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**A COMMON SENSE GUIDE TO WORLD PEACE.**  
By Benjamin B. Ferencz, Oceana Publications,  
1985

Benjamin B. Ferencz in *A COMMON SENSE GUIDE TO WORLD PEACE*, states the thesis of his book in the preface: "Unless change by non-violent means is made possible, change by violent means becomes inevitable. If peoples of differing persuasions cannot learn to live together in peace they will probably die together in war." Mr. Ferencz postulates solutions to world hostilities and advocates world peace by appealing to humankind's "common sense." Rather than condemning nations for their actions, his book calls to the world to effect peace before it is too late. Divided into three parts, *A COMMON SENSE GUIDE TO WORLD PEACE* discusses past efforts and proposed new efforts, both theoretical and practical, to end wars between and within countries and, more importantly, to prevent a nuclear holocaust.

In "What *Has* Been Done," Part One, Mr. Ferencz gives the reader an interesting and succinct history of the evolution of international law, culminating in the formation and operation of the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. He explores the failings of countries in drafting, concluding and adhering to treaties, the infringement of a sovereign's property or its citizen's rights and the problems inherent in international institutions.

Parts Two and Three provide a guide for governments to follow in order to achieve peace. Both "What *Should* Be Done" (Part Two) and "What *Can* Be Done" (Part Three) must be read together since they involve considerations necessary towards accomplishing this goal. Mr. Ferencz is optimistic and this comes through in his preface where he describes his approach to attaining peaceful objectives as viewing the glass "half-full" not "half-empty." In both sections, he suggests ways to improve international law, perceiving these as the foremost prerequisites to peace. Among these improvements are the balancing of principles such as self-determination and the nonuse of force, as provided in Articles 1(2) and 2(4) respectively, of the United Nations Charter. Other improvements include bridging the ideological gap, specifically between the United States and the Soviet Union,

and eliminating the escape clauses in the enabling documents of international conventions and organizations. For example, Mr. Ferencz advocates eliminating Article 9 of the International Convention Against The Taking of Hostages, which enables a terrorist to obtain political asylum and immunity from extradition.

An additional prerequisite for a peaceful world is to increase the role of the judiciary in international disputes. Mr. Ferencz asserts that controversies which cannot be settled by negotiation should be resolved by mediation, conciliation or by an impartial tribunal like the International Court of Justice. Although this book was published prior to the United States' withdrawal in October 1985 from the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in *The Case of Nicaragua vs. United States of America*, it appears that Mr. Ferencz's speculative fears about the domino effect of the United States' shaky recognition of the International Court's jurisdiction were well-founded and, in fact, prescient. Moreover, his hopes that the United States would "rethink its position regarding the International Court" have yet to be realized.

Mr. Ferencz's optimism, however, is contagious. One becomes more positive about the future of international law when he discusses the success of the international courts in adjudicating international crimes. The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, organized to try those who committed crimes against humanity during World War II, exemplifies international cooperation in the enforcement of international law. Mr. Ferencz also fervently advocates honoring the United Nations Charter obligations and the enforcement of international law as codified and recognized in treaties, customs and general principles of international law.

The focus of "What Can Be Done" to accomplish peace is directed towards ending the arms race and Mr. Ferencz proposes reducing munitions production and existing arsenals. In addition, he suggests resolving present conflicts which could destroy or endanger the peace of nations. Ultimately, before there can be any hope of lasting peace, Mr. Ferencz believes that it is necessary to educate the children of the world about the prerequisites of peace.

In conclusion, the author finds "no cause for despair" but warns against exaggerated criticism corroding the public confidence needed to stimulate improvements. However, one wonders what Mr. Ferencz's reaction would be towards the United States withdrawal from the jurisdiction from the International

Court of Justice in *The Case of Nicaragua v. United States of America*, the Iran-Contra arms scandal and the Star Wars agenda. Does this reflect the recognition and honor that nation-states have of international law and its obligations? From his attitude in *A COMMON SENSE GUIDE TO WORLD PEACE*, Mr. Ferencz might see these events as merely a minor setback in the evolution of international relations since ultimately "We have it in our power to begin the world over again."

*A COMMON SENSE GUIDE TO WORLD PEACE* infuses the reader with a sense of hope and optimism in the ability of all countries to peacefully resolve their differences through international law, regardless of the obstacles. Although there will constantly be changes and events in the international community, Mr. Ferencz implies that these changes should never affect each individual's faith in obtaining world peace. What is important is that each country and each individual believe that world peace can be realized.

*Denise Savage*