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**Hidetoshi Hashimoto on International Law (Sixth Edition). By Malcolm Shaw. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 1542pp.**

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**Abstract**

A review of:

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**Keywords**

Human rights, International law, Humanitarian law, International criminal tribunals, International relations

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**International Law (Sixth Edition). By Malcolm Shaw. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 1542pp.**

Malcolm Shaw, Professor of International Law at the University of Leicester, has published the sixth edition of *International Law*. International law (the Law of Nations) consists of rules and principles dealing with the conduct of states and international organizations. There is much that is unchanged in the sixth edition. The book begins with the chapters on “The Nature and Development of International Law” and “International Law Today.” These chapters discuss the historical evolution of international law as well as theories and interpretation of natural law and positive law. Shaw then examines sources of international law (custom, treaties, general principle of law, and judicial decisions), complex relations between international law and municipal law, and the subjects of international law. In the following chapters, Shaw deals with the issues of human rights protection, the law of treaties, immunity, the law of the sea, environmental law, the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, the use of force, humanitarian law, and international institutions.

Other sections of the sixth edition are thoroughly updated, and Shaw has added 254 pages to the previous edition. In the sixth, he has added a new chapter on “Individual Criminal Responsibility in International Law” as a part of human rights protection. In this chapter, Shaw asserts that the Nuremberg Trials established a historical precedent affirming that individuals have rights and duties under international law. The Court stated that “crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can the provisions of international law be enforced” (400). In this chapter, the author also examines the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the International Criminal Court (ICC). These international criminal tribunals have firmly established individuals as subjects of international law. In the sixth edition, Shaw also incorporates a discussion dealing with Air Law and Space Law into the chapter on “Territory.” In the fifth edition, he discussed the International Court of Justice in a chapter on “Inter-state Courts and Tribunals”; in the sixth edition he replaces it with a chapter specifically dealing with the International Court of Justice in order to demonstrate its significant work as an inter-state court.

Throughout, Shaw uses a topical approach organized by the exposition of subject matter in international law. The book is designed primarily for upper level undergraduate and graduate political science and international relations courses. By providing factual information relevant to the legal concepts, Shaw presents conceptual frameworks and theoretical perspectives that can be grasped by students. He does not use case method approaches for a law school course; nevertheless, this is an excellent reference book for law students.

There are three major omissions in the book. There is no chapter dealing with international economic law. Economic activities of states have ever been expanding in a globalized, interdependent world; discussions of international economic laws have great relevance in international law today. Chapter twenty-three, “International Institutions,” lacks discussion of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and Transnational Corporations (TNCs). Both are non-state actors that have acquired international legal personality; they have rights and obligations in international law. Given the fact that the book presents itself as a definitive work in the field, the

“Suggestions for further reading” at the end of each chapter and “International Law Websites” at the end of the book should be expanded. A collection of films related to international law should have been included because there are a number of excellent films on such subjects as the Nuremberg Trials and Rwandan Genocide.

International law has become an increasingly popular course in undergraduate and graduate programs in political science and international relations in recent years, reflecting the reality that the majority of the international community has come to accept the fact that international affairs should be based not on the realist notion of “power” but on the idealist notion of “international cooperation.” The great strength of this volume is its comprehensive coverage of the subjects in international law. In sum, the book is extremely informative and is undoubtedly one of the most popular international law books today. Yet students may find it necessary to use basic supplemental documents in order to read international legal texts and case law.

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