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CONTENTS

PAGE

Law and War in the Virtual Era

Jack M. Beard

409

Unmanned aerial vehicles and other remotely controlled or "virtual" military technologies are refashioning the conduct of military operations, the functioning of military institutions, and even the objectives of war itself. Virtual technologies are unexpectedly and ironically giving unprecedented traction, transparency, and relevance to venerable *jus in bello* principles protecting civilians from the effects of hostilities, and are forcing states to confront revitalized and new duties to avoid causing harm to civilian populations.

The Pillar of Glass: Human Rights in the Development Operations of the United Nations

Mac Darrow and Louise Arbour

446

Although human rights are among the defining purposes of the United Nations and apply to all its staff, recent intergovernmental debates on UN development operations have downplayed human rights, generating both confusion over the actual related duties of UN workers and political controversy. This response analyzes the roles and responsibilities of UN development workers under international human rights law, taking into account the overarching political context as well as the practical realities on the ground.

Thomas M. Franck (1931–2009)

Rosalyn Higgins

502

Notes and Comments

The Private Life of Environmental Treaties

Natasha A. Affolder

510

The Francis Deák Prize

526

Current Developments

The 2008 Judicial Activity of the International Court of Justice

D. Stephen Mathias

527

International Decisions

Edited by David J. Bederman

Maritime Delimitation in the Black Sea (Romania v. Ukraine) (Coalter G. Lathrop)

543

International Court of Justice judgment on marine delimitation in the Black Sea

China—Measures Affecting the Protection and Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (Daniel Gervais)

549

World Trade Organization panel report on China's enforcement of intellectual property rights

International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (Intertanko), International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (Intercargo), Greek Shipping Co-operation Committee, Lloyd's Register and International Salvage Union v. Secretary of State for Transport (Jan Wouters and Philip De Man)

555

European Court of Justice judgment on direct effect of law of the sea instruments in the European Community

Trinidad Cement Ltd. v. Caribbean Community; Doreen Johnson v. CARICAD (David S. Berry)

561

Caribbean Court of Justice decision on jurisdiction to render interpretations of CARICOM treaty

Demir & Baykara v. Turkey (Ragnar Nordeide)

567

European Court of Human Rights judgment on rights of trade union formation and of collective bargaining

Contemporary Practice of the United States Relating to International Law

Edited by John R. Crook

U.S. Administration Encounters Difficulties in Effort to End Guantánamo Bay Detentions	575
District Court Holds That Detainees Brought from Other Countries to Afghanistan Can Seek U.S. Habeas Review	579
U.S. Supreme Court Finds Iran Immune in Case Involving Terrorism Claims and the Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal	581
U.S. Supreme Court Finds President's Waiver of Terrorism Exception to Iraq's Sovereign Immunity Bars Pending Cases	582
Second Circuit Recognizes Common Law Immunity of Former Senior Israeli Intelligence Official	584
United States Joins in Inviting Cuba Back into the OAS, but Cuba Declines the Invitation	585
State Department Notifies Congress of New ILO Conventions and Recommendations	586
United States Hosts Antarctic Treaty Parties; Secretary of State Discusses Polar Issues	588
Eleventh Circuit Approves General Noriega's Extradition to France	590
United States Affirms Support for ICTY, Denies Karadžić Amnesty Deal	591
Major Corporations Settle Alien Tort Statute Cases Following Adverse Appellate Rulings	592
UN Human Rights Officials Berate U.S. Human Rights Policies and Practices	594
North Korea Rejects Past Nuclear Commitments, Tests Another Nuclear Weapon, and Provokes Additional UN Sanctions	597
President Obama Calls for Nuclear-Weapons-Free World, New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, Senate Approval of CTBT, and Strengthened Anti-proliferation Efforts	600
NAFTA Tribunal Rejects Glamis Gold Claim Against United States	602
Brief Notes	604

Recent Books on International Law

Edited by Richard B. Bilder

Review Essay

International Law as Public Law: On Recent and Historical German Approaches to International Law	
Denfeld, Claudia. <i>Hans Wehberg (1885–1962): Die Organisation der Staatengemeinschaft</i> ; Degenhardt, Frank. <i>Zwischen Machtstaat und Völkerbund: Erich Kaufmann (1880–1972)</i> ; Talmon, Stefan. <i>Kollektive Nichtanerkennung illegaler Staaten; Pluralistische Gesellschaften und Internationales Recht</i> [43 Berichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Völkerrecht]; Dicke, Klaus (ed.). <i>Weltinnenrecht: Liber amicorum Jost Delbrück</i> ; Matz, Nele. <i>Wege zur Koordinierung völkerrechtlicher Verträge</i> ; Nußberger, Angelika. <i>Sozialstandards im Völkerrecht</i> ; Scheyli, Martin. <i>Konstitutionelle Gemeinwohlorientierung im Völkerrecht</i> (Jochen von Bernstorff and Volker Roeben)	609

Book Reviews

Trachtman, Joel P. <i>The Economic Structure of International Law</i> (Jide Nzelibe)	619
Johnston, Douglas M. <i>The Historical Foundations of World Order: The Tower and the Arena</i> (Detlev F. Vagts)	623
Koh, Harold Hongju. <i>Transnational Litigation in United States Courts</i> (Anupam Chander)	625
Brölmann, Catherine. <i>The Institutional Veil in Public International Law: International Organisations and the Law of Treaties</i> (Steve Charnovitz)	627
Alvarez, Guillermo Aguilar, and W. Michael Reisman (eds.). <i>The Reasons Requirement in International Investment Arbitration: Critical Case Studies</i> (Jason Webb Yackee)	629
Moeckli, Daniel. <i>Human Rights and Non-discrimination in the 'War on Terror'</i> (Sikander A. Shah)	635
Virzo, Roberto. <i>Il regolamento delle controversie nel diritto del mare: rapporti tra procedimenti</i> (Hugo Caminos)	640

Books Received

International Legal Materials. Contents, Vol. XLVIII, No. 2	645
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