

U.S. Needs a New Commitment to World Court

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Letters

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To the Editor:

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs have recently conducted hearings on the many questions raised by the U.S. Government's decision, announced Oct. 7, 1985, to withdraw completely from the general compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. They are thus considering alternatives to complete withdrawal and whether the Government should draft a new declaration of adherence to World Court jurisdiction.

The compulsory jurisdiction of the World Court has long received the support of legal experts in this country and elsewhere, and was approved by a resolution of the American Society of International Law in 1946. We wish to express our deep professional concern regarding the Government's decision. We speak also for some 40 of our most distinguished colleagues in international law, including Arthur H. Dean, Philip C. Jessup, Leonard C. Meeker, Robert von Mehren, Elliott L. Richardson and other teachers and scholars, including Professors Richard B. Bilder, William W. Bishop Jr., Herbert W. Briggs, Goler T. Butcher, Robert F. Drinan, S.J., Richard A. Falk, Tom J. Farer, Roger Fisher, Richard N. Gardner, Leo Gross, John Lawrence Hargrove, John N. Hazard,

Richard B. Lillich, Covey T. Oliver, Edith Brown Weiss and Burns H. Weston.

In our view, the U.S. should re-establish its long-standing commitment to international law and the peaceful settlement of international disputes by carefully considering the adoption of a new or amended instrument of general adherence to the World Court's compulsory jurisdiction. It is in the interest of the nation and of the world.

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New York, Jan. 12, 1986

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