

**REPORT ON PANEL B-1:**  
**PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW**

*Changing Interface between International Politics and International Law*

1. SPEAKERS

- Moderator: Don McRae, University of Ottawa
- Speakers:
  - Stephen Toope, McGill University
  - Michael Byers, Duke University
  - Neta Crawford, University of Massachusetts

2. OVERVIEW

The panel began with an academic and theoretical discussion of the legal theory basis of international law and how international norms may impact on international actors, particularly the political actors. The discussion shifted to the importance of international law in relation to the understanding and conduct of international relations; that is, the impact of international law on the practice and politics of international relations. Interesting questions were raised as to the exact intersection of the two fields and whether there was a struggle over which would be able to best shape international legal structures. The role that the USA plays in the intersection of international relations and international law, particularly in light of the upcoming US election, was also debated at length.

3. DISCUSSION

At the intersection of international law and international relations

Stephen Toope shared his view that there is currently a shift in international legal perspectives to include concerns with politics. Professor Toope noted, and Neta Campbell agreed that international 'relationists' are increasingly interested in international legal and the effect international politics may have on international law. Likewise, international lawyers are becoming more interested about how international law affects the practice and politics of international relations. Michael Byers also commented on the natural synergy and sustainable interest between the two fields. Indeed, the panel was unanimous that the intersection between international law and international relations is increasing in importance.

Professor Toope suggested that in addressing this intersection, the question that international lawyers have begun asking is 'how' – how do international legal norms actually impact the international actors? Professor Campbell, in response, suggested that