult to maintain. Coordination between military and civilian agencies and between government agencies and the large number of diverse NGOs is also critical.**

**Another obstacle in the way of effective humanitarian intervention is the inability to agree on mission mandates and standard operating procedures (eg ROEs, SOFAs).**

**These procedures are essential to a smooth functioning and effective mission.**

We must also bear in mind that humanitarian intervention is aimed at providing immediate physical protection for people - a fundamental step, but usually only the first in building long-term stability and security.

Building the capacity to succeed means not only providing collective resources for humanitarian intervention, but providing collective - and adequate - resources, attention and priority for peacebuilding activities that follow.

## CONCLUSION

I have outlined some formidable obstacles facing all of us on the issue of humanitarian intervention.

**There are no easy answers.**

**Our ability to successfully undertake enforcement action depends on the existence of both the political will and capacity to intervene rapidly and effectively in order to stop or prevent massive human suffering.**

**I have also outlined some important rationale for undertaking intervention.**

**In our new global circumstances, the international protection of the individual has taken on increased importance.**

If there was some assurance that people would no longer be subject to the most extreme violations of humanitarian and human rights law, some guarantee the deliberate infliction of human suffering on a massive scale could be eliminated, and some prospect that past atrocities would not be repeated in the future, perhaps we wouldn't need to address the issue of humanitarian intervention.

However, that remains unlikely.

Massive and systematic abuse of human rights is, tragically, and enduring feature of our world.

**It is for that reason that we need to enhance both international political will and capacity to protect civilians - with force if necessary - from extreme instances of human suffering and loss of life.**

**It is both a reflection of our shared values and, ultimately, it is in our common interest.**