

# REFLECTIONS ON TRANSATLANTIC APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL LAW

DUKE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

## FOREWORD

On November 15, 2006, the Duke Law School Center for International and Comparative Law had the pleasure of hosting John B. Bellinger III, as he presented his speech, *Reflections on Transatlantic Approaches to International Law*. Mr. Bellinger is especially well-situated to offer the U.S. government's viewpoints on transatlantic approaches to international law, as he currently serves as the Legal Adviser to the Secretary of State. In that capacity, he is the principal adviser on all domestic and international law matters to the Department of State, the Foreign Service, and the U.S. diplomatic and consular posts abroad. He is also the principal adviser to other Executive agencies on legal matters relating to the conduct of U.S. foreign relations, including to the President and the National Security Council, via the Secretary of State.

As the United States faces increasing criticism for failing to "respect" or "adhere to" international law, Mr. Bellinger's insights in defense of the U.S. government's position are especially significant. Mr. Bellinger rejects these criticisms as largely unfounded, and insists that the United States has a steadfast and abiding commitment to upholding international law. He suggests that the points of contention in international law are less about the law itself, and more about the policy and approach used to implement the law. By sharing his unique experiences relating to the development of the International Criminal Court, the status of detainees and military commissions, and international approaches to privacy, Mr. Bellinger seeks to bridge the divide among states' various approaches to international law. In addition to staunchly defending the United States' record on international law issues, Mr. Bellinger urges American scholars to pursue the study of international law with rigor, understanding, and humility.