Introduction:
Careers in Diplomacy and International Law*

On the basis of experience I can say with conviction that, given the appropriate circumstances, international law and diplomacy interact and expertise in one can be of great relevance and usefulness in the conduct of the other.¹

When I was asked to contribute a piece to the series “Careers in International Law,” I was somewhat hesitant to do so. From the time of joining my country’s first delegation to the United Nations in 1960, soon after the independence of Cyprus, until nearly thirty-seven years later when I retired from the Foreign Service, I held key diplomatic positions, including two postings as Ambassador to the United States (fourteen years) and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Washington, three postings to the United Nations, including as Permanent Representative (sixteen years), Chairman of the Host Country Relations Committee, Ambassador to Germany, and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, I had multiple non-resident accreditations as Ambassador to such diverse countries as Brazil, Ecuador, Austria, Denmark, Canada and the Caribbean Commonwealth, and international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, UNIDO, ICAO, International Monetary Fund, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Organization of American States and the United Nations in Vienna. I also represented Cyprus at numerous conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth, and carried out several bilateral diplomatic missions to world capitals (London, Beijing, New Delhi, Moscow, and others).

Even though my diplomatic duties included such activities as signing the Multilateral Investments Guarantee Agreement (MIGA) Convention at the World Bank, the Customs Cooperation and the Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreements with the United States, and the Double Taxation Agreement

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with Canada, on behalf of Cyprus, these actions were in the course of political representation rather than as an international lawyer. Helping to set the course of Cyprus’ application to join the European Union in 1990 as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and systematically cultivating its advance as Ambassador in the just re-united Germany with its pivotal role in Maastricht and later in the United States, was also more diplomatic than legal activity. Signing the 1969 Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties and the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, on the other hand, could be considered a more legal function since both of these were major law-making treaties, following protracted negotiations in which I participated.

By training, choice and inclination, I also had a parallel career in international law, having studied the subject at Cambridge University, the Inns of Court and Harvard Law School; as a representative of Cyprus to the Sixth (Legal) Committee of the United Nations General Assembly from 1960 to the present; as a College Supervisor in international law at St. Johns College, Cambridge (1958–1959); and as a Professor of UN Law at the New School for Social Research (NY 1963–1965). I was also a three-term member of the UN International Law Commission (1982–1996) and a panelist for ASIL on such topics as UN Peacekeeping (1969), the Law of the Sea (1977), UN Decade of International Law (1995), State Responsibility (2001), and Proliferation of International Tribunals (2002), and I served as a judge at the Philip C. Jessup International Moot Court Competition. With my retirement from the Foreign Service at the mandatory age of sixty, I have a greater opportunity and more time to further pursue this interest. The evolving law of the sea, the new institutions of criminal justice and, more particularly, the nascent Permanent International Criminal Court – which I had advocated in various forums decades earlier – and the items currently on the agenda of the Sixth Committee including international terrorism, human cloning and international criminal jurisdiction, provide ample opportunity for meaningful, continued and intensified engagement. When this is combined with arbitration and other legal work, as well as consulting in the field, it can be not only interesting but also financially rewarding.

Looking back over more than four decades of involvement in the international legal field, a number of thoughts emerge. Some have to do with promoting one’s own country’s concerns and some are of broader interest and matters of personal conviction. As far as the former are concerned, I have always considered that it is in the national interest of Cyprus to be, and to be perceived as being, an “international law-minded” state. Constructive participation in conferences leading to major law-making treaties such as the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1968–1969) and the Convention on the Law of the Sea (1973–1982), and promoting concepts such as peremptory norms of international law in the former and the position of