



generalizations and preconceived notions about the regional state of affairs that might not be easily recognizable to those living in and familiar with the region.

Part three of the volume deals with what the author calls the fragmenting and unifying issues, with chapters on ethnic conflict, environment, and global governance. Ethnic conflict is viewed as a fragmentation of the international order, and this volume provides a comprehensive set of tables summarizing the scale and geographical range of these conflicts on a global basis. However, these conflicts are much more complex both as to the cause and impact, and the long-term effects for many actors and groups, including those beyond the immediate ethnic community, are not necessarily identified as easily or comprehensively as the summary tables presented here might suggest. Environmental concerns currently compete for the attention of political actors against such issues as ethnic conflict and the more traditional security concerns; the chapter on pandemics provides an insight into an issue area that may well come to dominate the international public policy arena, with a discussion that offers an opportunity to apply the perspectives approach to understand the challenges for policy and for international cooperation. Perhaps not surprisingly, the chapter on global governance raises many questions that go to the heart of international relations, yet fail to deliver clear-cut answers even with the application of Nau's tightly structured framework. Who controls international institutions, and will they behave differently than state institutions? Can global governance provide a structure to tame anarchy? What happens to national sovereignty in the face of global governance? These are old questions, and we are still likely to continue in search of the answers for some time to come.

Mary Farrell
University of London, UK

The Use of Force in Humanitarian Intervention: Morality and Practicalities

John Janzekovic

Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006, 212pp.

ISBN-10: 0-7546-4850-8

Journal of International Relations and Development (2008) **11**, 80–82.

doi:10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800147

Over the last couple of years, much has been written about the controversial issue of humanitarian intervention. Most books, however, have dealt with it from a relatively narrow perspective focusing only on its legal, political or moral aspects. The reviewed publication, written by John Janzekovic, lecturer of international relations at the University of Sunshine Coast in Australia and the Vaxjo University in Sweden, seeks to overcome this limitation by opting for a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary approach and by combining elements coming from both the theory and the practice. This ambitious effort, though, is only partly successful, since the author faces numerous problems caused as much by the complexity of the topic as by the absence of a clear methodology and the conflation of certain terms and concepts.



The book is divided into five chapters. Four deal with general problems, namely ethical reasoning and moral principles, plausible interventionist strategies, legal implications of humanitarian intervention and the objections raised against the concept. The fifth chapter contains a case study on the ethnic conflict in the Balkans (1992–1999) that serves to illustrate, more or less convincingly, the arguments made previously.

The first chapter presents the main thesis of the book, which is relatively simple. It consists of saying that ‘military intervention by external parties against those who conduct serious and ongoing violations of human rights is morally justifiable’ (p. 1) in case ‘non-coercive intervention fails or is doomed to failure by the intransigence of determined belligerence’ (p. 1). In justifying the thesis, the author uses what he labels as a consequentialist-utilitarian position. This position claims that ‘violence is itself not intrinsically good or bad’ (p. 27) and that the use of force is just when ‘it may be the only way to defend a moral good’ (p. 27). In addition, the author refers to the existence of an international ‘civil and moral society’ (p. 25), which makes in his eyes an armed intervention in countries, where serious human rights violations take place, not a right but even a duty of the international community as a whole as well as of all individual states and human beings. Both of the assumptions seem controversial.

The adoption of the consequentialist-utilitarian perspective, claiming that an act is morally right, when it leads to ‘what may be considered to be the best consequences’ (p. 5) or ‘what produces good or maximum utility for all person affected by the action’ (p. 35), makes the book vulnerable to objections of uncertainty and incoherence. It is so for three reasons. First, it is far from obvious why saving strangers, to use N. J. Wheeler’s words, should always, in any situation, be the option producing the maximum utility. The author does not explain this point, nor does he clarify, how he actually measures and compares such disparate values as human rights, national interests or financial burden of an armed action. Second, the introduction of the idea of balancing (one possible set of consequences against other ones) into the system negates the concept of an *obligation* to intervene, since this concept precludes a free choice between several equal options, making one of them simply a *must*. And finally, the consequentialist logic suggests that, if using force and killing is in certain circumstances acceptable and if what really matters are the best — not good — consequences, even the original human rights violation could probably be justified, provided it causes, on an overall scale, more good than bad. This suggestion reveals the traps of the chosen approach that the author does not manage to solve otherwise than by affirming the absolute, *per se* evil of the trigger act, thus resorting to a deontological standpoint. Such a position is not methodologically sound and undermines the argumentation.

The reference to international civil and moral society, which ‘not only responds to the welfare of citizens in a material sense, but also [...] demonstrates tolerance, compassion and understanding’ (p. 25), does not seem convincing either. The author fails to explain, what he bases his claim about the existence of such a society on. The assertion that ‘humans do not, and cannot, live in isolation with only self-interest as the primary motivation’ (p. 27) likens rather an article of belief than a serious scientific argument. In fact, the author himself admits that the idea of obligatory humanitarian intervention makes sense only ‘if one subscribes to the notion that there are at least some universal humanitarian ideals’ (p. 42), failing, at the same time, to be more specific on why should one subscribe to such a notion, and on what happens if one simply decides not to do so.



The second chapter of the book, focusing on plausible interventionist strategies, is of a more practical nature. Inspired by his own experiences in the military, the author identifies three important elements to be taken into account during the planning and realization of an armed action. Those include a clear determination of responsibility, an unequivocal and sufficiently strong mandate, and realistic expectations (for instance, the expectation that the intervention will be most probably met with violent opposition).

In addition to this, the author makes other interesting practical remarks, out of which three merit special attention. First, he accentuates that in deciding on military actions, states as well as the international community tend to focus more on 'the concerns and needs of potential interventionists [...] than on those suffering serious deprivations and abuse' (p. 6). This attitude shapes the course of interventions and makes them easily open to distraction and manipulations. The way out is, however, difficult to find and the appeal to the universal solidarity, repeatedly made in the book, hardly constitutes a sufficient solution. Second, the author rightly reveals that there is no consensus on how to measure success of an intervention. Sticking to the idea that humanitarian action should always be about saving lives, he proposes to primarily have a look at whether there is 'immediate relief to those suffering extreme violations of human rights' (p. 7). Finally, Janzekovic describes three practical and especially acute problems linked to the realization of humanitarian interventions. Those are the problem of timing, since most interventions do not come at all or come too late, hindered by an unrealistic requirement of the prior exhaustion of other means; the problem of the choice of means, frequently dictated rather by the zero-casualty strategy than by concerns for the target population's lives; and the problem of the quantity of forces displayed that is often largely underestimated. Both of these remarks are well argued and illustrated in the case study.

The third, legal chapter of the book surveys, and sometimes slightly confuses, several branches of international law (international humanitarian, criminal and human rights law and rules on the use of force), containing also some non-canonic or simply erroneous statements ('humanitarian law consists of a combination of international law and human rights conventions,' p. 102). The fourth chapter, which presents, and to a certain extent also answers, the most classical objections against humanitarian intervention — such as those that using force is morally wrong, non-violent intervention works better or force should only be used in the national interest — is, on the contrary, relatively logical and well structured.

The reviewed publication seeks to offer a fresh and innovative look at the complex issue of humanitarian intervention. It manages to do so in chapters reflecting the author's own operational experiences with military actions, which contain stimulating suggestions. It is less successful in chapters of a more theoretical or methodological character that tend to suffer from inconsistencies and incoherence. All in all, Janzekovic's *The Use of Force in Humanitarian Intervention: Morality and Practicalities* constitutes a valuable contribution to the debate on humanitarian intervention... that is nonetheless much stronger in *practicalities* than in *morality*.

Veronika Bilková
Institute of International Relations, Prague