

Special topics



Bratt argues in his article “Peace over Justice” that the goals of the United Nations frequently find themselves muddled. Although in theory peace and justice should go hand in hand, the two goals often end up pulling in opposite directions. The goals of establishing peace usually involve a level of violence due to the nature of countries divided by war. While the preservation of civilian life is always a main concern of the UN, during peacekeeping or peace establishing missions loss of civilian life from bombings and being the general area of conflict is inevitable. While trying to maintain a balance with justice by providing food and medicine sources, peacekeeping and justice cannot work together in these instances. Bratt writes, “Although we may find that peace can exist without justice, there will never be justice without peace.” Through his extensive list of examples, Bratt proves this point. Justice is entirely dependent on the creation of peace in a state at war and cannot be executed correctly without peace.

Bratt calls upon numerous examples to demonstrate his point. For example, the issue with picking a side to punish in the aftermath of war often encourages groups to keep fighting. The side that is punished is the result of a loss, not necessarily the group that committed the most atrocities. This also brings new challenges to justice seeking missions because supplying food, water, medicine, and even arms only perpetuates the desire to fight. Also, the image of imperialism can be seen through peacekeeping missions, especially with the presence of the Permanent Five many of which were once colonizers of areas with internal strife. Peacekeeping then takes on a whole new image and convolutes the issue between justice and peace even more. Bratt’s argument is convincing even though it advocates administering justice after peace. The question of preserving human life cannot be

answered solely through the search for justice, but must be supported by a pact of peace between warring factions within a country.

The NIEO or New International Economic Organization was a product of the Second World War and the United Nations first attempt to address the issue of world economic inequality. The General Assembly convened in order to study the world economic problems especially the role of wealthier countries in the development or underdevelopment of smaller and economically inferior nations. The western world's preoccupation with oil was a deciding force in the change of ideology behind the NIEO as understood at the Sixth Special Session. The President of Algeria, President Boumedienne, used this economic elephant in a manner to manipulate the global powers thirst for oil. He accused them of deliberately keeping Arab nations underdeveloped in order to make financial gains and his scare tactics and reprimands were successful for a time being. However, as the prices in oil dropped or remained the same throughout the late 1970's and the economic giants found sure footing, the principles behind the NIEO went by the wayside. The change in ideology is the result of several factors. First the drop in oil prices took the wind out of the sails of oil nations. As a result, the economic giants in the West regained their confidence in the global market and were no longer intimidated by threats from underdeveloped nations. Thirdly, the coalition between third world nations was not strong and was easily separated when called into question as in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Social issues gained precedence in importance as the importance of economic equality fell into the shadows. This in turn aided the emerging debate over the terms " rich" countries and " poor" countries. The UN refused to recognize these blanket terms as acceptable forms of classify

nations. Also, the emphasis on private economic entities once again became an important factor in the world economy. Finally, the collapse of the Soviet Union saw a disintegration of the already frail coalition of third world nations. All of these factors led to the beginning of the end of the NIEO concept of world economic equality.