

## House of Lords Debate -- What steps in the UK government taking to give effect to the United Nations doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect

30 June 2009

*On 30 June 2009, the House of Lords (UK) held a short debate, "to ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to give effect to the United Nations doctrine of **Responsibility to Protect**".* Lord Jay of Ewelme, Lord Parekh, Lord Brett, Lord Patten, The Bishop of Wakefield, The Earl of Sandwich, Lord Addington, Lord Howell of Guildford and Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead made speeches at the debate. Below are excerpts from two speeches, please refer to link below for full transcript of all 10 speeches.

### Lord Jay of Ewelme (Crossbench)

(...) Against that background, I ask the Minister to ensure that putting the doctrine of **responsibility to protect** into effect gets to the top of our foreign policy agenda, with the departments concerned (...) working closely together so that the tools of our foreign policy—diplomacy, economic aid and our peacekeeping forces—are properly co-ordinated. (...)

In addition, I suggest that we work to ensure the UN General Assembly reconfirms **R2P**

at its meeting next week and agrees on the urgent need to put it into effect; that we make the doctrine a central plank of our foreign policy dialogue with the Obama Administration; that we work within the European Union, for which the Minister is uniquely well placed, and in particular with the Swedish presidency that takes office tomorrow, to put the doctrine at the top of the EU's agenda too; that we work equally hard (...) and as G8 hosts next year, to put the doctrine high the G8 agenda; and that we build up a dialogue on **responsibility to protect** with the African Union, the charter of which includes the important and welcome principle of non-indifference to grave crimes committed within African Union member states.

Lord Parekh (Labour) (...) I endorse the United Nations report on the **responsibility to protect**. (...). However, as the document is formulated, there are important gaps. I will briefly highlight five of them, and hope that the Minister will feed them into the appropriate channels.

First, those four evils overlap. (...)The United Nations document tends to homogenise them and fails to appreciate the need for different strategies.

Secondly, we need to evolve a global consensus on what obligations and responsibilities the outside world has. (...) The United Nations document makes the mistaken assumption that there is already a universal consensus on intervening in situations of this kind. (...)

The third point that needs some attention is the document's total absence of mention of the need to restructure the United Nations. (...) If the United Nations is to carry moral and political authority it will need to be far more representative than it is. (...)

Fourthly, (...) The purpose of military intervention should be not to run the country or discipline the natives and sort them out but rather to restore normalcy and hope that over time the country, now handed over to its citizens, will be able to manage its own affairs.

My fifth and final point is to do with the need to explore non-military forms of intervention. (...)

Official transcript of House of Lords 30 June 2009 debate:

[Click here](#)

(Read from column 191 to 206)

mySociety compiled transcript of the RtoP section (easier to read format):

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