The Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention and Federal International Child Support Enforcement

*Peter H. Pfund**

Since 1980, the Hague Conference on Private International Law has produced three conventions focused on child protection that have fleshed in — with practical rules, substantive norms, and procedures for cooperation — the framework of laudable aims and children's rights set out in the 1988 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.[1] These three Hague conventions are the 1980 Hague Convention on International Child Abduction,[2] the 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption,[3] and the most recent Hague Convention, adopted in final form on October 18, 1996. The 1996 Convention deals with the protection of children, i.e., jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition, and cooperation with regard to protective measures for the child.[4] Beyond the scope of this Paper, but

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* Assistant Legal Adviser for Private International Law, U.S. Department of State. This Paper is based on a presentation made at the fifteenth annual Brigitte M. Bodenheimer Memorial Lecture on the Family, delivered on November 7, 1996, at the University of California, Davis School of Law. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the Department of State.

[1] U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by U.N. General Assembly Resolution 44/25 on Nov. 20, 1989, *reprinted in* 28 I.L.M. 1448.

[2] Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction of Oct. 25, 1980, *in* HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW, ACTES ET DOCUMENTS DE LA QUATORZIEME SESSION, TOME III 413-22 (1982), *reprinted in* T.I.A.S. No. 11670; 19 I.L.M. 1501 [hereinafter Convention on International Child Abduction].

[3] Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption of May 29, 1993, Final Act, Part A, [hereinafter Convention on Protection of Children], *in* HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW, PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION, TOME II 523-35 (1993), *reprinted in* 32 I.L.M. 1134 [hereinafter PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION]; P.H. Pfund, *Intercountry Adoption: The 1993 Hague Convention: Its Purpose, Implementation, and Promise*, 28 FAM. L.Q. 53, convention text at 76-88 (1994); 40 NETHERLANDS INT'L L. REV. 292 (1993); I/II UNIF. L. REV. 237 (1993).

[4] Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Chil-

also of relevance to the internationalization of family law and worthy of mention, are certain fairly recent inter-American conventions adopted at inter-American specialized conferences on private international law dealing with maintenance obligations,[5] the wrongful removal of minors,[6] and child trafficking,[7] among others. Some of these conventions are regional equivalents of conventions produced by the Hague Conference on a world-wide basis.

Adair Dyer's Paper[8] addresses the Child Abduction[9] and the Protection of Children[10] Conventions. This Paper discusses the Intercountry Adoption Convention[11] and its likely future implementation in the United States. I also briefly describe new federal legislation to make arrangements at the federal level with other countries for the reciprocal enforcement of family support obligations, including child support.

I. INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

Intercountry adoptions to the United States in the fiscal year that ended on September 30, 1996, totalled 11,340, more than 1000 children higher than in the highest previous year (1987). The following are a few selected figures for fiscal year 1996 (based on immigrant visas issued): China: 3333; Russia: 2454; Korea: 1516.[12] These figures suggest that more children proba-

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dren, and Decisions on Matters Pertaining to the [Future] Agenda of the Conference of Oct. 18, 1996, Part A (provisional ed.), *in* HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW: FINAL ACT OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION 3-22, *reprinted in* 35 I.L.M. 1391 [hereinafter Convention on Parental Responsibility].

[5] *See* Inter-American Convention on Support Obligations, adopted at Montevideo on July 15, 1989, O.A.S. Treaty Series No. 71, OEA/Ser.A/46, *reprinted in* 29 I.L.M. 73, 75-80 (with Introductory Note and Content Summary at 73-74).

[6] *See* Inter-American Convention on the International Return of Children, adopted at Montevideo on July 15, 1989, O.A.S. Treaty Series No. 70, OEA/Ser.A/45, *reprinted in* 29 I.L.M. 63, 66-72 (with Introductory Note and Content Summary at 63-65).

[7] *See* Organization of American States, Fifth Inter-American Specialized Conference on Private International Law: Inter-American Convention on International Traffic in Minors of Mar. 18, 1994, O.A.S. Treaty Series No. 79, OEA/Ser.A/54, *reprinted in* 33 I.L.M. 721, 723-31.

[8] *See* Adair Dyer, *The Internationalization of Family Law*, 30 U.C. DAVIS L. REV. 625 (1997).

[9] *See* Convention on International Child Abduction, *supra* note 2.

[10] *See* Convention on Parental Responsibility, *supra* note 4.

[11] *See* Convention on Protection of Children, *supra* note 3.

[12] Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Dep't of State, Immigrant Visa Monthly Workload

bly still come to the United States in adoption annually than to all other countries combined. This, in turn, suggests that there are good reasons for the United States to become a party to the first Convention that gives ungrudging endorsement to such adoptions and sets out internationally agreed norms and procedures designed to protect both the children involved and the interests of the children's birth and adoptive parents.

In 1988, at the Hague Conference's Sixteenth Diplomatic Session, the organization's member states decided to include on the agenda for the next session "the preparation of a convention on adoption of children coming from abroad."[13] By 1990, the action legal officer for the project on the Permanent Bureau — Adair Dyer's colleague Hans van Loon, who has become Secretary General of the Hague Conference as of July 1, 1996 — prepared a very complete and authoritative report.

The van Loon report[14] was a remarkable example of the useful work that a secretariat such as the Hague Conference's Permanent Bureau can do. By means of thorough research and analysis, the report helped the Hague Conference Permanent Bureau steer member states and the organization on the right course in seeking to come to grips with a difficult problem needing attention at the international level. The report discussed adoption's evolution as a social institution in industrialized and developing societies, the origins of children available for intercountry adoption, and abuses of the intercountry process. It included a comparative legal examination of domestic and intercountry adoptions and reviewed existing international legal instruments seeking to protect children in connection with intercountry adoption. The report closed with an examination of the likely objectives of a new convention and how the convention might deal with various issues and provide for cooperation among the countries involved.

Report (Oct. 31, 1996).

[13] HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW, PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTEENTH SESSION, TOME I 35 (1991) (Final Act, Part B, item 1.a).

[14] *See* Report on Intercountry Adoption (with Annexes), Prel. Doc. No. 1 (drawn up by J.H.A. van Loon, Apr. 1, 1990) *in* PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION, *supra* note 3, at 10-119; *see also* J.H.A. van Loon, *International Co-operation and Protection of Children with Regard to Intercountry Adoption*, *in* 244 RECUEIL DES COURS, COLLECTED COURSES OF THE HAGUE ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW 195, 229-60 (VII ed. 1993).

The Department of State and the United States delegation to the work of the Hague Conference also independently examined the issues. A specialized study group of the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Private International Law provided expert advice and guidance on U.S. law and practice and the concerns of the U.S. adoption and child welfare community and interested federal government agencies. The three all-day meetings of the study group, which occurred during the preparation of the convention, were each announced in advance and were open to the public. They were attended by about seventy persons who were also attending these meetings so they could provide feedback on developments in the study group and at The Hague to the U.S. adoption community.

The U.S. delegation to the sessions at The Hague included representatives of the State Department, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), Adoptive Families of America, the National Council For Adoption, the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, and other adoption interests. The U.S. delegation to the final Hague Conference diplomatic session, in 1993, at the conclusion of which the final text was adopted, also included a representative of the American Public Welfare Association and two adoptive parents of children from Southeast Asia, appointed by the White House.

In addition to the U.S. delegation, participants in the deliberations included experts from thirty-five other Hague Conference member states as well as experts from thirty non-member countries of origin of children available for intercountry adoption. The most needy of those countries received financial assistance from the Hague Conference to enable them to attend the sessions on a regular basis. This assistance was provided from a special fund established by the Permanent Bureau, into which a number of member states made voluntary financial contributions.

Additionally, many of the Latin American countries of origin, after the first such special commission session at The Hague, were provided interpretation services from Spanish into both French and English on an exceptional basis. This was to ensure that experts from those countries would not be impeded from effective participation because of limited ability to speak one of the Hague Conference's two official languages.

Deliberations began in 1990, after the van Loon report was published and distributed. The deliberations consisted of three two-week sessions of a Special Commission of the Hague Conference between 1990 and 1993. These sessions first discussed issues and their possible resolution, and then focussed increasingly on draft language of convention provisions.

If any of the participating delegations had doubts about the need for the development of internationally agreed norms and procedures to regulate intercountry adoption, these doubts were overcome by the situation that developed in Romania after the fall of Ceaucescu. Hundreds — even thousands — of Romanian children were snapped up by well-meaning persons from many countries who took the children abroad in adoption during a period of legal vacuum in Romania. There were no laws, regulations, or procedures to ensure that the children were really available for adoption, resulting in the severance of the legal parent-child relationship between the children and their birth parents.

In addition to the Permanent Bureau's and the participating countries' delegations' motivation to protect primarily the children involved, and, in that process, protect the legal institution of intercountry adoption, non-governmental international organizations participating as invited observers — particularly the International Social Service, Defense for Children International, and Terre des Hommes — provided an important influence in the conference room. While these invited observers sometimes seemed to have the narrow focus of single-issue interests, they helped force participating countries to come to grips with some very difficult issues. One of these issues was "private" adoptions.

The United States was not the only primarily receiving country from which some prospective adoptive parents were either being assisted by individuals like lawyers, or were themselves directly trying to find children abroad to adopt without the involvement of an agency or individual intermediary. However, many other countries where adoption services were offered only by governmental authorities, and particularly states of origin, considered such then-unregulated "private" adoptions to be most prone to abuses — improper payments to officials, circumvented

procedures and fraud, improper financial gain, and improper inducements to birth parents to consent to severance of their legal parent-child relationship.

The United States and other receiving states supported Convention provisions permitting private adoptions, but also provisions for their regulation by the Convention. The U.S. delegation, while it included experts personally opposed to such "private" adoptions, realized that if private adoptions were not explicitly permitted and regulated, the Convention might never receive the political support it would need for the United States ultimately to ratify and implement it. Other countries, too, found that their system of empowering approved individuals to provide adoption services, and the efforts of their prospective adoptive parents to act for themselves, would be encompassed within the broader meaning of "private" adoptions.

During the third special commission session in February 1993 — the last before the diplomatic session in May 1993 at which the final text was adopted — after delegations had become committed through earlier work to the success of the Convention, the commission discussed the issues involved in "private" adoptions. It then conducted a series of indicative votes on very fundamental questions related to private adoptions. The Canadian Commission chairman and the Permanent Bureau had prepared these questions with great care. Little was left to do after those votes but drafting to make provision for those decisions in the language of the Convention and its Explanatory Report.[15]

The formulation of the questions and the votes on them give a good insight into the process of decision-making on policy matters at such sessions of the Hague Conference and the way that international agreement and consensus is achieved. The questions and concerns regarding private ("independent") adoptions are broken up into their constituent substantive elements and individually addressed:

> *By a large majority* the Special Commission decided to include independent adoptions within the Convention (33 votes for, 7 against).

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[15] *See* G. Parra-Aranguren, Explanatory Report on the Convention of Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, *in* PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION, *supra* note 3, at 538-651.

> *By a large majority* the Special Commission decided that the Convention would forbid direct, unsupervised contact between the biological parents and the prospective adoptive parents.
> *By a large majority* the Special Commission decided that the Convention would forbid direct, unsupervised arrangements for adoptions organized by independent intermediaries.
> *By a large majority* the Special Commission decided that in every case of intercountry adoption the Central Authorities in both the State of origin and the receiving State should be informed of proposed adoptions.
> *By an overwhelming* majority the Special Commission decided that the Convention should prohibit adoptions arranged by intermediaries not authorized to do so by competent authorities.
> *By a large majority* the Special Commission decided that each State would be free to impose all provisions of the Convention in every adoption and furthermore that each State would be free to enforce additional requirements of they so desired.
> *By a large majority* the Special Commission decided that the provisions of Chapter IV [Procedural Requirements] should, in substance, be mandatory.[16]

The Convention, as finally approved, sets out in several different articles the majority views reflected in these votes. The framework of norms and procedures set out in the Convention is generally understood to be the acceptable minimum. Thus, each party state may maintain and provide for additional requirements, restrictions, and conditions to those set out in the Convention.

The Convention permits but regulates private adoptions, setting for them the same substantive norms as for agency-assisted adoptions and imposing notice and other requirements. These norms and requirements no longer leave adoptions really private in the sense of the private adoptions with which so many experts had problems. Moreover, as is true now, countries of origin are free to choose not to permit "their" children to be the subject of an adoption unless adoption services are provided only by governmental authorities and Convention-accredited agencies with which they choose to work.[17]

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[16] Report of Meeting No. 41 of Feb. 7, 1992, *in* HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW, SPECIAL COMMISSION ON INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION 2.

[17] Convention Article 22(4) makes what is generally understood — that party states

The Convention applies to all adoptions involving the movement of a child from the party state of habitual residence to another party state of which the adoptive parents are habitual residents. Before such an adoption may proceed, authorities of the country of origin of the child must make certain determinations related to the child, and certain others must be made by the authorities of the receiving country. The resulting adoption is then entitled to recognition in every state party to the Convention by operation of law.

Party states are required to establish national Central Authorities with certain programmatic and facilitative functions. The Central Authorities also have case-specific functions, primarily set out in Chapter IV of the Convention. Adoption agencies accredited in compliance with certain general standards set by the Convention may perform most of these case-specific functions, and probably will in the United States. The Convention explicitly calls on the Hague Conference Secretary General to convene meetings at regular intervals to discuss problems encountered in implementing the Convention and improvements to its implementation.

The U.S. delegation to the Hague Conference's Seventeenth Session returned from the final negotiations convinced that the Convention was one that the United States could implement and ratify. The Convention has been endorsed by the American Bar Association and many national organizations representing adoption interests, which maintained understandable concern about the details of its implementation in the United States and abroad. Following these endorsements, the United States signed the Convention on March 31, 1994. This signaled a general intent in due course to move towards U.S. ratification.

Nonetheless, there has been some lingering reluctance with regard to U.S. ratification in some quarters. This was fueled in part by the flexibility that the Convention gives party states about the details of its implementation within their legal, political, and social systems. There was also initial concern that U.S. implementation could impose substantial new bureaucratic burdens and costs on prospective adoptive parents and adoption

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may maintain or impose requirements and conditions additional to those imposed by the Convention — explicit in this regard.

agencies, and that only large, well-established U.S. adoption agencies might qualify for Convention accreditation.

In spite of this residual reluctance, by about the time that the United States signed the Convention, it was becoming clear that the Hague Conference had a winner on its hands. More countries had participated in the negotiation of this Hague Convention (sixty-six countries) than any previous one,[18] and more countries had signed this Convention (fifteen countries) in its first year than any previous Hague Convention. The Convention subsequently came into force, with three ratifications, less than two years after adoption of its final text.[19]

Since 1993, there has been an attitudinal shift in the United States towards the Convention's acceptance. Even a sense of urgency for the United States to ratify has developed. Increasingly, countries of origin, whether they have signed or ratified the Convention or not, are expressing their preference or expected eventual preference to send their children to countries that have ratified the Convention and thereby committed themselves to comply with its internationally agreed norms and procedures for the protection of the children and parents involved. Moreover, some countries of origin are stating a preference to work with U.S. adoption agencies that have been approved in some way at the national level, rather than merely being licensed by the state or states from which they operate. This seems to be creating an *existenz-angst* that is helping generate the essential private sector political support that the Convention and its implementing legislation must have if the Senate and the Congress are to take favorable action. There have also been continuing contacts and informal consultations between many elements of the U.S. adoption community and certain federal government officials, which may have improved the level of confidence in each others' motivations and dispelled some of the concerns.

Federal implementing legislation, on which inter-agency consultations are in progress, will need to address a number of

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[18] *See* PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION, *supra* note 3, at 122-27 (listing countries that participated in Seventeenth Session).

[19] The Convention entered into force on May 1, 1995, following the ratification of the Convention by the third state, Sri Lanka, on January 23, 1994, Mexico and Romania having ratified earlier.

issues. Administrative issues include establishing and staffing the U.S. Central Authority in the federal government. Financing of its operation must be arranged, probably through the appropriation of start-up funds and a small user fee to be paid by U.S. prospective adoptive parents. Other administrative issues include organizing the Convention-accreditation of U.S. adoption agencies and setting the criteria and standards that accredited agencies will need to meet.

Legal issues include ensuring compliance with the requirement that Convention adoptions be recognized in all party countries. Federal implementing legislation may require recognition of all Convention adoptions throughout the United States, even those decreed before the United States becomes a party to the Convention, the recognition of which is not mandated by the Convention. We may need provisions to ensure that state and federal privacy legislation does not interfere with the U.S. authorities' ability to comply with various Convention requirements for gathering and transmitting information on the child and the prospective adoptive parents to authorities of the other party state involved. We will need also to examine whether the revocability and the possibility of non-renewal of Convention-accreditation or approval for adoption service providers, together with existing federal and state criminal laws, provide adequate sanctions to deter and punish violations of the Convention and its implementing legislation and regulations.

Implementation of the Convention will also raise immigration issues. With regard to children coming to the United States, we at the State Department will be working with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service on amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).[20] These amendments may provide for a new category of children immigrating to the United States — those adopted abroad or to be adopted in the United States pursuant to the Hague Convention. We will also work with the INS on the amendment of immigration-related regulations to accommodate the requirements of and procedures set by the Convention and the amended INA.

With regard to children from the United States being adopted under the Convention, we are examining how to arrange for the

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[20] *See* Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(b)(1)(F) (1994).

determinations that the Convention requires to be made while those children are still in the U.S. jurisdiction where they habitually reside. We have found, somewhat to our surprise, that no safeguards currently exist in the United States at the federal or state level for the small number of children from the United States being taken abroad for adoption there.

Finally, we must set criteria for the accreditation of U.S. adoption agencies that is required to enable them to offer their services for adoptions falling within the Convention's scope. This is one of the most sensitive issues for the adoption community. Two groups of adoption and child welfare interests, now joined in the "Hague Alliance," have worked for almost three years to agree on a set of accreditation criteria that the Hague Alliance member organizations believe such agencies should meet. These criteria have recently been received by the federal government and will be closely examined once the federal legislation has been enacted. Accreditation criteria, based on those agreed upon by the Hague Alliance, will ultimately find their way into federal regulations. The work that has gone into these criteria shows a high level of interest and commitment to sound intercountry adoption practices by a broad spectrum of U.S. adoption and child welfare interests. Their wish to ensure effective implementation of the Convention in the United States bodes well for the Convention.

The preparation of federal legislation will require consultations between the Departments of State, Health and Human Services, and Justice and the INS. These will be followed by further consultations with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (because of the Indian Child Welfare Act[21]) and the Department of Defense (because of its institutional interest on behalf of U.S. Service personnel located in the United States or stationed abroad). There will be discussion regarding whether the United States should take a minimalist approach to implementation of the Convention or whether some measures beyond the minimum may be reasonable, desirable, and timely. Moreover, Congress may believe that certain protections and procedures mandated by the Convention and involved in its implementation in the United States should apply to all future adoptions involving the

[21] *See* Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C. §§ 1901-1963 (1994).

movement of children to the United States, not just those when the child is coming from another country that happens to be a party to the Hague Convention.

We hope to have at least a concept of such legislation ready for consultations with the U.S. adoption community and other elements of the private sector at a fifth study group meeting by about mid-April 1997. Our aim is to have an Administration-cleared bill ready for introduction before the summer recess of Congress in 1997. Even if that works out, we will require at least one year and possibly two after enactment of the legislation and its approval by the President before we will have established the U.S. Central Authority, issued regulations for the accreditation of U.S. adoption agencies, gotten the word out about the accreditation procedure, processed two to three hundred applications for accreditation, and are otherwise ready to implement the Convention as of the day it will enter into force for the United States.

In light of the long lead-time involved in this country, and other countries' expectations of, and impatience with, the United States that are being encountered by U.S. adoption agencies, I believe that in 1997-1998 there will be a strong push by adoption and related interests in the United States for speedy and favorable action by the Administration and Congress. We may need to ask other countries, and countries of origin in particular, to understand that, at this time in our history, establishing new federal government powers and responsibilities in an area so far largely left to state law will take longer in this very large country than arrangements to implement the Convention in smaller centralized countries with unified law and a parliamentary form of government.

II. INTERNATIONAL CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

I now turn briefly to a recent legislative development designed to improve international family support enforcement in the United States. Congress recently enacted welfare reform legislation, a provision of which will give the federal government a new formal role in international child support enforcement.

The provision in question arises out of the efforts of Gloria DeHart. Since 1980, on her own time and initiative while a

Deputy Attorney General of California, on behalf of most U.S. states, Gloria DeHart negotiated arrangements for the reciprocal enforcement of support obligations with twenty countries. These arrangements have taken the form of parallel unilateral policy declarations under which participating U.S. states undertook to enforce support obligations originating in foreign countries, so long as those foreign countries would reciprocally enforce support obligations originating in the participating U.S. states. These arrangements have worked well and have benefitted probably hundreds if not thousands of children in the United States and abroad. However, the system was dependent on the judgment and commitment of Gloria DeHart and required foreign governments to negotiate with the political subdivisions of the United States through her.

There is a provision in the recently enacted and approved welfare reform legislation[22] that authorizes the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to designate as reciprocating countries those countries that are substantially able to meet the listed mandatory requirements for such designation. The designations may be made by declaration (such as notice in the *Federal Register*), by executive agreement (an exchange of diplomatic notes having the same effect internationally as a treaty), or by a combination of the two. This provision was prepared by Gloria DeHart — now employed in the State Department's Office of the Legal Adviser — in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Child Support Enforcement and the National Child Support Enforcement Association, and with the knowledge of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. The new welfare reform legislation also provides for the establishment in HHS — ultimately its Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) — of the U.S. Central Authority, which will monitor this system and make it work in individual cases.

With the State Department and OCSE acting for the United States, we expect soon to begin negotiations with most of the twenty countries with which the individual U.S. states have had

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[22] *See* Section 371 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-193, § 395(a), 110 Stat. 2105 (1996).

such arrangements — particularly those with which such arrangements have worked without difficulties. Next will come efforts to achieve arrangements with a number of additional countries with which the individual U.S. states have been negotiating or that have indicated an interest to conclude new arrangements under the recently enacted federal legislation. As we move into these new arrangements, we shall also look closely at the 1956 U.N. Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance[23] and the conventions produced by the Hague Conference dealing with maintenance obligations[24] to determine whether there would be further benefits if the United States were to become a party to one or more of these treaties.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the recent Hague Conventions aimed at protecting children on the move, we see that the United States has been a party to the 1980 Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction since mid-1988.[25] Efforts are under way that should make it possible for the United States to become a party to the 1993 Intercountry Adoption Convention[26] by the end of the century, provided the U.S. adoption community and other private sector elements give their support to Senate advice and consent to U.S. ratification and congressional enactment of federal implementing legislation. In the next year or so, as the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Enforcement Act[27] takes

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[23] Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance, June 20, 1956, 268 U.N.T.S. 32-47.

[24] *See* Hague Convention on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations in Respect of Children, Oct. 24, 1956, *in* HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW, ACTES ET DOCUMENTS DE LA HUITIEME SESSION, TOME I 348-50 (1957), *reprinted in* 510 U.N.T.S. 161; Hague Convention Concerning the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions Relating to Maintenance Obligations Towards Children, *opened for signature* Apr. 15, 1958, *in* HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW, ACTES ET DOCUMENTS DE LA HUITIEME SESSION, TOME I 351-55 (1957), *reprinted in* 539 U.N.T.S. 27; Hague Convention on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations, *in* HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW, ACTES ET DOCUMENTS DE LA DOUZIEME SESSION, TOME IV 377-82 (1975), *reprinted in* 21 AM. J. COMP. L. 156 (1973); Hague Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions Relating to Maintenance Obligations, *in* HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW, ACTES ET DOCUMENTS DE LA DOUZIEME SESSION, TOME IV 268-76 (1975), *reprinted in* 21 AM. J. COMP. L. 596 (1973).

[25] *See* Convention on International Child Abduction, *supra* note 2.

[26] *See* Convention on Protection of Children, *supra* note 3.

[27] Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (Tent. Draft No. 6, Oct.

further shape, we shall see whether the most recently adopted Hague Convention — on the Protection of Children[28] — will find favor in the United States and be endorsed for U.S. signature and ratification. We shall also see with how many countries it will be possible to successfully conclude arrangements for reciprocal enforcement of support obligations.

Possibly, by the year 2000 or so, there will be in place for the United States all or most of these means to better safeguard the children involved in these procedures and relationships. This would ensure that the United States is taking full advantage of some of the available multilateral treaties, to many of which the United States and the U.S. private sector have made substantial and important contributions. Certainly, it seems in the best interests of the United States and its mobile population that the United States benefit from these carefully crafted conventions designed to deal effectively with family relationships and problems that extend across international borders.

22, 1996).

[28] *See generally* Convention on Protection of Children, *supra* note 3.