



## Foreign intelligence collection: The interplay between international law and national sovereignty

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### Abstract

Strategic international relations predispose states to relate with nations for mutual benefits and protect national security and territorial integrity accordingly. These bilateral and multilateral relations are guided by codified legal templates in principles, letters and spirit of international law. Ideally, foreign intelligence collection should be within the ambit of international law amongst allies at least to ensure mutual trust and respect. However, in real life situations, the applications of international laws and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is usually jettisoned on the altars of secrecy and national security even amongst close allies. The work therefore evaluated the need for extensive legal reforms that will usher in responsible and actionable foreign intelligence collection and management that takes into account national sovereignty, equity and mutual respect in the comity of nations. The prescribed legal reforms are intended to attenuate inequality and disrespect for weak and small nations by the 'super powers' of the world, thus creating a world order that will foist deeper cooperation in the global quest for security, peace and development. To achieve all these, the work adopted the doctrinal cum historicist approach which involves scrutinizing legal propositions/doctrines and content analysis of data from primary and secondary sources such as statutes, books, journals, gazettes, government publications, declassified intelligence, and such other data that were logically and objectively presented for coherence and logic as required by this kind of research enterprise.

**Keywords:** International law, national sovereignty, foreign intelligence collection, legal reforms, international relations, interplay

### Introduction

The interplay between international law and national sovereignty in foreign intelligence collection has become a critical issue in the postmodern era. Globalization and technological advancements have significantly transformed the landscape of intelligence operations, making it imperative for nations to engage in strategic international relations to safeguard their national security and territorial integrity. Bilateral and multilateral relations between states are governed by codified legal frameworks, reflecting the principles, letters, and spirit of international law. These frameworks are designed to ensure mutual benefits, protect sovereignty, and promote peace and cooperation among nations. However, the practical application of these legal norms often deviates from the ideal, particularly in the realm of foreign intelligence collection.

In theory, foreign intelligence collection should adhere to the principles of international law, fostering mutual trust and respect among allies. Yet, in reality, the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is frequently compromised under the guise of national security and secrecy. Even among close allies, clandestine intelligence activities often breach international legal standards, leading to tensions and mistrust. This contradiction between the legal ideals and actual practices in intelligence operations highlights the need for extensive legal reforms. Such reforms should aim to create a framework that balances the imperatives of national security with the principles of equity, mutual respect, and adherence to international law.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to influence policy and legal frameworks at both national and international levels. By highlighting the discrepancies between the principles of international law and the actual practices of intelligence collection, the study provides a basis for advocating legal reforms. These reforms are crucial for

fostering a global environment where nations, regardless of their power or size, can engage in cooperative and respectful intelligence operations. The study also contributes to the broader discourse on international law, sovereignty, and security, offering insights that are relevant to policymakers, legal scholars, and international relations experts.

### Brief Sources of International Law

International law is derived from a number of sources, including as judicial decisions, globally accepted legal principles, treaties, and customs. Conventions, often known as treaties, are formal agreements between governments that set forth particular duties and regulations. Consistent state practices that are recognised as legally binding and reflect the common behaviour and values of nations give rise to customary international law. Major legal systems' general legal concepts serve as supplemental resources, providing essential rules that can be applied in a variety of legal situations. Furthermore, judicial rulings and the writings of distinguished legal academics are crucial in establishing, interpreting, and promoting international legal norms, which in turn affect state behaviour and international relations.

### The Concept of International Law

The term "international law" refers to a set of guidelines and precepts that govern relations and interactions between nations and other organisations acknowledged as international players. Treaties, conventions, and customs that states recognise as legally binding are the primary sources of its formation. Shaw points out that international law serves as a foundation for maintaining justice and order in the world community. Its purview encompasses a wide range of topics, including international trade, environmental preservation, human rights, and force regulation. Given that it depends on governments' voluntary permission, its binding character is

occasionally questioned; yet, its contribution to international cooperation and stability is still generally acknowledged.

The idea of state sovereignty, which gives every state the right to rule itself free from outside intervention, is a fundamental component of international law. The United Nations Charter and other important international accords are based on this idea.

However, the lack of a central body that can enforce sanctions or guarantee consistent compliance makes it difficult to enforce international law. Therefore, tools like international judicial organisations, collective security agreements, and diplomatic engagement are necessary for maintaining order and resolving disputes. The idea of international law has changed over time in reaction to advancements in technology, politics, and the economy. According to Bassiouni, the complexity of contemporary international relations is reflected in the growing inclusion of non-state players in modern international law, including multinational corporations and intergovernmental organisations. In order for global government to properly handle cross-border concerns, international law must continue to strike a balance between state sovereignty.

### **International Legal Personality**

The acknowledgement of international legal personality, which gives entities the ability to enter into legal relations, bear rights, and assume obligations under international law, is a key idea in international law. States are the main carriers of this identity due to their sovereignty and external recognition. As provided by their founding treaties and recognised by member states, some regional institutions, like the European Union, and international organisations, like the United Nations, also have legal personality. This recognition improves the structure and coherence of the international legal system by enabling them to participate in treaties, engage in diplomacy, and pursue remedies through international legal forums.

### **Sovereignty and Non-Intervention**

A fundamental tenet of international law, sovereignty emphasises the autonomy of states and their control over internal affairs. It supports the principle of non-intervention in domestic matters by embodying the notion that states have sole authority over their internal affairs free from external influence. This principle, which is enshrined in the UN Charter, seeks to protect national autonomy while promoting peaceful cohabitation and avoiding unilateral measures that could cause instability (Brownlie, 2018) <sup>[5]</sup>. However, the idea of sovereignty has evolved to reflect contemporary circumstances, recognising that situations involving violations of human rights or transnational dangers may call for international involvement, necessitating a balance between national autonomy and global responsibility.

### **Human Rights and International Law**

One of the hallmarks of contemporary international law is the defence of human rights, which is predicated on the understanding that every person has intrinsic worth and equal rights. In order to protect civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, international human rights legislation relies on treaties, customs, and court rulings. In order to ensure accountability for violations, fundamental agreements like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights put legal obligations on nations to uphold, defend, and fulfil these rights. The evolution of human rights law is a reflection of continuous efforts to promote social justice, equality, and the rule of law worldwide.

### **State Responsibility and Accountability**

A key idea in international law is state responsibility, which establishes the legal repercussions for nations that violate their international commitments by engaging in wrongdoing. It describes the attributional principles, how violations are found, and the resulting repercussions. It is expected of states to stop such crimes, look into them when they do, and compensate the harmed parties. International courts and tribunals, arbitration, or diplomatic channels are frequently used for dispute resolution and enforcement. Maintaining state accountability promotes compliance with international legal standards and fortifies the rules-based international order, which improves collaboration in tackling common issues.

### **Diplomatic and Political Mechanisms**

Enforcing international law still requires diplomatic and political methods that focus on discussion, compromise, and reaching an agreement. States can work together on urgent issues like arms control, environmental preservation, and human rights through these channels, which also help to strengthen adherence to legal responsibilities and settle disagreements amicably. In order to promote compliance and deal with complicated issues that transcend country boundaries, multilateral diplomacy and political pressure are essential.

### **Judicial and Quasi-Judicial Bodies**

International legal principles are interpreted and applied formally by judicial and quasi-judicial entities (Shaw, 2017) <sup>[24]</sup>. For instance, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and regional human rights courts review cases involving violations of international law and decide disputes between governments. UN treaty-monitoring bodies are examples of quasi-judicial organisations that monitor state adherence to treaty obligations and offer suggestions to encourage accountability. These organisations contribute to the development of legal principles guiding state behaviour and the formation of international law.

### **Challenges in Enforcement**

International law continues to face challenges in ensuring accountability and compliance, even with enforcement mechanisms in place. The efficacy of legal remedies is frequently constrained by the sovereignty concept and the absence of a central enforcement authority. Enforcement is made more difficult by political interests, power disparities, and governments' resistance to international jurisdiction. Furthermore, state-based enforcement regimes may be threatened by the influence of non-state entities like NGOs and multinational corporations. In order to overcome these challenges and maintain the efficacy of international law in advancing world peace, security, and justice, more collaboration, more robust institutions, and creative approaches are required.

### **National Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity**

The international legal order is based on the fundamental principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity,

which guarantee that states maintain authority over their governments and territories. States that possess sovereignty have the sole right to run their own affairs independently of outside intervention. This notion is essential for upholding international order and honouring the diversity of political, economic, and social systems around the globe, as Crawford (2019) <sup>[8]</sup> points out. By preventing illegal annexations or incursions, territorial integrity protects states' acknowledged borders.

The idea of non-intervention, which forbids meddling in the domestic affairs of another state, is closely related to sovereignty. It forbids the use of force against a state's political independence or territorial integrity and mandates the peaceful resolution of conflicts. It is enshrined in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. Sovereignty violations continue in spite of these safeguards, frequently with justifications based on humanitarian or national security concerns.

One of the fundamental concerns in world politics is the continuous conflict between national sovereignty and international commitments. Many nations are reluctant to accept conventions that they believe violate their sovereignty or to give up power to international organisations. However, in a world where everything is interconnected, there is a growing recognition that tackling issues like pandemics, terrorism, and climate change requires teamwork. Striking a balance between allowing for efficient global government and respecting sovereignty is the challenge.

### **Gathering of Foreign Intelligence**

To protect national security, foreign intelligence collection entails learning about the capabilities, intentions, and actions of foreign entities, such as governments, businesses, and private citizens. According to Lowenthal (2019) <sup>[19]</sup>, it includes the use of many instruments and tactics to gather information, either overtly or covertly, such as espionage, signals intelligence (SIGINT), human intelligence (HUMINT), and cyber intelligence (CYBINT).

The scope of intelligence work has significantly increased due to technological advancements. Global monitoring of online activity, financial movements, and communications is made possible by the digital age. Gellman and Poitras (2013) emphasise how the scope of contemporary intelligence systems was made evident by disclosures regarding the extensive monitoring operations of the National Security Agency (NSA) of the United States. Although these capabilities increase security, they also raise questions about civil liberties, privacy, and possible misuse.

The covert character of intelligence operations creates moral and legal conundrums that frequently conflict with international law, particularly when it comes to issues of human rights and sovereignty. Chesterman (2006) <sup>[7]</sup> emphasises the significance of striking a balance between respect for state autonomy and privacy and efficient intelligence operations. The international community still urgently needs greater accountability and openness.

### **The Development of International Law on Intelligence Gathering and Its Historical Background**

Changes in international relations and the concept of sovereignty are reflected in the evolution of international law controlling intelligence. There were numerous legal voids in the early 20th century since intelligence was primarily governed by bilateral agreements and tradition. Particularly during stressful geopolitical periods like the Cold War, when

espionage became essential to statecraft and strategic benefit, this absence of official oversight fuelled conflicts.

The United Nations' establishment in 1945 promoted the codification of international rules with a focus on non-interference and sovereignty. However, the hidden character of intelligence work persisted in defying thorough oversight, and covert activities during the Cold War frequently disregarded or transgressed international norms.

### **Considering the Law and Ethics**

Intelligence gathering is inextricably linked to ethical considerations. Many intelligence techniques, including manipulation, deceit, and the use of private information, would not be permitted in other situations. Agencies must deal with these issues while making sure their activity supports justifiable security goals, according to Gill and Phythian (2018). It is still very difficult to draw moral lines that balance operational efficacy with adherence to international standards and human rights.

Reform is necessary to solve ethical and legal issues. Intelligence operations should be governed by explicit, legally binding regulations supported by accountability and transparency initiatives. Chesterman (2006) <sup>[7]</sup> argues that improved compliance and standardisation of legal frameworks can be achieved through multilateral agreements and increased international collaboration. In an interconnected world, such actions are essential to guaranteeing that intelligence gathering complies with both security requirements and international legal norms.

### **Case Studies of International Law Violations in Intelligence Collection**

The difficulties and repercussions of violating international law in intelligence operations are demonstrated by a number of real-world examples. The 2013 Edward Snowden revelations, which exposed the vast monitoring operations of the National Security Agency (NSA) and its partners under initiatives like PRISM, are a prominent example. These disclosures sparked heated legal and ethical discussions by exposing the NSA's widespread surveillance of both foreign nationals and American residents (Gellman & Poitras, 2013). In the aftermath, there were tense diplomatic ties, court cases, and increased debates over how to strike a balance between private rights and national security.

The 2010 Stuxnet cyberattack on Iran's nuclear facilities is another noteworthy example. Stuxnet, a highly sophisticated computer worm that harmed Iran's nuclear centrifuges, is thought to have been co-developed by the United States and Israel. The incident brought up important issues regarding the legitimacy of cyberattacks that physically damage vital infrastructure as well as their wider ramifications for security and peace. Stuxnet brought to light the increasing importance of cyberwarfare in intelligence operations as well as the challenge of implementing current international legal norms for such operations.

The variety and complexity of legal violations in intelligence gathering are illustrated by these instances. To meet these changing difficulties, they emphasise the urgent need for extensive legal reforms and improved international cooperation. The international community must create flexible legal frameworks that protect sovereignty, human rights, and moral principles as intelligence techniques develop.

**Legal Theories relevant to International Law and Sovereignty**

The anarchic character of the global system, where states act in self-interest to secure existence and security, is emphasised by realism in international relations theory. Realists contend that violations of international conventions, such as clandestine intelligence activities, can be justified by national security considerations. According to this viewpoint, the actions of strong governments are motivated by the preservation of their sovereignty and strategic advantage.

On the other hand, liberalism emphasises the possibility of collaboration through global organisations and legal systems (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Liberals contend that respect for international law can advance mutual gain and stability. This method of gathering intelligence emphasises the importance of openness, responsibility, and respect for national sovereignty in order to promote confidence and international collaboration.

Constructivism emphasises how shared understandings, identities, and norms influence state conduct. According to this viewpoint, a state's ideals and accepted standards have an impact on its intelligence practices. Constructivists support the development of international standards that promote fair, sovereignty-preserving intelligence operations. Legal viewpoints support these political theories: Natural Law grounds international norms in universal moral principles; Legal Realism highlights the impact of politics and power on the application of law; and Positivism emphasises state consent and codified law. The intricate relationship between sovereignty, international law, and intelligence operations is highlighted by these frameworks

taken together, highlighting the necessity of legal reforms that strike a compromise between principle and pragmatism.

**Frameworks of Theory Used in the Gathering of Foreign Intelligence**

When these viewpoints are used to intelligence gathering, several aspects of the problem become apparent. Realists explain why strong states may put national security ahead of their legal duties, occasionally infringing on their sovereignty. According to liberalism, trust may be preserved when intelligence operations are regulated by strong legal frameworks and collaboration. Constructivism emphasises how shifting standards have the power to transform state behaviour in the direction of more moral intelligence procedures. The basis for balancing these political realities with legally binding norms is found in legal theories. When combined, these strategies support a fair model that takes into account changing international norms, legal requirements, and power dynamics.

**Current Methods for Gathering Foreign Intelligence**

Cyber monitoring, espionage, and covert operations are all combined in modern intelligence gathering. To obtain crucial security information, organisations like the FSB, MI6, and CIA use both human sources and cutting-edge technology. Cyber invasions, satellite surveillance, communications tapping, and electronic interception are some of the techniques. Despite being essential for counterterrorism and safeguarding national interests, these instruments usually fall into a legal limbo, circumventing international law and violating state sovereignty. Common intelligence methods and the legal issues they raise are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Method	Description	Legal Challenges
Electronic Eavesdropping	Intercepting phone calls and emails	Violation of privacy laws; potential breaches of sovereignty
Satellite Imagery	Capturing images from space	Issues of consent; potential for misuse
Cyber Espionage	Hacking and surveillance of digital communications	Breaches of cybersecurity laws; international jurisdictional issues
Human Intelligence (HUMINT)	Use of spies to gather information	Ethical concerns; risk of diplomatic incidents

**Analysis of Legal Instruments Governing Foreign Intelligence Collection**

International law, primarily through conventions such as the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Charter, provides a framework for the conduct of foreign intelligence collection. However, these laws are often inadequate in addressing the complexities of modern intelligence activities<sup>3</sup>. For instance, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) stipulates the protection of

privacy, but its application to intelligence operations is often limited by national security exemptions<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, regional instruments like the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) offer more robust protections against unwarranted surveillance, yet their enforcement is inconsistent across different jurisdictions. Table 2 presents key legal instruments and their relevance to intelligence collection.

**Table 2**

Legal Instrument	Relevance	Limitations
Geneva Conventions	Sets standards for treatment during warfare	Limited scope for peacetime intelligence activities
United Nations Charter	Promotes respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity	Ambiguous on covert intelligence operations
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	Protects individual privacy and freedoms	National security exemptions limit applicability
European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)	Provides strong privacy protections	Enforcement varies among member states

**Sovereignty and International Law**

Sovereignty remains a core principle of international law, emphasizing the autonomy of states to govern without

external interference. However, foreign intelligence collection often contravenes this principle, especially when conducted unilaterally by powerful nations. A comparative

analysis of different countries reveals significant disparities in how sovereignty is respected or violated. For instance, the United States' intelligence activities, often justified under the Patriot Act, have faced international criticism for overstepping legal boundaries<sup>2</sup>. In contrast, European

countries, guided by stricter privacy laws and international conventions, generally exhibit greater compliance with international norms. The following table 3 compares the adherence to sovereignty in intelligence operations between selected countries.

**Table 3**

Country	Approach to Sovereignty in Intelligence Operations	Notable Practices
United States	Often prioritizes national security over sovereignty	Extensive use of cyber surveillance and HUMINT
United Kingdom	Balances national security with legal obligations	Utilizes electronic eavesdropping with legal oversight
Germany	Strong emphasis on privacy and legal compliance	Restrictive laws on surveillance activities
Russia	Prioritizes state security with minimal transparency	Aggressive cyber espionage tactics

**Case Studies of Intelligence Collection and Legal Implications**

Examining specific cases provides deeper insights into the legal implications of intelligence collection. One notable example is the Edward Snowden revelations, which exposed the extent of the NSA's global surveillance programs. These disclosures highlighted significant breaches of privacy

and sovereignty, sparking global debates on the legality and ethics of intelligence practices. Another case is the Stuxnet cyberattack, this incident raised questions about the application of international law in cyber warfare and the respect for state sovereignty. The table 4 here summarizes these case studies and their legal implications.

**Table 4**

Case Study	Description	Legal Implications
Edward Snowden	Exposed NSA's global surveillance programs	Breaches of privacy; sparked global legal and ethical debates
Stuxnet Cyberattack	Cyber operation targeting Iran's nuclear facilities	Raised issues on cyber warfare and sovereignty

The Impact of Power Dynamics on International Law Compliance

Power Dynamics	Impact on Compliance	Examples
Superpower Dominance	Increased ability to bypass international norms	US surveillance programs, Chinese cyber espionage
Weaker Nations	Struggle to assert sovereignty	Limited capacity to counter foreign intelligence activities
International Organizations	Variable influence in enforcement	Inconsistent application of legal frameworks

Power dynamics play a crucial role in the enforcement and compliance with international law in intelligence collection. Superpowers like the United States and China often operate with relative impunity, leveraging their geopolitical influence to bypass international norms. This disparity creates a significant imbalance, where weaker nations struggle to assert their sovereignty against more powerful states. The unequal enforcement of international law undermines global cooperation and erodes trust among nations. Addressing this imbalance requires robust legal reforms that promote equity and mutual respect in intelligence operations. The tables illustrates the impact of power dynamics on compliance with international law.

**Gaps in Current Legal Frameworks**

The current legal frameworks governing foreign intelligence collection are often inadequate and fragmented, failing to comprehensively address the complexities and ethical considerations of modern intelligence operations. A significant gap lies in the lack of clear definitions and boundaries for acceptable intelligence activities under international law. Many existing treaties and conventions, such as the Geneva Conventions and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, provide broad protections against arbitrary interference but do not specifically address the nuances of intelligence collection. This ambiguity allows states to exploit loopholes, engaging in practices that undermine national sovereignty and violate the principles of international law. Furthermore, the current frameworks are often biased towards the interests of powerful nations, leaving smaller

and weaker states vulnerable to exploitation. The dominance of these powerful states in international forums allows them to shape the legal discourse in a manner that legitimizes their intelligence practices while marginalizing the concerns of less influential nations. This power imbalance not only perpetuates inequality but also erodes mutual trust and respect among nations, undermining the very foundations of international cooperation and security.

**Legal Reforms for Responsible Intelligence Collection**

To address these gaps, comprehensive legal reforms are necessary. Firstly, there needs to be a clear and universally accepted definition of foreign intelligence collection that delineates acceptable and unacceptable practices. This definition should be enshrined in a new international treaty specifically focused on intelligence activities, ensuring that all states adhere to the same standards. Secondly, the principle of proportionality must be embedded in the legal framework governing intelligence collection. Intelligence activities should be conducted in a manner that is proportionate to the threat posed, minimizing the infringement on national sovereignty and the rights of individuals. This would require stringent oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance and accountability. Thirdly, there should be enhanced transparency and reporting requirements for intelligence activities. States must be obligated to disclose their intelligence operations and methodologies, subject to appropriate safeguards for national security. This transparency would foster mutual trust and facilitate cooperation among states while deterring abuses of power.

Fourthly, ensuring compliance with international law in intelligence collection is paramount for fostering global security and stability. One of the key challenges in this regard is the enforcement of legal norms. Many states, particularly the powerful ones, often disregard international law when it conflicts with their national interests<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, robust enforcement mechanisms are essential.

Fifthly, the establishment of an international oversight body, possibly under the auspices of the United Nations, could provide a platform for monitoring and enforcing compliance with intelligence-related treaties and conventions. This body would have the authority to investigate allegations of illegal intelligence activities and impose sanctions on non-compliant states. It could facilitate dispute resolution among states, promoting a culture of accountability and adherence to international law.

Sixthly, international law should mandate the inclusion of judicial oversight in national intelligence frameworks. Independent judicial bodies should review and authorize intelligence operations to ensure they conform to legal standards and respect the rights of individuals and states. This judicial oversight would act as a check against arbitrary and unlawful intelligence activities, reinforcing the rule of law in international relations.

Seventhly, legal reforms should aim to promote equity and mutual respect among nations, addressing the power imbalances that currently plague international relations. This can be achieved by ensuring that all states, regardless of their size or power, have an equal say in the formulation and implementation of intelligence-related legal norms.

Eighthly, inclusive international forums and decision-making processes would enable smaller and weaker states to voice their concerns and contribute to the development of fair and balanced legal frameworks. This inclusivity would foster a sense of ownership and commitment to the rules governing intelligence activities, enhancing global cooperation and stability.

Ninthly, the legal reforms should emphasize the protection of weaker states from exploitation by powerful ones. Mechanisms such as international arbitration and mediation could provide recourse for states that feel aggrieved by the intelligence activities of others, ensuring that their sovereignty and territorial integrity are respected<sup>3</sup> (Krisch, 2010)<sup>[18]</sup>. These mechanisms would deter powerful states from engaging in aggressive intelligence practices and promote a more equitable and respectful international order.

### **Benefits of Legal Reforms to Global Security and Development**

Implementing these legal reforms would yield significant benefits for global security and development. A clear and universally accepted legal framework for intelligence collection would reduce the incidence of conflicts arising from misunderstandings and mistrust among states. This reduction in conflicts would, in turn, create a more stable and predictable international environment, conducive to cooperation and development.

Moreover, enhanced transparency and accountability in intelligence activities would build trust among nations, facilitating collaboration on shared security challenges such as terrorism, cyber threats, and transnational crime. This collaboration would enhance the collective capacity of states to address these threats, contributing to global security.

Finally, promoting equity and mutual respect through legal reforms would foster a more inclusive and cooperative international community. States would be more likely to engage in multilateral initiatives aimed at addressing global challenges, such as climate change, poverty, and pandemics. This collective action would drive progress towards sustainable development, benefiting all nations.

### **Conclusion**

The study has demonstrated that the current legal frameworks governing foreign intelligence collection are significantly inadequate, leading to numerous challenges in international relations. The lack of clear definitions, boundaries, and enforcement mechanisms in international law allows states to exploit these gaps, often to the detriment of smaller and weaker nations. This undermines national sovereignty, erodes mutual trust, and perpetuates global inequities. The dominance of powerful nations in shaping legal discourse further exacerbates these issues, marginalizing the interests and concerns of less influential states.

To address these challenges, comprehensive legal reforms are imperative. These reforms should aim to provide clear definitions of acceptable intelligence practices, ensure proportionality and transparency in intelligence activities, and promote equity and mutual respect among nations. By embedding these principles in international law, the global community can create a more just, secure, and cooperative international order. Such reforms would not only enhance compliance with international law but also foster deeper cooperation in addressing shared security challenges, contributing to global stability and development.

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