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Füsun Türkmen

From Libya to Syria:

The Rise and Fall of Humanitarian Intervention?

pp. 3–9

Humanitarian intervention has long been held hostage to the concept of national sovereignty. Throughout the Cold War, the principle of non-interference in internal affairs has prevailed over the protection of civilians. The post-Cold War genocides perpetrated in Africa and the Balkans have led to the emergence of the ›responsibility to protect‹ (R2P). In the wake of the Arab Spring, the international intervention in Libya appeared to be a turning point, as it was explicitly meant ›to protect civilians‹. When Syria was set afire shortly after that, the regime engaged in mass killings and atrocities, including the use of chemical weapons against the civilian population. But this time, the international community refrained from military action. While attempting to identify the reasons for this contradiction, this article will seek an answer to the question: Is this already the end of humanitarian intervention?

Thorsten Benner

UN Crisis Diplomacy:

Increasingly Helpless and Irrelevant?

pp. 10–14

Syria, Iraq, Ukraine – these are just a few of the crisis hotspots that challenge the United Nations. In none of these cases can the United Nations claim anything close to success. This article puts the problems of UN crisis diplomacy into perspective. Increasing geopolitical fissures have buried the liberal dream of a UN-centric order and contribute to the limits of action, especially in cases where the core geopolitical interests of key powers are at stake (like in Syria, Ukraine). But even where there is very limited geopolitical rivalry (e.g. South Sudan), crisis diplomacy is challenged by rising expectations of protection combined with insufficient means, the often underrated veto power of local elites as well as weaknesses of political mobilization. Despite its systemic weaknesses, the United Nations is unlikely to be challenged in its role as ›provider of last resort‹ in political and humanitarian crises.

Devin Joshi · Roni Kay O'Dell

**How UNDP Human Development Reports
Changed the World**

pp. 15–20

For twenty-five years, Human Development Reports (HDRs) produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have promoted ›human development‹ based on the imperative of expanding people's capabilities to lead meaningful lives of their own choosing. Supporting this perspective, HDRs compare countries on the composite Human Development Index (HDI) as a way of measuring development as an alternative to measures of economic growth and per capita income. Assessing whether Human Development Reports have changed how people around the world think about development, the authors conducted qualitative and quantitative content analysis of their global academic and mass media coverage. They found that the media frequently covers HDR publications in all world regions and that coverage is largely favorable.

Ingvild Bode

Agents of the Status Quo or Agents of Change?

**How UN Officials Can Influence Processes of Policy
Change in the United Nations**

pp. 21–26

UN officials are more easily associated with the status quo than with change. Apart from the UN Secretary-General and his Special Representatives, their work has therefore been subject to limited attention. However, the development of major ideas such as human development or sovereignty as responsibility can be associated with the actions and personalities of specific, temporary UN officials. This article argues that temporary civil servants can become agents of change if three factors are combined: first, they occupy insider-outsider positions at the border between the ›second‹ and the ›third‹ United Nations; second, they have the ›right‹ personal qualities; and third, they are able to frame their ideas effectively at an opportune moment in time. These arguments are illustrated with two cases: Mahbub ul Haq and human development and Francis Deng and the international concern for internally displaced persons.