cts for the hostage-taking committee pear, however, somewhat more hopeful, ce (a) its mandate is better focused an that of the Committee on Internanal Terrorism and (b) there are indicaons that moderate African and Arab ates may be prepared to support intertional measures against this kind of tivity.

The results achieved by these two mmittees will, in the long run, help to dicate the prospects for strengthening ernational legal measures against terrism within a UN context.

The debates over several years on rious proposals for strengthening the le of the International Court of Justice d other mechanisms for the peaceful ttlement of disputes have similarly realed widespread caution, particularly the part of developing states, which the Court and much of the traditional rous of international law as being too ich committed to the status quo. It has metimes been suggested that the Court nds to view the world "through a rear-w mirror". While an objective assessent of the Court's judgments in past ars would not support such a sweeping ticism, it is a fact of international life at states have resisted efforts to broaden ceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction the Court and have shown great reluctnce to refer their disputes to it.

In many areas, nevertheless, the UN s played a dynamic and innovatory role contributing to a stable world order rough the progressive development of ernational law. This role has been most ident where states have come to recogze a growing sense of interdependence — example, on the need for rational manement and conservation of the earth's sources and on the development of an ernational economic system leading to nore equitable distribution of resources.

The UN Conference on the Law of the a has been working out a new legal gime for man's use of the oceans, demed to be practical, equitable and sponsive to current needs and realities. e range and complexity of the issues at ke are probably unprecedented and a ccessful outcome is by no means certain, spite general recognition that full acunt should be taken of the aspirations the developing countries to benefit from e resources of the oceans.

A significant aspect of the Law of the a Conference has been the important e played in the negotiating process by a mber of special-interest groups that, flecting the variety of interests at play, fer from traditional political, geographic and economic alliances. For example, on issues of the preservation of the marine environment, the "coastal-state group", which includes both developing countries and developed countries such as Canada, has taken positions at odds with positions advanced by the "major maritime powers". On many issues, the developing countries have taken a common stand, while on others there have been differences between those countries that are "coastal states" and those that are "landlocked" or "geographically-disadvantaged".

The extent to which vital national interests are involved and the difficulty of gauging support on the many interrelated issues has led to the realization that, to be effective, a treaty must command not just majority support but broad general support. As a result, the conference rules of procedure provide for voting only as a last resort. The conference is trying to put together a "package" so that a consensus can be reached on the treaty as a whole. Although it is unlikely that any country will be satisfied on all issues, it is hoped that by 1978 solutions will have been reached on the most important issues still confronting the conference.

Law of the Sea Conference in search of consensus

The conference has already achieved broad agreement on revolutionary new legal conceptions such as the 200-mile "economic zone", in which the coastal state will exercise specific types of jurisdiction, and the "common heritage of mankind", applicable to the international seabed area beyond national jurisdiction. These conceptions, in which duties go hand-in-hand with new rights, are based on principles of equity rather than power, and will form the basis of the new constitution for the seas. Even as the negotiations continue, emerging principles of international law have gained wide acceptance and have been translated into state practice. For example, Canada and a number of other countries have recently taken action to assert exclusive fisheries jurisdictions of 200 miles on the basis of ideas developed at the conference. Whether or not the international community is successful in the near future in completing the negotiations, it is clear that the law of the sea will never return to the unsatisfactory state it was in before 1967, when the United Nations launched the precursor of the third UN Law of the Sea Conference.

Outer space

The progressive development of the law of outer space is another area in which the UN has played a major role, primarily through its Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. This Committee, of