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Book Review: Conflict and Peace Studies: Aidan Hehir, Humanitarian Intervention after Kosovo: Iraq, Darfur and the Record of Global Civil Society (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2008, 208 pp., £45.00 hbk)

David Chandler

Millennium - Journal of International Studies 2010; 38; 843

DOI: 10.1177/03058298100380031301

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have to function across the whole spectrum of their activities. This poses a challenge to those who would identify greater independence as the solution to all of contemporary humanitarianism's problems.

Furthermore, the crucial role of states in providing much of the funding for humanitarian action is discussed. This links into the issue of accountability, which has exercised humanitarians much in recent years. Professionalisation of the field has created the need for humanitarians to be accountable towards donors, often powerful states. Yet many are troubled by the lack of accountability towards the recipients of aid. As Janice Gross Stein notes, accountability 'works best when it is used as an opportunity to widen the conversation about the politics, power, and ethics that define humanitarian space' (p. 142). Clearly, then, humanitarians would be wise to acknowledge the power they wield, and the politics involved in their endeavours.

For Laura Hammond, promoting 'transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs' is central to reducing the considerable dangers faced by aid workers and arguably more important than declarations of independence and refined statements of humanitarian purity and principle (p. 194). Indeed, one of the messages of the book as a whole is that a pure, monolithic humanitarian identity can only ever be a myth. Craig Calhoun ably deconstructs this myth, providing vital historical context and a nuanced picture of the plural lineages of contemporary humanitarianism. Stephen Hopgood challenges humanitarians to confront their own mythologies, provocatively asking whether Wal-Mart could be seen as a humanitarian actor if it proved most efficient at providing life-saving aid. He poses a simple but vital question: 'What is humanitarianism?' (p. 121).

Indeed, the book itself becomes a rich elaboration of that question, and makes a compelling case for its crucial importance to the contemporary world. In a particularly rewarding essay, Michael Barnett draws out the richness and complexity of the enterprise, arguing that it is central to the scholarly vocation. Peter J. Hoffman and Thomas G. Weiss conclude in this vein, defending humanitarianism as a field of enquiry within social science, while using the lessons of preceding chapters to build bridges between scholars and practitioners. This collection should be required reading for both.

HENRY RADICE

Henry Radice is a PhD candidate in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

CONFLICT AND PEACE STUDIES

Aidan Hehir, *Humanitarian Intervention after Kosovo: Iraq, Darfur and the Record of Global Civil Society* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2008, 208 pp., £45.00 hbk).

Just as the Owl of Minerva flies at dusk, this book casts light on the heated debates over humanitarian intervention after Kosovo in a way which helps clarify a problematic for too long made opaque by the binaries of IR approaches within the framings of liberalism and realism. This book helps explain why neither framing was able to capture the discussion of how to normalise or to legitimise, or even to coherently theorise, a liberal discourse of intervention in a world without the preconditions of liberalism (a global sovereign or society). The framings which set up the problematic of a clash of human rights and sovereign rights seemed to resist being posed in terms of liberal discourses of rights and law; a necessity if the discussion was to shift from abstract norms – always asserted but never consented to or made capable of guiding policy – to workable frameworks of policy understandings.

In the world of the 2000s – the world of humanitarian intervention after Kosovo – every attempt to move from abstract assertion to concrete policy appeared to dissolve into its own contradictions. The contradictions, which we are still living with and are replayed in the attempts to turn the 'The Responsibility to Protect' into a meaningful coda, to 'operationalise' what we understand we have universally consented to. Why is it that it appears we have a paradigm in which it is possible for a global sovereign to cast its judgemental gaze over a global society and yet it appears impossible to act or to be perceived as acting according to the assertions, of global 'norms'; that, far from seeing the emergence of the global framings, held to be 'immanent' in relation to Kosovo, we seem to be destined to be forever stuck in a world in which liberal approaches cannot fully appropriate for themselves? Hehir gives us many of the answers to these questions and sometimes they are uncomfortable ones, ones that sit uneasily with the dogmatic assertions of IR, but ones that we need to take heed of nevertheless.

What makes this book both exceptional and necessary is that Hehir does not seek primarily to enter into a liberal debate of more or less intervention in an economy of global power but rather to explain the conditions of possibility and impossibility in which this debate took place. Hehir explains how the discussion of humanitarian intervention broke through the boundaries of a realist IR, asserting a global problematic of the rights of the human. However, he also charts how this liberal framing of rights resisted an institutionalised form, choosing a moral or ethical (non-institutionalised) view of rights, reflecting the lack of an institutionalised global sovereign. Rights without rights-bearing citizens were represented as ethical claims, articulated not by a rights-bearing demos, but instead by the asserted emergence of a new actor, one not bound by framings of rights and law: 'global civil society'.

Hehir rightly focuses on the limits of a liberal construction of intervention, framed not in terms of law but of ethics, where the legitimacy of intervention – and the acts of states, which claimed the rights of global sovereignty – was framed not as an expression of their power but of global civil society, speaking and acting through its interlocutors fighting a Just War under the global flag of NATO's regional alliance. The shaky legitimacy of the liberal fiction (that the interests of particular actors were subsumed within the global universal) was already problematised in the

Kosovo war itself – where NATO bombing from 15,000 feet was seen to undermine the claim that ‘their’ lives mattered as much as ‘ours’. Hehir argues that the construction of global civil society as the real agent of global sovereignty stood exposed over Iraq and Darfur, as we entered a world in which it seemed that every act of intervention and non-intervention by Western powers revealed not its global ethical aspirations but rather the limits of its particularist interests.

The retreat from liberal framings of global claims has followed thick and fast in the wake of Kosovo, and it is charted here, with the renunciation of a liberal problematic of intervention in the language of R2P and through rethinking policy in the wake of the debacles of Afghanistan and Iraq and the contradictions and evasions over Darfur. Hehir highlights this shift from liberal framings of intervention – to save, secure and develop – to the desire for regulation from a distance as, for example, the Sudanese government and the African Union are forced to bear the burdens of responsibility. Just as the meaning of sovereignty had been deconstructed so genocide too has become merely a contingent term with which we should not be ‘too preoccupied’ (p. 69, quoting US Secretary of State, Colin Powell).

Hehir reveals the hollowness of these liberal framings of the global. Looking back on the era of ‘after Kosovo’, he clarifies that global civil society could not frame and legitimise a discourse of intervention and non-intervention. He concludes the book by highlighting the gap between the imagination of the global and a framework which could be framed in liberal terms, correctly pointing out that the advocates of intervention do not emphasise the strengthening of international law despite the seeming possibilities of its reform. Hehir’s powerful book helps to clarify that we have moved beyond a world in which liberalism and realism could frame an understanding of politics and policy-making and is essential reading for those concerned with how the politics of intervention and non-intervention have begun to be reshaped in the world after ‘the world after Kosovo’.

DAVID CHANDLER

David Chandler is Professor of International Relations at the University of Westminster, UK.

Jenny Engström, *Democratisation and the Prevention of Violent Conflict: Lessons Learned from Bulgaria and Macedonia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, 182 pp., £55.00 hbk).

Jenny Engström’s *Democratisation and the Prevention of Violent Conflict* is intended as a contribution to the ongoing debate about the relationship between democratisation and intra-state conflict. Using the case studies of Bulgaria and Macedonia, she sets out to contest the claim that democratisation in ethnically plural societies need necessarily lead to conflict, as much of the recent literature suggests.