Praying for Bullets: The Moral Necessity of International Intervention in Cases of Genocide

Layla Raine Grice
Northwest Academy

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians

Part of the Diplomatic History Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians/2013/oralpres/13

This Event is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Young Historians Conference by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.
Praying for Bullets: The Moral Necessity of International Intervention in Cases of Genocide

By

Layla Raine Grice

April 26, 2013
The Greek philosopher Plato described the soul as a charioteer, driving with two horses. One of the two horses is white and obeys the orders of the driver; the other is black and consistently disregards the instructions of the driver. The charioteer is reason; the information behind our decision making. The white horse is goodness, the aspiration to make the ethical choice for the betterment of the world. The black horse is evil, the blatant disregard for what is right in favor of egocentric desire. This same allegory can be applied to a global scale. Within the international community each country must balance the desire to selfishly serve their own present needs, and the goal to serve the good of the whole community. When faced with a problem as complex and horrendous as genocide, the nations of the world must defer to the desire to avoid involvement, the easier and safer choice, or take steps to intervene, the morally upright, yet dangerous and complicated option.

At the end of World War I, the global community joined forces and created the group known as the League of Nations. This body of international representatives was in existence from 1919 to 1946. The purpose of this organization was to further world peace and prevent another world war. Its members swore to uphold the pact “to develop cooperation among nations and to guarantee them peace and security” (UN.org). After WWII the League of Nations was reformed to become the United Nations. The U.N. states four main purposes on their web page: “To keep peace throughout the world, To develop friendly relations among nations, To help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other’s rights and freedoms,” and finally “To be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations to achieve these goals” (UN.org). The U.N. is instrumental in
upholding international law and negotiating international relations and treaties between countries.

In 1948, shortly after the horrors of the holocaust and World War II, the newly formed United Nations had its first convention of the prevention and punishment of crimes of genocide. Prior to this convention the term genocide was not widely known or used. It was within this convention the United Nations officially defined genocide for the first time:

…any of a number of acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

(UN.org)

The act of defining genocide was a significant step forward in the fight to prosecute crimes of genocide. The famed Nuremburg trials were the first international criminal trials to prosecute perpetuators of genocide. What remained unclear in the international community however was how to respond to genocide as it occurred.

That same year the UN adopted an equally important document, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document was binding to all members of the UN and served to define the UN position on human rights, liberty, and freedom. It has become an important part both in international law and in applying pressure on countries acting in violation to the declaration. Of particular interest are Articles 3 and 5 "Everyone has the
right to life, liberty, and security of person…No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment” (UN Declaration of Human Rights).

The U.N. is often placed in the precarious position of striving to respect a nation’s sovereignty while also protecting the citizens of that same nation. A nation’s sovereignty refers to the right of a nation to rule itself without unrequested intervention from the outside world. Within the U.N. perhaps the most prominent council is the Security Council, consisting of five permanent members; China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as ten rotating members with a term of one year. The president of the Security Council is rotated by (English) alphabetical order, with each President having a term of one month. Within the U.N. Charter the following right is given to the Security Council, that they, “The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security” (UN Charter, Chapter 7, Article 39). The U.N. website further elaborates that the Security Council is in charge of establishing and monitoring all peacekeeping operations of the U.N. they also have the power to extend, amend, or end missions (U.N. Security Council). In order to take action, the Council must first put forth a resolution that outlines the peacekeeping missions mandate and the number of troops that will be sent. The Security Council is put into a position unique to any other government, or group of government. It is arguably the most powerful group within the United Nations. It makes decisions that have direct ramifications on the communities worldwide, to say nothing of individual countries. Nowhere are the consequences of these decisions clearer.
than in cases of genocide. Over the course of its existence the UN has been faced with four mass killings that have been officially defined as genocides (in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Sudan). In order to give my arguments proper context I will examine two genocides: the massacres in Bosnia in the 1990s, and the mass killings in Sudan in the 2000s.

The Bosnian genocide was a slaughter of the Islamic Bosnians by the Catholic Bosnian Serbs in Srebrenica, an area controlled by the Bosnian Serb army during the 1992 to 1995 Bosnian War. In the 1980s Bosnia was populated by roughly 1.3 million Bosnian Serbs, Orthodox Catholic Christians, over 1 million Bosniaks, Sunni Muslim, and 0.7 million Bosnian Croats, Roman Catholic Christians. Until 1980, the countries we now call Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia were united in one country called Yugoslavia, under the rule of a communist leader Marshall Josip Broz Tito. After his death in 1980 the country was divided, and the 1990 elections resulted in the separation of Yugoslavia into Serbia to the east, Croatia to the west, and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the middle. In 1992 the E.U. and United States recognized Bosnia as an independent country. The Bosnian Serb population however, was unhappy with an independent Bosnia; they sought to be part of Serbia, which shared their Orthodox Catholic beliefs, they quickly assembled armed forces and began to take action. By 1993 the Serbs had established the Republika Srpska in the eastern part of the country and the Bosnian Serb army controlled nearly three quarters of the country. The Bosnian Croats had, for the most part, been driven out of their homes, though a small army continued fighting for its Bosnian territory through 1994; the Bosniaks, however, maintained a presence only in urban areas. The U.N. refused to intervene, except for a small amount of humanitarian aid. The E.U. meanwhile
did attempt some amount of mediation, but too little effect. As the war progressed the
U.N. eventually sent in peacekeeping troops to protect six so-called ‘safe areas’ which
were mainly populated by the Bosniaks. Despite this military intervention each of the
safe areas was overtaken by the Serbian army and ‘cleansed’. Women were kept hostage
and often raped, the U.N. estimates around twenty thousand women were raped during
the war, but some estimates put that number as high as fifty thousand. The U.N. Security
Council at first deemed the killings ‘ethnic cleansings’ to avoid the use of the term
genocide. The worst of the killing was in Srebrenica, an area supposedly protected by
French and Dutch U.N. troops, more than 8000 Muslims were killed, and many more
were displaced from their homes. Serb troops stole helmets from the U.N. peacekeeping
forces and used them to convince Muslim women that they were a nonthreatening
peacekeeping force. A peace treaty was eventually negotiated in December, 1995. Ratko
Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, leaders of the Serbian army were both declared war
criminals and Radoslav Krstic, a commander working for Mladic, was charged with
genocide in December 1998. In 1999 the U.N. admitted its own failures in not acting
sooner, placing blame mainly on the shoulders of the Secretary General Boutros Boutros
Ghazi and the U.N. envoy in Bosnia (Genocide-Bosnia).

The most important decision by the UN in terms of military intervention in Bosnia
was most likely the creation of ‘safe areas’ as outlined in U.N. resolution 824, put forth in
1993. This resolution designated certain areas as ‘safe areas’ it demanded that all troops
withdraw from those areas and banned all fighting within those area: “the capital city of
the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, and other such threatened areas, in
particular the towns of Tulza, Zepa, Gorazde, Bihac, as well as Serbrenica, and their
surroundings should be treated as safe areas by all the parties concerned and should be free from armed attacks and from any other hostile act” (U.N. Res. 824, 1993). The areas were put under the protection of international troops (Peacekeepers). This did little to deter the killings; indeed one of the largest massacres to occur during the Bosnian war was the mass executions in Serbrenica.

It is impossible to tell if a lack of international military intervention in the Bosnian genocide would have led to a higher death toll; however it is clear that the troops sent by the U.N. were insufficient to protect the Bosniak people. U.N. peacekeepers are put in a tricky position; they are sent to serve a specific mission, but they cannot fire their weapons, or attack in any way, unless in direct self-defense. If they were to witness murder or genocide, they would be unable to physically intervene. This regulation begs the question, how much good does peaceful intervention actually effect? Such a dilemma raises the age old adage; “an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.” It is simple enough to proclaim that genocide is wrong, but we cannot respond to violence with violence. That said, if the international community was able to go on the offensive, genocidal acts might be repressed before they take the lives of thousands of civilians as was the case in Bosnia, Sudan, and so many more countries.

This dilemma, is further complicated when the government in question refuses and rejects all international intervention. The genocide in Darfur is the official title given to the slaughter of roughly five hundred thousand civilians in the Darfur province of Sudan. Early in 2003, negotiations were beginning to end the civil war between a Muslim northern Sudan, and a Christian south Sudan. Problems arose however when the government in Khartoum (the capital of Sudan) found oil in the western province of
Darfur. Rebel groups fighting against the government claimed a share in the oil and attacked a government facility. In response the government sent a militia, the Janjaweed, to defeat the rebels. The Janjaweed rode through the countryside and by all accounts, burned every village in their path, raped women, destroyed crops, and killed thousands upon thousands of civilians. The U.N. humanitarian coordinator, Mukesh Kapila, notified the U.N. about the situation in Darfur but no actions were taken to stop the Janjaweed from ravaging the country. Kapila has stated in interviews that his repeated requests for action were deliberately ignored. The following year Sudan began to allow aid workers into Darfur and the U.N. supplied some humanitarian aid, and threatened military action, but nothing came of their threats. In July of 2004 the U.S. Congress gave the crisis in Darfur the official title of genocide and launched a formal investigation. The Security Council passes resolution 1556, which could include sanctions on the Sudanese government. Another two months passed before the Security Council passed resolution 1564, which explicitly threatens sanctions if the Sudanese government did not stop the violence. The Sudanese government however claimed that all militias were beyond its control. The genocide however continued for at least another two years and the following eight U.N. resolutions did nothing to end the slaughter. In 2007 the U.N. sent 26,000 peacekeeping troops to Darfur, though these troops did not have the power to disarm the Janjaweed. The genocide in Darfur is an example of the international community’s reaction to a particularly difficult dilemma, what to do when morally we should intervene, but the government of the country in question refuses international aid (On Our Watch).
Because of the monetary motivations behind the genocide in Darfur there has been some debate in the international community over whether or not the killings in Sudan can be classified as genocide. The results have been split, with some individual governments classifying the crisis as genocide and others refusing to do so. The United States chose to use the term genocide, thought the Security Council as a whole has not done so. The United Nations did release a statement however saying that the lack of the genocidal title “should not be taken in any way as detracting from the gravity of the crimes perpetrated in that region…crimes against humanity and war crimes that have been committed in Darfur may be no less serious and heinous than genocide” (U.N. Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, pg. 4). There were several logistical obstacles to international intervention of any kind, the first of which was that the Sudanese did not want the international community to intervene in any way. They repeatedly refused aid from the international community, and refused any connection with the Janjaweed. Additionally they have refuted the estimates concerning the number of people killed and displaced. The Sudanese government refused to take action in response to the numerous resolutions put in place by the U.N. Secondly, the international community could not agree on a course of action amongst themselves. China especially was opposed to any intervention in Sudan for fear of endangering the oil deal they had made with the Sudanese government. In 2004 The U.N. did send a small number of troops into Sudan, but the troops were restricted from disarming the Janjaweed and attempts to increase the number of troops were blocked.

Beyond the standard resolutions and deliberations within the U.N. three events distinguish the international response to the Darfur crisis. A large grassroots movement
focused on bringing the war in Darfur to international attention and pressuring the international leaders to bring an end to the violence; no movement of its kind was formed in response to previous genocides and shows the heightened awareness and sensitivity to genocide at the individual level. Next was indictment of President Omar al Bashir in 2009 by the International Criminal Court, as well as Ahmad Harun, the former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior, and Ali Kushayb, the Janjaweed militia leader. Though the suspects have not been surrendered to the ICC, their indictment is a strong statement on the part of the international community, and a step in the right direction in terms of punishing the perpetrators of genocide. Finally, in 2005 the U.N. adopted the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine, a document that directly cited the international community’s responsibility to protect all people from war crimes, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity:

The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means…to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity…should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We stress the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and its implications. (31)

The fallout from all of these actions were not enough to stop the massacre in Darfur, thousands upon thousands lost their lives, and many more were displaced and fled to
refugee camps. The threats and eyes of the international community were not enough to effect real change. Despite this, the (mostly symbolic) steps taken by the international community in the case of Darfur are all slowly building towards a world where someday genocide will no longer be ignored.

To those who have never personally witnessed an event as horrific as genocide it is difficult to comprehend the true cost. It is easy to hold genocide at an arms-length, to focus solely on the statistics, this many thousand have died, this many million have been displaced. Though I learn about the existence of genocide at a young age, I couldn’t really realize what genocide meant until I watched interviews with survivors of the Darfur genocide or read the stories of women who survived the rape camps in Bosnian. The cost of genocide is personal; every one of those thousand dead has a face and a story. A man in a refugee camp in Chad, whose eyes had been gouged out by militias who massacred his village said, “I am living like a dead man. In the past, I was an able person. Our suffering will continue. The Janjaweed will not stop their attacks. This place is not safe.” Fatih Younnis the elected leader for the district of Mukjar, which is sometimes referred to as the ‘ground zero’ of the Darfur massacres, led 4500 of his people into hiding, and eventually to the relative safety of the refugee camps in Chad, he related the story, saying, “And then we order them to go without speaking, without crying…even we cup the mouths of the children to not make any noise. So like that we walk all the night until before the morning, by the short hours, we arrive to the border of the Chad. They fired all the village and they killed many more other people, children, women, and venerables, everybody.” Likewise throughout the Bosnian genocide countless citizens suffered horrors. Women and girls were abused, and imprisoned in rape camps, with no
option for escape; while men and boys were torn from their families and murdered. A genocide survivor recounted the story of a boy being torn from the arms of his mother, and carried off by soldiers. “That woman [his mother] was thrown in the truck, and the others were told it was their job to make sure she didn’t get out of the truck…So what do you do to prevent something worse? You grab hold of the woman and put her down…

From the bus, we saw a large field full of men. The first thing I noticed was how many men there were….You saw that the life had already gone out of them. Their eyes were empty. They knew they were looking at death, and you could see it in their eyes” Stories of genocide continue to haunt us long after the massacres have ceased. There are innumerable tales and each seems more appalling than the last, yet we cannot forget these stories, they remind us of what is truly at stake if we continue to stand by and watch genocide unfold.

After the genocides in Rwanda and Serbrenica, the international community used the slogan “never again” committing to the prevention of genocide worldwide, however the events in Darfur have proven that despite the good intentions worldwide, the international community has not done enough to protect the civilians of the world against genocide. The real dilemma lies in the international response to genocide. The responses to both the Bosnian and Sudanese genocides were clearly insufficient, but to take international intervention much further would be a violation of national sovereignty and could possibly start an all-out war.

However the question remains, what is the role of the international community in cases of genocide? The U.N. has promised to protect the people of the world from crimes
of genocide, and yet they seem consistently reluctant to employ these powers in the name of a country’s sovereignty.

When the UN was created it swore to protect certain rights belonging to all of the world’s peoples, namely, life, food, education, freedom of speech, etc. The act of military intervention may end the genocide sooner, however direct military intervention could also result in a higher death toll. If the goal in stopping genocide is to prevent the loss of life that act of military intervention could only worsen the situation. Which leaves the world’s leaders with a moral debate: intervene and risk a higher death toll, or stay silent and watch the drawn out suffering of innocent people? The Responsibility to Protect (or R2P) that was operationalized in 2005 clearly outlined the UN’s duty to act in a case of genocide. This document, alongside the Declaration of Human Rights from 1948, proves irrefutably that the UN has recognized, if not acted upon, their own responsibility to act on the individuals behalf. Furthermore they have made promises to protect every individual’s right to life. As a democratic governing body, the UN has a responsibility of uphold the promises it makes. In his article, “Humanitarian Action and Military Intervention: Temptations and Possibilities” Fabrice Weissman argues that the UN has a moral responsibility to uphold its promises and international law, through force if necessary:

The request for armed intervention against a genocidal power is simply a request that the law be applied. Indeed, the 1948 Convention for the prevention and curtailment of the crime of genocide enjoins the 129 signatory states to take all appropriate measures, including military action. In other words, by designating extreme violence as constitutive of genocide, the signatories are automatically
committed to using all available means to combat those who organize, facilitate and perpetrate this crime against humanity (8).

He argues that by not intervening we are failing in our promise to protect and prevent genocide. By not following through and intervening in cases of genocide, the UN fails to remain accountable to the people who have given its power. It can be concluded that the UN cannot in good conscience refuse intervention in cases of genocide on any grounds, to do so would violate the promises they made to citizens of the world.

There are two options in terms of international intervention; the first is humanitarian intervention; the second is military intervention, meaning that foreign troops would go on the offensive against perpetrators of genocide. The righteousness of humanitarian intervention is difficult for most people to morally oppose. Even in cases where the government in question refuses international intervention, under the U.N. declaration of human right all people are guaranteed “…the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25). Thus by the word of the United Nations, even in cases of genocide, no one can be denied these basic rights. However is it really fair to act with violence against a crime of violence? In his article “A Case for the Responsibility of the Bystander” Arne Johan Vetlesen argues, “The bystander who reacts with non-reaction, with silence in the face of killing, helps legitimize that very killing. When nothing is done in the face of what is unfolding, and when what unfolds is, beyond doubt, killing of a genocidal nature, the message to the agent as well as to the direct victim is that such killing may continue” (Vetlesen 12). From his point of view the peacekeeper who stands
by and does nothing while innocents are slaughtered in a genocidal manner, is endorsing the crime, allowing it to continue further. It is true that of all heinous crimes genocide is often relatively unpunished. Even when a leader is indicted by the ICC this indictment can be just as much of an empty threat as the U.N. resolutions and sanctions, as in the case of Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, and when peacekeepers are sent to an effected area, they are banned from using their weapons and disarming the perpetrators of genocide.

Though the UN may have a responsibility to protect the world’s peoples, it often refuses to intervene by citing respect for a nation’s sovereignty. In his writings on justice and equality, the philosopher John Rawls introduces the concept of the veil of ignorance. He challenges his readers to imagine themselves in their original position, in other words to put themselves in the mindset that they had prior to gaining any knowledge of their current position or status in society. The only thing you do know is that all peoples are created equal. He argues that under such a circumstance any rational individual would come the conclusion that “each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with similar liberty for others” and “Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage and b) attached to positions and offices open to all” (qtd. in Kay 1). The first of these conclusions is also referred to as the Liberty Principle, and the second, the Difference Principle. Because of the ‘veil of ignorance’ there can be no knowledge of discrimination, patriotism, or personal opinions. The only thing you know is that everyone is equal. If that is the only fact known for certain than the only logical
conclusion can be that everyone deserves equal rights. If you believe every person to be equal it would be nonsensical to give them unequal rights.

As political philosophies such as Rawls have become popular, they have been applied to cases of international law. The UN as an international governing body should give equal treatment to all of those countries for which it is responsible. Though the Declaration of Human Rights was created in 1948, it took time for these policies to be considered in international politics. Slowly over the years, however, there has been a shift, if not in actions, at least in opinions concerning human rights. Professor Petersman speaks to this shift in his article *Theories of Justice, Human Rights, and the Constitution of International Markets*: “The modern recognition—in numerous worldwide and regional human rights conventions and other human rights instruments—of ‘the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family [as] the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world’” requires basing international law, public policy, and justice on ‘normative individualism,’” (Petersmann 409). Normative individualism simply refers to the belief that all individuals are born with equal rights. This new focus on human rights and normative individualism requires that some of the emphasis be taken away from state sovereignty and placed on the rights of the individual. Under these arguments it is impossible for the UN to ignore the rights of the individual in the interest of state sovereignty. To do so would deny the citizens their right to life and freedom from terror as outlined in the Declaration of Human Rights. Petersmann goes on to argue, that the many UN documents concerning human rights are binding, thus by ignoring those in need the UN breaks its own laws. Secondly if one were to assume the veil of ignorance, as Rawls proposes, and ignore the rights of the individual in favor of
the rights of a nation, they would be in direct violation of the Liberty and Difference Principles. It is therefore morally unjustifiable for the UN to refuse citizens of a country intervention on the grounds of national sovereignty.

Though humanitarian intervention can be potentially life-saving to those fleeing from genocide; it does nothing to defend the citizens under attack from the perpetrators of genocide. Humanitarian aid provides medicine, food, and water, to those in need but does not go on the offensive against criminal actions. By not sending military intervention the UN is not fulfilling its commitments made by the Declaration of Human Rights and R2P. The only way to properly keep their promise is to send in armed troops authorized to defend citizens in danger for their lives. Troops could only justify an attack if it is proven that an individual was attempting to take another’s life. Furthermore, in respect to Rawls veil of ignorance under which all individuals must be treated equally under law, the goal towards the perpetrators should be restraint and prevention rather than death.

Though this is an idealized and purely theoretical point of view, the fact remains that by refusing to take action the UN also refuses to make good on its promises to the citizens of the world. It operates from a viewpoint that recognizes but does not act upon Rawls veil of ignorance, instead focusing on the politics and international negotiations.

Opponents of international interventional have often cited relativist theories in defense of their arguments. Relativist theories operate on the belief that what is right or wrong depends on the views of an individual (subjectivism) or society (conventionalism). In other words, there are no universal truths or morals; they are all dependent on the principles of a society or individual. These theories stand in contrast to objectivist theories that state that there are certain universal moral principles, that are determined as
right or wrong based either on the consequences of the act (consequentialist theories) or on the kind of act it is (deontological theories). Relativism was an especially dominant argument against the imposition of western values on cultures considered to be ‘uncivilized.’ If relativism is considered morally correct it would be morally wrong for the UN to intervene in cases of genocide, because they would be unable to judge what is right or wrong in that particular country.

As anthropologists and sociologists continue to study societies, relativism has become less pertinent. Most anthropologists agree that there are certain taboo and values that seem to be universally held. Murder within the community, for instance, or burglary is widely regarded as wrong. In their work, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definition*, A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckohn, “No culture tolerates indiscriminate lying, stealing, or violence within the in-group. The essential universality of the incest taboo is well-known. No culture places a value upon suffering as an end in itself. . . . We know of no culture . . . where the fact of death is not ritualized.” All different cultures share common bonds that form a rudimentary morality.

In the current political climate, relativism has ceased to be a fair argument against international intervention. The creation of the UN, as well as the raid globalization and crossover between cultures the need for universal laws has become clear. The implementation of universal morals no longer translates to colonization. Furthermore, relativism could prevent justice from being served, preventing international courts from prosecuting murders, rapists, and dictators in the name of cultural relativism. In his article “The End of Cultural Relativism” Amitai Etzioni argues against relativism:
In recent years, though, it has become increasingly—although far from universally—agreed that a full-fledged relativistic position is untenable. If pushed to the extreme, it prevents one from making any moral judgments about others at all, and our moral sense strongly urges us to express our concerns about genocide, torture, rape, and other such acts, wherever they occur. Nor have other nations been reluctant to express their moral judgments about what they perceive as the moral decay of the West. (179)

By creating an international criminal court and a set of international laws and sanctions, we have passed the point where cultural relativism can be used as an argument against international intervention. When the UN creates international laws and regulations they are acting upon universal judgments of right and wrong, Etzioni goes on to say, “Recognition of human rights… represents an attempt to move beyond thin globalism and recognize a set of worldwide, overarching values to be respected in their own right and to serve as a basis for making cross-cultural normative judgments” Not to intervene on the bases of relativism, would morally require the abolishment of the ICC, R2P, Declaration of Human Rights, and all international sanctions. The UN’s existence is based on the acceptance of intercultural values and rules.

There will never be a perfect answer to genocide; it is not the sort of crime that can be ‘solved.’ The roots of genocide go deep into the problems that every society faces; genocide is the explosion of racial and ethnic tension, tension that goes to the heart of who we consider ourselves to be and where we belong. The UN cannot and never will be able to eliminate genocide completely, but there is much more that the UN can do in order to slow and hamper genocide. Firstly, humanitarian aid must be provided to those
in affected areas. Secondly, according to the Liberty and Difference Principles and the universal morality established by objectivist theories, The UN has a responsibility to intervene militarily to stop the perpetrators of genocide. The UN has already taken some steps toward acting upon these steps. The R2P and Declaration of Human Rights are important for their role in defining the UN’s position on the rights of the world’s peoples. The next step for the UN should be an acceptance of the veil of ignorance philosophy, and a concerted effort to put the rights of humankind above international wheeling and dealing.
Works Cited


http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/

UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), available at:

http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b3712c.html [accessed 14 November 2012]


