

***“International (In)Justice: Six Decades After, Have we
Progressed Significantly Since Nuremberg?”***

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ABSTRACT

After the Second World War, an “internationalization” of human rights occurred, with states beginning to accept that human rights were not mere matters of domestic (internal) concern, but rather the responsibility of all states committed to international world peace and security. The trials held at Nuremberg and Tokyo marked an important turning point in the history of international relations in the field of human rights. Individuals were held accountable for internal acts that amounted to gross violations of human rights.

My paper topic: “International (In)Justice: Six Decades After, Have we progressed significantly since Nuremberg?” attempts to address the significance of those historic trials. Was the criminal trial framework at Nuremberg a blueprint for how to carry out international justice today? Was it somehow flawed?

The paper focuses on what has happened since the occupation of Iraq and how the competing arguments for and against U.S. policy since 2003 have been framed. My aim thereby is to sharpen our understanding of what precisely is at issue by discussing the ongoing controversies about “the war on terrorism” from a heightened perspective, whereby the implications, politically and morally and historically, of both our conduct and choices might be illuminated.

My aspiration in the paper is to present both sides without coming down on either one, given the complexity of the issues, the dangers of historical analogies, and the fact that

these complex questions are still fully in process and unresolved. We need more mutual understanding and less hard position-taking these days, with the arguments on both sides presented via a contextualized perspective that includes critical self-reflection, that is, reflection by us Americans and the U.S. government on the limitations and possible hypocrisy of our own perspective.

The main theme of the paper is to examine the hypocrisies of nations, especially their questionable moral stature to impose equitable judgment on a defeated nation, and my ultimate aim is to stimulate consideration of international justice and to call for an engaged, moral response to those chauvinistic blinders that preclude fairness.