

Lesson 3

Need:

Timeline for postwar world –

24 October 1945 – birth of the United Nations

9 December 1948 – U.N. adopts Lemkin’s Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide

12 January 1951 – Convention takes effect

U.S. signs on to genocide convention

Discuss: Why did it take the United States so long to sign on to this convention?

What is the relationship between the United States and the United Nations?

What is our current relationship with the United Nations? Why?

Option:

Often the stories that come out of war zones and situations that are premeditating genocide are unbelievable. Victims stories are seen as irrational and incomprehensible. By the time that people realize that there is truth to the stories, it is too late to stop the perpetrators from many violent actions, and the cost of involvement has risen too high. Tim O’Brien, an infantryman in the Vietnam War wrote of his inability to express what he saw in combat in a semi-biographical novel, The Things They Carried. In the chapter entitled, “How to Tell a True War Story”, he tries to explain why firsthand accounts are often unbelievable. Have the students read through the chapter, or a pared down version, and discuss the author’s views. How do these ideas pertain to the first eyewitness accounts of extremist behaviors from the perspective of American media viewers and readers?

Option:

Read On Killing, focusing on chapters that deal with the effects of genocide.