

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ORGANIZATIONS

Terms and concepts to know:

International norms	“New World Order”
International organizations (IOs)	UN Charter
UN General Assembly	UN Security Council
“Blue Helmets”	World Court (ICJ)
War crimes	Prisoners of War (POWs)
Just war	Human rights
Crimes against humanity	Amnesty International

Study and discussion questions:

1. The former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali proposed (without success) the creation of a standby army of peacemaking forces loaned by member states. This would of course, reduce state sovereignty and increase supranational authority. Discuss such a plan’s merits and drawbacks.
2. Collective security against aggression depends on states’ willingness to bear the costs of fighting wars to repel and punish aggressors. Sometimes great powers have been willing to bear such costs; at other times they have not. What considerations do you think should guide such decisions? Give examples of situations (actual or potential) that would and would not merit the intervention of great powers to reverse aggression.
3. Given the difficulty of enforcing international law, how might the role of the World Court be strengthened in future years? What obstacles might such plans encounter? How would they change the Court’s role if they succeeded?
4. Although international norms concerning human rights are becoming stronger, China and many other states continue to consider human rights an internal affair over which the state has sovereignty within its territory. Do you think human rights are a legitimate subject for one state to raise with another? If so, how do you reconcile the tensions between state autonomy and universal rights?
5. What would you describe as some of the stronger points made about the lack of legitimacy regarding the decision of the United States to attack Iraq? What do you think constitute weaker points made by the author (Mandel)?
6. Discuss and debate some of the different perspectives on international law as viewed through a “Marxist” lens and discussed by Keach. What areas of agreement or disagreement with your own position can you find?

Readings:

WEB – Readings from the “International Law” links.

Video:

The Prosecution of the American President.