

'Biggles' takes point for Blair's assault on sovereignty

By Gabrielle Peut

Former Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans, who earned the nickname "Biggles" for his flights over Tasmania during the 1983 Franklin Dam battle, is the most prominent Australian involved in former British PM Tony Blair's drive to expunge the principle of national sovereignty from international law.

Evans is one of the key theorists of the "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) doctrine, otherwise known as the Blair Doctrine, which Blair first unveiled at the Chicago Economic Club in 1999 in the midst of the NATO bombing of Serbia over Kosovo. Blair offered the international community a set of criteria for deciding when and how to intervene militarily in the affairs of another country, asserting that the era of the nation-state which commenced with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia was over, and that Britain and her allies had the right to armed intervention on humanitarian grounds—R2P. It is a Trojan horse for colonialism, creating the pretext for former colonial powers to re-enter their old territories, as seen in the British returning to Iraq, the French and Italian involvement in the overthrow and murder of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, the French intervention into Mali to clean up the mess caused by the same al-Qaeda rebels they supported in Libya, and the current French support for the same al-Qaeda rebels again, to topple President Bashar al-Assad in Syria; Evans has been key in shaping it from the beginning.

In September 2000 the Canadian government on behalf of the British Commonwealth announced at the UN it had founded the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), under Gareth Evans and Algerian national Mohamed Sahnoun. Funding for the new organisation came from one of the Queen's own private investment managers, mega-speculator George Soros, who at the same time was actively funding the fake "grass-roots" colour revolutions to topple the governments of Russia's near-neighbours.

By 2001 at the most opportunistic moment, two weeks after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Evans and Sahnoun produced a report on behalf of the Canadian Government and the ICISS entitled "Responsibility to Protect", which was revealed at the UN General Assembly. The findings in their report, of course, were in tandem with the Blair/Bush warmongering doctrine that legitimised the Iraq invasion. By November/December 2002 in an article that appeared on the Foreign Affairs website, both Evans and Sahnoun explained their concept of Responsibility to Protect:

"The international community in the last decade repeatedly made a mess of handling the many demands that were made for 'humanitarian intervention': coercive action against a state to protect people within its borders from suffering grave harm... Disagreement continues about whether there is a right of intervention, how and when it should be exercised, and under whose authority... The issue must be reframed as an argument not about the 'right to intervene' but about the 'responsibility to protect' that all sovereign states owe to their citizens."

Later in the same article Evans and Sahnoun denounce the Westphalian principle of sovereignty:

"At the heart of this conceptual approach is a shift in thinking about the essence of sovereignty, from control to responsibility. In the classic Westphalian system of international relations, the defining characteristic of



Gareth Evans is Tony Blair's co-schemer in the war on sovereignty.

sovereignty has always been the state's capacity to make authoritative decisions regarding the people and resources within its territory... a sovereign state is empowered by international law to exercise exclusive and total jurisdiction within its territorial borders, and other states have the corresponding duty not to intervene in its internal affairs. But working against this standard has been the increasing impact in recent decades of human rights norms, bringing a shift from a culture of sovereign impunity to one of national and international accountability. The increasing influence of the concept of human security has also played a role: what matters is not just state security but the protection of individuals against threats to life, livelihood, or dignity that can come from within or without. In short, a large and growing gap has been developing between international behaviour as articulated in the state-centred UN Charter, which was signed in 1946, and evolving state practice since then, which now emphasises the limits of sovereignty."

Australia promotes R2P

By 2008, the Iraq war was seen as such a fiasco that no doctrine attached to Blair should have had any credibility, but the Australian government under new Prime Minister and British agent Kevin Rudd went all out to boost the doctrine further. Rudd established two major centers in Australia: the Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC) launched November 2008, formally known as the Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence, a government think-tank advising on how to more effectively intervene (regime change) on conflicts abroad for civilian protection; and the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (AP R2P), launched at the University of Queensland in February 2008, "dedicated", as they say, "to advancing the responsibility to protect principle through research and policy dialogue". The AP R2P boasts Gareth Evans as its patron, and was officially launched by the former

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