PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

States, like individuals, have ever been concerned with their rights rather than duties. It is nevertheless surprising that no little attention has been given to the subject of the responsibility of states in international law. It is merely an introductory survey of a subject which would require a lifetime of study, and it is issued in the hope of initiating the discussion which such a subject deserves. I have attempted to derive from existing international practice the rules which govern the responsibility of states and to systematize them somewhat, especially with regard to differentiating substantive and procedural rules. I have also been concerned to a slight degree, with the broader aspects of the subject its base, its needs its tendencies.

I hope, therefore, that it may be of service not only to the lawyer who has international claims to prepare, or who is interested in the important work of the codification of international law, but of even more service to all those who are interested in the problem of international government. After all, the basis of any governmental system is obligation, and since political institutions are evolutionary, rather than creations, the proper approach to the problem of maintaining international peace and security must be from the existing system. For too many thoughtless schemes, set up with no reference to existing foundations now clog the path of international progress.

The study will cover the ‘general principles’ of state responsibility rather than particular areas of the incidence of state responsibility. At the same time the exposition necessarily involves considerable reference to matters of substance and in particular the question of ‘causes of action’ is taken up at some length. The research has tried to keep a balance between the consideration of issues of ‘pure’ legal principle and necessary reliance upon the practice of states and experience deriving from international judicial proceedings. The valuable work of the International Law Commission has been taken carefully into account. The subject-matter of responsibility is closely bound up with the precise technical problems which have to be faced in the process of applying principles and concepts. The significance of categorical formulations is much reduced in the narrow defiles of particular claims and circumstances.
International legal issues have focused on governments, corporations, organizations and people around the world and the process of globalization has increased this impact. In the global legal environment, knowledge of international law is an indispensable tool for all scholars, legal practitioners, decision-makers and citizens of the 21st century.

All gratitude and praise to the Lord, for the ocean of blessing he has showered on me

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