



Consulat général de France à New York

**Speech of Mr. Philippe Lalliot,**  
**Consulate General of France in New York**

**Conferences@934 : The Responsibility to Protect:  
a New Tool for Peacekeeping**

Thursday, January 19, 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Friends,

I wish to welcome you to the Consulate and to our opening Conference@934 of 2012. I would like to take this somewhat belated opportunity to wish you all a happy and successful New Year.

Allow me to begin by thanking the representatives of the Alliance Program at Columbia University, with whom we are organizing tonight's conference. As you may know, the Alliance Program is a great program of cooperation between Columbia, Polytechnique, Sciences-Po and the Sorbonne. Thanks to them, and thanks to you, many students can be with us today – a fact I am most delighted about.

This evening will be the 24<sup>th</sup> session of this cycle of conferences we launched a little over two years ago. I like to highlight the large scope of subjects it has been treating. Last time, for instance, we spoke about French gastronomy with Adam Gopnik and Layla Demay. Today we will be discussing the theme of the “responsibility to protect”.

Since its adoption by the United Nations' General Assembly in 2005, the notion of the "responsibility to protect" gives rise to a number of questions, if not to say controversies. If its initial goal is to protect civil populations and to prevent mass atrocity crimes of being committed, it might – according to its detractors – become a way of legitimizing certain Western countries' interference with the internal affairs of other nations, sometimes even in the form of a military intervention.

In which manner can the responsibility to protect be defined as an instrument for peacekeeping? What form of collective action may it justify? When do we cross the line between this responsibility to protect, and respecting the States' sovereignty?

We are fortunate to have with us tonight two of the top notch experts on the subject. I shall present them in a few words.

Last October, Hervé Ladsous was appointed Under-Secretary-General at the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Dear Hervé, you are one of our "top" French diplomats, and you recently received the rare dignity of Ambassador de France. You have held the most prestigious positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If only to cite two, you were Ambassador to China, as well as Chief of Staff for the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppé.

Michael Doyle is an American Security and International Affairs Professor at Columbia University. Dear Michael, you have taught at Princeton and directed its Center of International Studies. You have also taught at John Hopkins and Warwick Universities. You are a renowned expert in International Relations Theory and in International Law. Since 2006 you have been a member of the UN Democracy Fund, of which you are currently the president. You have also been one of the major advisors to the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

As usual, after a discussion of half an hour between our guest speakers, we will go on with another half-hour of Q&A. I would like to mention we are off the record tonight, unless our guests decide otherwise. We shall terminate this session at 7:45 p.m., in order to continue the conversation over a drink. With no further delays, I hand the microphone over to Michael Doyle, and wish you all an excellent evening./.