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Kate Heartfield  
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I've got a lot of problems with the doctrine of the **Responsibility to Protect** a doctrine that has never been used, and that would have to overcome serious political obstacles if it were ever to be used. ()

The fact that **R2P** has never been used doesn't stop people from attacking straw men, as Matteo Legrenzi did in an op-ed in the Citizen today. He writes that Russia invoked the principle to justify its invasion of Georgia last year. True enough, but just because Russia makes a ludicrous argument, doesn't mean anyone has to buy it and indeed, no one did. We shouldn't judge the principle of **R2P** by attempts to abuse it. ()

But I don't think the perception-of-imperialism argument should scupper **R2P** altogether. To my mind, it makes more sense to formulate policy based on reality, not perceptions. It's true that the perceptions matter, and must be addressed, but that's no reason to abandon the concept that human beings have a right not to be attacked by their own governments.

I also found his dismissal of the UN's adoption of **R2P** a bit odd. Here's the paragraph I mean:

It is true that **R2P** was endorsed by world leaders at a UN World Summit in 2005 and later adopted as a resolution by the UN General Assembly. We should remember, though, that all manner of initiatives get voted on by the UN General Assembly, from Sport for Peace and Development to the International Year of Older Persons. None of these shape the conduct of international politics.

Well, no, but the **R2P** doctrine was specifically, purposefully adopted to shape international politics. It didn't happen by accident. And the UN isn't some mysterious distant conclave; it's us. If Canada doesn't want to vote to support a new international norm, it doesn't have to. So it should mean something when it does just as its support of international treaties and agreements (Kyoto, the optional protocol on child soldiers) should mean something too. We should either mean what we say, and be prepared to back it up, or shut up altogether. ()

Source: <http://communities.canada.com/ottawacitizen/blogs/worldnextdoor/archive/2009/04/14/is-quot-the-responsibility-to-protect-quot-an-imperialist-idea.aspx>