

Global Citizenship Public Lecture
The Liberal International Order after 9/11:
Crisis or Renewal?
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Abstract

The landscape of international politics post 9/11 has altered profoundly. The fall of the Twin Towers brought to an end the optimism of the 1990s about the prospects for a more just world order. The response by the United States to the terrorist attacks has been primarily through force, itself requiring new kinds of justification for international action. In seeking to alter the rules around the use of force, is the US acting as a rogue hegemon, or is such behaviour normal? Realists would argue that hegemony throughout history have sought to create an international order that is convenient for their national interests. Liberal theorists and activists believe that the war on terror has eroded international legitimacy and made it more difficult to bring about progressive change. Are liberals correct to believe that there is a crisis in world politics, or does the end of Neoconservatism portend the possibility for renewal? While the US is at the centre of current debates, the shift in power to South and East Asia raises a different set of challenges in relation to how far institutions and norms should be adapted to new power political realities. To date, rising powers have argued for a fairer distribution of power rather than a change in the values and institutions themselves. The talk will conclude by asking whether the rise of India and China is a greater threat to liberal internationalism than that posed by the two Bush administrations.