

**Pacifism has the Effect of Condoning Genocide**  
**by Gregory Stanton, President, Genocide Watch**  
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It has always perplexed me that far more genocides have taken place during the Presidencies of liberal Democrats (Wilson - Armenia; FDR - the Holocaust, the Ukrainian "famine", Stalin's purges; Carter - Ethiopia, Cambodia; Clinton - Rwanda, Bosnia; and Obama - continuation of Darfur, Burma, and the coming genocide in Southern Sudan).

Democrats seem not to understand the need to use force to prevent and stop genocide. There is a pacifist aversion to use of force in the human rights movement, too. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International will never advocate it. They won't even use the word *genocide* as it clearly applies. Where are the Henry Jacksons, the Harry Trumans, and the JFK's of today?

A pacifist aversion to use of force in the human rights movement has been fatal to millions of people. We should never forget the ICRC's silence in the face of the Holocaust or the Quaker's visit to "reason with" Hitler. Amnesty International was unwilling to advocate the use of force to end the Rwandan genocide ("outside its mandate") and still are today on Darfur.

I'm happy to get the truth told about HRW and Amnesty. I had to battle with them for years to get the Cambodian Tribunal established. The HRW Asia Director tried to kill the Cambodia Tribunal by all means at his disposal, including getting any funding for it blocked by Senator Mitch McConnell, of the Senate Appropriations Committee. HRW's long-time representative in Phnom Penh, also tried to kill support for the tribunal among Cambodian human rights groups.

Now the HRW Asia Director is falsely claiming to have supported the tribunal, but giving interviews to Voice of America saying that it has become a corrupt farce. He is a liar about his previous position. He has been consistent in opposing trials for the Khmer Rouge leaders.

I wrote my article, "Perfection is the Enemy of Justice," published in the *Bangkok Post* and the *Phnom Penh Post* (available on Genocide Watch website), in opposition to HRW's critiques and those of Amnesty International which also tried to block creation of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. The article answered every one of their critiques and turned the debate around.

Eventually a resolution that David Scheffer [*Ambassador David Scheffer was the Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues in the Clinton Administration.*] and I worked on with numerous UN delegations was passed by the UN General Assembly, forcing the UN's Office of Legal Affairs, which had walked out of negotiations with the Cambodian government back into those negotiations on terms set by the Cambodian Law to create the Tribunal.

One has to question HRW's opposition to genocide with so many examples of its reluctance to apply the term and even to punish obvious perpetrators like the Khmer Rouge. To their credit, HRW did call the Rwandan genocide by its proper name and were one of the first organizations to do so. Holly Burkhalter and Ken Roth led the effort. Holly has since left HRW and is now with the International Justice Mission. HRW was also one of the most effective supporters of the International Criminal Court. But they always seem to oppose the use of force to stop genocide.

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*Editor's Note: This thought provoking challenge to human rights philosophy will be the basis for a more extensive essay by the author in a future issue. GPN is publishing this powerful critique briefly in a preliminary form at a time in history when concerned people are debating the possible necessity of using force against a would-be nuclear power that engages in manifest denial of the Holocaust, provides ongoing military support to terrorist groups who have attacked Israel and brazenly calls for the total destruction of Israel.*