

HMDC Topic Discussion (Brainstorming)

Topic: *The United States should accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.*

US Membership Strengthens the International Criminal Court (ICC)

1. **Legal Cooperation Required:** The United States currently refuses to help ICC investigators, but joining the ICC would require the US by law to cooperate fully with all investigations. Every US government agency, including the military, would need to share information with ICC investigators when they are looking into war crimes or human rights violations. US officials would have to help ICC teams talk to witnesses and collect evidence, which would make investigations much more successful.
2. **Major Budget Increase:** Because the United States has one of the world's largest economies, it would need to contribute about 22 percent of the ICC's yearly budget, which would almost double the money the court has to work with. The ICC could use this extra money to hire many more investigators, lawyers, and other workers who are needed to investigate crimes around the world. With more staff members and resources, the ICC could work on investigating many more cases at the same time instead of having to choose only a few cases to focus on.
3. **Intelligence Network Access:** The United States has many spy satellites and intelligence agencies that collect important information about crimes happening around the world, and this information would become available to ICC investigators. The US intelligence agencies could share photos from satellites that show evidence of mass graves, military attacks, and troop movements that prove crimes happened. ICC investigators would be able to use this detailed information to build stronger cases against people who commit serious crimes.
4. **Military Expert Support:** The United States military has many experts who understand how armies work, how different weapons are used, and how military commanders give orders to their soldiers during conflicts. These military experts could help ICC investigators understand exactly how crimes happened and who was responsible for ordering them. The US military's experience in investigating battlefield crimes would help ICC teams collect better evidence and understand what they find.
5. **Diplomatic Power Shift:** The United States has strong relationships with many countries around the world and could use this influence to help the ICC instead of working against it. When the ICC needs to investigate crimes in different countries, the US government could encourage these countries to cooperate and share evidence instead of blocking investigations. US diplomats could also help convince countries to protect witnesses who need to testify about crimes they saw.
6. **Increasing Transportation Resources:** The United States military has many airplanes, helicopters, and ships that operate all over the world and could help ICC investigators travel safely to places where crimes happened. When witnesses need to be moved to safe locations or when evidence needs to be transported, the US military could provide secure transportation that protects both people and evidence from being lost or destroyed. Having access to US military transportation would allow ICC teams to respond quickly when they learn about new crimes and reach remote locations that are currently hard to access.

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US Membership Would Strengthen the ICC (*Continued...*)

7. **Improved Technology Transfer:** The United States has developed many advanced tools and computer systems that help investigate complex crimes, and these tools could be shared with ICC investigators to make their work more effective. US experts could teach ICC staff how to use special computer programs that help organize and analyze large amounts of evidence about crimes. The ICC's ability to handle digital evidence and manage complex investigations would improve greatly with access to US technology and expertise.
8. **Increased Training Capabilities:** United States investigators from agencies like the FBI have a lot of experience solving complicated international crimes, and they could teach ICC staff their methods and techniques. ICC investigators could learn better ways to interview witnesses, collect evidence, and build strong cases that prove who committed crimes. US legal experts could also teach ICC prosecutors how to present evidence in court in ways that are clear and convincing.
9. **Greater Security Enhancement:** The United States has extensive experience protecting people who work in dangerous places, and this knowledge could help keep ICC investigators safe when they work in areas where conflicts are happening. US security experts could help ICC teams avoid dangerous situations by warning them about risks and providing secure communications systems that prevent criminals from knowing where investigators are. US protection would make it safer for witnesses to talk to ICC investigators without fear of being harmed.
10. **Increasing Legal Power:** The United States courts and military justice system have handled many war crimes cases over many years, and this experience could help the ICC make its own cases stronger. US legal experts could share information about how they proved similar crimes in past cases and what evidence worked best to show guilt. The ICC could study how US courts have handled difficult legal questions about war crimes and use this knowledge to improve their own court procedures.