
Conference Whitepaper - The Responsibility to Protect: A Strategy for Engaging America

Chicago, IL (March 2007) The 15-17 November 2006 conference on "The Responsibility to Protect: Engaging America" was the most in depth conversation on the doctrine of the responsibility to protect since the release of the ICISS report. It was also the first such conference in the US to focus on this topic. The conference whitepaper is now available.

Participants agreed that it is time to strengthen current efforts to move R2P from the "experts" level to a broader discussion and support building efforts if this new doctrine is to become one important element of the debates preceding the 2008 presidential campaign. Participants strongly felt that R2P offers a much needed new direction for America's foreign policy, and that the US's support to R2P is critical to fulfill its promise. The US leadership on R2P will be essential for this new global moral compact to move from rhetoric to action. In their strategy for engaging America, conferees agreed that R2P should be framed as an empowering prophecy that puts America's strengths to great purpose. Participants also reached consensus on the fact that, most importantly, "acting on R2P" calls for a shift in culture.

Accordingly, America's future relationship with the world needs to be guided by the following principles: prevention, cooperation, multilateral processes, burden sharing, fighting impunity, respect for the rule of law and use of force as a last resort. Conferees identified key audiences for an R2P campaign (faith and religious communities, the US military and political leaders from both parties) and suggested current efforts undertaken by the R2P Coalition in America should be brought to the next level. This white paper also lists several additional steps that need to be taken in order to complete this strategy on engaging America on R2P.