

domestic legal systems. However, we are closer to having a comprehensive legal framework for international dealings than many people suspect, and the similarities between the domestic and international bodies of law are greater than many suspect.

Let us consider the sources of international law. Domestically, law-creating goes on at many levels. The legislature, the missing element on the international plane, is a prolific source of law. But so also are contracts (by which individuals consent to be bound by rules of conduct they themselves establish), custom, the decisions of the courts, and the opinions of great writers on law. All these have parallels in international law.

Treaties, whether they be bilateral or multilateral, are the counterpart of contracts, for they create law by consent among nations. Custom is often a source of international law and, in fact, some of the great conventions, like that on diplomatic relations, are codification of years of custom. The importance of custom is given formal recognition by the Statute of the International Court of Justice, which permits the Court to apply "the general principles of law recognized by civilized nations". Even countries other than those which are parties to disputes are influenced by the decisions of the International Court of Justice and may consider themselves bound by decisions which define the nature and scope of principles of international law. And then there is the work of the writers on international law, whose contributions are just as significant as those in the domestic sphere.

There is even some international parallel to domestic legislation. The great multilateral conventions bear many of the marks of legislation. They embrace the largest part of the world community in their scope and the terms in which they are couched are a reflection of the majority will, achieved very often by compromise, debate, and a vote. And surely the regulations being generated by the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations bear many of the characteristics of legislation.

While the systems that have developed for promulgating international law are certainly not the most orderly or effective that can be devised, they do clearly serve the function of producing rules which are useful and which are given very wide recognition. The increased flexibility that arises from the less formal procedures may ensure that the rules correspond to existing conditions and change with them more readily than might otherwise be the case. This more haphazard method of promulgating rules of international law may provide a measure of insurance that states, the subjects of international law, will be able to regulate their affairs more effectively than would be the case under a more rigid system.

Granting, therefore, that there is a relatively well-organized procedure which produces international law, can the system of international law work without a formal system of enforcement? Undoubtedly, if the parallels between international law and domestic law were exact, then an organized system of enforcement would be the most effective method of ensuring compliance with the law. However, to the extent that international law does exist, it is with the consent of the overwhelming majority of all nations and it therefore has the best teeth of any law system in the world.

There is no greater assurance of the enforceability of the law than that its subjects wish it to be enforced and, however tempting the prospect,