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Inis L. Claude Jr.

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## REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
23 September 1960

by

Professor Inis L. Claude, Jr.

One of the most notable features of present-day international relations is the proliferation and flourishing of regional associations, which we may loosely define as more or less formally constituted and elaborately organized mechanisms created and maintained by a self-selected group of states which have, or feel that they have, a particular basis for intimacy of interrelationship. The adjective "regional" automatically suggests a geographical relationship. While it is true that there is hardly a regional grouping in which the factor of the spatial location of member states has no constituent role, it is equally true that today's regional pattern is by no means dictated by the facts of geography. Some groupings, indeed, are geographical monstrosities. The essential characteristic of a regional association is that its composition is determined by the application of some criterion of selectivity which is believed to be relevant to the task at hand. It is inherently, and by deliberate contrivance, a nonuniversal international agency.

As I have suggested, the international woods are increasingly full of regional associations. They are growing not only in numbers, but in variety as well. Many of the most striking and significant innovations in the field of international organization have recently been associated with, and are attributable to, the regionalization movement. One has only to mention NATO, SEATO, OAS, the Council of Europe,

the European Common Market, and the Warsaw Pact—and this by no means exhausts the list—to demonstrate the multiplication and the diversification of regional associations in our time.

Moreover, some of the regional institutions are of extraordinary importance, not only as contributions to the development of international organization, but also as instruments of the foreign policy of states and influences upon the foreign policy of states. Certainly, some of the Western European organizations represent vitally important experiments in the relationships of their member states. In recent weeks, the OAS has loomed particularly large in the international affairs of the Western Hemisphere. And anyone cognizant of the strategic problems of the Cold War must surely be aware of the profound significance of NATO.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the rising importance of regional associations in the period since the Second World War is to be found in the *de facto* emancipation of those agencies from the restrictive and directive control of the United Nations which was contemplated in 1945, when the Charter of that organization was devised. It is true that a preference for the regional principle was vigorously expressed by leading figures in the anti-Axis coalition during World War II, and that the San Francisco Charter conceded a great deal to the demands of those who favored emphasis upon that principle. Indeed, as we shall see later, the Charter contained, in Article 51, a major loophole designed to permit states to form combinations for defensive purposes. To this degree, it left the way open for independent action by regional groupings, and even expressed a considerable reliance upon collective defensive arrangements divorced from the United Nations in critical situations. Nevertheless, the general tendency of the San Francisco Conference was to make the United Nations the focal point of primary reliance in international affairs, and to insist that regional associations

should be subordinated to the authority of the global institution. A place was recognized, rather grudgingly and conditionally, for regional agencies, but it was expected and intended that the responsibility and the competence of the world body to preside over the international scene should not be compromised by the autonomous activities of regional agencies. Senator Vandenberg, a prominent advocate of the regionalist viewpoint, spoke of the "over-all supervision" and the "dominant supremacy of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security," in discussing the relationships between the United Nations and regional groupings. The official American commentary on the San Francisco Conference, submitted to the President by the Secretary of State, contained the following passage:

It was recognized that the Security Council must have a general authority over regional security machinery in order to prevent such arrangements from developing independently and thus possibly pursuing different ends. In other words, this provision (Article 53) was intended to coordinate the functions of a regional grouping with those of a general organization, and at the same time establish the final authority of the latter.

The provisions for insuring the primacy of the United Nations over regional associations remain formally in effect, and the constitutional documents of most of the latter agencies contain words respectful of this superiority-inferiority relationship. However, I suggest that a realistic analysis must point to the conclusion that this relationship is fictitious. Regional associations have assumed the autonomy which the authors of the Charter sought to deny them. Restrictive clauses, purporting to subordinate their activities to the overarching authority of the United Nations, are likely to be ingeniously evaded, or

studiously ignored, or conveniently forgotten, rather than crassly violated. Note, for example, our success just a few weeks ago in frustrating the Soviet Union's efforts to have the Security Council assert its competence to give or deny legitimacy to the decision of the OAS to invoke nonmilitary sanctions against the Dominican Republic. There were several technical quibbles which clouded the issue, but the United States made its position clear when its spokesman denounced the Soviet move as "a bald effort to seek a veto over the operation of the inter-American system." That is precisely what Article 53 seems to have been intended to do—to make regional enforcement action dependent upon authorization by the Security Council—but we have effectively repealed the rule without erasing the words which state the rule. The notion that OAS or NATO, or the Warsaw Pact organization—is under the control or supervision of the United Nations falls into the category of legal mythology. For whatever reasons, regional associations have gained an importance in world affairs which was not contemplated by the predominantly globally-oriented institutional designers of 1945.

The variety of regional associations now extant is sufficient to justify, if not necessitate, a venture in classification. Neat categories are difficult to formulate for this collection of entities: we have big ones and small ones, compact ones and diffuse ones, modest ones and pretentious ones, active ones and dormant ones, et cetera. We Americans have a standing temptation to divide them into good and bad regional associations, honorable ones and disreputable ones, depending upon whether the United States is a member, or is sympathetically related to them. This is convenient, but probably not very scholarly! Our typology can legitimately distinguish between multipurpose regional bodies—such as the OAS—and those which are meaningfully concerned only with a single functional objective; the latter category may be subdivided to separate the economic and social agencies

from those which have a predominantly political and military—or security—orientation. Thus, the OEEC is a regional economic body, and NATO is unmistakably a security arrangement. We may want to differentiate between regional associations which reflect a tendency and an aspiration to move in a federative direction—here I refer to the European Coal and Steel Community and its sister institutions created by the well-known European Six—and regional associations which follow the more traditional lines of international organization, confining themselves and seeming destined to confine themselves to promoting collaboration and coordination among the member states.

I should be the first to admit that these classificatory suggestions provide only the crudest of Procrustean beds, but the lack of categorical definitiveness does not really concern me. The essential point is that regional associations pose and confront different kind of problems; they serve different purposes; they exhibit different sets of characteristics; hence, they cannot be analyzed or evaluated in the same terms. We must be wary of excessive generalization in dealing with these quite disparate entities.

I should like now to turn to the group of regional associations with which the United States has been most actively concerned—those which have primary relevance to the problem of security—which are ultimately military in their implications. Here, I think it worthwhile to dwell at some length upon the distinctions between what I would call (1) the "collective security" type; (2) the "alliance" type; and (3) the "guarantee" type of arrangement.

Let us look first at "collective security." This concept, first elaborated in the aftermath of World War I, implies a legal and organizational arrangement, supported by requisite political conditions, in which all the members of a group are committed and expected to rally to the defense of any one of their number

which may be attacked by any other of their number. This is a deterrent scheme, internally oriented; that is to say, it is expected to embrace, within a single system of order, the potential aggressor, the potential victim, and the potential defenders of the collective peace, and it purports to deter aggression within the system by offering the assurance and the threat of collective resistance to any member which goes on the warpath. This collective action may involve sanctions of whatever variety may be deemed or found necessary—diplomatic, economic, or military. The theory of collective security represents the repudiation of the theory of balance of power, in that it looks to the attainment of stability not by the development of an equilibrium between defined groups set in competition with each other, but by the maintenance of a flexible disequilibrium—a situation in which any state within the system may be discouraged from aggression by the prospect that all or virtually all of the other states will join in mobilizing an overwhelming preponderance of power, cooperatively and collectively assembled, to frustrate its ambitions.

It is evident that collective security is essentially a global scheme. It was originally conceived in the conviction that the competitive divisiveness which marked the balance of power system was a flaw fatal to the prospects of a stable and peaceful order. It promised to substitute for the "we against them" situation an alternative arrangement in which "all of us will stand against any of us who kicks over the traces." The League of Nations represented a faltering and imperfect—and, ultimately, unsuccessful—attempt to translate the theory of collective security into an operative scheme. Regionalism was widely believed to be incompatible with, and antithetical to, collective security. Regionalists, past and present, have effectively criticized the collective security notion on the ground that it is neither probable nor desirable that a given state should undertake—or honor, if it does undertake—an obligation so indeterminate as that of

fighting anywhere, at any time, against any aggressor, on behalf of any aggressee, in combination with any other defenders of the general system.

Despite this doctrinal tension between collective security and regionalism, we do find some evidences of the imprint of collective security on contemporary regional associations. In one of its aspects, the OAS is a collective-security-like organization. I refer to the fact that, under the Rio Pact of 1947 and the Bogota Charter of 1948, all members of this hemispheric body are pledged to consider an attack upon any of them by any state, including explicitly another American state, as an assault upon them all, capable of triggering the mechanism of collective consultation and possible collective action. Thus, insofar as the OAS is directed toward the cooperative squelching of aggression from within its own ranks, this body represents a translation into regional terms of the normally universalistic doctrine of collective security. It may well be that the United States conceives the OAS primarily as an instrument of hemispheric solidarity against possible intrusions of outside powers, but, in practice, a very large part of the political business of the organization has concerned problems of relationship among its member states, not between them and extra-continental powers.

With this exception, contemporary regional security groupings tend not to be internally oriented in the manner of a collective security system, but externally oriented in the manner of an alliance system. NATO, to cite the most significant example, is clearly not a design for collective action by its members to protect each of them against aggression launched by any of its fellow-members. It is, rather, a combination of states which, fearing attack from the outside—and from a particular source on the outside about the identity of which there is no confusion or disagreement—have joined together to cope with that external threat. Nobody joins NATO to find safety



against the United States, a member of NATO; it offers none. Indeed, I should say that a state's joining NATO indicates that it feels threatened by the Soviet Union and does not feel threatened by the United States. NATO is not a means of gaining security against American attack, but a symbol of its members' conviction that no such security is needed. In this sense, NATO, an alliance, is a much more moralistic scheme than a hypothetical collective security system. Collective security assumes that any state may be tempted to commit aggression, and, consequently, that every state must be enveloped in a system which threatens to confront it with overwhelming collective force if it should yield to that temptation. The theory of collective security is no respecter of states—it acknowledges no line between peace-loving and potentially warlike states. NATO, on the other hand, expresses a belief on the part of its lesser members that one of the Great Powers is predatory, and must be guarded against, while the other can be counted upon to use its strength for beneficent purposes, and can be relied upon for protection. This would seem to indicate that, within the present-day operation of the balance of power system at least, states do not conduct their policy exclusively upon the basis of calculations of relative power—who has how much power—but rely heavily upon their estimations of the interests, purposes, and moral scruples of the holders of power—who seems likely to try to do what with his power.

I would submit that NATO is an alliance, precisely and particularly in the sense in which an alliance is different from, even antithetical to, a collective security arrangement. It is a security arrangement directed against aggression from outside, contrasting sharply with collective security, a security arrangement directed against intramural aggression. Collective security commits all to act for each against any, while NATO, a selective security system, unites a selected group of states in mutual protection against

an external power which is specific, even though it is not formally specified in the text of the treaty. Yet, ironically enough, NATO has been, frequently and at the very highest levels, described as a collective security arrangement.

Why, we may ask, is NATO so commonly and persistently mislabeled in this manner? How can it be that an alliance is called a collective security arrangement, when Woodrow Wilson and his cohorts worked so hard to replace the alliance system with the collective security system which they regarded as basically different and infinitely preferable? Is it fair to Wilson, who was sent to his grave by the fight over collective security, to add the further indignity of spinning him in his grave by allowing alliances to appropriate the label of the scheme which was to supplant them?

The answer is rather complicated. In the first place, much of the misuse of the term, collective security, is doubtless innocent and entirely natural. Less charitably, we could call it ignorant. Collective security does not sound like a technical term with a specialized meaning, and it is understandably not obvious to the uninitiated—persons unfamiliar with a generation of literature in the international organization field—that collective security is not a fit term for any scheme whereby two or more states undertake to act collectively against threats to their security—that is, even for an alliance. More defensively, perhaps, I might say that this usage expresses the impatience of men of affairs with the semantic quibbling and terminological hair-splitting of the men of scholarship. Why should the academics be permitted to capture a perfectly good expression like collective security and regiment its use, depriving others of a convenient synonym for "collective defense arrangement" or "mutual security association"? By whose fiat can collective security be deprived of its apparently natural synonymy with those latter expressions?

I should respond at this point that I do not really think it matters what an alliance is called—except that I do believe it inadvisable to call two different things by the same name. This practice has an unfortunate tendency to conceal differences which ought to be held in awareness, and taken into account, in the interest of accurate analysis and appraisal. Herein lies the secret of my unhappiness about the corruption of the terminology of alliance and collective security.

I must now contradict myself. It does matter what an alliance is called. Objectively, perhaps it does not, but subjectively it matters greatly. Subjective reactions to words are often highly important among the objective facts with which both statesmen and politicians—and I leave you to make the distinction there—must deal. "What's in a name?" is, in the realm of politics, a rhetorical question, begging the answer, "A great deal."

Here, we approach another part of the explanation for the phenomenon under consideration. In terms of contemporary ideology, American and international, collective security sounds better than alliance; it peals a more acceptable tone. Domestically, the word, alliance, has a long history of disrepute. Wilson drew from a long American tradition when he spoke disapprovingly of the alliance system, and I believe that he was being very shrewd when he strove desperately, albeit unsuccessfully, to convince the American public that the League system which he asked them to join was fundamentally different from the alliance system which they had always shunned. International-relations realists, who condemn Wilson for his disparagement of the balance-of-power cum-alliances system, should be reminded that he was functioning as a domestic-politics realist when he refrained from trying to sell the American people a permanently entangling-alliance scheme. For my part, I have an unconfirmed and perhaps unconfirmable hunch—which may

or may not mean a wrong one—that Wilson's insistence on the fundamental differentiation between the new collective security system and the old alliance system was motivated largely by tactical considerations. My notion is that he might have been willing to consider an old-fashioned alliance with the World War I associates in the postwar period, but he felt that the American Senate and public would accept only an arrangement which was, or could be plausibly represented as being, markedly and drastically different from such an alliance. In the event, they accepted neither, but I cannot find it within myself to assert that Wilson was wrong, or unrealistic, in his apparent conviction that they were more amenable to being sold a new-fangled scheme called collective security than the old-fashioned and traditionally maligned thing called alliance.

Alliance is still a word of very dubious repute in the United States. We are becoming braver. This eight-letter word, along with various four-letter words, is now being given greater and less abashed public currency. But the urge for a euphemism persists, and collective security fills the bill. We have alliances now, but in truth we have no doctrine of alliance to legitimize it and bestow ideological respectability upon it. In terms of the American tradition, "a good alliance" may sound self-contradictory; collective security is used to mean just that. Its use enables us to make entangling alliances without confessing, even to ourselves, that we have repudiated the wise counsel of the Founding Fathers against entering into entangling alliances.

Very much the same analysis applies to the international scene. To assert, in a United Nations meeting, for instance, that we have formed an alliance is to make the damaging confession that we are a reactionary force, bent on turning the calendar back to the bad old days of uninhibited power politics and undercutting recent attempts to institute a more orderly system of world affairs.

All this suggests that collective security is as acceptable a concept, domestically and internationally, as alliance is unacceptable. This is true, in the ideological sense. Considering that collective security has but the sparsest of claims to operating success in the past, and but the barest of prospects for operative significance in the future, its ideological success is rather remarkable. The truth is that nobody really wants to participate in a full-fledged security system. We dare not rely on such a system. We are not willing to accept the obligations which would be incumbent upon us in such a system. We cannot allow the Soviet Union to gain the opportunities which such a system would confer upon it. I might cite in evidence of these statements some of the policy situations which have arisen in the various post-World War II crises. In the Korean crisis of 1950, the United States went into action with the blessing of the United Nations, but our leaders were very careful to assure the public that we entered the fray on the basis of our own judgment of our own interests, not on the basis of an obligation imposed on us by a vote of the Security Council. Evidently we were not prepared to accept the collective security proposition that American response or lack of response to Communist aggression should be determined by a collective rather than a national policy decision. In the Hungarian crisis of 1956, the United States was very glad to have a collective condemnation of Soviet malfeasance, but we carefully avoided any initiative which would have put us in the position of being ordered by the United Nations to engage in action directly against the Soviet Union. We regarded the decision to fight against the Soviet Union as too grave to allow it to be made for us by an international organization. In the simultaneous Suez crisis, we indicated clearly that we were as hesitant to engage in collective security action with the Soviet Union as against it. President Eisenhower brushed aside as "unthinkable" the Soviet suggestion that the two great powers join their forces to clear up the Middle Eastern

situation. He was right. It was unthinkable, for our interest demanded that Soviet forces be kept out of that critical area, not that they be invited in under the covering of a collective security enterprise.

The point of all this is that we reject collective security in fact, and for reasons which seem utterly sound. We are not alone in this. The rejection of collective security is one point on which the nations are virtually unanimous. Yet, curiously enough, the ideological attraction of the slogan of collective security is sufficiently powerful to induce statesmen to believe that it is politically advantageous or even necessary to cover alliances with the euphemistic label of "collective security arrangements." I suggest that the description of NATO and other regional defensive groupings in which the United States participates as collective security associations is in large part a domestic and international public relations gesture.

Having said this, let me concede that in one important respect NATO does borrow from the doctrinal tradition of collective security. The idea of collective security is closely connected with the notion of international organization. Wilson did not simply preach the doctrine of collective security in the abstract. He pushed the concrete project of a League of Nations. His criticisms of the balance of power system boiled down to the assertion that it was fatally disorganized. It amounted, he alleged, to competitive chaos. His therapeutic prescription was organizational in nature. He called for a systematic institutionalization of the conduct of international relations. Thus, there is good historical reason for the association of the concepts of collective security and international organization.

In the light of this background, the "O" at the end of "NATO" assumes significance. It is our fashion today to include an "O"—for organization—in the

abbreviated titles of regional security associations. In some cases, it stands for something real—in NATO, for instance. In others—SEATO, for instance—the meaningfulness of its referent is much more questionable. But the "O" must be there. SEAT won't do; it must be SEATO. I think there are two reasons for this, aside from the facilitation of pronunciation. First, we have a throwback to the point concerning ideological attractiveness: an alliance is a "bad thing" but an international organization is a "good thing." True, in the contemporary ideological mood, an international organization may be regarded as an expression of naiveté, but it is unlikely to be denounced as evidence of nastiness. N-A-T-O has a more reputable sound than N-A-T. Second, I think that we have here a genuine recognition of the need—the objective need—for institutional mechanisms to translate formal commitments into effective reality. Mere pieces of paper are no longer highly regarded as instruments of American foreign policy. We have become acutely aware that treaties of alliance have real significance for us only if they serve as constitutional foundations for the erection of institutional superstructures. Wilson conceived of international organization to replace the alliance system, to make alliances unnecessary. What we have done is to use international organization to implement the alliance system, to make alliances working entities in time of uneasy peace rather than mere formal assertions of intent to work together in the event of actual war. Wilson envisaged international organization in lieu of alliances. We have adopted international organization in support of alliances. Thus, NATO is an alliance plus, rather than a mere old-fashioned alliance. We judge, with unchallengeable correctness, that the prospect for the North Atlantic alliance's doing what we hope it can do in the troubled and dangerous situation of our time is enhanced by the existence of an operative mechanism, designed to promote the implementation and the implementability of the commitments stated in the Treaty. In this sense—the sense that our regional security

associations reflect the adoption of the international organization motif—I think it is fair to say that the collective security tradition has left its imprint on our security arrangements.

Nevertheless, this is far from saying that NATO is properly described as a collective security arrangement. Fundamentally, it is a new kind of alliance—a souped-up alliance, if you please. I do not say this in criticism. If we can emancipate ourselves from the notion that alliance is reprehensible and collective security is respectable, and consider the matter on its merits, I think we may conclude that this variety of alliance is infinitely preferable in today's setting to any version of collective security which we could conceivably have. We have adopted NATO precisely because it is different from collective security—because it offers the hope of benefits which we doubt that a collective security system could confer, and seems not to have the deficiencies which would characterize any collective security system that we can presently imagine. I suggest that if we were clear about ourselves and honest with ourselves, we would simply say that we have rejected the prescription of collective security and opted instead for a modernized alliance system. And I see no reason why we should say this apologetically. There is nothing sacred about the doctrine of collective security.

Perhaps this would be a good time to relieve the suspense. If you can conceive my metaphorical man as a tripod rather than a bipod, I will say that we can now drop the other—the third—shoe. For, some time back, I suggested that we differentiate between three types of regional security groupings: the collective security type, the alliance type—both of which I have discussed—and, finally, the guarantee type. I mean the latter category to include arrangements which, actually if not formally, involve less mutuality, or greater one-sidedness, than is customarily and reasonably associated with the concept of alliance. In a



guarantee situation, there is a guarantor—a state which does not so much participate in a scheme of reciprocal support as provide unilateral protection to lesser partners. Admittedly, no hard and fast line can be drawn between these two types of arrangement, and reasonable men may differ in their interpretations of a given relationship. In the present case of the United States, it is clear that we are the strongest partner in all the regional groupings in which we are involved, and are therefore somewhat in the position of a guarantor in every case. On the other hand, we doubtless hope or expect to receive security benefits from each of these groupings, and in this sense we have the status of ally in every case. Nevertheless, I think it is fair to say that some of our so-called alliances are more genuinely alliances than others; the others, while not formally differentiated, are functionally much closer to the guarantee type of arrangement. It is a question of degree. NATO, I suggest, falls toward the alliance end of the scale, while SEATO, in my view, ought to be plotted near the guarantee end. Surely, it makes little sense to describe our relationships with Britain and with Thailand in the identical terminology of alliance. There is a difference of degree of mutuality in such a pair of cases significant enough to justify characterizing the relationships as different in kind. My main point is this: some regional associations are more accurately understood as formalizations of a great power's intent to reserve a given area against the intrusions of the competing great power than as alliances in the literal sense. They are declarations defining a sphere of influence. They are "No Trespassing" signs affixed to zones of critical importance. Concretely, I am inclined to argue that SEATO is not an alliance so much as it is a declaration that the United States, seconded by Britain and France, intends to react protectively on behalf of its Asian members if Communist aggression should be launched against them. Both NATO and SEATO are line-drawing operations in this sense; but NATO is additionally a

collective defense mobilizing agency, while SEATO, has, I think, very little of this additional feature. Much of NATO's meaning derives from its mechanism for collaborative planning and military preparation. SEATO's meaning, if I am not mistaken, is largely exhausted by the fact that it puts the United States on record as informing the Soviet Union that we will not acquiesce in its conquest of the designated area. I believe that the same is true of the OAS, insofar as it is a regional security association. This is a way of saying that, functionally, we could have accomplished very nearly the same thing in these cases by issuing unilateral reiterations and revisions of the Monroe Doctrine. This is not to say that we should necessarily have gone about it that way. The form of multilateral alliance has at least two special advantages. First, it pays a respect to the national sensitivities of the protected states which is wholly desirable. It makes for better relationships with them by sparing them the humiliation of the overt recognition of their dependence upon the United States. Second, it has the merit of introducing some degree of reciprocity into the relationship by providing a channel whereby they submit a certain quid for our quo. Their contributions to the security enterprise may be largely passive and permissive—in the form of bases, for instance—but these may nonetheless be significant. We would do well to recognize, however, that in the final analysis there is a fundamental difference between those regional associations which undertake the multilateral mobilization of resources for security and those which do little more than symbolize the intent of the United States to bar Soviet or other Communist expansion. If NATO is really more than an alliance, SEATO may perhaps be described as less than an alliance. If NATO is an alliance masquerading as a collective security arrangement, SEATO is a scheme of guarantee masquerading as an alliance.

Now, I should like to develop some observations regarding the situation which brought about the creation of regional security associations involving the United States, and the expectations which we may reasonably attach to such agencies. I shall focus primarily on NATO, which is unchallengeably the most significant of the lot.

Whatever one chooses to call NATO, one must surely concede that it is something new and unprecedented in the history of American relationships with other nations. The standard way of "explaining" NATO is to say that we attempted, in setting up the United Nations, to institute a system of collective security for the postwar era. That effort failed. When we had realistically to admit that the ideal hope of creating collective security within the framework of the world organization had faded, we turned to the establishment of NATO. The arrangement, in short, is a compensatory arrangement. Global collective security collapsed. NATO, whether viewed as a regional collective security scheme or, as I would view it, as a modernized alliance, undertakes to do what the United Nations was hopefully designed to do. The realists have picked up the pieces of the idealists' shattered dream.

It seems to me that this is a serious distortion of the facts concerning the United Nations and NATO. Admittedly, the founders of the United Nations indulged in a good deal of oratorical reference to the ideal of a global collective security system, and one can construe certain passages in the United Nations Charter as indicating that the world organization was intended and expected to save the world from war by confronting any and every potential aggressor with the massive resistance of the collected peace-loving states. However, I suggest that if you focus your attention for a bit on one word—VETO—you will discover that the creation of the United Nations represented no such intention or expectation.

Most commentators on the United Nations have suggested that the insertion of the great power veto in the provisions regarding the Security Council reflected a fondly held illusion that the Soviet Union and the United States would maintain their unity and march ahead in brotherly togetherness. This strikes me as both illogical and unhistorical. The veto was not put into the Charter in a fit of absent-mindedness or idealistic illusion. I find it difficult to imagine and impossible to discover supporting evidence for the proposition that the veto was so strenuously demanded by the great powers on the basis of a conviction that it was unnecessary, because they would be so united that they would never have significant occasion to use it. My logic tells me, and my reading of the record of the San Francisco negotiations tells me, that the veto was inserted in recognition of the probability that the great powers—notably, the United States and the Soviet Union—would disagree and thus find occasion to use it, not in confidence that the powers would always agree and thus leave it a dead letter. One does not fight for a veto power on the ground that nobody will want to veto anything.

The veto is analogous to a fuse in an electrical circuit. It is put there to blow out if and when the appropriate occasion arises. This assumes that there is a reasonable probability that such an occasion may arise. If one is confident that it will never be necessary or desirable to break the circuit, he would do better to stick a penny in the fuse box. The veto, like the fuse, is a deliberately weakened point in the line of action, designed to interrupt action in cases where such interruption is deemed prudent. The insertion of such a circuit-breaker anticipates and provides for such contingencies. It certainly does not reflect assurance that they will not arise.

What I am trying to say is this: the veto provision indicates that the founding fathers of the

United Nations recognized the danger of trouble among the great powers, and decided, quite deliberately and consciously, that it would be futile and dangerous for the Security Council to try to launch collective action against, or in the face of stubborn opposition by, one of the major states. To put it bluntly, their adoption of the veto rule was a way of saying that there should be a built-in obstacle to the United Nation's undertaking to initiate a collective security action against either of the two giants. This, I think, reflected not a smug assurance that such action would be unnecessary, but a realistic belief that it would be impossible to carry out successfully.

This adds up to the proposition that the notion of building a full-fledged collective security system, applicable to and hopefully effective in cases of aggression launched or supported by the major powers, was rejected at San Francisco. These are obviously the most critical cases for world peace and order. The United Nations was designed in the hope that collective action could be mobilized in cases of relatively minor importance. If the veto is interpreted as meaning what I think it was clearly intended to mean, we must conclude that the United Nations was not designed, or intended, or expected, to attempt the application of the collective security principle in the event of Soviet aggressiveness. What if the Soviet Union should go on the warpath? In that case, the writers of the Charter intimated, the various states will be on their own, to develop whatever response they think best with the blessing of Article 51. We do not think a global collective security system applicable to such a case can now be devised, and we fear that it would be both futile and dangerous to make the effort, or to foster the illusion that a collective security system capable of controlling great powers has been or can be erected.

In these terms, the creation of NATO is not an effort to do something which the authors of the

United Nations promised but failed to do, but a move to attempt something which the latter acknowledged they could not do and abstained from trying to do. NATO does not reflect the breakdown of a United Nations assumption that there would be no trouble among the great powers. It reflects the realization of the United Nations assumption that if such trouble should arise, extra-United Nations arrangements would be required. The trouble has arisen; the extra-United Nations arrangements have been made. If NATO is not, as I have argued, an expression of the collective security doctrine, this is thoroughly compatible with the Charter, which repudiates the notion that a collective security system can be erected to cope with aggressive great powers. As I read the Charter, it says that if the Soviet Union becomes aggressive, you had better try something other than collective security. We have tried something other than collective security—namely, NATO. It might make sense to try to establish a collective security system to deal with difficulties of the sort which we face today, but the founders of the United Nations said, "No," and I suspect that they were right.

This is not to say that the regional security association is the ideal device for promoting the development of a stable world order and thus serving the most basic long-term interests of Americans and everybody else. Nor is it to say that the United Nations, not having been designed to do the job which NATO is designed to do, has nothing significant to do and no valuable potentialities to be realized. There is ample work to go around, and there is every reason to experiment with every type of international institution which shows the slightest promise of contributing something to the survival capacity of human civilization. Regional associations, like global organizations, pose peculiar problems and have their peculiar limitations. Yet, they also have possibilities and capabilities of a special order. The confrontation of the problems posed by regionalism and the

exploration of the possibilities afforded by regionalism are highly significant events in contemporary international relations and, I might add, in American foreign policy.

## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

Professor Inis L. Claude, Jr.

Present Position: Professor of Political Science, The University of Michigan, 1960-61:  
Visiting Research Scholar, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

### Schools:

1938-42 Hendrix College, B.A. degree.  
1946-49 Harvard University, M.A., Ph.D. degrees.

### Career Highlights:

1942-46 Enlisted man, U.S. Army.  
1949-51 Instructor in Government, Harvard University.  
1951-56 Assistant Professor of Government, Harvard University.  
1956-57 Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Delaware.  
1957-60 Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Michigan.  
1960- Professor of Political Science, University of Michigan.

### Miscellaneous:

Chase Prize, Harvard, 1949, for doctoral dissertation.  
Faculty Fellowship, Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1951-52.  
Research Grant, Rockefeller Foundation, 1958-59.  
Visiting Research Scholarship, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1960-61.

### Publications:

Books: *National Minorities: An International Problem*,  
Cambridge: Harvard University Press,  
1955.



*Swords Into Plowshares: The Problems and  
Progress of International Organization,*  
New York: Random House, 1956, 1960.

Articles and Reviews published in *Harvard Studies  
on International Affairs, International  
Organization, American Political Science  
Review, American Journal of International Law,  
Journal of Conflict Resolution, Encyclopaedia  
Britannica.*