

Media Availability (November 17, 2006) - American Commitment to Protect Populations from Genocide

Chicago, IL (November 17, 2006) – Leading International Figures Spearhead National Strategic Effort to Strengthen American Commitment to Protect Populations from Genocide

To: Assignment/Planning Editors

From: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Who: Lloyd Axworthy, President, University of Winnipeg; Nobel Peace Prize Nominee; Former Canadian Foreign Minister; Led the global effort to outlaw landmines and the use of children as soldiers

Gareth Evans, President and CEO, International Crisis Group; Former Australian Foreign Minister; Chief architect of the UN peace plan for Cambodia

What: International leaders will gather in Chicago to spearhead the development of a strategy intended to educate and engage America in its responsibility to protect populations from genocide and other atrocities.

When: Media Availability: Friday, November 17, 2006, 11:00 a.m.

Where: The Mid-America Club, 200 East Randolph Street, Chicago

Lloyd Axworthy and Gareth Evans will speak about a new national effort to develop strategies to strengthen American commitment to its responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. They will also discuss methods to bring prominence to an issue that – up until now—has been absent from public thinking and the political agenda in the United States.

Axworthy and Evans, will participate in a special media availability session from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 16, 2006, at the Mid-America Club in Chicago. They will give brief remarks followed by a question and answer session. Please e-mail Hugh McMullen at hugh@vdcom.com or call (312) 408-2580 ext 15 to attend. Photo identification or press credentials required.

This media availability coincides with the conference, “The Responsibility to Protect: Engaging America”—cosponsored by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the R2P Coalition and the International Crisis Group— which is bringing together leading U.S. international affairs experts and policy makers. The conference will take place in Chicago November 15 -17, 2006.

Over the course of the conference, a three-part strategy will be developed to increase America’s commitment to protect populations from mass atrocities. Experts and policy makers will focus on what responsibility to protect means, why it matters and why the U.S. should embrace it; policies for implementation; as well as how to bring the responsibility to protect to the center of national debate.

During the 2005 United Nations General Assembly World Summit, the international community agreed that each individual state has the responsibility to protect its populations from atrocity crimes. By endorsing this doctrine, the international community agreed that if a state is unable or unwilling to do so, this responsibility falls to the international community, which can intervene by force as a last resort to stop atrocity crimes.

The conference will build on the major outcome of the 2005 U.N. World Summit. A future conference report will lay out specific recommendations for increasing acceptance of “the responsibility to protect” norm in U.S. policy.

Exactly one year after the U.N. adopted this doctrine, the City Council of Chicago passed a resolution that endorses the principle of the responsibility to protect. This resolution is believed to be the first such action by a local governmental body, and it calls on the President and the U.S. Congress to implement the 2005 World Summit Outcome declaration on the responsibility to protect.

The International Human Rights Law Institute of DePaul University and the Center for International Human Rights of Northwestern University School of Law are also cosponsors of the conference.

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The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, founded in 1922 as the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, is a leading

independent, nonpartisan organization committed to influencing the discourse on global issues through contributions to opinion and policy formation, leadership dialogue, and public learning. To learn more, visit thechicagocouncil.org.

The R2P Coalition is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization whose mission is to convince the American people and its leaders to embrace the norm of the responsibility to protect as a domestic and foreign policy priority. To learn more, visit R2Pcoalition.org. Contact: Richard H. Cooper, Convenor, T (630) 573-4403, info@R2Pcoalition.org,

The International Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with nearly 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Contact: Kimberly Abbott, Media Adviser for North America, T (202) 785-1601, or (202) 441-4404 (cell)