
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

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The primary aim of intergovernmental institutions is to produce some predictability about the behavior of their members. Among the some 200 contemporary transnational bodies, the United Nations (UN) system has the broadest scope. Its paramount goal is the maintenance of international peace and security, and it is therefore usually involved in the most dramatic breakdowns of, and attempts to restore, cooperation among governments. Its associated agencies cover virtually every aspect of social life in almost every part of the world. And the UN system is linked with almost all narrower transnational bodies. Consequently, the UN system can serve as a secure basis for inquiry about the future of international organization.¹

The Revival of the United Nations

In some important ways, the relationships among the great powers have remained remarkably stable since 1945. They have not conducted direct military attacks against each other. The United States and the Soviet Union remain the preeminent powers. The other original permanent members of the Security Council—China, France, and the United Kingdom—still hold their places. No new aspirants for great power status have crossed the threshold of formal status in the Security Council, and little agreement can be found about which if any should be favored.

All of the most influential governments have maintained their UN membership, although in the associated agencies the pattern is more varied. Outside of the UN system, the United States took a keen interest in American hemispheric and European organizations. The Soviet Union restricted its participation generally to Communist bloc organizations. China remained largely disengaged from regional organization, while France developed numerous bilateral links with its former colonies in Africa. Germany, Japan,

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1. This term reflects the distinction made by Inis L. Claude, Jr. between the process of international organization to create reliable patterns of interstate behavior, and international organizations, the institutions created to further the process. Inis L. Claude, *Swords into Plowshares*, 3rd. ed., rev. (New York: Random House, 1964), 4.

and Italy have increasingly deepened their engagement in UN activities.² Along with the other industrialized countries (including the European permanent members of the Security Council, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada), they participated in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). When great power connections to regional organizations are added together, they formed an intimate web between the UN system and related bodies.

The way in which the great powers have employed their membership in the United Nations and associated organizations varies a great deal and perhaps cyclically. During the period of American dominance, from the inception of the UN to roughly 1966, the Soviet Union kept the UN at arms length. Soviet behavior largely comprised defensive moves against the United States, whose success in garnering support for its policies was then overwhelming. Soviet representatives were omnipresent, almost always critical or opposed to specific proposals which other great powers supported, and eager to sponsor general pronouncements on broad issues, such as the desirability of peace itself. Moreover, the USSR could be counted on to protect its positions in the Security Council with a veto and oppose almost any program that required execution by an international secretariat or its agents. It participated only in limited ways in active UN economic development efforts, even while enthusing about sweeping proposals, such as the New International Economic Order, that demanded fundamental changes in the world economy. The Soviet Union was altogether missing from the multilateral financial institutions.

By 1970 the United States had embarked on a course remarkably similar to that of the Soviet Union, in response to the entry of the former colonial countries. As a means of competing with Soviet success in associating itself in the General Assembly with the Third World on issues of colonialism and economic redistribution, the United States took refuge in the Security Council and began to use its veto to protect its clients, especially Israel. The United States increasingly shunned international programs in favor of bilateral approaches. Its delegates sometimes criticized the results of voting in the General Assembly. It no longer supported the expansion of international executive functions, especially in matters of peace and security. American contributions to UN development programs, already under pressure, receded further as measured both in terms of a percentage of total contributions and as a percentage of gross national product. Even in the financial agencies, the Reagan administration began a critical attack, echoed in Congress, which declined only after much counter pressure from interest groups, such as those representing the banking and financial industries. By 1986 the United Nations had an exhausted treasury to which more than eighty governments, including the heavy American and Soviet contributors, owed payments. As for the

2. Donald J. Puchala and Roger A. Coate, *The Challenge of Relevance: the United Nations in a Changing World Environment* (Hanover, N.H.: Academic Council on the United Nations System, 1989), 38–42.

paramount activity of the UN system, the maintenance of peace and security, each of the superpowers usually blocked the other's initiatives. Only when their aims unexpectedly coincided, as in the Suez crisis of 1956, could the United Nations approximate some of its planned functions.

This convergence of American and Soviet approaches to the UN dissolved when the Gorbachev government suddenly announced in 1987 that it intended to give much greater deference to the UN system, support its budget, and participate in a wider range of its activities.³ The Reagan administration did not follow suit. It is not yet clear whether the change in Soviet rhetoric will produce a deep involvement in the UN or simply moderate its detachment. But giving permission to Soviet nationals for the first time to accept long-term appointments in secretariats, directly informing its citizens of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, announcing a large contribution to relief in Afghanistan, and, perhaps above all, using UN channels in preparing for its withdrawal from Afghanistan, all suggest a trend toward greater Soviet involvement. To withdraw from this involvement would presumably result in substantial penalties.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of the UN revival is its role since the mid-1980s in managing regional conflicts.

With the Soviet reversal, the United States may well turn to a different mode of competition. Rather than further reducing its level of interest, the United States seems likely to increase it. Washington will shift its strategy from damage control to an active engagement across the board. If continued American-Soviet cooperation is assumed, the United States will be unlikely to decamp. Its earlier disengagement yielded few positive results, other than restraining budgetary growth and opening the door wider to Soviet initiative. A renewed American engagement, selective in nature and differing in depth according to issues, seems a more likely course for the next decade. It will usually or often have the support of France and the United Kingdom, while a conservative Chinese government seems likely to continue to limit its engagement and to acquiesce by abstaining.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of the UN revival is its role since the mid-1980s in managing regional conflicts. The award of the Nobel Peace

3. For a brief account of the changes in the Soviet position see Johan Kaufmann and Nico Schrijver, *Changing Global Needs: Expanding Roles for the United Nations System* (Hanover, N.H.: Academic Council on the United Nations System, 1990), 89-100.

Prize to the UN for peacekeeping brought much applause from both superpowers. Neither of them has taken advantage of the periodic opportunity to torpedo the UN peacekeeping forces in Cyprus or Lebanon. Both accepted the Secretary-General's initiative in quietly introducing observers in Beirut. They worked together in restraining the mounting attacks on shipping during the Iran-Iraq War and agreed to an increased UN role in the negotiations that eventually emerged between the combatants. Both either tolerated or supported the long efforts of the UN mediator for Afghanistan. In different ways, both support the principle that the UN system should have a leading role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Despite a cheese-paring financial approach, both governments supported UN supervision for the final formal extraction of Namibia from South African control.⁴ Neither government responded with outrage, as they might have only a few years ago, to suggestions of peacekeeping forces in other quarrels. They joined other permanent members of the Security Council in outlining a supervisory role for the UN in an eventual peace for Cambodia.

Perhaps the best demonstration of the UN's potential for conflict management was its response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The lead taken by the Security Council brought a positive response from the great majority of UN members. They accepted the basic proposition that Iraq had violated the accepted international code of behavior as embodied in the UN Charter and had to be coerced into ending its occupation of Kuwait. They agreed that withdrawal of the invading forces must precede substantive negotiations, and that force could be legally used by UN members against the offending government if its troops were not withdrawn. The two superpowers, along with the other permanent members of the Security Council, worked smoothly together under American leadership to put together a broad-based coalition to enforce these decisions.

The United States did not agree, however, with the Soviet Union that the dormant Military Staff Committee should be roused to advise the Security Council on the use of force. The command of the large American force dispatched to the Persian Gulf as the result of decisions in Washington remained beyond the reach of the Security Council. Both Iraq and the United States thus demonstrated that a determined government still has little difficulty avoiding prompt deference to the United Nations, even when the superpowers and the majority of the Council are in general agreement on policies.

Yet the Kuwait case also showed that the Council has an unexpected capacity for strong responses when the United States and the Soviet Union work together. It seems obvious, moreover, that their cooperation made support or at least acquiescence by the other permanent members more likely and thus put the Security Council into a position to affect the stance of all UN members.⁵ It is noteworthy that among the members of the European Com-

4. For an informed discussion see Kaufmann and Schrijver, 77-88.

5. "There is at present a dawning recognition by the major powers, including Britain and France, that their

munity (EC), a sharp debate on closer political coordination followed their flaccid response to the program adopted by the Security Council.⁶ The approach to the Iraq-Kuwait conflict encouraged parallel but unilateral decisions to use both economic and military coercion to enforce UN resolutions.⁷ Members of the Security Council, wealthy countries, and those with substantial military capacity were expected to react. The actions of Japan and Germany in these circumstances became an object of much political attention. They had a choice of becoming an integral part of the decisionmaking of the UN coalition or remaining in a rather detached, uninfluential position. They chose the latter by arguing that their constitutions forbade military contributions. Although they responded with financial contributions, their gestures probably provided new reasons to exclude consideration for some time of their possible permanent membership in the Security Council.

The abruptness of the Soviet shift to a deeper engagement emphasizes the constancy of its earlier policy. It has been slow to change its restrictive style in the UN and its negotiators generally have moved only hesitantly without consultations with the capital. Its earlier relationship with the UN argues that the present course of deeper engagement with multilateral institutions and their specific programs may continue unchanged well into the next decade. At the same time, the depth of the new Soviet commitment has not been tested, despite agreements in principle and actions which would open the USSR to hitherto unheard of penetration by officials and programs of the UN system. Nor can an abrupt reversal in general attitude, or a highly selective menu of cooperation, simply be ruled out.

Yet, based on a rough projection of trends in great power participation in the UN system and the tone of their relations, the years ahead will see the UN system as one of several important centers of significant contact. What emerges, however, will necessarily reflect variations in direct tension between the superpowers. They will participate actively in managing some regional conflicts, but each will retain dominant influence over others. The range of Soviet participation will increase, while that of the United States will show selective reengagement. Together they will be readier than in the past to restrain UN activities which might cause friction between them. While neither will actively seek to shift every decision to the United Nations, they will be readier to allow some movement in that direction. Generally, the UN system will take the initiative where the influential members encourage them, and will simply react when a broad consensus of governments does not emerge.

individual and collective status has been slipping over the past two decades. . . . For the permanent members, revitalizing the Security Council has been both an attempt to reassert their former status and an awakening to the fact that they may have more interests in common as major powers than they might have supposed during the cold war years." Puchala and Coate, 22-23.

6. "Of Bridges, Pillars and Canals," *The Economist*, 9 February 1991, 52.

7. The Security Council authorized "member states . . . to use all necessary means to uphold and implement" its resolution demanding that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait. UN Security Council Resolution 678, 29 November 1990. There was no central mechanism for guiding policy beyond economic sanctions. A committee was established to monitor the application of sanctions. UN Security Council Resolution 661, 6 August 1990.

Conflict Resolution and Arms Control

Regional conflicts among countries that must rely on strictly limited resources tend to check themselves. The sheer cost of modern warfare erodes the ability of poor or small countries to engage one another for very long. When regional conflicts have continued for a long time, as in the Middle East, Central America, Angola, or Namibia, one or several greater powers from outside the area can usually be found filling the local treasuries and military armories. Left alone, the belligerents would exhaust their matériel and probably their morale before too long. In such circumstances, UN treatment of the dispute may be salutary.

If the great powers have modified their earlier avoidance of the United Nations in handling regional disputes and now give greater emphasis to UN peacekeeping ventures, this may partly reflect a reluctance to continue costly commitments to clients. Certainly the Soviet Union has curtailed some of its earlier involvements (e.g., in Afghanistan and, through Cuba, in Angola), and reduced its support of Vietnam. The United States government has never had a free hand to use its full might in Central America, and since the termination of the Reagan administration, its role there has diminished. In Afghanistan, a mutual winding down went some distance. The American role in the Horn of Africa remains thin and shadowy, while the Soviet Union has reduced its aid to Ethiopia.

Both attrition and diminishing great power support in regional conflicts have led some belligerents to turn to the UN structure for help in conflict resolution. This was the case with Iran and Iraq and with Angola and South Africa, with the Frontline African governments giving strong encouragement. The UN has a continuing role in Central America, and repeated suggestions of a similar role have emerged from the querulous conferences on the future of Cambodia.⁸ The Israel-Palestine conflict has never been outside UN concern, and the changes in American and Soviet approaches to that area will encourage the Security Council to become more involved. With the declaration of a Palestinian state by the Palestine Liberation Organization and its access to the Security Council, it will be hard to avoid.

The UN's role in settling regional conflicts will increase during the next decade. Peacekeeping forces and monitoring missions will be used more freely. This does not mean that disputes will be resolved at a wondrous rate. The UN mechanism has impressive capacities for avoiding final decisions, waiting in hope, or keeping disputes on ice. Peacekeeping forces and monitoring may serve as the specific means for killing time. Using them has the virtue of postponing commitment, allowing the emergence of possibly crucial changes of government, the disappearance of dispute-causing conditions, or a reduction of the level of crisis.

Possibly threatening developments loom. For at least two decades, reports that smaller powers were developing nuclear weapons have multiplied. If

8. For a review of the negotiations see *ibid.*, 48-61.

uncertainty gives way to knowledge that Israel, other Middle Eastern governments, Pakistan, or South Africa have such weapons, the ability of the Security Council to dampen regional disputes with constant negotiations and peace-keeping forces is likely to decline. To the nuclear threat can be added the development of chemical weapons. Their employment in the Iran-Iraq conflict and the threat of their use in the recent Gulf conflict support the argument that regional conflicts can easily spill over to mass destruction. Fatigue and depletion of resources become less restraining. The UN system (or some combination of UN and other agencies) might be called in only to witness the horrors and organize a humanitarian cleanup.

Even this dismal speculation suggests growing centrality for the UN system. What tenuous control there is over the spread of nuclear and chemical weapons relies on the UN and its allied organizations. Negotiations on controlling chemical weapons center in a UN conference. The UN system was the vehicle for investigating Iraq's use of poison gas against its Kurdish minority in Halabja, as well as earlier complaints from the United States about the use of chemical weapons in Indochina. Eventually the UN may succeed in creating a system to limit their use.

Control and reduction of armaments relate directly to the evolving cooperation of the United States and the Soviet Union. Although the most far-reaching negotiations on arms control take place outside of the UN structure, both the United States and the Soviet Union have encouraged greater interest in UN meetings.⁹ UN efforts to draft a treaty controlling chemical weapons revived when the Soviet and American negotiators began to make progress on other arms control negotiations. The UN Disarmament Conference also attracted new interest as a general observation point and pulpit for the governments excluded from the major negotiations. Although neither of the superpowers showed any inclination to dump their bilateral negotiations, such as those on intercontinental ballistic missiles, into the multilateral hopper, the residual task of verification may well emerge as a major task for the UN system.

Disaster Relief and Refugee Assistance

Aside from reacting to military catastrophes inherent in the use of advanced technology in regional conflicts, the United Nations will play an increasingly important role in responding to man-made and natural disasters. Here it will have the collaboration of the EC, the transnational Red Cross organization, and other non-official bodies. The centrality of the UN system results from rather clear organizational trends of the last decade, the absence of other global organizing devices, and the growing realization that some disasters are preventable and that humanitarian relief has widespread support among governments and various publics.

9. The UN role in arms control is briefly reviewed in United Nations Association, *Issues Before the 45th General Assembly of the United Nations* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1991), 69-81.

In the man-made disaster of large-scale flows of refugees, the UN has a viable agency in place.¹⁰ This is the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose activities affect perhaps eight million refugees and who has acknowledged the existence of more than fifteen million refugees in the world. Although the most important donor governments incessantly seek to contribute less, the level of expenditures has not diminished much and tends to rise in response to new incidents. The High Commissioner's office has a well-developed and active transnational network of support. In addition, it has counterpart bureaucracies in many of the more than ninety countries where it maintains offices. Even if the tightening of asylum procedures that occurred in Europe during the late 1980s persists, the High Commissioner's office will continue to intervene actively in national processes. Where refugees are turned into immigrants for third-country settlement, it can count on support from interest groups in receiving countries.

Furthermore, it is widely understood that people who are stranded outside of their own lands by military action or social upheaval deserve organized international attention. A forty-year-old symbol of that concern is the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.¹¹ Its work, alas, shows no sign of diminishing, for the fate of the Palestinians is explicitly tied to a peace settlement between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Neither side has ever abandoned its use of the Palestinians as a weapon against the other.

More recently, three UN conferences on refugees from Vietnam, the assistance given Afghan refugees both in exile and for their return, and the constant but still marginal activity in the Horn of Africa provide conclusive evidence of the concern for the displaced. Where the issue goes beyond protection and assistance for persons who arguably could not have formal status under the UN Convention of Refugees, the UN Secretary-General's office has sometimes taken the lead in both man-made and natural disasters. It also connects with the diplomatic function of the Secretary-General, who will look for ways to cope with forced migrants before they become long-term international clients along the lines of the Palestinians.

Some of the ventures led by the Secretary-General's office have taken on impressive proportions. That was the case with the treatment of the series of both natural and man-made disasters that occurred as a result of the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971. In the mid-1980s, the UN Office for African Emergency Assistance, designed to be temporary, mounted a large-scale relief effort. A similar pattern applies to the establishment of the office of UN Coordination for Afghan Relief and the UN Border Relief Operation for Cambodians living along the Thai-Cambodian border.

10. For a discussion of forced migration see Leon Gordenker, *Refugees in International Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); and on the UNHCR see Gordenker, "The United Nations and Refugees," in *Politics in the United Nations System*, ed. Lawrence S. Finkelstein (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), 274-302.

11. A recent analysis is provided by Abraham Ashkenasi, "The International Institutionalization of a Refugee Problem: The Palestinians and UNRWA," *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* Vol. 12, No. 1 (1990): 45-75.

The bureaucratic equipment for dealing with disasters has shown a trend toward growth. Having a structure in place makes a rapid, coordinated, and appropriate response by both governments and international agencies easier. Despite doubts about its performance, the UN Office of the Disaster Relief Coordinator shows more energy than it did a decade ago. Its function is primarily to sound the alarm. The UNHCR has developed an emergency response capacity which is now supposed to function as part of the standard operating procedures. In the office of the UN Secretary-General, the recently-created Office of Research and Collection of Information has begun to construct a system of early warning for such disasters¹² and may be of great assistance in helping the Secretary-General call timely attention to situations of need. The UN Development Program (UNDP) and the World Bank both have moderated their earlier reluctance to helping meet the needs of refugees. Other international agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the

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World Food Program, and the UN Children's Fund, continue to react to emergencies. So do the EC, the International Red Cross, and the International Organization for Migration. Their activities receive support from and are supplemented by an extensive transnational network of voluntary agencies in many countries, some of which also serve as the commissioned executive agents of the intergovernmental agencies.

Other public issues probably will attract increased international cooperation, considerable parts of it within the UN structure. Among these issues is control of population growth. Already, two large-scale international conferences have been held on that subject since the mid-1970s, and an operating program in the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has been established. Although the United States has actively tried since 1980 to obstruct parts of the program, UNFPA has widespread support and is addressing a continuing, acknowledged problem.

Another of these issues is ecological protection, already a major international concern. It seems a likely future development that efforts will be made by

12. For an account of the present status of this effort see Luise Drüke, *Preventing Action for Refugee Producing Situations* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990), 61-66. Drüke pleads for a general strengthening of UN mechanisms to provide early warning and to prevent forced migration.

some governments and private groups to expand the organized concern for what could be termed the "global commons" as well as particularly endangered parts of the ecology. A conference in Brazil in 1992, ten years after the first global UN conference on the environment in Stockholm, will no doubt take some major steps on these issues. A fourth issue which seems certain to stimulate growth in the UN system is that of coping with the AIDS epidemic. This effort is centered in the WHO, but it will affect many parts of the UN program, especially those dealing with development. The fact that the first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on a health matter was its support for the WHO effort acknowledges the generality of the AIDS issue.

Because of their prominence in the United Nations and other international institutions during the past two decades, these issues have been added to the agenda of international concerns or else have been moved to higher priority.¹³ But they were not discovered in a flash of diplomatic insight in the General Assembly. Before they reached the General Assembly, they were studied by experts both inside and outside government and across national boundaries. The international organizations merely furnish a vehicle by which they can be given wider attention than is usually the outcome of discussions within academic or technical circles. The result is to educate additional governmental elites and ensure that the international concern does not vanish. Programs of the international institutions are organized around the results of special international conferences and General Assembly actions on new issues. Thus government bureaucracies become engaged. Expert associations and pressure groups gain a new, international center at which to aim their efforts.

Given the willingness of governments and private groups to support transnational humanitarian ventures, not to speak of their usefulness to the victims, it seems likely that the UN system will increase its concern with such activities. By now a large corps of volunteers, international officials, and governmental functionaries have taken part in them. Academic research has developed around these issues during the last two decades. They touch a wide variety of publics and tend either to recur or else, as in the case of narcotics or AIDS, to pose a long-term challenge that is truly without frontiers. These factors suggest that social issues will be an area of growth for organized international attention.

Human Rights

International cooperation on such topics as refugees and protection of indigenous peoples connect with a widely-accepted international effort to protect human rights.¹⁴ This is one of the earliest programs of the United Nations

13. "Member states are asking the United Nations to assume a leadership role in a myriad of social, economic, and humanitarian issues, from the war on AIDS to the war on drugs—so much so that many U.N. observers fear that the system is threatened by more demands than it can ever hope to meet." United Nations Association, *Issues Before the 45th General Assembly*, xii. For brief accounts of these demands see Drüke, 83–117, 170–89.

14. For authoritative treatments of human rights in international politics, with strong reference to the UN

and one of the most expansive. From a situation in which the notion of international protection of human rights was hardly more than a pious hope, the United Nations has promoted a series of widely accepted international conventions, pioneered the use of international deliberations as a means of monitoring the behavior of governments toward their own nationals, and even wedged open a narrow slot for individual communications. A complex, comprehensive machinery for supervision has been put together. The parallel effort in the Council of Europe, which drafted the European Convention on Human Rights, resulted in the creation of a system of protection that actually changes national practices and is applied in national courts.

The idea that governments have an obligation to respect human rights has spread far and wide in the world. Even governments which so far have not ratified the principal UN conventions, like the United States, use their terminology in order to criticize the practices of others. Dissident groups in authoritarian societies refer as a matter of course to their rights under the system organized by the United Nations and to the Helsinki declarations. Where human rights are denied on a systematic or particularly gross scale, the UN system has responded with special measures, such as reports of a depth hitherto unknown in international relations, and specific resolutions, such as those on Afghanistan. This set of activities is strongly supported by non-governmental organizations that provide both the raw material of information and, to a more limited extent, political pressures on national polities. As a result of these efforts, UN activities increasingly engage individuals and voluntary organizations.

This expansion in scope and depth has met resistance during the last forty-five years, to some extent because of the inertia of social institutions, but also as a result of government decision. Yet none of this has halted the steady growth of the effort to protect human rights. This set of activities will carry on unabated and expand steadily, if modestly, in the years ahead.

Economic Development

As compared with early years, transnational activities directed toward economic development of the poorer countries still form a major segment of UN activity.¹⁵ This includes a substantial set of ancillary institutions in UNDP, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) which has recently become autonomous. Related to their efforts are the activities of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and, more distantly, regional development banks and the OECD whose members are principal sources of official aid.

system, see David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); and Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).

15. For a treatment of this area see Schrijver, 18-56.

In terms of constructing institutions that provide a variety of approaches to development, the UN has done a great deal. This is complemented by the EC, the OECD, and the British Commonwealth, as well as by a number of other smaller enterprises. But the results remain debatable. In part, the variety of doctrines represented in these organizations causes doubts. UNCTAD and UNIDO originated from objections to a world view dominated by highly developed countries: proponents complained that international institutions were either responsible to rich countries or insufficiently supported by them. This line of criticism reached its apogee in the radical program for economic reorganization set out by the Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly in its resolutions on a New International Economic Order that followed the sudden but short-lived demonstration of a capacity by members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to act as a producers' cartel. A spate of different national responses and a huge menu of international deliberations followed. It ended with little satisfaction for anyone, as the OPEC cartel fell apart. Efforts to extend it to other resources failed. The condition of the international economy remained unsatisfactory to the people of the developing countries.

The formation of UNCTAD and UNIDO had even earlier highlighted dissatisfaction with economic development driven by technical assistance, an approach that dominates UNDP operations. These involve most of the UN specialized agencies and more recently have become an important activity of the World Bank. After more than three decades of these projects, it is probably fair to say that while few informed officials of recipient governments would want to eliminate the technical assistance programs, they do not rely on them exclusively for their economic salvation.

Meanwhile, the World Bank has grown rapidly since the late 1960s into a dominant institution in the field of economic development. Aside from an annual loan portfolio of some \$20 billion, it has widened its own ability to provide economic analysis, general advice, and technical assistance. It has recently begun to show increasing sensitivity to such social issues as environmental protection, urbanization, and migration. Its cousin institution, the IMF, has become a formative center for economic policies for debt-ridden countries. Its advice to many of them is highly controversial and related primarily to the indebtedness of borrowers, rather than to rapid economic development. Because these two institutions distribute formal financial resources, for different but sometimes converging purposes, in a world where the large-scale official transfers of assistance on both bilateral and multilateral bases have declined relative to need, they serve as centers of development policies. The UN programs seem dwarfed on both material and doctrinal dimensions.

Economic development will continue to be important on the UN agenda, if for no other reason than that national officials in charge of development will seek forums to voice their needs and dissatisfactions. The several UN-based institutions are unlikely to disappear, even though the donor countries may be expected to restrict increases in their real budgets. But they cannot

be expected to have the magnetic qualities of the relatively wealthy World Bank, the crucial IMF, or the increasingly-active EC programs. Barring a complete collapse of the international financial system under the weight of debt and uneven performance, it is in those three locations that transnational cooperation will effectively remain. The UN system will retain its forums and technical assistance, which will expand only if the pace of economic development increases and its doctrinal basis wins broader governmental consensus.

Leadership

Developing leadership in international organizations, where loose institutional bonds and complex procedures reign, has not been easy.¹⁶ Very rarely in the UN system during the last two decades have top executive officers been appointed for their expected leadership qualities. If Kurt Waldheim could be appointed UN Secretary-General twice, it seems clear that the Security Council has tried to avoid originality. Nor was the present Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, renowned as a blazing innovator or political pioneer at the time he was appointed. The national officials who negotiate such appointments, and who are the object of campaigns by some of the candidates, clearly prefer conventionality to initiative and novelty.¹⁷

Attracting and retaining talented individuals in positions of leadership will require creating generally recognized prestige, organizing support in deliberative bodies for UN decisions, and developing innovative and persuasive suggestions for new program directions.

All the same, Pérez de Cuéllar has seized opportunities to increase the prestige of his office. While he could not decree such opportunities as the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, he and his agents held the ring until it was possible for the United Nations to take up a more forward position. Unlike Waldheim's style of incessant, visible activity, Pérez has usually played a waiting game. All the while, he assiduously reminded disputing parties of his mandate. This tactic eventually put him into a position of prominence, if not leadership.

Attracting and retaining talented individuals in positions of leadership will require creating generally recognized prestige, organizing support in delib-

16. "There exists today a leadership vacuum in the UN system." Puchala and Coate, *The State of the United Nations, 1988* (Hanover, N.H.: Academic Council on the United Nations System, 1988), 47.

17. For a discussion of the UN leadership issue and prescriptions for reform see Brian Urquhart and Erskine Childers, *A World in Need of Leadership* (Uppsala, Sweden: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 1990).

erative bodies for UN decisions, and developing innovative and persuasive suggestions for new program directions. The availability of experienced personnel is an essential element. Certainly this has been the case in the European Commission. The UN system and other international agencies can at least be said to provide opportunities for experience in international operations. Participation in their programs has involved thousands of soldiers, economists, development advisers, humanitarian assistance specialists, and experts on human rights, not to mention diplomatic generalists. Given the continuing attention to humanitarian affairs, leadership may be expected or supported from their ranks in the future. It is clear that whether or not Secretaries-General are brilliant innovators, their active role can no longer surprise national governmental officials. If the fortunes of international organization rise, it will be easier, as it has been in the EC, to attract the participation of both skilled political leaders and career civil servants. At the same time, it is safe to predict that the pressure from national governmental representatives on the international agencies to find jobs for themselves and their favorites will never cease. The emergence of leaders, however, will make it easier to exclude the time-servers.

Conclusion

If the trends noted here were accurately defined and if they continue for the next decade, intergovernmental organizations will function as an active element in a variety of fields. The attacks on them, especially from the United States, appear to have brought the United Nations and with it all multilateral agencies to a low point in 1986. Since then, international organization has begun to display new energy and greater effectiveness. The UN system clearly has gained in influence on some important issues. European organization has increasingly expanded.

Nevertheless, the UN system will remain far from the exclusive center of international cooperation for which some dreamers and advocates of bureaucratic tidiness appealed in 1945. It still depends on a meshing, or at least a coincidence, of national foreign policies, especially those of the richest, strongest countries. Their governments are the best equipped to act autonomously and the least dependent on cooperation. They also pay the largest share of the cost of the UN system. Their attitudes toward the UN may be determined by ideology or by transient national political trends, as has been the case in the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom.

Developments within the UN system and other international institutions will increasingly tend to dampen sharp swings of policy and maintain centrist trends. The first of these outcomes derives from the fact of membership. Governments undertake commitments in international organizations that other governments, perhaps in a self-serving manner, expect to be taken seriously. That some national officials may have reserved attitudes, individual priorities, or agendas separate from formal obligations, merely repeats experience. It is a commonplace of political organization that participants have varied views

and mixed motives. National decisionmakers do not get off scot-free when they fudge or contradict international commitments. The minimum costs may include isolation, decline in their credibility in relations with others, reduction of influence on organized international programs, bureaucratic strife at home, and possible political objection from their national constituents. As the response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait showed, surprise violations of international commitments to orderly settlement of disputes may even result in military enforcement action.

Accepting international cooperation implies bureaucratization at the national level. Part of the national bureaucracy in every member country expects to be involved with UN affairs. It is there that any national reactions to international recommendations are prepared. The national officials form part of the transnational chains of specialists who put together international programs and negotiate resolutions. They invest part, perhaps much, of their activity in UN affairs, even if their judgment is not drowned by wild enthusiasm. However critical they may be in regard to aspects of organized international activity, they have seldom engaged in wholesale rejection. That does not mean, of course, that it cannot happen, but rather that the pulls developed by bureaucratization encourage continued participation. This can be directed to shaping the extra-national world and obtaining benefits for the national polity or some personal end.

Participation in organized international activities has increasingly spread beyond formal governing institutions. A growing number of individuals and organizations participate directly. This development is perhaps most evident in human rights and other humanitarian fields, but it applies elsewhere as well. The cross-hatching relationships stimulated by the UN and other international institutions constitute a real social base. That does not mean the organization is impregnable, but rather that it provides a foundation for current activity and future growth.

Because international institutions depend primarily on nationally based organizations for the execution of agreed programs, the decision chains tend to become long and complex. Additional transnational cooperative programs will be affected both by the slender international administrative capacities and by the complexity of designing programs on the basis of consensus among a long list of governments. Already national officials complain of the excessive bureaucratic process in international institutions and demand greater efficiency. The number of such complaints seems likely to grow even faster than the expansion of international organization if ever greater tasks are assigned to organizations that, as has been the case for the last decade, are kept under continual pressure to cap the growth of their budgets and thus their staffs. At the same time, simple budgetary restraints will almost certainly have to give way in the face of programs that governments, often the same ones that complain about costs, insist on mounting through international agencies.

It seems likely that the UN system and other international agencies will be more engaged than ever in the post-cold war world with subject matter that would have seemed unimaginable in 1945, but is increasingly acknowl-

edged as susceptible only to international approaches. These include such issues as ecological threats and human rights. The social base available to the United Nations and other international agencies will serve in this engagement and will continue to grow in a world unfettered by cold war ideological competition.

Major military conflicts could rend the relatively fragile web of international organization. It is in the nature of military power that it can be used on the basis of unilateral decisions, as both Iraq and the United States demonstrated anew in 1990. These decisions can be made in an aberrant, miscalculating manner and, even if taken lucidly, are likely to encounter the unexpected. The UN system may be able to help potential combatants avoid a conflict or to provide a legal shield for a settlement, but it cannot prevent national authorities from exercising their military will, no matter how damaging to the rest of the world.

Short of a catastrophic war, or even a large-scale regional conflict which poisons the international agenda, damaging decisions may be made by national governments, mainly to satisfy domestic constituencies.¹⁸ This was certainly the case with the withdrawal of the United States from the International Labor Organization in the 1970s and with its withdrawal from the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the 1980s. It also, for the most part, explains the American refusal during the Reagan administration to meet its UN financial obligations. Not every government can have as much effect on the UN system as the United States, but it is conceivable that several governments might make parallel decisions that cause much damage.

Such imponderables encourage caution about sketching international organization in the years ahead as a steady, rising line toward seamless cooperation among governments. Even if that outcome cannot be forecast, it leaves standing the notion that international organization, including the UN system, will prove more useful in more ways to more people, organizations, and governments in the post-cold war era than it has in the past.

18. "Even legislators who might be otherwise predisposed ideologically are finding that UN bashing is politically a rather cheap way to pay off the right-wing voters in their districts." Puchala and Coate, 22.

