
EDITORIAL

Is international law really law? This is a well known question to us, public international law students, which is often put by people who are less involved in the subject than we are. If one studies, teaches or deals with international law otherwise, one starts to believe in it. And if you are working on an international law journal this believe goes even deeper. It is evident that international law is becoming increasingly prominent in the solving of world problems.

But sometimes a scepticism on the role of international law is fed by the daily facts. Do states themselves believe in international law? Or do states act according to their own views and wishes and use the law of nations only in a way that suits them the best? These days the subject is on the headlines again. It is obvious that international law is being violated in the present 'Gulf Crisis'. But also, never before was there such a display of consent amongst the members of the United Nations in condemning an act of aggression against one of its members and in issuing resolutions to force an aggressor on his knees.

Crises like these should not withhold us from promoting international law or lead to a loss of faith in the predominance of law over power. Although they are to be regretted very much, international disputes like the 'Gulf Crisis' could also be a stimulation to develop further international law and to seek better ways of solving disputes between states.

In this respect we would like to bring to your attention the forthcoming appearance of a special issue of this journal on the promotion of peaceful settlement of disputes in the *Decade of International Law*.

The Editorial Staff of the *Leiden Journal of International Law* aims to promote the understanding of the principles and purposes of international law and to describe current developments in the field; and we still believe in international law. International law is not broken more often than any other system of law; it is only natural that what is reported in the newspapers is the exception, not the rule. The LJIL publishes about the exception as well as the rule. In this issue the Student Contributions deal with disputes between states (United Kingdom versus Argentina in the Falkland Islands dispute, and The Netherlands versus Surinam regarding the suspension of the development assistance treaty). The Leading Articles have more to do with 'the rule'. Professor W. Verwey describes new GATT-rules, the article of L. Hancher deals with international legal rules about radioactive waste disposal and R. Martha examines EEC-rules regarding 'the origin of goods'. And of course we have articles about the enormous political changes in (Eastern) Europe and their international legal implications.

With all this, the Editorial Staff wishes its readers all the best in studying, teaching or practicing international law.