

Interest Group Reviews and Discussion

FUTURE PERFECT: THE CONTINUING ROLE OF THE LAUTERPACHT CENTRE¹

*Closing words by Dr Charlotte Ku*²

Dr Charlotte Ku, former Director of the Lauterpacht Centre made the following remarks:

It is a privilege and pleasure to follow the distinguished panel of speakers and this full and rich day of discussion on The Function of Law in the International Community. It is also a great pleasure to be able to offer congratulations to Sir Eli on his 80th birthday and to the leadership of the Faculty of Law, represented by its Chairman, Professor David Feldman, and that of the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law on the Centre's 25th anniversary.

These are important milestones and clearly are recognized as such by all of us who have gathered here – many of whom who have travelled some distance – to celebrate, but perhaps more importantly to engage in robust and collegial discussion on important aspects of contemporary international law. We are here because we believe and support the Centre's mission; because we have benefited from the Centre's resources and because we are part of the Centre's community of international law scholars – whether as faculty, as research students, or as visitors through the Centre's program of Visiting Fellows. We are a worldwide network who are drawn together by association with the Lauterpacht Centre either through Sir Eli both through his teaching and practice or through the wider international law community.

Each of us is drawn to this network because of what it offers us in collegiality and the opportunity for feedback and collaboration in our work. So much of this is captured in the Centre's treasured custom of coffee at 11 am. Not only is one physically refreshed after such a break, but also intellectually refreshed by a conversation or a chance encounter. Many of these conversations continue and help to produce new insights and perspectives. The Centre is a hub

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² Reported by: Ms Emily Crawford and Ms Kate Parlett.

of international law activity in its Friday lunch programs, colloquia, research student presentations, and program of visiting fellows. People have come to the Centre to recharge their batteries as I did following twelve years as Executive Director of the American Society of International Law. Not only did I catch up on reading and complete two book chapters, but I also reflected on the extraordinary changes that international law had undergone during the years that I had worked at ASIL – from the beginning of 1990 to late 2006. My experience is typical of those who have managed to come to the Centre to spend a little time to reflect and to write.

But in one respect, my experience was not typical. As many of you may know, I was asked to undertake a study about the Centre's future. Was the vision of the Centre's founder, Sir Elihu Lauterpacht and subsequent directors of the Centre sustainable? Indeed, is this vision still relevant to contemporary conditions within international law and within the university here in Cambridge. In connection with this study, I contacted many of you and produced a report to help chart a course for the Centre's future.

The conclusions of the study were simple. The Lauterpacht Centre's mission is more important than ever in the fast-paced changing environment in which international law operates today. As we know from the International Law Commission's study on the fragmentation of international law, there is much international law activity today that we might generally regard in a positive light, but it has also created stresses that require consideration and understanding. The Lauterpacht Centre provides a place and a community for informed rumination and policy relevant output to help shape decision-making and normative development. We have but to reflect on the distinguished personal contributions of Sir Eli to international jurisprudence as well as the important work represented by so many of you who are attending this celebration.

So, there is much to celebrate. But there is also much to do. Of course, there is much to do in the ongoing understanding and development of international law. But there is also much to do to sustain the Lauterpacht Centre and its community to ensure their ongoing service to international law.

This brings me to a key point addressed in my report – the Centre's leadership. We are here today to celebrate the vision of Sir Eli and the leadership of his successors as Centre directors that have created this important hub of international law activity. The Centre has been blessed in the quality and dedication of its directors. But it has also come by this talent somewhat by happy coincidence in the person of the Whewell Professor or through individuals who took on this

leadership responsibility while maintaining other Cambridge connections or other professional interests.

It became clear to me and those I consulted that for the Centre to realize its full potential, it needs to have the independent financial means to support leadership brought in for the primary purpose of advancing the Centre's mission as the intellectual home for international lawyers around the world and for those working in international law projects here in Cambridge. Such leadership requires a visionary who is sufficiently rooted in international law to know the community and the issues, but who is also sufficiently dedicated and entrepreneurial to know how to advance the insights and output of the Centre's research community.

Such leadership is key because it is the linchpin that makes everything else happen. It is the key to realizing the potential of all that we are presently celebrating about the Centre and that has been mentioned – the buildings, the programs, the connections, and the people. And, it is something that we, as members of the Centre community, must commit to doing something about.

How can we do so? Financial contributions are a start and there are forms in your packets providing options and modes for doing so. This includes is a list of specific needs to secure the Centre's future. These include endowing the Centre director's chair, securing additional funds for ongoing building improvements, continued building of the Centre's endowment by becoming a Friend of the Lauterpacht Centre, supporting the Centre's Visiting Fellows Alumni Fund, and supporting the International Law Fund's scholarships.

Let me note the leadership that has already taken place in some of these areas. Professor Crawford has appropriately noted the leadership that has given the Centre its premises. I want to mention two newer developments initiated specifically in connection with the 25th anniversary celebrations. The first is a Friends of the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law program where seven individuals have already each committed £5,000 to the Centre's Endowment. We invite others of you to consider joining this group. The second is the initiative of a Steering Group of the Centre's former Visiting Fellows who are working to activate an alumni association and to create an LCIL Alumni Fund to support Visiting Fellows from under-represented parts of the world who may not have the means to travel to and to reside at the Centre for any length of time.

So, of course, we are here to celebrate and to congratulate. But we are also here to commit and to rededicate ourselves to the systematic and vigorous development of international law through the work of researchers, practitioners, teachers, and students associated with the Lauterpacht Centre. All of us gathered here are part of the Centre's community and as such, bear responsibility for securing its future. We can do this through our own individual contributions both now and into the future.

Think about where your contribution might make the most difference. I would further ask each of you to think about contacts you have or people you know who share a commitment to a strong system of international law and global governance who might be interested in supporting the Centre's work. The sums we need may seem large when contemplated in an individual context, but we all know of gifts that make the Centre's needs pale by comparison. So, the targets are reachable if we work together to reach them. Please let James or Eli know of such ideas or contacts you might have.

I would close by addressing the younger members of the Lauterpacht Centre community. I am so pleased to see those of you here who have just completed your doctorates or just started your teaching careers. I know the cost in time and funds that you have had to bear in order to be here today. This portends well for the Centre's future, but only if we see it as part of our ongoing responsibility to secure that future. And, that responsibility extends to all of us – young and old. So, please consider your own personal circumstances, but develop a habit of supporting the Centre and to understanding the Centre's important ongoing financial needs.

So, let us celebrate, but let us also commit to a strong and bright future for the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law whose leadership and importance in the service of international law will be cause for a 50th anniversary celebration in 2033.

Professor Crawford closed the Conference with an expression of thanks to all participants. There had been a series of brilliant accounts of different subjects. He hoped it would inspire a desire to further support the Lauterpacht Centre at a time when it is absolutely needed.