



The Cambridge Union Society  
9A Bridge Street  
Cambridge, CB2 1UB

Email: [press@cus.org](mailto:press@cus.org)

## Press Release: Thursday 28th April 2016

# THIS HOUSE BELIEVES HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION DOES MORE HARM THAN GOOD

### **Anna Walker- 1<sup>st</sup> Proposition**

This debate is all about doing “the most good and the least harm” Walker begins, pointing out that the goals of any type of humanitarian intervention should be, “sustainable, ethical and more importantly realistic”. She continues by pointing out that, “it’s the world intervention that we need to look at and we need to problematize”, because an intervention is “not consensual”, and often does not work. Taking up the example of Afghanistan, she suggests that “if we kill 100 ISIS operatives, we make 200 more”, and this means that “humanitarian intervention is self-defeating”. Walker then concludes by arguing “humanitarian intervention and humanitarianism are two different things”.

### **General Sir Michael Jackson- 1<sup>st</sup> Opposition**

The General opens with the declaration that “Soldiers and diplomats should be as one”. He goes on to highlight that, “when the Royal Navy goes to Montserrat in the aftermath of a dreadful earthquake... that is a form of intervention”. The General then highlights cases such as Kuwait; there was an intervention which has largely been successful, “The general settlement for peace... has more or less lasted since Christmas 1995”. General Jackson, who was appointed to Chief of the General Staff a month before the Iraq War, went on to discuss the importance of nation-building, “very often the military dimension is the pre-amble”. In his final point, he reveals the purpose of humanitarian interventions, “we are trying to stop people being killed, stop them living under a tyranny, and ensure that what follows the tyranny is better than the tyranny”, admitting that he is not confident that this is something we achieved in Iraq. Nonetheless, he concludes, “if we say that we will never do anything... we will be in dereliction of our international duty”.

### **Harry Stovin-Bradford- 2<sup>nd</sup> Proposition**

The younger Stovin-Bradford opens boldly, highlighting Iraq and Afghanistan as examples of situations in which, “we do serious damage by leaping before we’ve looked”. Turning comical for a moment, he addresses his opponent, who also happens to be his father: “Dad, I can ask you a few questions about this”. Stovin-Bradford, who is also Debating Officer at the Union, notes that, “the political will seems to stop when the body bags start coming home”, when really we need to see “an intervention of ten years, of fifteen years, not just the length of the election cycle”. Finally, Stovin-Bradford draws to a close with the point that humanitarian intervention “seems to create more heads on the hydra than it seems to cut away”.



The logo for Deloitte, consisting of the word 'Deloitte' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font with a small green checkmark-like symbol at the end.

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### **Matthew Stovin-Bradford, 2nd opposition**

The older Stovin-Bradford opens with some good-natured teasing, “the opportunity to share this platform with my son is one I will treasure forever. But you’re wrong”. He explains that, as a young Royal Marine, “I wanted to be a force for good...that included humanitarian intervention”. He regrets the occasions when, “The UK was too timid to do the right thing and go and sort it out”. He points to the success of the intervention in Sierra Leone in 2000 (which he was personally involved in), noting that the peaceful election in 2007 was “a great outcome because we set the conditions for it in 2000”. He dismisses the idea that Iraq was a humanitarian intervention- it was “self-defence...Saddam Hussein is in Iraq, that’s where I go and get him”. Stovin-Bradford concludes by urging, “let’s get involved earlier”.

### **Sir Christopher Meyer, 3rd proposition**

Sir Christopher Meyer, former British ambassador to the US and Germany, opens by explaining that the “doctrine of international community” came from a 1999 speech by Tony Blair. In this speech Blair “did mention as bad people who need to be brought down Saddam Hussein”, meaning that Iraq can qualify as a humanitarian intervention. However, Sir Christopher points out that, “Saddam Hussein was a bad man... but ISIS is far worse”. The difficulty, he notes, arises when “the military go in, and the political aim is unclear”. On nation building, he criticises, “trying to graft onto other societies our values our norms, no better, no worse, than theirs, but different”. He concludes by arguing that, “the problem is the damned politicians”, finally warning, “don’t do nation building, because it is a fool’s errand; don’t intervene in civil wars”.

### **Ingram Davidson, 3rd opposition**

“Humanitarian intervention... is a weapon in a varied toolkit” begins Davidson, who was formerly the Secretary General of Cambridge Model United Nations. “What we need to do is to recognise the motivation”, he continues, “Daesh aren’t engaged in a western mind-set, they won’t engage in diplomacy”. Davidson also notes that both the opposition and proposition have praised the success of the Sierra Leone intervention- “we have yet to see a point that really cuts down how successful that has been”. He goes on to rebut the idea that nation building is problematic, “regime change shouldn’t be seen as western imposition... we need to take into account the morays of the country itself”, before concluding that “this is something that matters every day because it is a developing doctrine... it’s up to us”.

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For footage of the event go to <https://www.youtube.com/user/cambridgeunionsoc>

Friday, 29 April 2016