

Contingencies, Constraints, and Collective Security: Perspectives on UN Involvement in International Disputes

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Source: *International Organization*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Summer, 1974), pp. 493-520

Published by: University of Wisconsin Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706304>

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# CONTINGENCIES, CONSTRAINTS, AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY: PERSPECTIVES ON UN INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES

John Gerard Ruggie

I

Arising from a desire for "a new and more wholesome diplomacy," as President Woodrow Wilson phrased it,<sup>1</sup> the concept of collective security has over the years encompassed hope, delusion, and disillusion as well. From its beginning it was seen as an alternative to the "crude machinations" of the balance of power system that had led to World War I; and it was designed, by means of the League of Nations, to offer legitimate international authority to manage a preponderant collective deterrent power, and to define and resist aggression. "The scheme is collective in the fullest sense; it purports to provide security *for* all states, *by* the action of all states, *against* all states which might challenge the existing order by the arbitrary unleashing of their power."<sup>2</sup>

But if the concept of collective security was thought to express an international order other than the mechanical maneuvering of a balance of power system, it was not, at the same time, thought to be a form of world government. Even while seeking an effective deterrent arrangement, President Roosevelt said of the United Nations, "We are not thinking of a superstate with its own police force and other paraphernalia of coercive power,"<sup>3</sup> although *national* con-

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Inis L. Claude, *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Inis L. Claude, "The Management of Power in the Changing United Nations," *International Organization* 25 (Spring 1961): 224.

tingents were to have been placed at the disposal of the Security Council.<sup>4</sup> In sum, "In its ideal form, [collective security] calls for an international organization with authority to determine when a resort to force is illegitimate and to require states to collaborate under its direction in suppressing such use of force."<sup>5</sup>

This ideal form is conceptualized in the flow diagram in figure 1. Ideally, a consensus among states about principles of legitimate behavior is implied, as is the role of an organization in upholding these—domain consensus, in short.<sup>6</sup> The organization is to decide whether an act violates such principles. If so, a more issue specific consensus about the appropriate level and type of collective response is to emerge, and the issue dealt with.

Take, for example, the case of the United Nations. The phrase "international peace and security" appears some 32 times in the UN Charter, and some six articles deal with the "Pacific Settlement of Disputes." The ideal form would imply that any state action endangering international peace and security would lead to an appropriate collective response, and that any act by the Organization furthering the pacific settlement of disputes would be supported.

Needless to say, the ideal form has never been realized in practice. As a result, discussions of the concept of collective security, and of such related notions as peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peaceful change, have been attended by much confusion. Students of UN affairs have offered substitutes and have disaggregated the concept into a variety of component parts.<sup>7</sup> No solution has been widely accepted, but it is agreed that the United Nations exists within the context of an international political environment, and that aspects of that environment affect UN behavior. Put differently, and more generally, one may say that the level of systemic organization presupposed by the ideal form simply does not exist, and that the UN is, therefore,

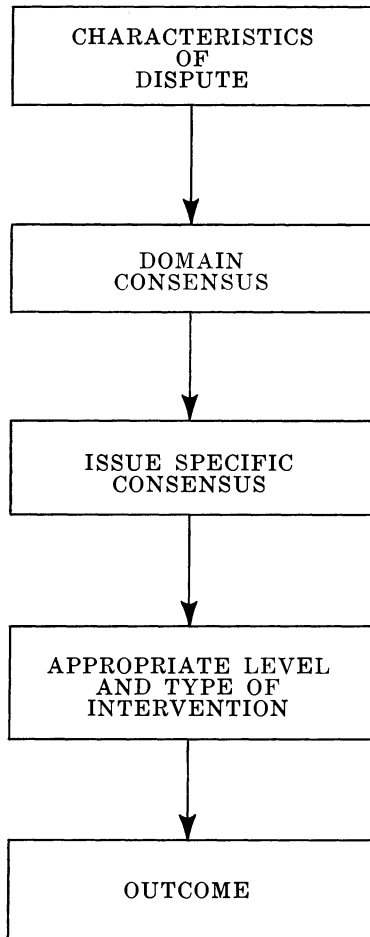
<sup>4</sup> The negotiations in the Military Staff Committee, designed to deal with their formation, came to naught.

<sup>5</sup> Claude, "The Management of Power," p. 221.

<sup>6</sup> This concept is taken from James D. Thompson's fine volume on organizational theory, *Organizations in Action* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), where he defines it as: "a set of expectations both for the members of an organization and for others with whom they interact, about what the organization will and will not do. It provides, although imperfectly, an image of the organization's role in a larger system, which in turn serves as a guide for the ordering of action in certain directions and not in others" (p. 29).

<sup>7</sup> One author (David P. Forsythe, "United Nations Intervention in Conflict Situations Revisited: A Framework for Analysis," *International Organization* 23 [Winter 1969]: 115-39) suggests that UN behavior related to the notion of collective security may be separated into peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. In turn, the task of peacekeeping, according to this analyst, is composed of eight roles, arranged in order of progressive degrees of intervention by the

FIGURE 1



organization. These roles are: to symbolize interest, investigate past events, observe current events, supervise agreements, police hostilities, enforce solutions *de facto*, enforce solutions *de jure*. The final role is referred to as collective security, or amassing the preponderant deterrent.

As the concept is used in this research note, it refers to the entire array of techniques available to the United Nations to settle disputes which may lead to hostilities, delay hostilities, and localize hostilities, or to use force in intervening where all else fails. In short, the concept refers to the collective attempt to prevent or restrain the use of force among national actors, and to the attempt to deal with disputes that may lead to hostilities. The only differentiation employed here—which will be elaborated upon below—is between *procedural* involvement on the part of the UN and *substantive action* taken by the Organization.

much more dependent upon the forces of world politics—upon its environment—than is assumed by the ideal form. As a result, our conceptions of both the concept of collective security and of the role of the UN have become progressively demythologized; indeed, self-proclaimed “realists” have argued that the United Nations cannot be considered an actor in world politics at all, but is simply an instrument of the dominant forces of world politics.<sup>8</sup>

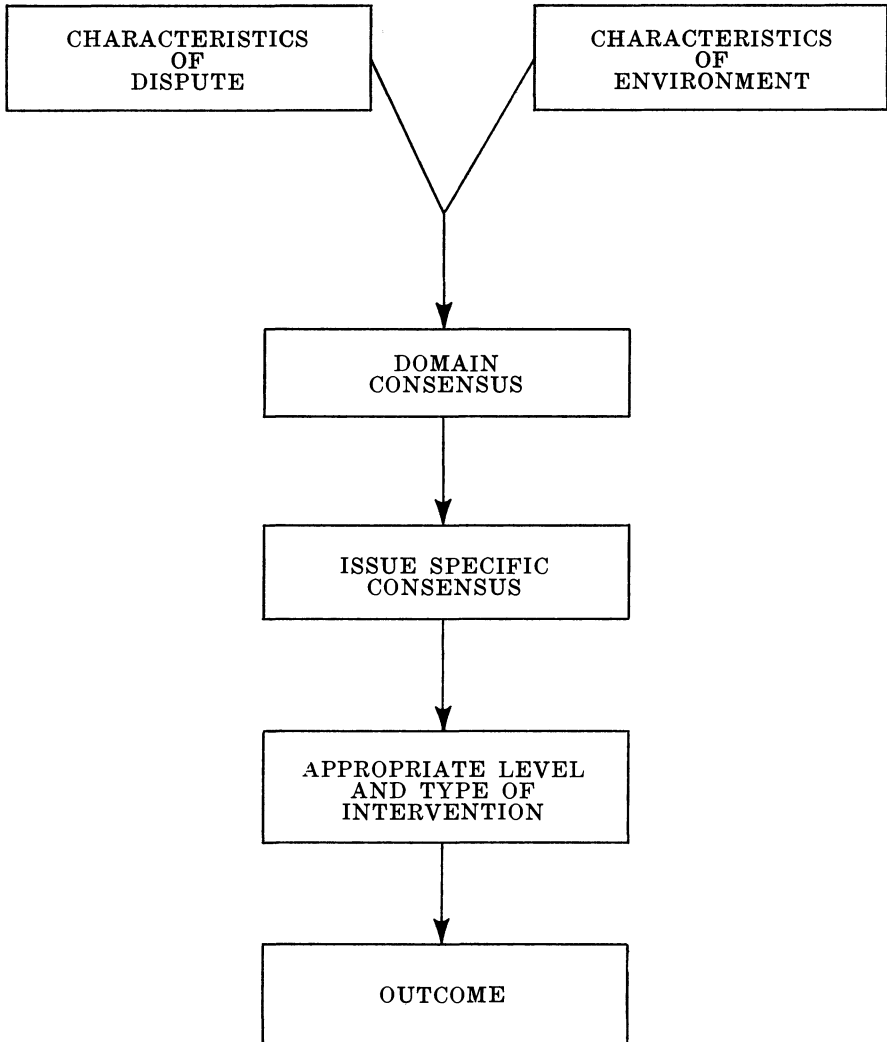
This revised model is conceptualized in figure 2. In this model, the Organization does not decide whether an act violates principles of legitimate behavior on the basis of the characteristics of that act alone. Rather, it is the environment that defines legitimacy, and it is the interaction between the characteristics of a dispute and the dominant forces in the environment that generates, or fails to generate, a collective response.

In the literature depicting UN involvement in international disputes, the environmental factors most often thought to be crucial in determining whether the UN will take action have been the influence of the cold war, the hierarchy of powers involved, and the configuration of international alignments. These have been the dominant macroperspectives, as it were, within which individual cases have been analyzed and explained. Today, however, we find ourselves amidst exceedingly complex and apparently fundamental environmental change. The discontinuities in world politics effected by the “explosion” of new states a decade ago have been much commented upon. Now, potentially profound discontinuities appear to be effected by change within and among the advanced industrial societies, which have a much greater impact upon the structure of the international environment. The complex of changes associated with the notions of a postindustrial society, of transnational interactions, relations, and actors, of détente, of the increasing salience of the politics of economics and ecology, of new dependencies upon raw material sources and new vulnerabilities to terrorism—these and related changes drape our past perspectives on conflict and conflict management in some measure of doubt. It is difficult to justify explanations on the basis of factors that are becoming more complex, less salient, or are disappearing altogether. We require new concepts with which to depict the international environment of international organizations, in other words, and I think few would disagree with this assertion.

There is a second point to be made, however, that is more con-

<sup>8</sup> Good discussions of this issue may be found in Oran R. Young, “The United Nations and the International System,” *International Organization* 22 (Autumn 1968): 902-22; David Meyer, “Some Basic Issues Concerning Universalistic Security Organizations,” n.d., unpublished manuscript; and Forsythe, pp. 115-39.

FIGURE 2



tentious and, from the point of view of more adequate analysis of international organization, more important. It is my argument that any characterization of either international environments or international organizations that (1) is a single factor characterization and (2) is purely empirical is epistemologically inferior and debilitating to the development of general propositions about international organization and world politics. My case can be most persuasively

made, not by grand debate and exegesis about uncertain futures, but by showing that the dominant perspectives on collective conflict management are inferior in accounting for *past* behavior, at the very time that analysts were seized by their efficacy.

The argument proceeds as follows. First, the three dominant perspectives are briefly explicated, and their performance in accounting for past behavior examined by simulating UN activities in accordance with these perspectives, in the context of some 60 actual disputes with which the UN concerned itself between 1945 and 1965 (see appendix 1). Second, a more generic perspective of the environment and international organizations is developed and simulated in the context of the same disputes. Third, some substantive and methodological comments conclude this research note.

## II

The three main candidates for depicting the environment of the United Nations in explaining why the Organization did or did not take action in international disputes have been: (1) the nature of the issue involved, whether it was a cold-war or non-cold-war issue; (2) the hierarchy of powers involved in the dispute; and (3) the alignment of parties to disputes. Each is briefly examined.

### 1. *The Nature of the Issue*

The pervasive influence of the cold war—as a “superissue,” as two students of the UN have put it<sup>9</sup>—in international politics in general and on international organizations in particular has been a most ubiquitous explanation of the inability of the UN to achieve the ideal some had envisaged for it in 1945. Judiciously put:

The confrontation that developed between East and West . . . was hardly conducive to the full implementation and carrying out of the Charter provisions for keeping the peace. . . .

The confrontation of East and West in ideological and political conflict not only made it impossible for the Security Council to take decisions on many questions brought before it but also prevented the Council from equipping itself to exercise the full powers given it by the Charter.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Hayward R. Alker, Jr. and Bruce M. Russett, *World Politics in the General Assembly* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965).

<sup>10</sup> Leland M. Goodrich, “The Maintenance of International Peace and Security,” *International Organization* 19 (Summer 1965): 432-33; this special issue of *International Organization* also appeared as *The United Nations in the Balance: Accomplishments and Prospects*, eds. Norman J. Padelford and Leland M. Goodrich (New York: Praeger, 1965).

However, with the arrival of former colonies in the United Nations as member states, issues related to decolonization too became "super-issues." And, with the appointment of Dag Hammarskjöld as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, such issues, and non-cold-war issues generally, were said to have become conducive to UN participation in maintaining peace and security and in settling international disputes. Writing of the impact of the African countries in particular, one author argues: "The admission of these states substantially altered the Organization's environment and the demands made upon it. It is suggested . . . that these changes have been so substantial as to alter the nature of the political process of the Organization."<sup>11</sup>

Can one say, then, that the nature of the issue, as defined by the dominant forces of world politics, is the determinant of UN behavior in the collective security area? In keeping with the thrust of the above statements, I may suggest the following as a general behavior rule for the UN to follow when considering disputes. Faced with a dispute concerning a cold-war issue, the UN would not intervene at all or would limit itself to procedural involvement only; but in the context of a non-cold-war dispute, the UN would engage in substantive action to stop hostilities where they exist and/or to resolve the issue that gave rise to the dispute. This behavior rule is expressed in the flow chart of figure 3, and was acted out in each of the 60 disputes the UN considered in the twenty years included here.<sup>12</sup> How adequate a predictor of when the UN would intervene is it?

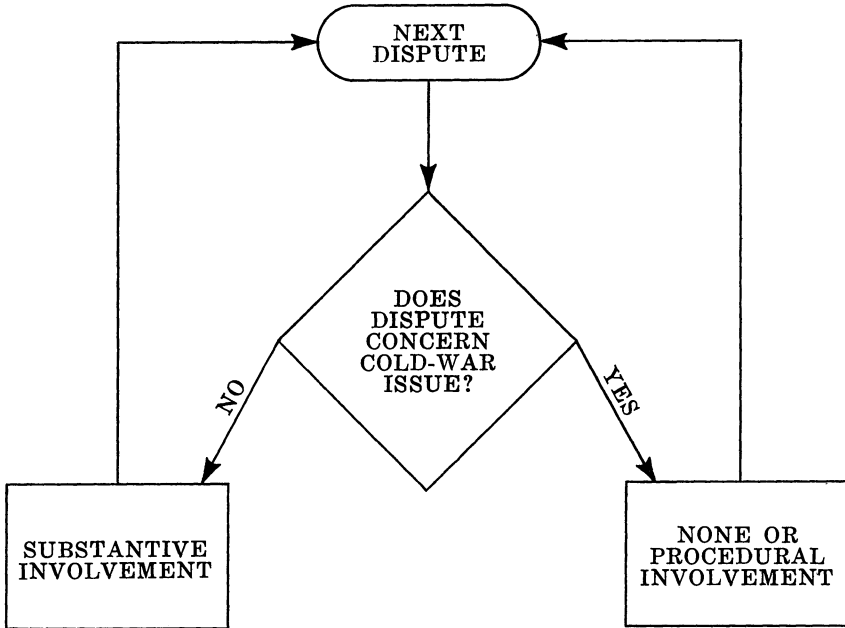
As shown in appendix 2 (in the row labelled "all phases"), when matched against actual UN behavior, the model using this behavior

<sup>11</sup> David A. Kay, "The Impact of African States on the United Nations," *International Organization* 23 (Winter 1969): 21; Kay's analysis is of the general impact of these states, and not upon the collective security area in particular.

<sup>12</sup> The 60 disputes included in the present analysis, and listed in appendix 1, were referred to the United Nations between 1945 and 1965. The original source of these data was Ernst B. Haas, *Collective Security and the Future International System*, Monograph Series in World Affairs (Denver, Colo: University of Denver, 1968). I partially revised, recoded, and extended the data, which Professor Haas generously made available to me.

Disputes were coded as follows: (1) *Issues* were coded with respect to their relation to "superissues": cold war, colonial, or other. (2) *UN involvement* was coded as: none, procedural, or substantive. *Procedural involvement* includes referring the dispute back to the parties for direct negotiation, referring the dispute to a regional organization, launching an inquiry, and establishing a "secretary-general's presence," the last being procedural in the sense that it is designed to facilitate adherence to previous UN action. By *substantive involvement* on the part of the UN is meant: collective mediation/conciliation, appointment of a single mediator to negotiate with the parties, ordering a cease-fire, establishing a truce supervision or police force, declaring sanctions, embargoes, boycotts or military enforcement. In case of multiple actions, that exhibiting the greatest degree of involvement was coded.

FIGURE 3



rule correctly simulated approximately one-third of the cases in which the UN either did not intervene or limited itself to procedural involvement, and it correctly simulated three-fourths of the cases in which substantive action was taken.<sup>13</sup> The fact that a dispute concerns a non-cold-war issue, then, would lead one to expect UN involvement more often than not. On the other hand, the fact that a dispute concerns a cold-war issue is a rather poor predictor of no or only procedural involvement. And, with an overall accuracy of 53.3 percent, the nature of the issue, as here defined, is no better a pre-

<sup>13</sup> A word about the character and the techniques of analysis here employed should be added at this point. Were it my intent to construct a rigorous and elaborate model that most economically and effectively predicts UN behavior, more discrete categorizations and more demanding statistical techniques would, of course, have been utilized as the basis for the simulations which follow. This is not my intent, however. In this research note, I wish only to suggest that, whatever the techniques employed, the major shortcomings of studies of the UN in the collective conflict management area stem from the perspectives with which most such studies are approached. For this, largely pedagogical, aim, the simple categorizations and calculations I use will suffice. Because of the character and the techniques of analysis here employed, absolute figures in any one case are less informative than a comparison of the various perspectives with one another and with the behavior rule that the UN ought never to do anything.

dictor of UN behavior than the rule that the UN ought *never* to involve itself in any dispute of any kind. In other words, given the fact that in 32 of the 60 cases *actual* involvement consisted of no involvement or procedural involvement only, the instruction that the UN ought never to engage in substantive action of any kind under any circumstances would be correct more than half of the time.

## 2. *The Hierarchy of Powers*

The hierarchy of powers within the international system, and, in particular, its expression in the veto provision of the UN Charter, is a second environmental characteristic thought to have had a debilitating effect upon UN attempts to keep the peace. The fact that the great powers, as permanent members of the Security Council, could exercise a veto over substantive action has meant, according to some, that the formulators of the Charter refrained from creating an enforcement system that could be used either without or against those great powers. Substantive action, in other words, presupposed great-power unanimity, which did not exist. As a result, "the United Nations enforcement system was to be operative only against minor aggressors which neither possessed the veto power nor enjoyed the protection of a great power's capacity to block Security Council action."<sup>14</sup> The implication is: Faced with a dispute involving a state enjoying either the veto power or the protection of a power able to exercise a veto, the UN is expected not to intervene at all or to limit itself to procedural involvement; but if only minor powers are parties to disputes, the UN is expected to engage in substantive action.<sup>15</sup> Figure 4 expresses this as a behavior rule, and it too was acted out in each of the 60 disputes included in this study.

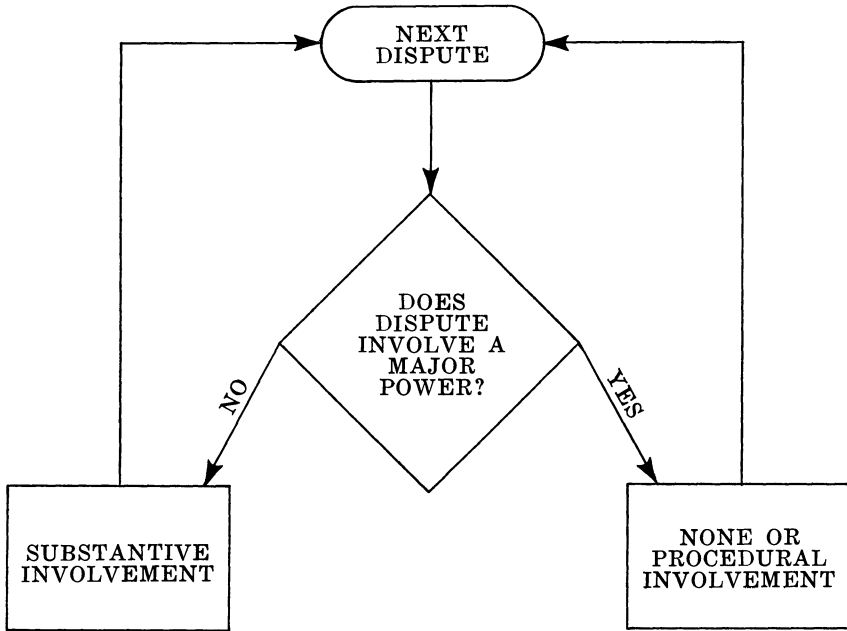
As indicated in appendix 2 (in the row labelled "all phases"),<sup>16</sup> when matched against the manner in which the UN actually responded to disputes, the model using this behavior rule correctly simulated just over one-half of those cases in which the UN did not intervene or limited itself to procedural involvement. At the same time, it correctly simulated some seven of every ten cases of substantive action by the United Nations. More specific historical and institu-

<sup>14</sup> Claude, "The Management of Power," p. 230.

<sup>15</sup> Major powers are defined as the permanent members of the Security Council; for the purposes of the decision point in figure 4, all others are considered minor.

<sup>16</sup> Claude, for one, would undoubtedly consider a number of disputes included here as being insufficiently salient for an analysis of collective security mechanisms. Hence, the behavior rule represented by figure 4 also was acted out in cases involving hostilities only. The results are not appreciably different from those reported in appendix 2.

FIGURE 4



tional critiques aside,<sup>17</sup> with an overall accuracy of 63.3 percent, the hierarchy of powers, as here conceptualized, also is a poor characterization of the determinants of UN behavior.

### 3. *Patterns of International Alignment*

The salience of international alignment patterns, for the state of the international system generally—in determining how stable the system will be at any point in time and the extent to which international disputes will have system-wide repercussions—has long been

<sup>17</sup> Claude's formulation, and others like it, have been criticized by a number of students of UN behavior. One, responding directly to Claude's argument, found it "an inadequate theoretical analysis of the various methods of power management and an oversimplified categorization of the contemporary situation" (Ruth B. Russell, "The Management of Power and Political Organization: Some Observations on Inis L. Claude's Conceptual Approach," *International Organization* 15 [Autumn 1961]: 630). Another has found that "the UN has in the past been able to set up many peace suborgans despite opposition from several, and sometimes important, Members. . . . a distinction is worth bearing in mind between what is ideally necessary and what is practically possible" (Yashpal Tandon, "Consensus and Authority Behind UN Peacekeeping Operations," *International Organization* 21 [Spring 1967]: 259).

noted in the international relations literature.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the relation of conflicting states to the main patterns of international alignment has been cited as a crucial variable in determining UN responses to international disputes.<sup>19</sup> In fact, "in enunciating the strategy of 'preventive diplomacy' [Dag] Hammarskjold stated that the Organization could only act effectively in conflicts where the interests in dispute are 'marginal' to the Cold War conflict or outside the geographical sphere of the blocs."<sup>20</sup> One possible expression of this strategy, albeit not the only one, and of the salience of alignment patterns in general would be the following: Faced with a dispute involving members of the same bloc, that is, an *intrabloc* conflict, or between members of opposite blocs, that is, an *interbloc* conflict, the UN would be expected not to intervene or to limit itself to procedural involvement; but if the parties to a dispute are *unaligned*, or if one is aligned and the other not,<sup>21</sup> the UN would be expected to engage in substantive action. Figure 5 is a flow chart representation of this strategy and expresses it as a behavior rule which was acted out in each of the 60 disputes.

How accurate is this rule in accounting for UN involvement? As displayed in appendix 2 (under "all phases"), when matched with actual UN behavior, the model using this rule correctly simulated nearly seven out of every ten cases of noninvolvement or procedural involvement by the UN. At the same time, it correctly simulated three-fourths of all cases of substantive UN action, amounting to an overall accuracy of 71.7 percent. Hence, of the three characterizations of the environmental determinants of UN behavior reviewed thus far, the nature of international alignment patterns, and the relationship of conflicting states to those patterns, clearly constitutes the best single factor predictor of UN involvement in international disputes from 1945 to 1965.<sup>22</sup> Yet it, along with the other two, exhibits

<sup>18</sup> The most recent analysis, which makes reference to various previous sources, is Michael Haas, "International Subsystems: Stability and Polarity," *The American Political Science Review* 64 (March 1970): 98-123.

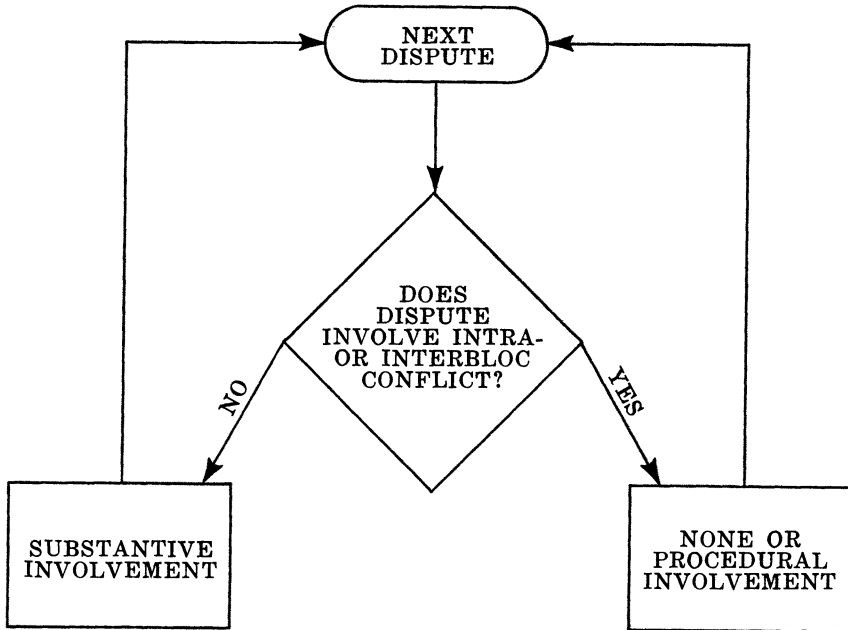
<sup>19</sup> See, *inter alia*, Oran R. Young, *The Intermediaries: Third Parties in International Crises* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967); Mark W. Zacher, "United Nations Involvement in Crises and Wars: Past Patterns and Future Possibilities," paper prepared for delivery at the 66th annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Los Angeles, 8-12 September 1970.

<sup>20</sup> Zacher, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> The latter is Zacher's operationalization of Hammarskjold's strategy. Alignment refers to the position of the parties to disputes with respect to the East-West alliance system.

<sup>22</sup> A number of different formulations are, of course, available in the literature. Evan Luard, for example, has suggested that out of the need for urgent action, and by trial and error, the UN learns to respond appropriately to conflicts between states. See his "United Nations Peace Forces," in *The Evolution of International Organizations*, ed. D. Evan Luard (New York: Praeger, 1966). Hayward Alker is attempting to simulate a number of alternate learning models of UN intervention, which should determine the extent to which learning can be said to take place.

FIGURE 5



two serious shortcomings from the point of view of developing more general propositions about the behavior of the UN.

First, being single factor characterizations, all three are, of course, attuned to changes in a single factor only. As such, they are predicated upon the assumption that the same factor has the same influence at any point in the life of the UN. What is more, the Organization too is assumed to be rigid, simply an instrument of one single factor in its environment. Omitted are possibilities of different factors having a differential impact at different points in time and of interactions among different factors under different environmental configurations.

Second, all three characterizations are formulated at such a low level of abstraction that explanation tends to depend upon the presence or recurrence of idiosyncratic factors. As I have argued above, however, the idiosyncratic factors characterizing the years 1945-65 are unlikely to recur in the future; or, at the least, they will be much more complex (as with alignment patterns), completely issue specific (as with hierarchy), and much less salient (as with generalized ideological cleavages). The future environment is unlikely to be recognizable within the perspectives of even the recent past. New categorizations,

in sum, are required. Yet these must not be so tied to the present and immediate future as to succumb to the same shortcomings in the long run. New formulations, therefore, ought to be more generic than those we have used in the past.

Only the confines of our collective imaginations limit the number and variety of perspectives we may develop that do not entail these general problems and perform equally well, or better, in accounting for UN behavior in specific cases.<sup>23</sup> It is my contention that a major step in the right direction would be effected by our conceiving of the behavior of the UN, and of any other international organization for that matter, in the terms developed for the study of complex organizations. I suggest further that we formulate its dealings with its environment in the terms developed for organizational-environmental relations in general. Such a step would lead not only to more effective studies of the UN but also to more efficacious evaluations of its behavior.

To argue this case, not in the abstract but by way of example, a simple environment-organization model is developed below, and the behavior rules it suggests are acted out in the context of the same 60 disputes already analyzed. Before so doing, however, a few remarks of a conceptual and definitional nature are required.

### III

What organizational theorists have perceived as the growing dependence of organizations upon their environments, particularly in certain kinds of environments, has recently led to the analysis of the

<sup>23</sup> I hasten to add that not all of these comments apply to all studies of UN activities in the conflict management field. See, for instance, Ernst Haas's monograph, and Young, "The United Nations and the International System," both of which entertain and explore a variety of environmental configurations as determinants of UN behavior. The most extensive and elaborate comparative study is: Ernst B. Haas, Robert L. Butterworth, and Joseph S. Nye, *Conflict Management by International Organizations* (Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press, 1972); it, too, explores a variety of competing hypotheses and configurations.

At the more general level of determining the basic logic of international organization, a particularly promising development has been the exploitation of notions derived from the theory of public goods. See, among others, Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser, "An Economic Theory of Alliances," in *Economic Theories of International Politics*, ed. Bruce M. Russett (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1968); Bruce M. Russett and John D. Sullivan, "Collective Goods and International Organization," *International Organization* 25 (Autumn 1971): 845-65; and John Gerard Ruggie, "Collective Goods and Future International Collaboration," *American Political Science Review* 66 (September 1972): 874-93.

"causal texture of organizational environments."<sup>24</sup> Among the general attributes that characterize organizational environments are cultural variations, sociopolitical settings, rapidity of change, and complexity.<sup>25</sup>

In political science, *environment* has referred to that which exists outside the boundaries of whatever entity is under consideration—a very difficult notion to operationalize under the best of circumstances, made more problematical still when the boundaries are as hazy as they are in international organization. Nevertheless, we generally tend to agree that the environment of international organizations is composed of patterns of objectives, of capabilities, and of behavior of states and other relevant actors. More to the point is the term *task-environment*, derived from organizational theory, for it focuses upon that subset of "everything out there" that is relevant to goal setting and goal attainment *within* the context of a specific issue or decision.<sup>26</sup> Variations in task-environments generate different settings for the behavior of an organization—different patterns of demands and supports to which I will refer as *behavior settings*.

Why is it important to establish conceptual links between an organization and its task-environments? Essentially, for two reasons.

<sup>24</sup> F. E. Emery and E. L. Trist, "The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments," *Human Relations* 18 (February 1965): 21-32. A review of the literature attempting to relate external factors to organizational structure and behavior may be found in Shirley Terreberry, "The Evolution of Organizational Environments," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 12 (March 1968): 590-613. Conceptualizations and analyses of organizational-environmental relations are developed in: James D. Thompson, "Decision-Making, the Firm, and the Market," in *New Perspectives in Organization Research*, ed. William W. Cooper (New York: John Wiley, 1964); Paul R. Lawrence and Jay W. Lorsch, "Differentiation and Integration in Complex Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 11 (June 1967); and Paul R. Lawrence and Jay W. Lorsch, *Organization and Environment* (Cambridge: Harvard School of Business, 1967).

<sup>25</sup> For cultural variations, see, for example, Stanley H. Udy, Jr., *Organization and Work* (New Haven, Conn: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1959). For sociopolitical settings, see, among others, Peter M. Blau and W. Richard Scott, *Formal Organizations* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1962), chapter 8; and Thompson, "Decision-Making, the Firm, and the Market." For rapidity of change, see Emery and Trist. And for complexity, see Todd R. LaPorte, ed., *Organized Social Complexity: Challenge to Politics and Policy* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1974); this is the most extensive and intensive analysis of the concept of organized complexity and of its consequences for organizational and political affairs.

<sup>26</sup> For a recent and terribly useful discussion of environmental-organizational links in the context of the specialized agencies of the UN, see Robert W. Cox and Harold K. Jacobson, "Power, Politics, and Politics: The Environment," in Cox and Jacobson, *The Anatomy of Influence: Decision Making in International Organization* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1973). There is one of the most elaborate and sophisticated discussions of various conceptual issues attending the general study of international organization.

First, when national actors create an international organization, certain dependency relations are built into it, these being expressed by the scope of activities the organization is expected to perform and by the role the organization is assigned in performing such activities. Hence, from the outset, the parameters of organizational behavior—how limited or broad its scope, how constrained or independent its role—will be defined by factors external to the organization. Second, it is important to develop such linkages because these initial relations will not remain static over time; national actors may seek to overcome new constraints upon their objectives and behavior or reduce new contingencies posed by the objectives and behavior of others. Hence, new patterns of demands and supports for organizational action may develop—new behavior settings, in sum. And what was not possible for the organization to accomplish in a prior behavior setting may now become possible, and vice versa.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, in the context of collective conflict management, the pertinent question to ask of the UN is not “Will the peace be kept?” but “*Whose* peace will be kept?” Furthermore, whose peace will be kept will vary with changes in the task-environment of the UN, changes that will offer new possibilities while foreclosing old ones. What attributes of the task-environment are (1) sufficiently generic so as not to succumb to the here-today-gone-tomorrow problem and (2) sufficiently sensitive to change so as not to assume that precisely the same factor determines organizational behavior at all points in time? Of the many possible candidates, let me propose that we examine the *complexity* of the task-environment facing the organization; it is intuitively attractive given our prior discussion of change and discontinuity and of the inadequacy of simplistic past formulations. And, although it is not a complete and, therefore, not a completely satisfactory formulation, let me further suggest that we operationalize the concept of complexity by the pattern of distribution, within the task-environment, of the supportive resources the organization requires.<sup>28</sup>

If one single actor were to monopolize all required supportive resources (for instance, funds, votes, technical assistance) and if the organization were to be incapable of acting without them, then the

<sup>27</sup> A more extensive discussion of the formal logic of this process may be found in Ruggie, pp. 874-93.

<sup>28</sup> I select this particular operationalization because, as we will see below, it tends to formally subsume several aspects of the three perspectives simulated above. For a more complete explication and operationalization of the concept of complexity in the context of international organizational environments, see John Gerard Ruggie, “The Structure of International Organization: Contingency, Complexity, and Post-Modern Form,” *Peace Research Society (International): Papers* 18 (1972): 73-91.

organization would be a captive of that actor and an extension of that actor's policies. Knowing that actor's policies alone would suffice to predict the behavior of the organization; the structure of the task-environment would be exceedingly simple, in other words. On the other hand, if a great many actors shared in the possession of the required supports, with no one having a preponderance, a much more fluid and complex situation would result, one in which the organization would be expected to enjoy greater maneuverability in its actions.

More specifically, I define this particular dimension of the task-environment by (1) the extent to which supportive resources are concentrated or dispersed, and (2) the manner in which they are concentrated or dispersed. For instance, if supportive resources are distributed in such a way that two (opposing) actors or two groups of (opposing) actors share them equally,<sup>29</sup> I will say that a *symmetrical* distribution exists; an unequal distribution of such resources may tend toward an *asymmetrical* pattern. If a single actor or a group of actors preempts all supportive resources, the distribution will have the additional characteristic of being *concentrated*; and the extent to which no one actor or group of actors preempts such resources will be said to characterize a *dispersed* distribution.<sup>30</sup>

Plotting the extent to which supportive resources are concentrated or dispersed on the horizontal axis, and the extent to which they are symmetrically or asymmetrically distributed on the vertical axis, I obtain the coordinate system shown in figure 6. Each point in the coordinate system constitutes a different behavior setting for the organization; each, therefore, will specify a different set of behavior rules for that organization. Consider the behavior rules the organization might derive from the settings represented by the four extreme points ( $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ ,  $X_4$ ) in figure 6, particularly from the point of view of regulating the (conflictual) behavior of actors.

*Behavior Setting  $X_1$* : One actor, or one group of actors, preempts all supportive resources the organization requires; it is, therefore, a captive organization, able to effect only what it knows,

<sup>29</sup> If two actors, rather than being opposed, were to agree, they would be considered as one for our purposes.

<sup>30</sup> The dispersion or concentration of supports, as an important factor in determining dependence relations between the environment and the organization, is discussed by Thompson, *Organizations in Action*, pp. 26-27. The distribution and clustering of power within the environment are used by Haas to differentiate phases of the UN system; see, for example, Ernst B. Haas, *Human Rights and International Action* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1970), pp. 137-38; and Cox and Jacobson, *The Anatomy of Influence*. These conceptualizations are also suggested by and developed in Wolfram Hanrieder, "The International System: Bipolar or Multibloc?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 9 (September 1965): 299-308.



to a third actor, or third actors, as well, particularly if the third actor can exploit the opposition of the two main actors.<sup>31</sup>

*Behavior Setting X<sub>4</sub>*: One actor, or one group of actors, possesses a disproportionate share of the supportive resources required; but these are, nevertheless, dispersed among additional actors as well. Vis-à-vis the main actor(s), the behavior of the organization will resemble the case of X<sub>1</sub>; it will not attempt to regulate the actor's (actors') behavior. Responsiveness to the desires of third actors will be determined by issue specific factors, a generalized exploitation of the opposition between main actors not being possible in this situation.

These four behavior settings are, and are meant to be, ideal types, expressing logical and empirical *possibilities* for which no precise correspondence necessarily exists in the life of any one particular organization. Their utility lies in their giving us a logically consistent set of generic terms with which to categorize particular cases. Particular events and behavior may now be ordered on theoretically based criteria, rather than on shifting and uncertain empirical grounds. Hence, in what follows, I briefly order the twenty years of UN behavior here included in these terms, and then simulate the behavior rules suggested by this ordering within the context of the 60 actual disputes used as the data base.

#### IV

The ability of the United Nations to regulate conflicts and disputes is delimited by the nature of the task-environment upon which it is dependent, and changes in its activities are closely linked to changes within that task-environment. Thus, as one student of international organization has argued, "the United Nations must be described as a multi-phase system whose characteristics and evolutionary potential must be specified in terms of the changing environment in which it operates."<sup>32</sup> In the previous section, one means for depicting changes in the environment was developed; here it is applied to the UN.

*Behavior Setting 1.* The formative years of the UN, sometimes referred to as its Charter phase, emerged from a precarious continua-

<sup>31</sup> Were a third actor to join one of the other two, an asymmetric distribution would result.

<sup>32</sup> Ernst B. Haas, "Dynamic Environment and Static System," in *The Revolution in World Politics*, ed. Morton Kaplan (New York: John Wiley, 1962), p. 278.

tion of the wartime coalition of the great powers. "The victor nations in World War II in uneasy alliance, dictated the terms of world peace, and created the UN to serve their vision of the future."<sup>33</sup> In terms of my formulation, the supportive resources were distributed asymmetrically, in favor of the great powers, and were, what is more, concentrated as well, the great powers preempting such resources.

Throughout these early years, from 1945 to 1947, there was some ambiguity as to which image of peacekeeping was to be implemented. The unity of the great powers was to guarantee the collective security of the system; yet no provisions were made for the regulation of conflicts between the great powers, and deadlock was made possible by the requirement of concurrent votes. Similarly, in terms of a *modus operandi*, substance was to be given the collective security promise since, according to Article 43 of the Charter, national contingents were to be placed at the disposal of the Security Council. But the meetings held by the Military Staff Committee to negotiate agreement on these contingents were, due to distrust among the great powers, completely fruitless.<sup>34</sup> In sum, collective security was to be maintained through a consensus between the great powers, but not *against* any of the great powers. The behavior rule suggested by my formulation in this case of an asymmetrical and concentrated distribution of supportive resources is quite clear. Confronted with a dispute to which any of the great powers are a party, the Organization would be expected not to intervene at all or to limit itself to procedural involvement; in the case of any other dispute, the Organization would be expected to engage in substantive action. But this rule is specific to the behavior setting in the formative years only: by 1948, the fact of great-power discord and disunity became official, as the Soviet Union announced the two-camp theory. With that event, my formulation would suggest, an entirely new and different behavior setting came into existence.

*Behavior Setting 2.* The system of relations that emerged in the late 1940s has been variously referred to as the cold-war era or as a bipolar system, and is associated with an increasingly divided international arena. In terms of my formulation, the supportive resources the Organization required were distributed symmetrically and were concentrated, for the most part, within the two major blocs, West and East.

This bifurcated system, in its early stages (pre-1952), saw the Western bloc attempt to harness the UN in the furtherance of its

<sup>33</sup> Haas, *Human Rights*, p. 138.

<sup>34</sup> A more elaborate discussion of these early years may be found in Claude, *Power and International Relations*.

own anti-Communist aims, and to use the collective security machinery against the Eastern bloc. The East, resisting these attempts primarily in the Security Council, sought to expand its control through the more traditional means of subversion and aggression. In the later years of this period (1952-55), future collective security attempts in spite of this division came to be perceived as possible as third and nonaligned forces began to achieve membership in the Organization. Until 1955, however, the basic relationship of power, characterized by a symmetrical and concentrated distribution of supportive resources, remained unchanged.

As a result, the thoughts developed in the previous section would lead me to suggest the following sorts of rules of behavior for the Organization to follow. Faced with an intrabloc conflict, or one between members of the same bloc, the UN would be expected not to intervene at all, or to limit itself to procedural involvement. For to do otherwise would violate the domain of one of the bloc leaders, a violation that it would be expected to resist. For the same reasons, we would not expect the Organization, in general, to engage in substantive action when confronted by an interbloc conflict, or one between members of opposite blocs, *unless* both would be equally adversely affected by the continuation of that conflict. An example of the latter may be interbloc conflicts involving hostilities that threaten to engage the main actors in direct combat and, at the same time, threaten the entire system as well. In interbloc conflicts involving hostilities, in sum, we *would* expect the UN to engage in substantive action. Finally, we would also expect the Organization to attempt to regulate disputes and conflicts of any other sort.

By 1956 the membership of the United Nations had increased to approximately 80, from some 55 in 1946. In the spring of 1955, many of these new members, primarily from Afro-Asian states, had met in Bandung, Indonesia. There they had agreed in their concern over colonialism, "an evil which should speedily be brought to an end," and in their "abstention from alliances serving only the interests of the big powers."<sup>35</sup> The Bandung conference symbolized a cohesion among these new nations, at least in matters relating to decolonization and economic development. My formulation would suggest that it also symbolized a new behavior setting for the Organization.<sup>36</sup>

*Behavior Setting 3.* The bifurcation of the task-environment of the early 1950s became increasingly modified by the ever greater

<sup>35</sup> From the closing communique, cited in Charles L. Robertson, *International Politics Since World War II* (New York: John Wiley, 1966), p. 216.

<sup>36</sup> Haas, in *Human Rights*, sees the Bandung meeting as a symbol of the break between what he refers to as the "loose bipolar heterosymmetrical" system and the "tripolar heterosymmetrical" system (pp. 138-39).

voting power of the Third World. This power made it expedient for the two major blocs to seek Third World support within the Organization. As long as the Third World members acted as a cohesive group, then, they could influence issues of greatest concern to them but not affect the basic symmetry between the major actors. Put in the language of this theoretical discussion, the task-environment was still characterized by symmetry in the distribution of supportive resources, but these were no longer concentrated. Instead, third actors began to share in their possession.

The expectation, stemming from the theoretical discussion in the previous section, is that in a behavior setting characterized by a symmetrical but dispersed distribution of supportive resources, the domain of the Organization would extend in the direction of the third actors. This, in fact, became the expressed strategy of Dag Hammarskjöld: "conflicts arising within the non-committed areas offer opportunities for solution which avoid aggravation of Power differences and can remain uninfluenced by them."<sup>37</sup> The converse of this expectation is that, other factors remaining constant, *no* change will result in the Organization's behavior vis-à-vis the two main actors. The behavior rules this discussion suggests are quite clear. Faced with a dispute involving a colonial issue, the Organization would engage in substantive action; any other dispute, however, would be treated in precisely the same manner as were all disputes in the previous phase.

At the turn of the 1960s, few colonial issues remained to be resolved, and those remaining, such as the case of the Portuguese colonies, seemed intractable. The unity within the Third World began to disappear, and, concurrently, the unity within the two major blocs had been disintegrating as well. The result has been an environmental configuration that is becoming ever more ambiguous. I will suggest one consequence of these trends, as it began to appear in the years 1962-65.

*Behavior Setting 4.* During the early 1960s, a number of changes evolved in the task-environment of the United Nations that are salient for UN attempts to regulate international disputes and conflicts. For one, the postwar demarcation of political boundaries and definition of spheres of influence and control were ceasing to be of contention between the two superpowers, thereby abating, if not eliminating, one source of a number of past disputes and conflicts. Furthermore, the nature of international conflicts has been changing, from cases of clear-cut interstate aggression and hostilities to more ambiguous forms

<sup>37</sup> Cited by Young, *The Intermediaries*, p. 136.

of internal wars, insurgency movements, and counter-insurgency warfare.<sup>38</sup> In conflicts such as these, the UN cannot readily intervene without becoming embroiled in the domestic affairs of the parties to the conflicts, which, of course, it is prohibited from doing.

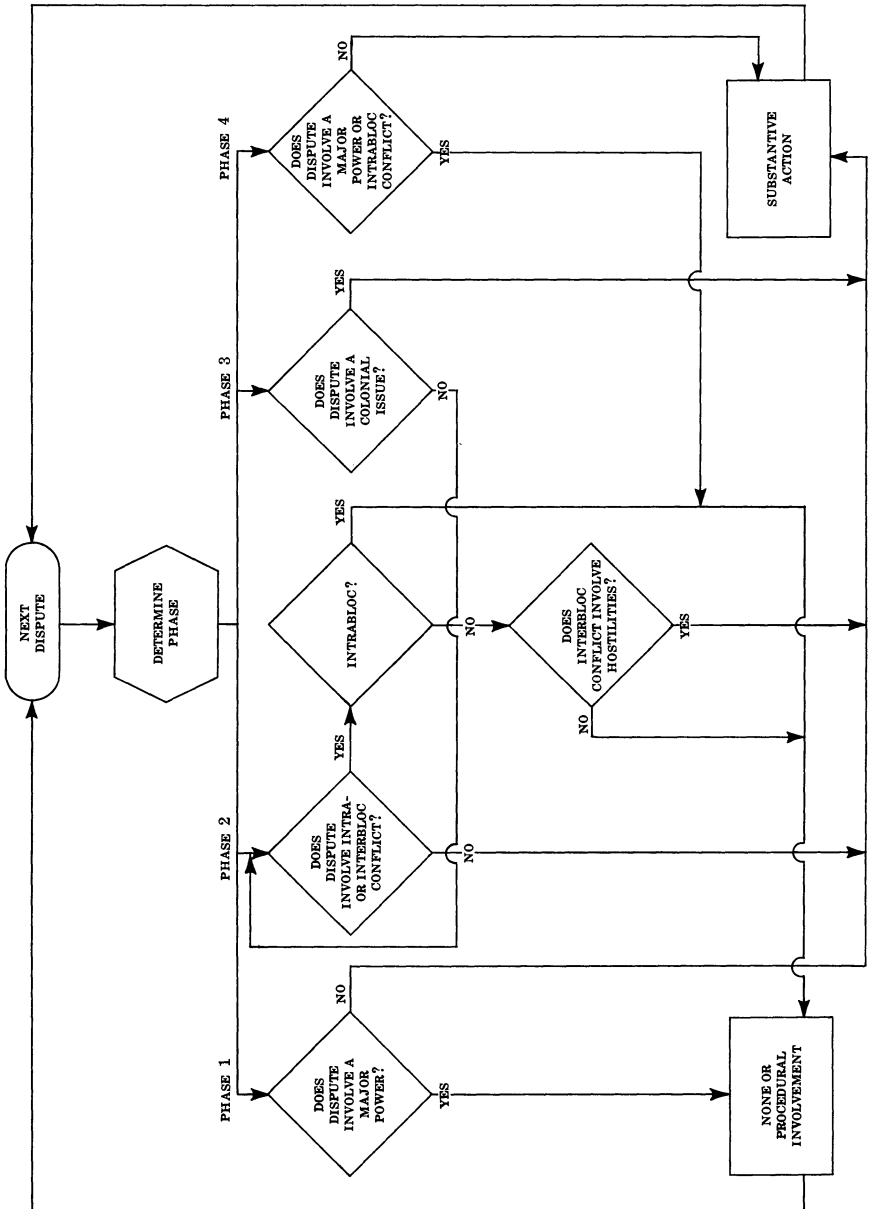
More in keeping with this theoretical discussion, two somewhat analogous changes in the distribution of supportive resources within the task-environment may be noted. First, Third World members are approaching a two-thirds majority within the General Assembly. While not all are nonaligned with respect to one of the major blocs,<sup>39</sup> they would, *were* they to act in concert, effect an asymmetrical distribution of supportive resources, albeit one in which these are dispersed. Second, and perhaps as a partial response to this possibility as well as to other common problems, the two superpowers appear increasingly to find it in their interests to coordinate common concerns, mobilizing the Organization to protect or to extend such concerns where feasible or necessary. In other words, being added to the traditional East-West superissue within the UN is a North-South superissue. This too exhibits characteristics of the behavior setting I described as an asymmetrical but dispersed distribution of the resources the Organization requires in order to act. But the Third World countries no longer act in concert, having broken into a number of subblobs. Moreover, the superpowers are finding it difficult to harness the UN as an extension of their own policies, although all of the great powers appear to be able to prevent the Organization from attempting to regulate their behavior. Amidst this uncertain and ambiguous setting, my formulation would suggest the following behavior rules. Faced with a conflict to which a great power is a party, or faced with an intrabloc conflict, the Organization will not engage in substantive action; but it will seek to involve itself substantively in other disputes and conflicts, treating these in a more issue specific manner than ever before.

With this in mind, the various behavior rules developed in the context of the four phases of UN history are summarized and presented as a flow chart in figure 7. These were acted out in the context of the 60 disputes included in the present study. When matched against the way that the UN actually responded to disputes, the organization-environment model correctly simulated almost three-fourths of those cases in which the UN had no or only procedural

<sup>38</sup> For an imaginative treatment of these and related issues, see Young, "The United Nations and the International System."

<sup>39</sup> Zacher, for example, estimates that in 1965 only approximately 26 percent of all UN members could be referred to as nonaligned—down from a high of 28 percent in 1963 (p. 8).

FIGURE 7



involvement and approximately nine of every ten cases in which it engaged in substantive action (see appendix 2, "all phases" row). In sum, this organization-environment formulation, based on changing environmental configurations and attendant changes in organizational behavior, accurately simulated the nature of the United Nations response in eight out of every ten cases. And, as is displayed in appendix 2, it is an improvement over the fixed and single factor perspectives in each of the four phases as well.

## V

As we begin to turn toward the future international task-environment and the nature of the future Organization, with what expectations can we assay the possible interactions between the two? First, I may conclude, any attempt to specify for one and for all times what the domain of the UN will be is misguided. "Domain consensus defines a set of expectations both for the members of an organization and for others with whom they interact, about what the organization will and will not do."<sup>40</sup> We have seen that consensus over the UN's sphere of action is not a juridical issue, defined by the Charter. Rather, it is formulated by means of a dynamic, interactive process between the Organization and the environment. It is a problem of recognizing appropriate and acceptable behavioral exchanges—a *political* issue requiring that a common preferred outcome for a number of sovereign actors be found. "It requires establishing a position in which diverse organizations in diverse situations find overlapping interests."<sup>41</sup> As the needs and aims of diverse actors change, it is not surprising that their expectations for, and demands upon, the Organization will change correspondingly.

Second, there appear to exist a number of common features within the diverse situations in which diverse actors find overlapping interests. Decolonization and economic development constituted the unifying issues among Third World actors. They lacked the resources to effect freedom from colonial control and to stimulate economic growth themselves. For the Organization, or through the Organization, they sought to relieve *constraints* upon their independence and upon their future. The great powers undoubtedly could have, in terms of physical capabilities, protected their client states and unilaterally pursued conflicts which they eventually resolved within the UN. However, potentially grave uncertainties would have surrounded

<sup>40</sup> Thompson, *Organizations in Action*, p. 29.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

the outcomes of such courses of action, including the possibilities of direct combat between the bloc leaders and a direct threat to the survival of the system. It is suggested that through the Organization they sought to overcome or limit such *contingencies*. In other words, when surveying future possibilities, conditions that may require joint contingency reduction, or joint relief from constraints, should form a focus of our analyses.

Third, the analysis suggests that any one particular manner of arriving at a consensus is not in itself an important determinant of UN behavior. The General Assembly has oftentimes taken up an issue, upon deadlock in the Security Council, and, particularly under Hammarskjöld, the Secretary-General himself seized the initiative a number of times. Various combinations between these three have effected a number of consensual mechanisms not foreseen in the beginning of the Organization, suggesting that as the aims and needs of old actors change, as new actors arrive within the arena, and as new sources of contingencies and constraints arise, consensual mechanisms expressing such change may be found. The role of creative leadership within the Organization would seem to consist of exploiting such periods of change and ambiguity, of recognizing new environmental configurations, and of demonstrating the possibilities for the formation of new coalitions.

Fourth, I suggest that as the number of actors within the task-environment increases, so does the range of possibilities for the UN. An organization able to choose between three or four alternate sources of support has greater scope than an organization monopolized by only one source. And not only does its scope increase numerically, but when it does involve itself in a dispute or conflict, it can do more on an issue specific basis, rather than on the basis of some generalized major cleavage in world politics. On the other hand, the greater the number of actors and the fewer the overarching issues, the greater the effort required to form a supportive coalition in any given instance. If, on every issue, the distribution of supportive resources within the task-environment were to represent no recognizable structure whatever (to center about the origins of the coordinate system in figure 6), the UN would become, essentially, paralyzed. Two possibilities would follow. First, if the contingencies and constraints posed by Organizational paralysis were of such magnitude as to threaten the system, member states may upgrade the Organization and allow it greater scope of action. Or, were this condition not met, the Organization may simply serve as a petrified monument to an uncertain future. The most recent evidence suggests that collective conflict management will increase in difficulty and will probably become even less

successful than in the past, thanks to environmental changes here described.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, the emergent configuration of the environment also suggests, however, that conflicts will become increasingly isolated, be kept self-contained, and not seriously affect other kinds of relationships. For better or for worse, states seem to be coming to tolerate conflict, and to learn to live with the ambiguity of engaging in serious conflict over one kind of issue while, at the same time and with the same state(s), behaving "normally" over others. In sum, the increasingly complex environment of international organization suggests that ours may well become a more conflictual world, but one less seized by conflict.

These are several of the prospects for the future that one can deduce from extant environmental changes. It has been the methodological burden of this research note to argue and to show that the analysis of such changes is considerably facilitated by raising our level of analytic discourse, from time-bound single factor characterizations to that of the UN as a complex organization, responding to and sometimes effecting change in a complex environment.

#### APPENDIX 1. UN INVOLVEMENT: ACTUAL, AND SIMULATED BY THE ORGANIZATIONAL-ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONS MODEL

Case	Phase <sup>a</sup>	Actual Involvement <sup>b</sup>	Simulated Involvement <sup>b</sup>
French withdrawal from Levant	1	1	1
Azerbaijan	1	2	1 * <sup>c</sup>
Corfu Channel	1	1	1
Franco government in Spain	1	2	2
Status of Trieste	1	1	1
South African race policies	1	1	2 *
Palestine (partition)	1	2	2
Suez Canal/Sudan agreement	1	1	1
Indonesia	1	2	2
Balkans	1	2	2
Kashmir	2	2	2
Israel/Arab	2	2	2
Czech coup	2	1	1
Hyderabad	2	1	2 *

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, the analysis in Haas, Butterworth, and Nye, *Conflict Management by International Organizations*.

## APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Case	Phase <sup>a</sup>	Actual Involvement <sup>b</sup>	Simulated Involvement <sup>b</sup>
Berlin blockade	2	1	1
Palestine borders and refugees	2	2	2
Korea	2	2	2
Withdrawal of Republic of China troops from Burma	2	2	2
France/Morocco	2	1	1
France/Tunisia	2	1	1
Guatemala	2	1	1
Future status of Cyprus	2	1	1
France/Algeria	2	1	1
Suez War	2	2	2
Hungary	3	2	1*
Syria/Turkey border	3	1	2*
Kashmir	3	2	2
Lebanon/Jordan/Iraq/UAR	3	2	2
Laos Civil War	3	2	2
Tibet	3	2	2
Nicaragua/Honduras border	3	1	1
U-2 incident	3	1	1
Thai/Cambodia border	3	2	2
South Tyrol	3	1	2*
West Irian	3	2	2
Congo (Belgium)	3	2	2
Goa	3	1	2*
Bizerte	3	2	2
Iraq/Kuwait (UK)	3	2	1*
Cuba/Dominican Republic	3	1	1
Cuban Missile Crisis	4	1	1
UK/Venezuela border	4	1	1
Congo (Katanga)	4	2	2
South African race policies	4	1	2*
Portuguese colonies	4	1	2*
Rhodesia (UDI)	4	2	2
Aden	4	1	1
Yemen	4	2	2
Haiti/Dominican Republic	4	1	1
Senegal/Portugal	4	2	2
Malaysia/Indonesia	4	1	2*
Congo (rescue)	4	2	2
Panama/US	4	1	1
Cambodia/South Vietnam	4	2	2
Cyprus Civil War	4	2	1*
Greece/Turkey	4	1	1
Oman	4	1	1
India/Pakistan war	4	2	2
US intervention in Dominican Republic	4	1	1
US/North Vietnam	4	1	1

<sup>a</sup> The four phases are as follows: Phase 1 (1945-47), Phase 2 (1948-55), Phase 3 (1956-61), Phase 4 (1962-present, with data stopping in 1965).

<sup>b</sup> "1" refers to no involvement or only procedural involvement by UN political organs; "2" refers to substantive action.

<sup>c</sup> Cases marked with an asterisk were incorrectly simulated.

APPENDIX 2. PERCENT OF UN INVOLVEMENT SIMULATED CORRECTLY ON THE BASIS OF FOUR BEHAVIOR RULES

	Cold-War/Other Issue			Hierarchy of Powers			Bloc Alignment			Organization-Environment Model		
	NONE OR PROCE- DURAL	SUBSTAN- TIVE ACTION	TOTAL	NONE OR PROCE- DURAL	SUBSTAN- TIVE ACTION	TOTAL	NONE OR PROCE- DURAL	SUBSTAN- TIVE ACTION	TOTAL	NONE OR PROCE- DURAL	SUBSTAN- TIVE ACTION	TOTAL
All Phases	53.3	34.4	75.0	63.3	56.3	71.4	71.7	68.8	75.0	80.0	71.9	89.3
Phase 1 (1945-47)	50.0	40.0	60.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	70.0	80.0	60.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
Phase 2 (1948-55)	57.1	37.5	83.3	64.3	75.0	50.0	85.7	87.5	83.3	92.9	87.5	100.0
Phase 3 (1956-61)	56.3	42.9	66.7	43.8	14.3	66.7	56.3	42.9	66.7	68.8	42.9	88.9
Phase 4 (1962-present, with data stopping in 1965)	50.0	25.0	87.5	70.0	58.3	87.5	75.0	66.7	87.5	80.0	75.0	87.5