SAINT GEORGE, THE DRAGONSLAYER: THE SYMBOLISM OF 'RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT'

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Although state sovereignty remains a central issue in international relations, the content of this concept has become a highly debatable issue. This is especially the case in the modern era of globalisation, increased interdependence and, especially, prevalence of human rights discourse. More often than not, sovereignty is rendered contingent on the states' ability to protect the basic rights of their citizens and to comply with the demands set forth by the international community. The article analyses the genesis and application of Responsibility to Protect – a relatively new framework for the international community to intervene where the aforementioned criteria are not met – without prejudice as to its ethical foundations but with an intention to put forward the challenges relating to the application of this framework. Analysing the current discourse relating to Responsibility to Protect and considering the history of past interventions on humanitarian grounds, the author argues that the idea of protection is left open for possible misuses by the most powerful actors

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within the international system and for attempts to hijack the very meaning of 'humanity' and 'protection' in order to deprive the enemy of any legitimate stance. The author also uses the myth of Saint George to further explore the symbolism of Responsibility to Protect as a battle between the forces of good and evil as an archetypical structure of thought.

Keywords: *Responsibility to Protect, humanitarian intervention, Libya, international community, human rights.*

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the concept and practice of sovereignty occupies a very important place in modern political discourse despite being an inherently problematic and bearing many meanings and even more secondary connotations. Sovereignty had once the ambition to provide the state with absolute security but now its function is more that of adaptation, while the very justification of sovereignty is detached from the state itself, making it dependent on external criteria (e.g. protection of human rights), negotiable, and conditioned by other actors in the global arena. It would be correct to say that while the question of sovereignty had long been dormant, it has recently resurrected itself, once again posing the old dilemma of whether it is a mere given or a collective creation. This question was dormant first and foremost because the very concept of sovereignty remained equivocal and relatively uncontested. There is no question where there is no doubt, and the actual essence of modern sovereignty is doubtful indeed.

This paper will analyse the modern imaginary and discourse of international relations, especially concerning the interrelated concepts of sovereignty, human rights and (non-)intervention. It is important to note that sovereignty, human rights, and non-intervention are all central to the UN Charter system but are often impossible to implement in their entirety. Therefore, space is opened for power relations and hegemonic construction of meaning and conditions of the co-existence of the three. It will be argued that the modern vision of the international system allows the creation of an absolute enemy, i.e. the one who falls outside the dominant discourse is not only *excommunicated* but also deprived of the status of a just opponent. The outsider

here becomes a non-value, which could be easily disposed of.¹ The rule and institutionalisation of bare norm and singular rationality helps to maintain the status quo and to further stigmatise the outsiders. Correspondingly, such a system allows the dominant states to maintain hegemonic modes of thinking, especially in the fields of rights, governance, and economics. Therefore, the dominant structure of power and knowledge is maintained both internationally and nationally. Such a formation of meaning is very often discursive. It establishes the limits of the sayable as entire practices and worldviews, especially concerning the extent of sovereignty, are discarded and reduced to empty speech at best, "destined to disappear without any trace,"² and which utterances could be used and/or revived. These formations also tend to manage the inclusion / exclusion of certain subjects and entire states, thus delimiting the boundaries of the 'international community'.

The first part of the article will analyse the practices used to discard national sovereignty as well as to establish the rule of empty transcendent norm, especially concerning the right to remove those expelled from the 'international community'. It will concentrate on the emergence of a transcendent political theology of Human Rights and the modes of their enforcement: humanitarian intervention and Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) as well as their possible misuses in the hands of the powerful. The second part will begin with the justifications employed in the wake of the NATO-led intervention in Libya and proceed on aerial campaigns as the new paradigm of intervention. It will conclude with the analysis of depictions of Saint George fighting the dragon as symbolic models of RtoP.

THE NATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL: A PARADIGMATIC TENSION

Sovereignty (and its natural corollary territorial integrity) is increasingly disputed in modern political theory and practice. It is true that the states have never been the sole actors and beneficiaries of the international sphere³ and that the obligations and responsibility towards

human beings and humanity in general has been discussed at least as early as the Roman Antiquity.⁴ Also, even the paradigmatic figures who laid the foundations of absolute sovereignty and non-intervention, such as Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, and Emerich de Vattel, tended to balance sovereignty and natural law, protection of citizens, and the duty of other sovereigns to step in and protect the oppressed, respectively.⁵ However, it is only in the decades following the end of the Cold War that the shared responsibility of the international community gathered its momentum. One could even say that “[a] post-territorial future seems to loom on the horizon.”⁶ In such future (which in some cases is already present) sovereignty is deservedly seen as conditional. However, such future (or present) is inherently problematic.

A shift of attention characteristic to the modern world order is that from national security to human security, and the legitimacy of national authorities is measured by the security and protection of the citizens.⁷ Post-Cold War developments and conflicts (the Balkans and especially Kosovo being paramount examples) arguably showed that the Charter system had exhausted itself and that new steps had to be taken and responsibilities assumed by the international community in order to further human security.⁸ Although individuals could be said to have been integral part of security dilemmas already from the French Revolution,⁹ it is only recently that they became core elements, at least according to some approaches. As a result, new emphasis on rights, combined with traumatic experiences of the world community, offered a fertile ground for new doctrines to be developed,¹⁰ significantly aided (or possibly even enabled) by the restructuring of global power relations. Therefore, an effort is put so that states would no longer be able to hide behind their sovereignty and the leaders avoid responsibility for their crimes.¹¹ According to a characteristic definition, “[i]n responding to threats to the international order <...> the members of the international community retain the right to apply economic, diplomatic, and/or political pressure against any power that violates international law and/or the peace and security of the community”¹² and to employ force as a remedy of last resort.

Probably the first war waged by the 'international community' as such was the First Gulf War, followed by the ill-fated operation in Somalia, replacing the community's role as a mediator, which was prevalent during the Cold War era.¹³ Such a change was completely logical: if previously balance of power and mutual containment of the two blocs was of prime importance, then currently emphasis is put on "mechanisms that can better generate compliance – primarily through monitoring and accountability, but also through adjudication and the application of penalties, and in rare circumstances the use of force."¹⁴ Compliance here definitely denotes the realisation of the normative order of the international community. According to the dominant view, such system is self-enforcing as it is in the interest of states to comply with it. This is so because of the threat that an 'irresponsible' state would be penalised by the 'responsible' ones.¹⁵ The vocabulary used here is of significant importance as the radical distinction between 'responsible' or 'reasonable' and 'irresponsible' or 'unreasonable' is a crucial tool to disqualify an opponent and to render its arguments as having no signifying value. This labelling is done not only on behalf of states and international organisations (such as the UN and its agencies) but also by NGOs (e.g. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) through what is known as their 'naming and shaming' strategy. Such a 'mobilisation of shame' helps both to disqualify states as unworthy members of the international community but also builds pressure on other states and international actors to intervene in one way or another.¹⁶ Any objections to such strategy are usually dismissed as self-interested complaints of those opposed to democracy and Western values.¹⁷ However, such interpretation entails a crucial oversimplification in that whenever a distinction between 'meaning' and 'non-meaning' is made, action taken in the name of such 'reasonable' cause is just if not on its own (i.e. it might violate the principle of state sovereignty, which is the cornerstone of international relations) then by the final causes (i.e. the good of the whole humankind).¹⁸ The issue at stake is the control of the division between the inside and the outside of humanity.

The appeals to humanity invoke a specific inversion of the natural law tradition. However, whereas the central figures of that tradition (such as Thomas Aquinas) placed God as the lawgiver in the system of eternal norms (and also as the source of natural law's authority), in modern secular visions reason is seen as the source of eternal and objective norms for the whole humankind¹⁹ – as if the emphasis on reason had removed the theological element and the need for transcendence. Human reason is seen as capable to discover the truths and norms that are 'self-evident' in their inherent justice, basic values that can be deduced logically by any rational individual, while the supreme authority is now provided by the law being directed towards the common good – the new *raison d'être* of law (rather than the fulfilment of a divine plan).²⁰ Indeed, promises of a finer future for the whole humanity, closely intertwined with the global spread of human rights, are the modern equivalents of the 'image and glory of God' – the theological premise of natural law and the cause for a just war to establish such norm.²¹ However, a question remains open as to who decides what sound reason and the common good are and who establishes them.

Martti Koskeniemi emphasises an important paradox, namely that the international normative structure rests on two contradictory assumptions: one is objective and 'descending', external to state behaviour and, at least in theory, binding due to its universal validity, while another one is 'ascending', i.e. arising from the states themselves. The problem is that for a norm to be binding, it has to be seen as transcendent while for it to be acceptable it must at the same time be seen as part of a political process.²² As a result, decisions can be grounded only on acknowledged norms but the norms themselves can be effective only after they have been given meaning in what constantly proves to be first and foremost a political process.²³ This process of the attribution of meaning is first and foremost a hegemonic process. In this context "hegemony emphasises the ways in which power operates to form our everyday understanding of social relations, and to orchestrate the ways in which we consent to (and reproduce) those tacit and covert relations of power."²⁴ This is particularly important keeping in mind that no political idea and action will ever

be presented as a particularity of a group (or a state). Rather, a demand, particular as it might be, will be made in the name of something that transcends it.²⁵

The replacement of God with Reason and the Will of God with the common good of humanity does not eliminate the element of political theology. But neither this is a political theology of Carl Schmitt wherein "[a]ll significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts."²⁶ At stake here is the establishment of a functionally transcendent normative structure that is put beyond any doubt and approachable only by believing. Since being coined by Marcus Terentius Varro, the term 'political theology' (being used either positively or as a means of critique) denotes the supreme public ordering and the system of beliefs that is much more passionate and immediate than any rational reasoning could be,²⁷ even when reason is an object of belief, thus crossing the blind spot of any normative structure where any argument has to give way to the basic '*it is because it is*'. Needless to say, only the acknowledgement of the hegemonic construction of meaning can protect political theology from fundamentalism.

Undoubtedly, humanity is an old political concept and it has been turned into a crucial element of international political theology. As a result, it comes as no surprise that the moral appeal to humanity "used historically to interfere in the affairs of people in order to put down endemic warfare, chronic disorder, despotic government, slavery, mutilation, cannibalism, and religious and social customs that were repugnant to civilized life" is equated with "response to modern day barbarism – failure to respect the principles of the new international legitimacy", based on human rights.²⁸ A necessary corollary to the modern theology or rights is "that the normative status of sovereignty is derived from humanity, <...> and that this humanistic principle is also the *telos* of the international legal system".²⁹ Humanity as such becomes 'the A and Ω of sovereignty' and of the whole international community. This turn from God to humanity as A and Ω is nothing short of significant as it only illustrates the quasi-religious nature of transcendent international norms.

Of paramount importance is the fact that the basic signifying structure of humanitarian intervention did remain the same since its inception in the 19th century despite the change of world order and the justification of such acts. Indeed, early examples of proto-humanitarian interventions could be seen in the European assistance to the Greeks (1821), the Lebanese (1860-1861), the Cretans (1866-1869) or the Balkan nations (1875-1878) in their struggles against the Ottomans, or the US intervention in Cuba.³⁰ However, it is worth noting that the Ottoman Empire was a cultural and civilizational 'other' against which a part of 'us' had to be protected, while to see the US intervention in Cuba as a humanitarian one would disregard the Monroe doctrine. Therefore, what should be seen in these examples is rather a precursor to the 'humanitarian' framing of power relations. Now, as then, there is "a perpetrator of atrocities, typically the government of an 'uncivilized' state (defined by culture or religion); a set of apolitical and unarmed victims; and a 'civilized' rescuer (or rescuers) aiming to halt the killings and atrocities".³¹ Therefore, what is encountered is an enemy of the whole humanity, the one to be confronted with the fervour of "the 'crusading spirit' and '*mission civilisatrice*' underlying contemporary war rhetoric and its international legal legitimization."³² The 'standard of civilization' is once again used as a test of admission to the 'Family of Nations',³³ as opposed to mere non-sovereign barbarian lands, open to 'help', 'protection', and (military, economic, and/or symbolic) colonisation. Therein is found the mobilising power of the civilization's struggle for human rights as struggle against evil, tyranny, and barbarism which are, strictly speaking, not only inhuman but also non-human.³⁴

THE APORIAS OF 'RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT'

The so-called 'Responsibility to Protect' (RtoP) doctrine is the latest rendition of the doctrines postulating the primacy of transcendent criteria ruling the global sphere, introduced by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in 2001. However, it offers a crucial innovation: the outright notion of humanitarian

intervention has been replaced by a more covert one of *responsibility*.³⁵ This change is more than a rhetorical substitution of one term with another, more acceptable, one – it is also a radicalization of the doctrine. First, if humanitarian intervention had initially been seen as a *right* of the international community to intervene under grave circumstances (e.g. genocide, ethnic cleansing), then the discourse of *responsibility* to protect clearly leaves less space for manoeuvre and places the international community (and primarily its most powerful members) under an obligation to act.³⁶ Second, the position of a state has also changed. Even previously a moral obligation (at least an implicit one) existed for any particular state to respect its citizens and be as responsive and representative as possible with the risk of becoming an international pariah for failing to comply³⁷ with only a faint threat of humanitarian intervention. RtoP, however, indicates a double bind: responsibility towards the citizens and responsibility towards the international community.³⁸ This definitely does not eliminate the element of control, crucial to traditional sovereignty – on the contrary, effective control (as contrasted with the so-called 'failed states') can be a necessary element of exercising responsibility.³⁹ Responsibility also denotes an ability to rise above the interests of particular states and actions for a common, rather than particular, good.⁴⁰

Although conventional interpretations of RtoP give a wide spectrum of circumstances under which the international community should offer its assistance and, in an extreme case, intervene, not all of them pointing directly to the faults of a national government (e.g. natural disasters, emergence of armed groups etc.), it is precisely the criminal aspect that is discussed most widely. RtoP is said to cover four kinds of crimes: war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and ethnic cleansing.⁴¹ Also, it is seen as addressing not only ongoing atrocities: the doctrine could be invoked pre-emptively when there is a reasonable prospect of crimes being committed in a foreseeable future.⁴² Indeed, precisely the emphasis on prevention is seen as a crucial innovation that RtoP offers as compared with e.g. humanitarian intervention. This is based on the so-called three pillars of responsibility: 1) "the state's obligation to protect", 2) "international assistance

and capacity-building”, 3) “timely and decisive response”.⁴³ However, it is the third pillar that appears to be most widely discussed.

The interrelationship between RtoP and sovereignty remains highly contestable. Needless to say, ‘sovereignty’ is not a timeless and unchanging concept. As a matter of fact, it has been invented and shaped through centuries of political deliberation and warfare, and has historically meant different things. Therefore, the invocation of RtoP should not be seen as a unique and modern challenge.⁴⁴ And yet, it is still clear that the direct relationship between sovereignty, non-intervention, and non-interference in domestic affairs, enshrined in the UN Charter system, has to be renegotiated in the light of globalisation of human rights in favour of external actors and norms.⁴⁵ Therefore, state borders are no longer geographical givens but also determined in relation to the wider normative framework.⁴⁶ However, RtoP approaches sovereignty differently than attempts to legalise humanitarian intervention. Instead of designating itself as an antipode to sovereignty (i.e. the right to violate it) and therefore affirming its ‘bounded’ nature, even if by negation, RtoP attempts to redesign sovereignty as such by imputing it with a new meaning.⁴⁷ Thus the global economic and governmental rationality, construing the visible aspect of global power relations, is even more entrenched and made ‘everyday’, and not only invoked under exceptional circumstances. In essence, this situation could be seen as bridging the gap between what could be the realist and the constructivist approaches to international relations. If realism emphasises objective and unchangeable (state) interests and stresses the importance of power, while constructivism stresses the attribution of threat,⁴⁸ then RtoP is clearly constructivist on the outside (a state is posed as security problem) and realist on the inside (its functioning and invocation is based on power and interest).

Of significant importance is the vagueness concerning the real essence of RtoP, which has helped consensus-building in the international community but undoubtedly will plague the doctrine when implementation is concerned.⁴⁹ Indeed, the imperative ‘no more Rwandas and Kosovos’ still lacks satisfactory answer.⁵⁰ Also, there are

two questions inherent in every occasion of international action or inactivity, be it Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Kosovo, Darfur, Libya: (1) whether the states have an obligation to respond to mass atrocities outside their territories; (2) whether the approval of the Security Council is vital or if the states can act outside the Council's framework if it is in an impasse. The adherents of the doctrine would answer affirmatively on both occasions.⁵¹ Intervention in the name of humanity is often even seen as being above institutional and legal frameworks.⁵² Furthermore, due to 'its inherent soundness and justice' responsibility to protect is seen to pervade any mode of state-thinking.⁵³ However, even the aim of intervention, most often posited as democracy, is not as clear-cut as it might appear, because it has come to signify everything and nothing at the same time: politics, ethics, law, and civilization, and many more things.⁵⁴ In short, RtoP has become a catchphrase under which various meanings are subsumed but it undoubtedly lacks a consensus as to the real content and extent of the doctrine, leaving back door open for power relations that impute and maintain its meaning in any particular case.⁵⁵ Also, RtoP is paradoxical in that it must be at the same time both constantly operating in the background as a normative framework *and* invoked only occasionally (and therefore selectively) in order to mobilise the international community to take action.⁵⁶ In the latter sense, RtoP appears as a spell to be cast, or possibly a damnation – which, in effect, it certainly is. Furthermore, the very responsibility is something which does not exist *per se*. It is seen only when 'irresponsible' acts occur. Paradoxically, responsibility arises only where there is irresponsibility – by the merit of there being a constitutive outside. Therefore, a paradoxical situation is created in which power determines the conditions of its own use, doing this under the veil of protection and responsibility – a much nobler pretext than an outright (humanitarian) intervention.⁵⁷ This change also means the removal of moral considerations and potential political costs related to claiming the 'right' of humanitarian intervention because RtoP denotes an automatic and dutiful – always already decided – standing in for the entire humanity.⁵⁸

Regarding the responsibility to intervene, six conditions have to be met: “just cause, right intention, legitimate authority, *extrema ratio*, proportionality and reasonable prospect of success” – all of them closely following the Christian just war tradition.⁵⁹ This dates back to Augustine, although he was still hesitant about the exact location of the supreme authority. However, ordered concord was already seen as the aim of a just war.⁶⁰ This theory, however, was most extensively developed by Thomas Aquinas who was the first to outline the aforementioned conditions. For him, “those who wage war justly aim at peace”⁶¹. As a result, war becomes a necessary tool for correcting the evils of this world and preserving the good – in essence, a charitable action.⁶² The just war now could take on many different names, be it humanitarian intervention, war on terror, disposal of tyrannical regimes etc. but the basic framework is still undoubtedly the same.⁶³ Presently, struggle for human rights is the prime cause for a just war – a just cause regardless of other circumstances.⁶⁴

The need of otherness is perfectly visible even in the modern order of a completely appropriated Earth (and the Earth has been appropriated both physically through military and communication technology and symbolically through the development of the ‘international community’ or ‘humanity’). Every inclusion and appropriation needs its own exclusion in order to be defined, contained, and maintained – even a complete one.⁶⁵ On the one hand, it appears perfectly natural and logical that “[h]umanity as such cannot wage war because it has no enemy, at least not on this planet.”⁶⁶ On the other hand, however, “[t]hose who use the discourse of ‘humanity’ politically designate themselves arbiters of ‘humanity’, drawing a line between who is human and who is inhuman, who is good and who is evil, who is ‘freedom-loving’ and who is ‘freedom-hating’.”⁶⁷ As a result, humanity becomes an evaluative and not a descriptive category, stripping the other of its otherness in order to make him/her truly human.⁶⁸ The one who is placed outside the human order does not become a simple enemy but the enemy of humanity.⁶⁹ In essence, ‘humanity’ wages war against the inhuman. As summarised by Carl Schmitt, “When a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity, it is not a war for the sake of humanity but a war

wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent.⁷⁰ Such a remoralisation of war only serves the proliferation of conflicts and adds new intensity to them.⁷¹ Notably, although war is not (and cannot be) moral itself, moral antitheses and framings of it can bring an unprecedented intensity to military action by further deepening the split between the friend and the enemy.⁷² In essence, 'humanity' wages war against the inhuman. 'Humanity', becoming the master signifier of the international political theology, has always already decided on an action taken in its name. The only problem is which group is able to assert its particularity as the embodiment of humanity and transform itself into a medium through which humanity speaks and occasionally acts.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: BETWEEN REALITY AND MYTH

The 'sharp end' of RtoP was first demonstrated during the Libya campaign,⁷³ partly moving away from disastrous past failures, such as Darfur.⁷⁴ Completely abandoning the more politically correct and convenient element of prevention at the heart of the RtoP triad (because it was deemed counterproductive), Resolution 1973 paved way for a direct intervention into an ongoing crisis.⁷⁵ Although in a sense prevention of harm did play a crucial part, it was a stick-without-carrot type of prevention not envisaged by the doctrine. Also, even if ordering military action (including that short of an outright intervention) is hardly ever impartial, in the case of Libya the Security Council very clearly and openly took sides with one of the parties to the conflict and reasserted its right to point the wrongdoer.⁷⁶ On the one hand, there is more than one reason to treat Libya as an exception, including the role of regional organisations, Muammar al-Gaddafi's lack of support among other leaders, the lack of a reasonable alternative etc.,⁷⁷ and the prolonged paralysis over Syria adds even further currency to the argument that implementation of effective protection is a political issue. On the other hand, it sets an important precedent for the international community's protection efforts by setting out the basic signifying structure of a possible RtoP intervention.

When an international coalition of (mostly Western) states began their operation to enforce a no-fly zone in Libya, the statements of leaders were particularly illustrative. On the one hand, there was a clear act of *naming* and *categorising*, i.e. of positing an outside and putting the other beyond the margins of the *normal*. Thus one could observe the unsurprising dichotomy of the tyrant *vs* the innocent men and women⁷⁸ (Barack Obama), this itself having a long tradition in the American military rhetoric, which is itself normally directed towards expanding freedom. Similarly, the “the appalling brutality”⁷⁹ of the regime was stressed by David Cameron. Thus “this regime has lost all legitimacy”⁸⁰ (Nicolas Sarkozy), while “the Libyan people have decided to free themselves, and this had lead to a great hope amongst all those who share values of democracy.”⁸¹

The second important element is the evocation of community. Thus, as stressed by D. Cameron, Britain as “part of an international coalition to enforce the will of the United Nations and to protect the Libyan people,”⁸² and, according to B. Obama, “the United States is acting with a broad coalition that is committed to enforcing the United Nations Security Council resolution 1973.”⁸³ Correspondingly, “the United States has worked with our international partners to mobilize a broad coalition, secure an international mandate to protect civilians, stop an advancing army, prevent a massacre, and establish a no-fly zone with our allies and partners.”⁸⁴ Both leaders clearly stressed that their countries acted not on their own but as part of a community and in pursue of a higher aim as, in D. Cameron’s own words, “actions have consequences, and the writ of the international community must be enforced,”⁸⁵ especially when “these people need our help and they need our support <...> We have a duty to respond to their anguished call”⁸⁶ (N. Sarkozy). Also, general unwillingness was stressed: “This is not an outcome that the United States or any of our partners sought”⁸⁷ (B. Obama), but “Gaddafi has ignored our calls”⁸⁸ and did not only that – “Gaddafi lied to the international community, he continued to brutalise his own people, he was in flamboyant breach of UN resolution, so it was necessary, legal, and right that he should be stopped and that we should help stop him.”⁸⁹ Thus the international community

in general and the countries concerned in particular are seen as being provoked or even forced to intervene (in essence, *extrema ratio*). However, at the same time several indications of not-so-altruistic motivation appeared. As hinted by D. Cameron, M. al-Gaddafi was "creating a more dangerous and uncertain world for Britain and for all our allies. This is what we must avoid and this is why it matters;"⁹⁰ additionally, in B. Obama's words, "To brush aside America's responsibility as a leader and, more profoundly, our responsibilities to our fellow human beings under such circumstances would have been a betrayal of who we are."⁹¹ To translate this into everyday language, this would have meant a weakening of US authority and global position.

The last remaining question is that of sovereignty. On the one hand, the UN Security Council passed its resolutions 1970 and 1973 "*Reaffirming* its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya".⁹² On the other hand, both the further texts of the resolutions (naturally, of Resolution 1973 in particular) and the statements of state officials were in clear conflict with such a claim. As far as the Resolution 1973 is concerned, the Council "*Decides* to establish a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians" and "*Authorizes* Member States <...> to take all necessary measures to enforce compliance with the ban on flights."⁹³ Obviously, practice did not confirm commitment to sovereignty either. Not only the enforcement of the no-fly zone and other elements of the campaign are of relevance here but also the actions that led to the campaign itself deserve attention. According to D. Cameron, "President Obama, President Sarkozy, and I spelled out the non-negotiable conditions, which Colonel Gaddafi had to meet under the requirements of international law, set out by the UN Security Council resolution 1973."⁹⁴ Needless to say, this is not a way of dealing with a sovereign leader (or, more particularly, with one who is still regarded as a sovereign leader).

The Libya campaign, it must be especially stressed, was an *air* campaign. Mirroring the transformation of sovereignty from an impenetrable core concept of international relations into a conditional phenomenon, military incursions into the airspace of states have

increased vastly in recent years. These incursions even appear to be normalised as viable activities of the powerful states in order to protect their interests,⁹⁵ even if they are often presented under the guise of humanitarian aims or the ‘war against terror’. Be it as it may, *de jure* such actions still constitute a violation of a state’s territorial sovereignty.⁹⁶ Libya, as an air campaign, also is the latest example of modern warfare – especially that of humanitarian kind – and possibly even an illustration of a paradigm. There are several examples of air campaigns in recent decades. One could start with the UN-mandated no-fly zones over Iraq between 1991 and 2003,⁹⁷ and continue with the bombing campaigns over Bosnia and Kosovo. A less spectacular but latent aerial military action involves the use of drones, especially over Pakistan and Afghanistan.

There are numerous benefits offered by aerial campaigns. Air power, due to its sophistication and potential firepower, is able to incite a fear superior to that of other conventional weaponry.⁹⁸ Air power could be used more rapidly than ground troops and, being more convenient to use, offers a more credible threat – the opponent would more readily believe that bombing raids may be initiated than a ground battle fought. This is a key prerequisite of a successful power play.⁹⁹ Libya also clearly illustrated the strategic advantage of aerial control as enemy – in this case, M. al-Gaddafi – ground troops could be neutralised, paving the way for the advancement of rebel militias. Moreover, one could trace a projection of further and further removal of a warrior from the foe:¹⁰⁰ a crossbow, a shotgun, artillery, manned aircraft, and finally unmanned drones. This leads to another motivation for such change: the security of one’s own soldiers. Aerial bombardment allows to significantly reduce casualties on the attacker’s side (provided the technological gap between the belligerents is wide enough), making intervention more reconcilable with the domestic public opinion, on the one hand, and creating a significant strategic advantage through aerial control, on the other. What is even more, the usage of exclusively aerial warfare for the sake of security can even be morally justifiable (at least in theory). Indeed, if a war is just, it is even morally obligatory to shield the just warrior from unnecessary

risk as much as possible.¹⁰¹ Admittedly, since times immemorial, wars were often fought between parties of unequal strength, and the morality of such war is strongly debated. However, if a war is just, then it is once again not only desirable but also preferable and natural that the just side is militarily stronger, because it fights on behalf of the good.¹⁰² This is not only of significant convenience but also sends a crucial symbolic message concerning the status of the opponent. All of the stated benefits make air campaigns a tempting choice when something has to be done (as demanded by the national public and/or the international community) but neither the public nor the officials are willing to engage in long, costly, and dangerous ground warfare.¹⁰³ The promise of 'short, limited but meaningful' long-distance strikes against Syria after the use of chemical weapons is a further illustration of such discourse.

And yet, a discussion of air power as a means of intervention, either a plain 'humanitarian' one or that based on RtoP, cannot be full without an inquiry into its symbolic dimension. First and foremost, the analysis of underlying symbolism helps to reveal the underlying archetypal structures of thought that allow the theologico-political shortcut to function more efficiently. Since this shortcut allows to overcome the paradox of simultaneous internal and external justification by establishing a connection, which is beyond doubt or, more precisely, beyond reasoning and judgement, it needs powerful 'wiring' to create a quasi-automatic response. It is therefore imperative to be able to recognise the powerful figures of thought that reappear under different guises. The punishment via an air campaign is no exception, again revealing the implicit political theology. Here the Christian legend of Saint George fighting the dragon is of particular relevance. Saint George was a Cappadocian knight. "Once he came into the province of Libya, to a city which is called Silene. And by this city was a pond like a sea, wherein was a dragon which envenomed all the country."¹⁰⁴ The story goes on to tell that the dragon required sacrificing him children and youths or else he would destroy the city. When the daughter of the king was about to be sacrificed, Saint George was accidentally passing by and stepped in to rescue her in the name of Christ.¹⁰⁵

One of the most interesting paintings depicting Saint George is “Saint George Slaying the Dragon” by Vittore Carpaccio. It is also one of the most visually explicit. The main theme is fairly standard: George is attacking the dragon with his lance. Notably, the knight is above and the beast is below thus an easily perceivable hierarchy is produced, especially keeping in mind that that Saint George is the warrior of God. Lying all around are bodies – or, more precisely, parts of bodies of those who fought the dragon and perished as well as of those who have been sacrificed: assorted remains scattered around a desert landscape. Indeed the landscape is telling: although green fields and hills dominate the horizon, around the dragon is nothing but bare soil and dead trees. Thus a double devastation by the dragon is stressed: that of human life and that of nature making the dragon an agent of death and doom. Finally, in the background one sees the innocent victim about to be sacrificed praying for the success of the knight. The princess is passive and submissive, ready to meet whatever fate but still, needless to say, not impartial. In sum, a basic triad is produced: the devastating beast, the innocent victim, and the noble rescuer.

A very similar painting is that of Rogier van der Weyden. First of all, the vertical dimension of Saint George’s fight against the dragon is absolutely clear: the mounted knight is directly above the beast literally lancing it to the ground. Also, the princess is less passive: she is on her knees, not merely wishing that the knight won but clearly expressing her desire. However, it is not only the princess that Saint George saves: in the background of both paintings we can see a city, definitely a prosperous one that is threatened by the dragon. As a result, the knight is the saviour not only of a singular human life but of the whole city, while the dragon thus turns into the enemy of the human community, societal order and prosperity.

If one looks for probably the clearest expression of the hierarchy of the belligerents, one needs to look at Lucas Cranach the Elder’s “Saint George with the Head of the Dragon”. Here the wounded beast is laying on its back, trampled by the knight’s horse while Saint George himself is stepping on his opponent with his sword raised for that last, fatal, stroke. The dragon is, then, under Saint George’s feet awaiting his

fate or, rather, punishment. In this respect, a very similar work is that by Peter Paul Rubens: the knight is about to slay the wounded dragon that lies under his horse in an extremely vivid and powerful scene. One should compare the expressions of the two belligerents: while the dragon's eyes are widely open and full of horror (not at all surprising given the circumstances), it is the face of Saint George himself that is the most striking – it shows neither anger, nor disgust, on the contrary, the knight appears to be calm and concentrated; he is merely doing his job. No less interesting is the depiction of the princess. It is not the more or less passive innocent victim praying for the success of her champion. In her one can see a mixture of curiosity and fear.

There can be little doubt concerning the ultimate victor. Tintoretto is useful in this case. Here the dragon fiercely fights the knight, and the body of one of the victims as well as the fleeing princess can be clearly seen. And yet, above the scene, in a cloud of light, there is God who observes and protects the divine champion and the city for which he had sent the saviour. Therefore, the struggle, with all its ruthlessness, is still reduced to an element of God's plan with a prefixed scenario. Similarly, in Anthony van Dyck's work, while the fight is still under way, the angels as envoys of God are already descending to crown the victorious knight.

Finally, after the fight, the dragon is forced by Saint George into submission, tied with a girdle, and delivered to the very princess that it threatened to kill. Saint George then promised to slay the dragon in exchange for conversion to Christianity of the inhabitants of Silene. The inhabitants of the city did precisely that and thereby Silene became part of the universal Christian community to the benefit of all.

Indeed, in the context of RtoP, the basic signifying structure is illustrative. What one encounters here is not only the aforementioned triad of the beast terrorising a city and a human community, the innocent victim who has to be rescued from the claws of the beast and the divine warrior who intervenes if not in the name of Christ then in the name of humanity and restores or establishes the transcendent order. The powerless, submissive, and pliable nature of the victim is particularly important. Not only it stipulates empathy (or at least pity)

but also “the weak and powerless have difficulty holding their putative benefactors to account”.¹⁰⁶ There is also the inherent moment of justice when the beast is punished and the community of a city, assuming the transcendent truth and the way of life prescribed by it, (re)joins the well-ordered universal human community.

As a final observation, airpower is definitely not the universal and all-powerful means to conduct one’s military affairs. It cannot vanquish the enemy on its own and, as shown in Kosovo, cannot stop atrocities *per se*. It is able only to hurt, not to seize and to hold. However, it can be perfectly used to deter and/or force a regime into submission or negotiation – that was precisely the outcome of the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999.¹⁰⁷ Also, aerial dominance and support can significantly aid local troops on the ground that are enabled to do the ‘dirty job’ themselves, sparing the intervener of high human and political costs, as was the case with the Croats in Bosnia and the rebels in Libya. Alternatively, aerial campaigns can initiate (or encourage) long-term political processes that have a profound impact on the territory concerned – once again in the hands of the local population. The independence of Kosovo is a paramount example here.¹⁰⁸ As a result, just as the inhabitants of Silene, the locals are left to carry on themselves after the dragon is slain and the hero leaves.

CONCLUSION

From what has been said, it is clear that the modern discourse of ‘responsible sovereignty’ has very clear criteria. It was possible only after the end of Cold War, when the world is no longer polarised and a monopoly of values and truth is possible. Related to this is the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a relatively small group of (mostly Western) countries, once again, without any clear counterbalance. Finally, air power has played a vital part in overcoming boundaries as paradigmatic symbols of sovereignty and eliminating distances.

It is impossible to separate the discourses of international politics and international law. Although the independence (and primacy)

of the latter is often stressed, the pervasive norm-based legality more often than not bows to the influence of powerful political actors that fill the international legal norms with meaning. Thus the two discourses are not only mutually supporting, but also inseparably fused. Additionally, the international political discourse is intimately connected with the domestic one to the extent that it has become a means of justifying and 'selling' foreign policy to the general public. It is more than evident, then, that the modern imaginary of the international system is maintained by the core power-states. Here one encounters the liberal international community, beyond which lie dangerous barbarian lands (*hic sunt leones!*). At the same time the political theology, upon which entire life, including secular power, depends is based on the transcendent human rights regime. And yet, the system still needs an outside to affirm itself: 'rogue states', 'axes of evil', 'tyrants' etc. that either retain their sovereignty as a perpetual reminder thus remaining in the 'international community' as its negative side or are effectively excommunicated, as illustrated by humanitarian intervention of RtoP. Such system is open to uses and misuses by the powerful states. The rule and institutionalisation of bare norm and singular rationality helps to maintain the *status quo* and to further stigmatise the outsiders.

One could notice that although there was no ebb of human rights abuses, the period between Kosovo in 1999 and Libya in 2011 saw no major humanitarian campaigns,¹⁰⁹ once again illustrating the selectiveness of state practice. A possible explanation is that during this decade the very constitution of the inhuman enemy had changed: the despot had been replaced by a more elusive category of the terrorist. The problem is that the terrorist, and especially the global terrorist, cannot be the basis of a new global order by him/herself due to the elusive character of terrorism itself. The terrorist (like the pirate, the brigand, etc.) can be a symbol of the anomic outside, of something that is beyond the line demarcating the limits of 'our' world but this beyond still has to be localisable. This is why even the 'war on terror' saw two major spatial wars, followed by long-term military involvement: Afghanistan and Iraq, i.e. is most importantly concerned with

the original Greek *geo-metria*, i.e. measurement of land. Consequently, in the long term humanitarian intervention or the new RtoP – a spatial military exception and simultaneously confirmation of world order – is likely to remain a prevailing paradigm of constituting the outside which at the same time negates and confirms the international order.

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SANTRAUKA

ŠV. JURGIS – DRAKONŲ SKERDIKAS: ATSAKOMYBĖS APSAUGOTI SIMBOLIZMAS

Reikšminiai žodžiai: atsakomybė apsaugoti, humanitarinė intervencija, Libija, tarptautinė bendruomenė, žmogaus teisės.

Nors „suverenumo“ sąvoka yra kartinė tarptautiniuose santykiuose, jos turinys yra tapęs debatų objektu, ypač šiandienos pasaulyje, pasižyminčiame globalizacija, tarpusavio priklausomumu ir žmogaus teisių diskurso galia. Dažnai suverenumas laikomas priklausomu nuo valstybių gebėjimo apsaugoti pagrindines piliečių teises ir įgyvendinti tarptautinės bendruomenės reikalavimus. Šiame straipsnyje analizuojama *atsakomybės apsaugoti* koncepcijos (įgalinančios tarptautinę bendruomenę įsikišti, kai minėti kriterijai neįgyvendinami) kilmė ir pritaikymas be išankstinės kritinės nuostatos jos etinio pagrindo atžvilgiu, bet siekiant parodyti iššūkius, susijusius su šios idėjos įgyvendinimu. Nagrinėdamas *atsakomybės apsaugoti* diskursą ir aptardamas ankstesnes intervencijas humanitariniu pagrindu, straipsnio autorius teigia, kad apsaugojimo idėja gali būti lengvai išnaudojama galinčiausių tarptautinės sistemos veikėjų, siekiančių įtvirtinti savus „žmonijos“ ir „apsaugojimo“ apibrėžimus. Autorius taip pat pasitelkia legendą apie šventąjį Jurgį, siekdamas aptarti *atsakomybės apsaugoti* simbolizmą kaip mūsų tarp gėrio ir blogio jėgų.