

FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce *Beyond the UN Charter: Peace, Security and the Role of Justice*, the fruitful result of the Third Conference of the Hague Academic Coalition (HAC)* entitled *From Peace to Justice*.

As the theme of the Conference, which was held in The Hague in April 2006, we chose to focus on a problem of a real and pressing nature: contemporary threats to international peace and security and whether or not we can address and resolve them within existing legal and political structures. This is a very relevant and timely topic. We find ourselves at a pivotal moment in history, when the peace and security of the world seems to be under threat from many different directions, and many accepted wisdoms are being questioned and challenged.

Observance of the *jus ad bellum* by states, the rules regulating the use of force, while obviously still necessary, is not in itself a guarantee to ensure our peace or security. Threats to our international peace and security posed by new types of non-state actors, including terrorists, are not the only ones we need to worry about.

International peace and security are challenged by phenomena such as massive violations of human rights or humanitarian law, within states and by both state and non-state actors. They face threats in particular from contingencies such as public health crises, including those posed by, for example, Asian Flu or HIV/AIDS, from the growing deterioration of our environment and the far-reaching consequences this will have, not least in terms of the pressure it will put on ever diminishing natural resources, and thus, possibly, of generating armed conflicts. Thus, we cannot only think of international peace and security as 'just' the absence of aggressive behaviour by states. Its sustainability does not only depend on refraining from certain types of behaviour, but also on taking positive action. We will not escape disaster by remaining inactive. Our health, safety and security depend on taking action now to avert disaster in relation to these threats to our safety and our very existence.

* See p. IX.

For the 2006 *From Peace to Justice Conference* choices had to be made. It made sense to focus our attention and efforts on the types of challenges to international peace and security which are at least perceived today as being amongst the most serious, and which are certainly generating the most discussion. And it made even more sense to place our discussion in the context of the larger debate regarding Security Council reform.

We are extremely proud and honoured that Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet of The Netherlands opened the Conference. She is well known for her strong support for and interest in issues of peace and justice, and I specifically want to mention her important work for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Until the end of 2004 she shared its Standing Commission. Since November 2005 she has been a Member of the Board of the ICRC Federation. She is also the Vice-chairperson of the Netherlands Red Cross Society. Furthermore, I would like to mention her role as a Member of the Board of Recommendation of the *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law*, which is published by one of the members of the Academic Coalition, the T.M.C. Asser Institute.

This book, as well as the Conference on which it is based, would not have been possible without the help of the highly motivated staff of the Hague Academic Coalition, of whom there are too many people to mention in this Foreword. However, as the General Director of the lead partner of this Conference, I would like to thank Dr Avril McDonald and Dr Olivier Ribbelink of the T.M.C. Asser Institute, who were responsible for developing the programme for the Conference. Furthermore, I would like to pay tribute to Dr Olivier Ribbelink for his work as the editor of the book that lies before you.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the Province of South Holland, the Municipality of The Hague and the French Embassy for their support.

Prof. Dr Frans A. NELISSEN
General Director T.M.C. Asser Institute
Chairman Hague Academic Coalition