

# The Question of Intervention

*John Stuart Mill and the Responsibility to Protect*

Michael W. Doyle

The question of when or if a nation should intervene in another country's affairs is one of the most important concerns in today's volatile world. Taking John Stuart Mill's famous 1859 essay "A Few Words on Non-Intervention" as his starting point, international relations scholar Michael W. Doyle addresses the thorny issue of when a state's sovereignty should be respected and when it should be overridden or disregarded by other states in the name of humanitarian protection, national self-determination, or national security. In this time of complex social and political interplay and increasingly sophisticated and deadly weaponry, Doyle reinvigorates Mill's principles for a new era while assessing the new United Nations doctrine of responsibility to protect. In the twenty-first century, intervention can take many forms: military and economic, unilateral and multilateral. Doyle's thought-provoking argument examines essential moral and legal questions underlying significant American foreign policy dilemmas of recent years, including Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan.



"In this brilliant book Michael Doyle supplies a lucid history, exposition, and evaluation of the idea of non-intervention from its beginnings in natural law theorizing about doctrines of just war to recent and contemporary debates over Somalia, Rwanda, Kosovo, Ossetia, Libya, Syria, and elsewhere, as well as a thorough account of the evolving machineries of intervention since the creation of the United Nations. It is the best available work on its subject, and is likely to be widely discussed."

—**Ian Shapiro, Yale University**

"Intervention is the quintessential ethical challenge of international politics. Competing claims often appear irreconcilable. Duties are not clearly assigned and expectations change over time. Michael Doyle sorts out the arguments in clear, concise, and lively prose, telling a story that enables a principled approach to power politics. This is a landmark book for scholars, students, and policymakers alike — it will become the go-to resource for years to come."

—**Joel H. Rosenthal, Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs**

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