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READER IN PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD LECTURES AT IMLI

Dr. Stefan Talmon, Reader in Public International Law, and before that University Lecturer in Public International Law at the University of Oxford (St. Anne's College), recently delivered a lecture to the IMLI class of 2007 – 2008 titled "Law Making and Law Changing by the Security Council". The subject of Dr. Talmon's lecture is a topic that should attract a great interest in circles of international law and politics as law making and law changing by the Security Council has become a reality in present day International Law.



Dr. Stefan Talmon with Prof. David Attard and IMLI class 2007 - 2008

Asked about the main aim of his lecture and the core message he wishes to convey to the students thereby, Dr. Talmon explains that his intention is to alert lawyers about the new development which otherwise could pass unnoticed and therefore become firmly imbedded in international customary law, as the reality is that not many people follow the United Nations developments. In fact, Dr. Talmon notes, very few have realised the recent developments and their repercussions on the new understanding of the role and powers of the Security Council. His aim is therefore to raise awareness, particularly among those officials and diplomats whose role is to alert their governments of the international legal developments and advise their ministers accordingly.

Originally Dr. Talmon's area of interest and research was law making by the Security Council, and his aim was to put together many aspects of the said notion, in particular through analysis of a number of Security Council's resolutions. In doing so, Dr. Talmon realised the second aspect of the recent development regarding the role and powers of the Security Council, and that is law changing, which has been present even longer than law making, but which at first seemed to have escaped the attention of the international community and the circles of international law experts. Dr. Talmon's interest in this specific subject was alerted by a few striking examples of the Security Council's resolutions which then inspired him to conduct further research into this question. During his research Dr. Talmon found numerous examples of Security Council resolutions adapting or suspending existing international law to particular situations. He also noted the formation of unusual alliances, as between India and Pakistan, united in their opposition to the Security Council's law making and law changing powers. He also found that various authors tackle individual aspects of or related to the respective phenomenon. Assessing the topic to be of a great bearing to the new developments of international law, in particular international customary law, Dr. Talmon came to conclude that the subject deserved a comprehensive approach by adding all the individual pieces together for the complete picture to emerge.

Regarding the question about his impressions and experiences of his first lecture at IMLI, Dr. Talmon noted that he was impressed by the international diversity of the student body, as the composition of the international representation at IMLI covers geographical areas which are usually not represented in these numbers at the large international universities. Dr. Talmon was particularly impressed by the number of students coming from Latin America. Secondly, Dr. Talmon found particularly interesting that IMLI successfully combines International Law of the Sea and Private Maritime Law, i.e. the public and the private aspect which usually are strictly separated, although it should normally not be the case, as lawyers from the field of public law, i.e. the Law of the Sea should have at least a basic knowledge of the commercial aspect of shipping and vice versa, the lawyers from the field of shipping law should have at least the basic knowledge of the public law aspects of the area in which the business operates. Finally, Dr. Talmon found it positive to see that students from all over the world live, study and socialise together on the campus. Dr. Talmon emphasized the importance of the contacts that are made in this way and the value of having the benefit of getting to know your counter parts in other states.

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