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International law

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At the end of the American Civil War, there were a lot of guys hopping around on crutches because they only had one leg.

In the movies, getting shot in the leg means you only limp around for a while until a back alley doctor pulls out the bullet, and you're good to go with a bandage.

The truth is, any kind of bullet entering your body can kill you no matter where you are hit.

During the Civil War, they introduced a new kind of bullet called a Minié Ball, named after its inventor, Claude-Étienne Minié. It was a low-velocity bullet with a large calibre - .58.

It improved the accuracy of the rifles of the day and also improved loading times and overall performance.

Unfortunately, if you were on the receiving end of one of these bullets, the wound was devastating.

When one of these bullets entered a soldier's leg and struck bone, the bone would be shattered by the impact. The surgeons of the day had little choice but to amputate the leg to save the soldier's life.

Warfare is a brutal business. There are only two goals in warfare, as explained by a top general I saw during an interview once ? destroy property and kill people. That's what it's all about.

Even while killing each other, countries decided it should be done ?humanely'.

During the Hauge Convention of 1899, it was decided that ?Dum Dum' bullets, as they were known, were prohibited in warfare. Dum Dum bullets are hollow point or soft point bullets that expand when hitting a target, causing massive damage.

It was decided that shooting a person this way was not ?humane.' However, I think they missed the point entirely. Apparently, it's inhumane to shoot someone with this type of bullet, but it's okay to kill someone if you have the right bullet or blow them to pieces with an artillery shell. The end result is the same ? the person is dead.

The PM made a statement a few days ago in support of Israel, saying, ?Israel has the right to defend itself in accordance with international law.?

Obviously, any country is going to defend itself when threatened, but since when does international law have anything to do with it?

Would Israel sit back and do nothing if ?international law' declared a reprisal to a military attack was not allowed?

The term ?international law' should be replaced with the phrase ?international suggestion.'

There are no real laws that cross borders.

?Under international law? is a buzzword used by politicians all the time, but rarely, if ever, is it enforced because you can't enforce laws in another country.

The United Nations has never been united ? it's just a name, and it has no real power.

The permanent Security Council at the UN has five countries ? China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and they can't agree on anything.

Try getting a vote where Russia and China vote in the same way as the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

Try introducing some legislation where North Korea will support a motion by France ? not going to happen.

The United Nations makes declarations and ?laws' all the time and can't or won't enforce any of them.

They have made laws about whaling but can't stop Japan from ravaging the seas, and they can't stop third-world countries from polluting their environment.

They can't stop a country from invading its neighbour, and they can't stop international crime because many countries don't even have extradition treaties, and the UN can't force a country to turn over a wanted citizen to another country.

If there were truly a ?United Nations', wars would be a thing of the past.

You can invade your neighbour, and the best your neighbour can hope for from the UN is to have the security council say, ?Hey, you shouldn't do that.? Even then, half of the security council would come out in favour of the invasion in one way or another.

It happens all the time.

If they really wanted to make the United Nations building in Manhattan a useful place, they should kick out the diplomats and turn the entire building into condominiums. At least it would be a useful place for people to live, and they could produce a new version of Friends, with happy young single people enjoying life while overlooking the East River.

Yes, they can ban certain kinds of weapons, but that doesn't work either.

Cluster bombs are once again being used, and minefields are being laid in many places near the Ukraine border.

So go ahead and defend your border and forget what international law has to say about it.