



Protecting the Responsibility to Protect: Canada, R2P, and the Need for Engagement in the Asia-Pacific

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1. Executive Summary

At the World Summit in 2005, United Nations (UN) Member States unanimously agreed on the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle. Member States acknowledged that it is the responsibility of states to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. The international community committed to assisting nations to protect their populations from mass atrocities, and to a timely and decisive response in the event of a nation manifestly failing to protect its population. Since the World Summit, Member States and the international community have committed themselves to the operationalization and promotion of R2P's principles. Canada in particular, which have been a key actor in R2P's authorship and inception, has emerged as an R2P 'champion' and its efforts abroad have resulted in positive steps towards the realization of R2P .

Despite its successes, Canada has made little progress in promoting the development of R2P in the Asia-Pacific Region. This is significant since the Asia-Pacific has had a number of deep historical experiences with genocide and mass atrocities, and yet R2P in general remains underdeveloped due to the continued prevalence of traditional notions of sovereignty among countries in the region. As Canada continues to see itself as a leader in R2P's development and as it continues to push to be recognized as an Asia-Pacific power, it will need to find a way to promote the development of R2P in the region.

This report examines Canada's potential role in the development of R2P in the Asia-Pacific Region. The first section explores *why* engaging the Asia-Pacific region on R2P is important for Canada, the region, and globally. This section analyzes the significance of R2P for both Canada and the Asia-Pacific region by looking at Canada's involvement in R2P's development and offers a deeper assessment as to why Canada in particular is suited to promote R2P's development in the region. Section two illustrates a number of strategies on *how* Canada can promote R2P's development in the Asia-Pacific. In particular, it looks at how Canada can promote R2P regionally through strengthening diplomatic frameworks, norm development, norm advocacy, and funding. Overall, the aim of this paper is to show that there is room for deeper engagement on R2P by Canada in the Asia-Pacific.



2. Introduction

The issue of humanitarian intervention has been a particularly challenging puzzle for the international community. The right for states to prevent other states from interfering in their internal affairs has been a cherished international norm, especially in the post-colonial and post-Cold War eras, and many states cling to this traditional notion of sovereignty. In the 1990s, however, genocide in Rwanda provided a harsh reminder for the international community of the consequences of inaction while ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and Srebrenica highlighted the repercussions humanitarian action may have.

Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan issued a challenge to the international community to try and reconcile the basic issues surrounding the principles of sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. In September 2000, the government of Canada established the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty in response to this challenge. The Commission's report, entitled *The Responsibility to Protect*, was the result and laid the groundwork for states to begin to address the legitimate use of force in order to prevent genocide and other mass atrocities.

The most significant aspect of the report was in the way it re-characterized the understanding of sovereignty from *sovereignty as*

*control to sovereignty as responsibility*¹; by accepting the principles of the United Nations Charter, Member States accepts the responsibilities entailed within that document and specifically, the responsibility to protect their citizens and their welfare. The report went on to contextualize that responsibility by emphasizing the importance of the state's and international community's role in the establishment of preventative mechanisms. Should a state fail in its responsibility to protect its citizens, the report provided criteria for how and when the international community should intervene and what its responsibilities were following intervention.

Canada advocated that the report be included in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. What emerged was a clear consensus among UN Members States endorsing the Responsibility to protect. R2P's significance as an emerging international norm was reaffirmed by the UN Security Council in April 2006. Following the Summit, Canada in addition to a number of other nations pushed to increase R2P's prevalence amongst policy-makers and increased the use of R2P language in global forums.

While the vast majority of states now agree on the principles of the responsibility to protect, there remain a number of unresolved issues surrounding the implementation of those principles. Even today, while a number of countries are invoking R2P in regards to the current violence in North Africa and the Middle-East (particularly in Libya), few can agree on how to act. In 2009, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon led the General Assembly debate with his report *Implementing the*

Responsibility to Protect which sought to address the R2P's operationalization deficit.

This report seeks to look at how leaders of R2P such as Canada can take the next step in realizing the principles of the Responsibility to protect. While the centrality of R2P in Canadian foreign policy has waned in recent years and as a result of governmental changes, it still remains an important policy among Canadian political leaders and scholars; Canada's invocation of R2P over the current Libya crisis and its subsequent leadership role in NATO's mission in Libya illustrate R2P's continuing significance. Understanding how R2P can gain a foothold in a region which still holds onto traditional notions of sovereignty and how R2P leaders can use their strengths to promote the operationalization of R2P's principles are key to R2P's success globally. This paper will look to bridge that knowledge deficit by looking at how Canada can leverage its leadership role and its relationship with the Asia-Pacific in order to move R2P forward in that region.



3. Protecting the Responsibility to Protect: Canada, R2P, and the Need for Engagement in the Asia-Pacific

The July 2009 General Assembly Debate on the Responsibility to protect Doctrine proved to be a resounding success. The Responsibility to protect (R2P) argues that states have a responsibility to protect their citizens from genocide and mass atrocities and that the international community has a duty to ensure that states uphold this responsibility. It was subsequently adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005 and in the 2009 Assembly Debate, “what emerged was a clear commitment from the vast majority of member states to the prevention and atrocity of crimes”² and R2P became something approaching international law.³

The Responsibility to Protect’s successes have been attributed to the efforts of a few governments which have continuously provided resources and a voice of advocacy for the doctrine. In particular, Canada has emerged as a global R2P leader as a result of its role in R2P’s authorship and advocacy, and is in a “unique position to be the model of its implementation.”⁴ However, despite Canada’s efforts to form a global consensus around the Responsibility to protect and the need to codify the protection of civilians from mass atrocities, the momentum behind R2P has lagged in some areas more than others. Specifically, while Canada has made progress in promoting R2P in the Asia-Pacific (and in other regions, particularly in Africa) through initiatives such as the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, there is much more

Canada can do to move the R2P agenda forward in the region. The lack of progress on the Responsibility to protect is particularly problematic considering the Asia-Pacific's growing significance for R2P and its historical experiences with humanitarian crises. If the Responsibility to protect is to be realized globally, deeper engagement within the Asia-Pacific by Canada is needed.

This paper will seek to analyze *why* and *how* Canada should engage the Asia-Pacific on R2P. The first section of this paper will briefly look at R2P's significance for both Canada and the Asia-Pacific. Specifically, it will look at Canada's role as a leader on R2P, and will then explain *why* engaging the Asia-Pacific on R2P is important for Canada, the region, and globally. Following this, this paper will provide a deeper assessment as to why Canada in particular is suited as an Asia-Pacific R2P leader and will argue that its status as a middle-power and its placement on the periphery of the region may make its ideas well-received regionally. The second section of this paper will look at *how* Canada can promote R2P in the Asia-Pacific. Specifically, Canada can promote R2P's development regionally through strengthening diplomatic frameworks, norm development, norm advocacy, and funding. Overall, the aim of this paper is to show that there is room for deeper engagement on R2P by Canada in the Asia-Pacific.



4. Canada, R2P, and the Asia-Pacific

Canada has been considered the ‘core’ champion of the Responsibility to protect doctrine since its inception.⁵ The concept of R2P was developed by the ICISS, which had been established by the Canadian government and attended to by Canadian experts in response to the growing need to address the issues of sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed that:

If humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica - to gross and systematic violations of human rights that affect every precept of our common humanity?⁶

The challenge resonated with Canadian policymakers who held a seat in the UN Security Council. Furthermore, Canadian peacekeepers had taken part in missions in Bosnia and Rwanda, where the UN was unable to curb the atrocities which had taken place in those countries. As a result, Canada took the lead in R2P’s authorship and R2P emerged as a “touchstone of [a] Canadian foreign policy.”⁷ Canada continued to promote R2P abroad and successfully advocated for its inclusion in the 2005 World Summit. Despite criticisms that Canada has ‘fallen by the wayside,’⁸ in its advocacy of R2P, Canada continues to see itself as an R2P leader and aims to seek “countries which may be persuaded to use the debate to build support for the principle, including advocating for it to be put into practice.”⁹

Promoting the development of R2P in the Asia-Pacific carries benefits for Canada. While Canada considers itself to be a ‘Pacific country,’¹⁰ its interests have increasingly become marginalized in the Asia-Pacific at a time when Asia is experiencing unprecedented growth and is becoming known as a global ‘rule-maker.’¹¹ Consequently, Canada is losing influence in both existing and emerging regional institutional arrangements.¹² In terms of both economic and political power, Canada is witnessing a comparative diminishment of “credibility, knowledge, and contacts”¹³ and while there remains a strong degree of trust between Canada and Asia-Pacific countries, Canada is increasingly seen as having little relevance to the region. Thus, R2P provides an avenue for renewed Canadian engagement in the Asia-Pacific in both political and economic terms and can help increase Canadian respectability within ‘Asian policy circles.’¹⁴ Similarly, by engaging the Asia-Pacific on R2P and “galvanizing international action,”¹⁵ Canada has an opportunity to restore its status as the global leader of the norm; ‘R2P’s success or failure’ will depend on the extent to which Canada can make significant progress on R2P’s development in the Asia-Pacific.¹⁶

While Canada’s effort in promoting R2P globally has made significant progress, particularly within Africa, Canada’s current presence on R2P issues in the Asia-Pacific region remains negligible.¹⁷ This is particularly troublesome considering the region’s significance for the development of the concept. As Alex Bellamy has observed, R2P’s significance for the region comes down to basic numbers as it is home to over two billion people¹⁸ and has the world’s fastest growing economies. More importantly, the Asia-Pacific is a region that has had deep historical

experiences with genocide and mass atrocities; “memories of the killing fields in Cambodia in the 1970s, East Timor in the late 1990s, and recurring armed conflicts inside Myanmar, the Philippines, and Indonesia”¹⁹ still colour the region. These issues are accentuated by the lack of progress towards the development of regional mechanisms to prevent future crises should they occur. Even though the invocation of R2P in order to facilitate Cyclone Nargis relief efforts in Myanmar, (which the ruling military junta were denying), was seen as controversial, it is probable that any attempt to actually operationalize R2P would have met with little success anyway, due to the lack of regional mechanisms to support such an invocation. It was not until China used diplomatic pressure that the junta allowed aid to flow into the country. Despite pressure from Canadian policymakers²⁰ through the use of ‘the toughest sanctions in the world,’²¹ Canada’s influence in the matter remained minimal. Myanmar and other recent events show that the responsibility to protect and humanitarian intervention as an issue “cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to Asian governments and their multilateral institutions.”²²

Additionally, while developing R2P within the Asia-Pacific is important regionally, it also has implications for R2P’s development elsewhere. As Paul Evans notes, due to the rapid growth of the region in economic and socio-political aspects, “engagement with regional processes in Asia has moved from a regional priority ... [and has] become a key piece in the realignment of world order.”²³ In regards to R2P, this realignment has been illustrated most recently in Darfur. Specifically, the current UN sanctioned mission in Darfur has largely depended on support from

China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, who had aptly demonstrated its willingness to use its veto to block strong actions against the regime in Khartoum. Despite indications that China has shown willingness to engage with R2P development, it has done little to translate these gestures into reality. Consequently, if Canada expects to lead the world in R2P in Darfur and elsewhere,²⁴ it must find a way to actively engage with Asia-Pacific powers like China. While Canada's relationship with China over issues of human rights have at times been frictional, China's endorsement of R2P at the 2005 World Summit and 2009 General Assembly debate provides a corridor which Canada can work through to ensure that policies are created which can help in the protection of civilian populations from mass atrocities.



5. Prospects for Engagement

Despite its current lack of engagement, as a middle-power Canada is in a unique position to encourage R2P's development in the Asia-Pacific. Specifically, its reputation as a non-hegemonic and non-imperial power gives Canada diplomatic agility and may make any R2P proposals that it puts forth appear less threatening to the sovereignty of Asia-Pacific countries. Indeed, a major obstacle to the development of R2P in the region remains the prevalence of the norm of non-interference. In the Asia-Pacific Cold War dynamics are still at play,²⁵ the spectre of colonialism still lingers and, "regional hegemony and clashes over territory"²⁶ are common. The legacy of European and Japanese occupation, in addition to the fear of hegemonic ambitions associated with China, Russia, and the United States have led countries in the region to remain sceptical on issues related to humanitarian intervention. US justifications for the War on Terror and Russia's invocation of R2P in its military intervention in Georgia have led states within the region to associate the responsibility to protect with Western economic and political self-interest.²⁷ As a result, countries in the region have emphasized the importance of "neutrality, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference [and] peaceful settlement of disputes."²⁸

However, as a 'global-non-great power'²⁹ Canada "is free of the latent distrust which sometimes undermines the efforts of those countries

carrying the baggage of colonialism,”³⁰ and is consequently more able to successfully promote diplomatic initiatives such as the responsibility to protect. Furthermore, since middle powers often work in coalitions of like-minded countries, they are often more successful at achieving diplomatic objectives since their proposals are viewed as being in the ‘common interest’³¹ and whose momentum, once backed by a number of countries cannot be stopped by larger powers.³² While Canada’s ‘physical remoteness’ and ‘negligible military capability’ may makes it seem like a second-tier player in the region, it is also these characteristics which make any proposal put forth by Canada seem less threatening and viewed with less suspicion than if it were to be tabled by a hegemonic power like the United States.³³ Similarly, while Japan and Australia are regional middle powers who are also R2P advocates, their placement within the region and their historical connection to it are likely to colour any potential proposals which they submit.

While a case for Canadian involvement in the development of R2P in the Asia-Pacific exists, it is important to provide an outline as to *how* Canada can increase its R2P presence in the region in order to illustrate the practicality of such an endeavour. There are four ways in which Canada can promote the development of R2P in the Asia-Pacific: through strengthening diplomatic frameworks, by fostering the norm’s development in the region, by assisting R2P advocacy efforts, and by increasing assistance through funding and the provision of additional resources to regional R2P initiatives.



6. Strengthening Diplomatic Frameworks

Strengthening those diplomatic frameworks which promote R2P is key to its development in the Asia-Pacific Region. In this context, diplomatic frameworks refer to both formal and informal platforms which can be used to promote, develop, and implement norms and policies. Such platforms include regional organizations, track-two fora and other diplomatic initiatives. Without such frameworks, efforts made towards the development of R2P may be less effective or have a limited impact. Thusly, in order to sufficiently ensure that R2P in the Asia-Pacific is well received and is integrated into regional policies, Canada should aim to support potential R2P-minded regional organizations and promote R2P policies through track-two forums and other diplomatic initiatives.

Regional Organizations

Regional organizations and other institutional arrangements can act as one type of diplomatic framework which can advance R2P. In order for R2P principles to be translated into effective action, institutionalization and regional internalization is essential. Regional arrangements can provide the necessary “legal and administrative training... technical assistance and [consistent] high-level discussion between officials,”³⁴ needed to improve capacity building for policy-makers. Moreover, regional arrangements can provide a platform for ongoing financial and advocacy support.³⁵ In addition to providing a “support network for

long-term commitment to the norm”³⁶ regional arrangements encourage compliance and cohesion, especially when R2P principles are challenged, as they have been by regional powers like China and by opponents like Myanmar and North Korea.³⁷ Similarly, regional arrangements can also provide a platform to voice concerns about R2P policies; without a regional voice in the Asia-Pacific, the global implementation of R2P³⁸ could lead R2P to be further associated with being “another form of Western colonialism.”³⁹

While there is currently a shortage of R2P oriented regional organizations in the Asia-Pacific which is problematic for the norm’s development, Canada can work to strengthen existing frameworks and organizations, and push to make R2P a larger part of their agenda. Generally, the Asia-Pacific region is known for its lack of potent regional institutions and institutional capacity.⁴⁰ While much of the momentum behind R2P has come from ‘fluid transnational coalitions’⁴¹ and while there exists a ‘variety of fora’ and diverse ‘macro-regional security’ frameworks for addressing issues such as R2P, such coalitions and frameworks are ad-hoc, temporally restricted, and limited in scope and depth, in addition to lacking general sustainability and coherence.⁴² The lack of regional mechanisms can be attributed to a historical reluctance among Asia-Pacific countries who feel that such regional mechanisms (especially Human Rights institutions) would impinge on state sovereignty.⁴³ While there exists a variety of regional arrangements such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation organization (APEC), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), for the most part they continue to adhere to the

principles of “sovereignty, non-interference, equality between states and independence.”⁴⁴ These arrangements are further hindered by their need for decisional consensus and in some cases, a lack of standing secretariats.⁴⁵

In addition to the relative weakness of regional organizations in terms of enforcing R2P policies, it is unlikely that a comprehensive and far-reaching R2P regime will be created in the near future. Thus, a strategy Canada should take is to strengthen existing diplomatic frameworks which currently handle R2P issues or are capable of addressing such issues. As a Pacific country, Canada is a member of prominent regional arrangements including APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum, in addition to being a dialogue partner to ASEAN. It is these organizations which provide a potential platform for discussing R2P relevant issues⁴⁶ and consequently, it is through these organizations which Canada should focus its efforts and has an opportunity to promote R2P regionally.

The ASEAN Regional Forum is likely to be the most receptive to Canadian diplomatic efforts in regards to R2P. Canada does play a strong role within the ASEAN Regional Forum, which is considered one of “the most appropriate node[s] for introducing R2P into the region.”⁴⁷ While formally it is considered a track-two process, its integration within ASEAN’s overall institutional body will likely mean that any progress made within the ARF will be felt within ASEAN itself. Through its Expert and Eminent Persons group, Friends of the Chair group and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), the ARF has the diplomatic potential to translate R2P principles into regional policy.⁴⁸

CSCAP in particular, has established a working group with Canada's participation, the goal of which is to discuss strategies in which R2P principles may be furthered within the ARF and ASEAN, which include the establishment of Early Warning Mechanisms, increased dialogue with the UN and regional NGOs, and the establishment of a Risk Reduction Centre.⁴⁹ However, while CSCAP provides a strong vehicle for Canada to promote R2P issues, the CSCAP study-group is still underway and any substantive outcomes remain to be seen.

There is also room for growth in Canada's promotion of R2P within ASEAN. Since 1977, Canada and ASEAN have been official dialogue partners, and regular meetings between Canada and ASEAN have been held roughly every eighteen months to discuss common economic and political issues. Canada has also been invited to several ASEAN post-ministerial conferences. It is through these meetings that Canada can work to advocate the inclusion of R2P in policy agendas, as it has done in the past with the Anti-Personnel Landmines Campaign.⁵⁰ Similarly, Canada can work to develop R2P within its existing strong bilateral relationships with ASEAN countries, particularly those of the Commonwealth and Indonesia.⁵¹ A strong criticism of ASEAN-Canada relations is that it has lacked consistency in recent years. The responsibility to protect, however, provides a clear policy strategy which Canada can focus its strengths, and Canada can work to ensure that R2P is reconciled with regional issues relevant to ASEAN and other regional preferences.⁵²

APEC provides a third potential entry point for Canada in the development of R2P policies. Human security issues are increasingly becoming part of APEC's agenda as regional leaders recognize that "human security is essential to economic growth and prosperity,"⁵³ However, while APEC has committed itself to a few narrow issues which are R2P relevant such as health security and disaster relief,⁵⁴ it has avoided the more broader approach to human security, "best encapsulated under the rubric of the Responsibility to protect."⁵⁵ Nonetheless, while R2P has yet to be incorporated into APEC's human security agenda, Canada can continue to push the use of R2P language within the organization and work to strengthen the organization's diplomatic capacity to deal with R2P issues.

Track Two and Other Diplomatic Initiatives

Like its work with CSCAP, Canada can support R2P initiatives through various track-two forums and other multilateral relationships. In this regard, Canada has shown considerable leadership, playing an active role in a variety of fora including the north Pacific cooperative security dialogue, the Canadian Consortium on Asia-Pacific Security, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, and a multitude of bilateral partnerships.⁵⁶ Through these avenues, Canada has made contributions in the form of ideas and experience (particularly in multilateral ventures), funding, and advocacy; "only a few countries were more effective than Canada in building a platform for sustained and constructive interaction between the research and policy communities... [that] ... maximized their regional receptivity and impact."⁵⁷ Track-two efforts can act as "'catalysts' in launching diplomatic initiatives"⁵⁸

through the creation of like-minded coalitions, establishment of knowledge pools, and the facilitation of agendas and conferences.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines provides an excellent model in regards to how can Canada promote R2P through track-two forums and multilateral initiatives in the Asia-Pacific. Through cooperation with NGOs and track-two forums, the Canadian government enlisted the aid of like-minded states to push through the Ottawa Declaration which sought to ban the global use of Anti-Personnel Landmines. A combination of fast-track intergovernmental diplomacy and track-two diplomacy led to the creation of the Ottawa Process core group (which was set in motion by the government of Canada,⁵⁹ and as a result, Canada was able to generate enough international momentum to pass the Ottawa Convention, which banned the use of Anti-Personnel Landmines. Since 2004, over one-hundred fifty-two states have signed the treaty while one-hundred forty-four have ratified it,⁶⁰ making the Ottawa Convention “one of the success stories of the human security movement.”⁶¹ The landmine campaign’s “fluidity, flexibility, and timeline of events,” provides an excellent model which a similar campaign centered on R2P can be created.⁶² As the lead ambassador on R2P at the 2005 World Summit, Canada would be in a unique position to launch a sustained diplomatic campaign on R2P in the Asia-Pacific.⁶³

Another example of how diplomatic initiatives can be successfully promoted through unofficial channels to transform norms into substantive measures can be seen in the development of the UN Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). While the SHIRBRIG ceased

operations in June 2009 and although it had numerous limitations, it was considered effective during its limited existence⁶⁴ and its creation can provide a guideline for the development of R2P mechanisms. Canada played a lead role in the establishment of the SHIRBRIG which operated under the UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS) and acted as the UN's readily deployable rapid reaction force, and it was Canada who argued that any international rapid reaction capability should be linked to UNSAS.⁶⁵ It was also the Canadian government that launched the 'Friends of Rapid Deployment,' group which grew to incorporate twenty-six members and whose work eventually led to the creation of the model upon which the SHIRBRIG would be built.⁶⁶ Canada's role in using diplomatic expertise in the development of the SHIRBRIG illustrates the importance of developing diplomatic capacity in order to translate norms into reality. Indeed if Canada is able to develop significant momentum behind the Friends of R2P group⁶⁷ like it did with the Friends of Rapid Deployment group, then there is much promise for R2P's development in the region. Overall, by strengthening diplomatic frameworks such as Asia-Pacific regional organizations and track-two processes, Canada can be assured that other processes such as R2P norm development, norm advocacy, and funding are effectively received and disseminated throughout the region.



7. Norm Development

In addition to strengthening diplomatic frameworks which can develop and operationalize R2P, the process of norm development is important for the advancement of R2P in the Asia-Pacific. Indeed, in many cases, once a sustainable framework is created in which norms can be realized, the process of norm development is likely to be more effective. Despite the creation of R2P-minded coalitions through groups such as the Friends of R2P, there is still a general lack of awareness of R2P among many officials and few officials are “aware of R2P or realized that their governments had made a commitment to the norm in the World Summit 2005 outcome document.”⁶⁸ The process of norm development seeks to create favourable conditions in which external norms can thrive. Effective norm development for R2P through the process of norm localization can ensure that R2P is not forgotten due to governmental changes and that it is not forced to compete with existing regional norms. It does this by seeking to internalize the norm among local actors and by ‘grafting’ the norm among existing regional practices and institutions.

A problem for R2P development in the Asia-Pacific is the issue of political turnover. While some Asia-Pacific countries have shown support for R2P in the past, their positions have been subject to change. Although it had initially supported R2P in 2005, Thailand has “subsequently gone quiet”

on the issue⁶⁹ while the Philippines went from being an advocate of the norm to resisting the use of R2P language by the end of 2005.⁷⁰ In contrast, Vietnam was not initially convinced of R2P's potential as an emerging international norm but eventually came to support its inclusion within policy circles.⁷¹ While this is partly the result of variance in advocacy efforts (which will be discussed in detail in the following section), it is also a result of the inability of the norm to become effectively embedded within policy arenas and internalized; for some states, governments which made commitments to R2P at the World Summit are not the same governments today due to elections and political turnover.⁷² As a result governments could change positions according to shifts in political impetus or political environments.⁷³

In addition to having to deal with the problem of short political 'attention spans,' R2P is also challenged by the prominence of existing regional norms. Specifically, R2P is often associated with the norm of humanitarian intervention, which runs counter to the regional norm of non-interference. R2P's association with humanitarian intervention and its juxtaposition with the norm of non-interference seemingly compels regional actors into a game of 'all or nothing,' choosing either R2P's "wholesale acceptance or rejection."⁷⁴ Consequently, in order to be integrated within the region, "norms must take account of regional preferences and attitudes," and R2P must be "reconciled with the principle of non-interference and applied in a manner consistent with it."⁷⁵ Thus, in order for Canada to effectively promote R2P in the Asia-Pacific, it must be able to integrate R2P into existing normative

frameworks, and transform it from a ‘morally correct option’ to a ‘politically correct option.’⁷⁶

The process of norm localization provides a strategy which Canada can use to integrate the norm of R2P within existing regional norms. It also provides an avenue to disperse the R2P principles within the region, thereby making them more prevalent and sustainable. According to Archaya, norm localization is a “complex process and outcome by which norm-takers build congruence between transnational norms, including norms previously institutionalized in a region, and local beliefs and practices.”⁷⁷ In regards to addressing the issue of internalization, the “availability of credible local actors” which are discursively capable are important to the advancement of external norms.⁷⁸ Consequently, this requires engagement at top-policy levels and ensuring that Canadian leaders continue to include R2P language within human rights literature and policy⁷⁹ and to promote R2P language among existing regional policy-leaders and the younger generation of diplomats.⁸⁰ It also requires engagement at the grassroots level. For example, Canada has supported the World Federalist Movement, which has continuously worked with Philippine officials to ensure that R2P language is incorporated within government policy documents.⁸¹ Likewise, other NGOs have broken down R2P norm development efforts into stages which has ‘yielded gradual support’ among governments including those of Japan, Cambodia, and Thailand.”⁸² Canada’s success in developing the norm of R2P in the Asia-Pacific partly relies on its ability to work through local agents “rather than going independently at it.”⁸³

In addition to working with local partners, integration of R2P through norm localization also depends largely on the strength of existing local norms, and whether or not external norms can help to enhance the legitimacy of institutions without “fundamentally altering their existing social identity.”⁸⁴ In this sense, external norms would have to be ‘pruned’⁸⁵ in order to conform to regional values; in this case, emphasis would have to be placed on the aspects of R2P which strengthen sovereignty, such as focusing on the pillar of the ‘responsibility to prevent,’ rather than those aspects which challenge it.⁸⁶ Canada was faced with this issue in the past when Canada’s foreign minister proposed the creation of a multilateral security organization in the Asia-Pacific, along the lines of a ‘Pacific’ version of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). While the idea was initially rejected by regional governments, upon further engagement through track-two meetings and promoting the development of the concept among regional policy leaders, the idea gained momentum when Japanese Foreign Minister, Taro Nakayama proposed to graft the concept onto an existing ASEAN arrangement. As a result, the ASEAN Regional Forum was created and has become one of the region’s primary multilateral security forums.⁸⁷ Thus, in order for R2P principles to be effectively received within the Asia-Pacific, Canada must not only ensure its promotion among local actors, but must also work to make it compatible with existing regional norms and institutions.



8. Norm Advocacy

For Canada, R2P's development in the Asia-Pacific not only relies on creating a space for R2P principles but also ensuring that such principles are consistently advocated at both governmental and grassroots levels. While norm development aims to create favourable conditions in which external norms can find a place to exist, norm advocacy seeks to promote the growth of those norms once they have taken root. Once norms have been 'captured' in the minds of both the public and government officials, it requires the commitment of 'prominent moral entrepreneurs' and the "mobilisation of an effective advocacy network" which includes civil society and governmental actors. Indeed, a strategy for Canada has been advocating in favour of R2P development and strengthening, "normative consensus on R2P by reinvigorating interest and commitment where it matters most" through regional organizations. However, Canada's R2P advocacy efforts in the Asia-Pacific overall still remain minimal. There is a little mention of the Asia-Pacific in its list of potential partners and among those who are aware of R2P within the Asia-Pacific, few are willing to openly embrace it or to commit to its promotion.⁸⁸ However, there remains potential for considerable growth in Canadian advocacy efforts both at governmental levels and grassroots levels.

While Canada is able to promote R2P at the governmental level, there is more work to be done to translate these efforts into significant momentum in the Asia-Pacific. CSCAP and ASEAN bodies like the Human Rights Resource Centre represent an effective entry point upon which such discussions and further high-level advocacy by Canada can be carried out. Another strategy for Canada is to help translate advocacy efforts at the UN level into active engagement within the Asia-Pacific through “fostering dialogue between the Asia-Pacific region and the UN, and between the Asia-Pacific region and other regions.”⁸⁹ Although UN-ASEAN cooperation in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis offers an example of how dialogue between the region and the international body may result in the development of R2P policies, “at present, UN-regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific is still ad hoc and under-institutionalized,”⁹⁰ and contact between the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and regional leaders remains absent. At the governmental level, Canada has a number of prominent R2P advocates, including former Foreign Affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy, current opposition leader Michael Ignatieff, and Heidi Hulan, a member of the Permanent mission of Canada to the United Nations.⁹¹ These R2P leaders have all been ‘tireless advocates’ and “consistently put R2P on the world Agenda.”⁹² Without any current R2P regional mechanisms, the UN remains the “main institutional agent to oversee construction of the R2P regime.”⁹³ Furthermore, according to the 2005 summit outcome document, the UNSC remains the definitive authority over the use of force in regards to R2P. Consequently, advocacy efforts at the UN level would resonate with Asia-Pacific states that remain sceptical to issues related to humanitarian intervention, including China who insists that

“all questions relating to the use of force defer to the Security Council.”⁹⁴

At the grassroots level, there is also room for growth in terms of advocacy efforts. R2P remains under the radar for many non-governmental organizations in the region.⁹⁵ Both a lack of regional R2P minded NGO partners⁹⁶ and a lack of general resources among existing NGOs further hinders grassroots R2P advocacy efforts. Likewise, most civil society organizations prioritize domestic advocacy over international efforts⁹⁷ which is problematic for developing an advocacy network for the Asia-Pacific. In terms of R2P advocacy, NGOs play a crucial role in “contributing information, arguments and energy to influencing the decision-making process,”⁹⁸ and act as a platform upon which sustained long-term campaigns can be promoted. Looking at the role NGOs played in raising awareness during the Landmines campaign gives an insight into their potential for pushing the R2P agenda forward; the campaign was highly successful in creating significant momentum and had the Anti-Personnel Landmine Ban treaty passed in six years, in addition to continuing to play a role in its implementation using over 1400 NGOs working together in over 60 states.⁹⁹ In addition to providing resources for long-term awareness, NGOs also have detailed knowledge of ongoing R2P issues within their operating countries and they “know how to mobilize the public and the media in their constituencies and have experience in lobbying governments where they are located.”¹⁰⁰

The potential for Canada’s role in advocating R2P at the grassroots level in the Asia-Pacific is considerable. In regards to promoting NGO

involvement in R2P, Canada remains the primary supporter of the Responsibility to Protect –Engaging Civil Society project (R2PCS). The project, which has been spearheaded by the World Federalist Movement and supported by Oxfam International, Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, and Refugees International¹⁰¹ is a collection of R2P-minded NGOs which aim to increase R2P’s operability, in addition to strengthening and raising awareness of the R2P norm among officials and the general public. Despite the vast number of NGOs which have expressed interest in this project, only five originate from the Asia-Pacific Region.¹⁰² Similarly, Canadian-based NGOs, which obtain funding and resources from the Canadian Government, remain focused on R2P development elsewhere in the world.¹⁰³ Despite the lack of civil society engagement, there are potential entry points to increasing NGO activity, and a number of Asia-Pacific organizations have begun to incorporate R2P language in their advocacy efforts, including Solidarity for Asian People’s Advocacy, Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition, Asian Circle 1325, ASEAN People’s Assembly, Burma Partnership, the World Forum for Democratization in Asia among others.¹⁰⁴



9. Funding

Once regional structures are in place and norm development and advocacy efforts have taken root, Canada can use funding and provide resources in order to ensure that R2P efforts in the Asia-Pacific are sustainable. The lack of resources available for both R2P engaged civil society organizations and track-two initiatives has hampered the advancement of R2P regionally.¹⁰⁵ Governmental departments including the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (FAITC), and the Department of National Defence (DND) have all made contributions to supporting R2P globally and elsewhere, including through funding empirical research on R2P through the Stimson Centre and through supporting various projects in West Africa to help operationalize peace support operations and develop R2P capabilities.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, CIDA, FAITC, and the DND have contributed to the growth of national human rights initiatives in Asia by providing funding and resources to bodies like the ASEAN Institute of Strategic and International Studies, the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights, and various bilateral dialogues.¹⁰⁷

Despite its support for R2P programs globally and in other regions and its support for human rights centres in the Asia-Pacific, Canada has focused little attention to specifically assisting R2P minded organizations in the region. Progress is hampered by the fact that funding for all Asia-

Pacific track-two initiatives has declined in recent years.¹⁰⁸ Likewise, criteria established by CIDA for foreign aid eligibility make providing support for Asia-Pacific countries to develop their capacity to prevent humanitarian crises difficult.¹⁰⁹ The challenge then is for Canada to increase its support for R2P track-two programs such as CSCAP¹¹⁰ in addition to assisting other R2P intergovernmental and civil society organizations. While such funding can be provided through government agencies, Canada is also in a unique position to lobby fellow G8 members to provide resources for the development of R2P regionally.¹¹¹ It is also important to ensure that once such funding is available that its use is coordinated properly as lack of inter-donor coordination has hindered R2P operationalization elsewhere.¹¹²



10 . Conclusion

If the Responsibility to protect is to be realized as an international norm and in order for it to be turned from principle into practice, deeper engagement with the Asia-Pacific is required and it is up to R2P leaders like Canada to take the lead in R2P's development regionally. With its experience, Canada can strengthen regional diplomatic frameworks and use norm development, norm advocacy, and funding to advance the cause of R2P within the Asia-Pacific. While this paper has outlined a general strategy for Canadian engagement in the Asia-Pacific, its purpose is not to draw attention away from Canada's efforts elsewhere. Rather, Canadian engagement with the Asia-Pacific should become part of a more comprehensive strategy for Canada's global R2P efforts. Furthermore, while strengthening diplomatic frameworks may assist with norm development and while norm development may be important in increasing the effectiveness of norm advocacy and funding, this paper does not suggest that these strategies should be employed chronologically. Rather, this paper has sought to illustrate that these various methods of promoting R2P in the Asia-Pacific are interrelated and that a truly comprehensive strategy is required. Likewise, while this paper has made an argument as to why Canada is suited to promote R2P in the Asia-Pacific, it is not the only country that is capable of doing so. Other regional R2P advocates like Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea each have a role to play in R2P's development. However, while the region does have R2P advocates, Canada should not shake off

its responsibility to engage the Asia-Pacific on the responsibility to protect, and the region has much to gain if Canada were to become more engaged. It is the responsibility of R2P's champions to make R2P's principles realized, so that when our collective capacity is again tested by the horrors of genocide and mass atrocities,¹¹³ the responsibility to protect is capable of doing exactly that, in the places that it is needed the most.



11 . References and Author Note

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