



Security & Defense


Guidelines
for Government and Citizenship

a publication of
The Center for Public Justice

- 1** Government's responsibility, under law, entails the protection of the political community from those who threaten life, property, and public peace. Government alone has the right to monopolize control of force for the purpose of upholding and enforcing the law.
- 2** Government's responsibility for domestic security and retributive justice is institutionalized in the form of police forces and court systems, which enforce and adjudicate the law against lawbreakers and ensure restitution for victims. As much as possible, the police and the courts should aim to reconcile victim and offender and to restore a just order.
- 3** Government's responsibility to protect society from unjust military aggression and foreign criminal violation is institutionalized in the form of defense forces, foreign intelligence services, a diplomatic corps, and other offices for international relations.
- 4** Both police forces and defense forces should be bound by law to use force justly and in support of government's broader responsibility to uphold just, healthy societies. Laws governing the use of force have been articulated in American state and federal statutes, in international laws such as the Geneva conventions on war, and in the historic Christian "just war doctrine." Only a legitimate public authority may command the use of force for purposes of upholding public security, protecting the innocent, punishing criminals, and capturing or, in certain circumstances, killing those who are using force illegitimately. Government may use lethal force *only* for just cause, as a last resort, and when the success of such retributive action appears probable.
- 5** Police and defense forces must conduct themselves in a just manner by upholding noncombatant immunity, limiting the use of force to a proportionate measure, seeking to end conflict as quickly as possible and with the least possible destruction, and aiming to restore conditions of peace and stability.
- 6** Our "shrinking" globe, with its increasing dangers of warfare and terrorism, has led most countries to join a growing number of alliances and international organizations. These alliances aim to settle disputes peacefully; to develop international law; and to foster arms control, mutual security, and the multilateral enforcement of international law and peacekeeping efforts. Countries should see their responsibilities for security, defense, and retributive justice as increasingly interdependent, and should cooperate to strengthen international law and institutions.
- 7** The United States, currently the world's dominant military power, should take the lead in helping to strengthen international law and institutions. It should do this for its own and the world's security, and to defend the innocent against unjust aggression, whether from terrorists or the armed forces of other countries.

For Further Reading

For more information, search on this topic at www.cpjustice.org.

Published by the Center for Public Justice, the Guidelines for Government and Citizenship are papers that:

- Address the nature of political community, the task of government, and the responsibility of citizens.
 - Illustrate how the Center's philosophy expresses itself when applied to a number of key policy areas.
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