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PREFACE

To every international lawyer, an invitation from the Curatorium of the Hague Academy to deliver the General Course in International Law is the greatest possible honour. The last Briton to give the General Course was James Fawcett in 1971. I express my appreciation for the invitation to offer my views on international law in fifteen lectures—and the firm indication from the Curatorium that what was sought was a personal statement.

But it is hard to describe the magnitude of the task that this honour bestows; or the difficulties that it presents. Can there really be anything new or interesting still to say, or is not all wisdom and scholarship already gathered in the Collected General Courses? The problem was accentuated by the fact that in recent years there had been some exceptionally admired General Courses: I may particularly mention those of Professor Michel Virally, Professor Oscar Schachter, and Professor Lou Henkin.

There were further problems. Would not a tour d'horizon of the corpus of international law in fifteen lectures necessarily result in dealing with any given subject in a shallow way? After all, on any topic that one might choose for a single lecture, there would exist a vast literature in a variety of languages, and often a very substantial jurisprudence as well. How could one conceivably begin to do justice to any one of these topics?

For several months these seemed insoluble, and indeed overwhelming, problems. But then a beam of light was shown to me by Judge Sir Robert Jennings QC, President of the International Court. He offered the wise advice that one should never lose sight of the fact that one was not writing the definitive treatise on the entirety of international law, but rather lecturing to students about the ideas underlying international law.

From that moment the task seemed marginally less daunting. Of course, it would still be necessary to immerse oneself in as much as possible of the vast literature on each topic. But my job would not be to summarize or synthesize all that had ever been said on a given theme, but rather to offer my own perspectives and ideas. The learned writings, the state practice, the judicial and arbitral decisions would assist in helping me decide what seemed the key issues on which I wished to comment.

That decision, together with the insistence with which it had been put to me that the General Course is intended as a vehicle for one's personal views and philosophy, led rapidly to another decision. My course would not follow the traditional chapter headings of the textbooks; nor would it endeavour to deal with every matter that should properly be covered in a textbook, or in a university course. Our tasks were different.

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But, if the lectures were not to follow the textbook headings, what should their theme be? A colleague suggested to me that I might focus on international law and the settlement of disputes. But international law in the settlement of disputes is only part of the story. International law, properly understood, is about avoiding disputes, or containing them, as much as about settling them. And indeed, the perception that international law is primarily about dispute settlement entails certain philosophical assumptions that should usefully be explored.

This General Course is neither a treatise nor a textbook. It is a series of lectures in which I endeavour to do two main things. First, I try to show that there is an essential and unavoidable choice to be made between the perception of international law as a system of neutral rules, and international law as a system of decision-making directed towards the attainment of certain declared values. Secondly, instead of recounting all the well-agreed principles of international law, I have deliberately written about many of the difficult and unanswered issues in international law today. And I have tried to show how the acceptance of international law as process leads to certain preferred solutions so far as these great unresolved problems are concerned.

I have had two further subsidiary objectives. One is to show that the process we call international law is not just about dispute resolution. I have also been very keen to show the students how things fit together. The traditional structuring of textbooks makes it hard to see how concepts apply in unexpected circumstances and locations. But this discovery—how one legal concept bears on another apparently unrelated matter—is one of the great excitements of international law. I wanted to show the students how the jigsaw fits together, how one matter bears on another, how there is always a new interrelationship to be discovered.

These are the objectives of this General Course. In my endeavours to realize them I owe a debt of gratitude to many people. First, to Professor Daniel Bardonnet, the Secretary General of the Curatorium, for his endless guidance, support, and encouragement, for his practical suggestions and personal friendship. Secondly, several students of mine at the University of London have enthusiastically helped with bibliographical research, harvesting the literature, assembling the evidences of practice, and chasing recalcitrant footnotes. My warm thanks go to Deborah Strachan, Greg Maggio, Charles Gottlieb, and Chanaka Wickremasinghe. My very great thanks go to Danesh Sarooshi, who engaged in this and assisted greatly on work on the typescript at the editing stage. Thirdly, the publication of these lectures affords me the opportunity of publicly recording my great appreciation to my secretary, Susan Hunt. Her unflappable assistance, in the face of chaotic piles of books and papers, illegible instructions, lengthy overnight faxes, wandering footnotes, and

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impossible deadlines, has been invaluable. Finally, my husband Terence has, as always, not only tolerated what others would surely have found intolerable, he has given every moral and practical support.

R. H.

London January 1993

ABBREVIATIONS

ACABQ Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary

Questions

AJIL American Journal of International Law
AOI Arab Organization for Industrialization

BFSP British Foreign and State Papers

BYIL British Year Book of International Law
Canadian YBIL Canadian Year Book of International Law

CAT Committee Against Torture

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women

CERD Convention on the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination

CPC Committee on Programme and Co-ordination

CSCE Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

EC European Community
EEZ exclusive economic zone

EJIL European Journal of International Law
GAOR General Assembly Official Records
German YBIL German Year Book of International Law

HRLJ Human Rights Law Journal
HRQ Human Rights Quarterly
HRJ Human Rights Journal

IBRD International Bank for Reconstruction and

Development

ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization

ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICJ International Court of Justice

ICLQ International and Comparative Law Quarterly

IFC International Finance Corporation
ILC International Law Commission
ILM International Legal Materials
ILO International Labour Organization

ILR International Law Reports

IMCO Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative

Organization

IMF International Monetary Fund

IMO International Maritime Organization
Iran-USCTR Iran-US Claims Tribunal Reports

ITC International Tin Council

LNOJ League of Nations Official Journal LNTS League of Nations Treaty Series

NYIL Netherlands Yearbook of International Law

OAU Organization of African Unity

ONUC Opération des Nations Unies au Congo

Parl. Deb. Parliamentary Debates

PCIJ Permanent Court of International Justice
PLO Palestinian Liberation Organization

Proc. ASIL Proceedings of the American Society of International

Law

RGDIP Revue général de droit internationale privé
RIAA Reports of International Arbitral Awards
UDI Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNCIO United Nations Conference on International

Organization

UNCLOS United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

UNEF United Nations Emergency Force

UNEP United Nations Environment Programme

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural

Organization

UNFICYP United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus UNIFIL United Nations Interim Force in the Lebanon UNOGIL United Nations Observer Group in the Lebanon

UNOSOM United Nations Operations in Somalia UNPROFOR United Nations Peace-keeping Forces

UNTS United Nations Treaty Series
UPU Universal Postal Union
WHO World Health Organization

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