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# CGS Announces ICC Ratification Initiative

CGS's predecessor organization, the World Federalist Association, played a vital role in the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and for many years served as a leading member of the [Coalition for the International Criminal Court](#) (CICC). In the 1990s, the WFA was a key member of a pioneering group of NGOs based in Washington, D.C., called the [Washington Working Group on the International Criminal Court](#) (WICC), who were the among the first advocates for the court. The herculean labors of this DC-based coalition and many others leaders around the world eventually led to the adoption in 1998 of the Rome Statute. This historic treaty, which ironically the U.S. has not yet ratified, led to the "seating" of the Court in 2002.

In light of events in Ukraine, CGS has announced a major campaign to convince the United States Senate to finally ratify the Rome Statute, and has begun meeting again with WICC. CGS is being advised in this effort by Bill Pace, executive director of the World Federalist Movement (WFM) from 1994 to 2019, who served as original convener of the CICC, as well as by Dr. Leila Sadat, a renowned scholar of international criminal law, and by WFM's incoming executive director, Amy Oloo.



## The unruly reception of the ICC by U.S. administrations

Although 123 nations are now signatories of the Rome Statute, the treaty has never been well-received in the U.S., as this very brief history attests:

- Bill Clinton's administration unsuccessfully tried to attach its Security Council veto power as a provision of the treaty; Clinton ultimately signed the Statute on the last day of his presidency but declined to refer it to the Senate for ratification.
- The treaty was "unsigned" during the Bush era at the urging of Secretary of State John Bolton, among other hostile acts. Bush and his Republican supporters also enacted the American Service-Members' Protection Act (ASPA), which authorized the US president to use "all means necessary" to free a US national detained by the ICC. The ASPA is still technically in force.
- The opportunity to sign the treaty was never formally addressed during President Obama's tenure, although it cooperated with the court's prosecutions.
- As is well known, the [ICC as an institution was bitterly assailed](#) during the Trump administration.

Today the ICC is making headlines because it is investigating allegations of war crimes in Ukraine, an action the Biden administration fervently supports. The ICC's efforts have even merited a rare [unanimous Senate resolution](#) condemning Russian war crimes and encouraging member states to support the ICC's work; remarkably, this initiative was sponsored by Republicans led by Lindsey Graham and co-sponsored by prominent Democrats. Perhaps more important is that U.S. Representative Ilham Omar (D–Minnesota) has introduced a resolution advocating U.S. ratification.

What is so obviously missing is bipartisan support in the Senate for full U.S. participation in the Rome Statute. And this is one among many reasons why CGS believes, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the ICC's founding, that its ICC ratification campaign is well-timed.



**Citizens for  
Global Solutions**

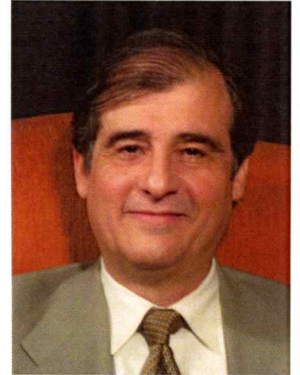
# War Crimes Are a Feature of the War System

By Byron Belitsos

The Ukraine conflict has been a grim reminder that barbaric warfare is too often the result of our flawed international security system—or, what world federalists often call the “war system” for short. While Russia’s wanton targeting of civilians may [justifiably be called a war crime](#), [Wikipedia’s list of ongoing conflicts](#) reminds us that *numerous other brutal wars* are also under way, and, sad to say, additional mass atrocities on the scale of war crimes are being committed across the planet. Painful as it is to face, alleged crimes of war took place in Yemen with U.S. complicity and funding, and colossal violations were recently committed because of U.S. aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq. One must add to this list alleged war crimes and mass atrocities by Israel against Palestinians, plus the actual cases now being investigated by the International Criminal Court in Sudan, the Congo, Myanmar, Libya, and a half-dozen others countries around the globe. And thus, while war-crimes accusations against Russia now make headlines, it is our solemn task to point to a larger pattern of crimes of violence generated by the war system.

War-making, international aggression, and war profiteering have never been an anomaly in human history, according to scholars. “The historical record,” writes Professor Marc Pilisuk, author of the masterwork [The Hidden](#)

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[Structure of Violence](#) (2015), “indicates that a war is occurring somewhere in the world far more often than periods of peace.” In other words, the war system is inexorable in all places and times, and this includes our own era. In recent centuries, the need to brandish ever more lethal weaponry in order to win wars of annihilation in the name of “self-defense” is a given for national leaders on all continents. The astonishing extent of warfare deaths, even in recent decades, is illustrated in this [startling map of war fatalities](#) spread out across the world since 1975, yielding a tally of over 2,700,000 war deaths. All of this slaughter has occurred in the lifetimes of many of us.

The upshot should be clear. Wars that end in terrible destruction are not just happenstance. They don’t just occur because of a few ambitious or mentally deranged leaders. *War is systemic, and war crimes are a central feature of the system.* War is the court of last resort in a world

of international anarchy, where the law of force eclipses the force of law. Nations must be prepared to defend themselves against armed aggression at any time or risk perishing. And this condition persists because we don't yet have a legal system that *compels* nations to resolve their disputes non-violently.

Because of the perverse inner logic of the war system, the ability to destroy the enemy's war machine and the willingness to incur massive civilian deaths on their side in the process, is the very basis of protecting one's own population. Possessing overwhelming firepower,

including nuclear weapons, is key to maintaining a credible deterrent to attack. And let's not forget that such expenditures cost nearly \$2 trillion a year worldwide, wasting resources that could go very far toward solving other pressing problems. And in a real sense this grim situation is nobody's fault, for the logic of the system drives nation-states, or military alliances of nations, toward immoral and criminal behavior. And, in the absence of the enforceable global law that CGS has stood for since 1947, warmongers everywhere will continue to get away with their crimes.

## **The Birth of Citizens for Global Solutions: Recalling Our Beginnings on the Occasion of Our 75th Anniversary**

**By Bob Flax**

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the most destructive war in human history, a mass movement developed among people in the United States and other lands who were determined to create the kind of united world that could avert future human catastrophe. Among their leaders were the acclaimed physicist Albert Einstein, Nuremberg war crimes prosecutor Benjamin Ferencz, presidential advisor Grenville Clark, and feminist Rosika Schwimmer.

In February 1947, during the final hours of one of the greatest snowstorms on the East Coast, 327 delegates representing several world federalist organizations from across the country gathered in Asheville, North Carolina, to launch one of the most significant peace

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efforts of the 20th century. Among those present were Norman Cousins, later World Federalist Association president and editor of the *Saturday Review*; Thomas K. Finletter, later President Truman's secretary of the Air Force; Florence Harriman, former U.S. ambassador to Norway; Cord Meyer, Jr., later United World Federalist president and CIA official; and Harris Wofford, civil rights activist and later U.S. senator from Pennsylvania.