

# Power drives discussion on American foreign policy

**Kristopher Moody**  
Reporter

Samantha Power examined the United States' response to genocide in the 20th century, the realizations learned from experience and the collateral damage of the war in Iraq.

She began her speech to a mostly sold out crowd in McCrary Theater, by opening up the "toolbox" that government officials have at their disposal to deal with genocide.

"It's not an on-off switch in terms of just sending in the military," Power said. "There are other options."

Power examined the creativity that policy makers have when faced with genocide. The soft tools in their box include denouncing the responsible government, freezing the assets of the perpetrator, enforcing embargoes and expelling ambassadors.

On the more robust end, officials could rally a multi-National force, impose air strikes or no-fly zones or invade the country.

In the past, Power said, American policy makers kept the toolbox

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—Conor Britain, freshman

closed. For example, during the Clinton administration, she said that crimes against humanity were buried under more centralized and pressing issues.

"The feeling of government officials is, 'let's not waste the president's time on this,'" Power said. "The issue doesn't rise to attention among U.S. policy makers."

The administration already is involved with so much that international conflicts are often forgotten.

"I think that any country with the resources like America has an obligation to help," Freshman Conor Britain said. "The problem is choosing which battles to fight. Unfortunately, it often tends to be the battles that result in political gain."

However, responsibility is a difficult matter in practice, Poer said.

She said that while there has been support for the phrase "responsibility to protect," finding somebody to execute those responsibilities proves more difficult.

Power identified examples of learning and change over the years of struggle with genocide policies. Governments now realize that these events don't disappear, and can spill over into neighboring states. One of the most beneficial signs of change is the surge of activism by global citizens. This lesson is one that can be added to the toolbox, Power said.

Power ended her speech by discussing the collateral damage of the war in Iraq. She said that the poor planning of the conflict combined with the catastrophic occurrences have changed how others view us. Their confidence in our competence



Brittany Smith/ Photographer

Power wrote "A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide."

has decreased.

Power said that in order for us to regain our good graces and superpower standing we must play by international rules. Since legitimacy and competence are linked, she argued that this would increase our

projected competence.

Power's speech was sponsored by the Liberal Arts Forum and the General Studies program.

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