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The Future of the United  
Nations and Global Policy

J. Martin Rochester

**THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND GLOBAL POLICY\***

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## THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND GLOBAL POLICY

1. Introduction

In the words of an old Romanian proverb, 'it is rarely easy to predict anything with certainty, especially the future.' One might add, especially in the case of contemporary world politics. In attempting to gauge the direction in which the international system is heading, one is confronted with an array of countervailing trends. To name just a few: war preparation as represented by global military expenditures continues to rise, exceeding all previous levels,<sup>1</sup> while the system as a whole has been moving over time toward war avoidance, at least in terms of the incidence of interstate violence (Jacobson, 1984, pp. 190-192)<sup>2</sup>; so-called superpowers with military arsenals of unprecedented destructive potential are frequently frustrated by ministates and other lesser powers; the East-West struggle continues in an increasingly multipolar environment; there is unparalleled affluence and scientific progress that touches part of the world, and yet new depths of human misery found elsewhere; nationalism is alive and well alongside growing transnationalism and subnationalism; integrative forces vie with disintegrative ones.

Perhaps the most glaring paradox in the current era is that *the need for coordinated problem-solving on a global scale -- in matters of security, economics, and ecology -- is arguably greater than ever before, at the same time that global institutional capabilities are diminishing and 'central guidance' mechanisms seem less feasible than in previous historical periods.* The technological imperatives that are inexorably producing a planetary shrinking and linking phenomenon have not been matched by any corresponding political imperatives, making the 'global problematique' (Meadows et al., 1972) difficult to come to grips with.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding the need for global problem-solving, one does not have to carry all the baggage of the 'Spaceship Earth' metaphor to accept the modest assertion that 'we live in an era of interdependence' (Keohane and Nye, 1989, p.3) and that the world as a whole has never been more strategically, economically, and ecologically interrelated, in terms of any corner of the globe being readily susceptible to important impacts stemming from decisions taken elsewhere (ranging from annihilation of the human species to lesser impacts). This does not deny the fact that interdependence tends to be asymmetrical, that there are distinctive subsystems preoccupied with local concerns more directly than system-wide concerns, that regionalism may be outpacing globalism in IGO growth and other respects and that most actors are more regional than global in the normal reach of their activities, that intranational interactions dwarf international transactions, or that discontinuities in power, alignment and other dimensions of system structure can be found across issues. As already noted, the contemporary international system is certainly complicated, but it is nonetheless global.<sup>4</sup>

The international system also seems to be characterized by a diminishing capacity for global problem-solving. One need only look at the current predicament of the United Nations, which has been attempting to survive a financial crisis that finds the membership over \$500 million in arrears and that has caused a 15% staffing reduction and budgetary retrenchment. In the peace and security area, one study (Haas, 1986, p.20) finds that only 32% of 'all disputes involving military operations and fighting' have been referred to the UN in the 1980s -- 'the lowest share in the history of the organization' -- in contrast to the UN's relatively successful record between 1945 and 1975, when the organization became involved in more than half of all 'international crises' and was effective at 'crisis abatement' in one-third of those cases, with effectiveness increasing as the situation became more violent (Wilkenfeld and Brecher, 1984). In the economic arena, the Bretton Woods postwar economic order, with the International Monetary Fund and related UN agencies at the core, is commonly

viewed as having become unravelled and threatened with collapse (Camps and Diebold, 1986; Gowa, 1983; Krasner, 1985). In the environmental and other more technical issue-areas, problems continue to mount as institutional resources decline.

The UN has suffered through many periods of perceived 'crisis' and 'decline' before, only to be revived.<sup>5</sup> And indeed, one can point to possible signs of revival of late, given renewed UN involvement in conflict management in Africa and elsewhere, American and Soviet commitments to restore funding to the organization, and other developments. However, the present malaise of the UN may be a more deep-seated and long-term condition, rooted in basic structural changes which have occurred in the international system since World War II that are raising doubts about the possibility, and even desirability, of relying on global intergovernmental organizations for problem-solving in the near future. In particular, there is a growing sentiment -- buttressed by elaborate theoretical and empirical analysis-- that, if comprehensive approaches to world order such as the League and UN have failed or worked only marginally in the past, they are a fortiori less likely to succeed in the present milieu in which amidst growing diffusion of power there are more national actors representing greater diversity of cultural, ideological, and other viewpoints than ever. The purpose of this paper is to examine the systemic constraints and opportunities facing the UN, specifically as an instrument for making and implementing 'global policy', in an era in which universal and formal organizational approaches to international cooperation are increasingly being called into question.

### 1.1 Anti-Globalism

Commenting on what has been a twentieth century penchant for thinking in larger, world order terms, Fromkin (1981, p.6) notes: 'The leaders of civilized opinion in every generation since 1914 . . . have believed that there is an urgent need for world politics to be transformed in such a fundamental way that warfare will be abolished and mankind will never have to go back into the trenches and bomb shelters again.' This mode of thinking was most plainly manifested among practitioners by the creation

of the League and UN; among academics, by the production of an enormous body of research informed by a system-wide perspective, especially in the international organization field where a globalist orientation dominated scholarship from the interwar period through the 1970s, interrupted only briefly by a flirtation with regional integration studies (Rochester, 1986). However, as global institutions have come under increasing stress in recent years, practitioners and scholars alike have begun to rethink earlier assumptions about the wisdom of creating and operating through overarching global superstructures. There has been a shift away from discussions of 'the global agenda', 'global bargaining', and 'global institution-building' toward the more modest consideration of how *any* inter-state collaboration ('cooperation under anarchy') is possible (Oye, 1986).

As Jervis (1988, p.318) puts it, 'the basic question posed by the recent work is how self-interested actors can cooperate in the face of anarchy and important conflicting interests.' Similarly, Axelrod (1984, p.3) ponders how 'cooperation [can] occur in a world of egotists without central authority.' Drawing on game theory, collective goods theory, and microeconomic theory comparing the behavior of states with that of profit-maximizing firms in a free market, it is hypothesized that international cooperation is best achieved through a strategy of 'decomposition' whereby only the barest number of relevant nation-state actors are brought into the bargaining process from issue to issue (Oye, 1985, pp. 4 and 18-22). It is argued that the more 'players' involved in the bargaining process, the higher the 'transaction costs' in achieving a mutually agreeable outcome, the more serious the 'free rider' problem of monitoring compliance with the agreement and sanctioning potential defectors, and the more difficult it is generally to attain cooperation of a 'robust' quality (Keohane, 1984). In game-theoretic terms, global bargaining is dismissed as a game of Deadlock rather than Prisoners' Dilemma or some other mixed-motive contest.

One can discern, then, a convergence of neorealist and neoliberal thought, grounded in a new pragmatism emphasizing the virtues of nonglobal multilateralism (some might say 'minilateralism'), i.e. the pursuit of international cooperation through ad hoc issue-specific bargaining among like-minded, relevant actors in multiple arenas rather than in a system-wide, universal context.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2 Anti-Institutionalism

Accompanying the movement away from globalism is a movement away from institutionalism, if institutions are defined in the traditional sense as formal organizations. The scholarly community in the international organization field has become increasingly disinterested in the study of organizations (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986).<sup>7</sup> There are calls for 'a new theory of institutions' in international relations (Young, 1986), but the emphasis is on the analysis of 'recognized patterns . . . around which expectations converge [in a given problem area],' which 'may or may not be accompanied by explicit organizational arrangements,' i.e. *regimes* (Young, 1980, pp.332-333). In other words, regimes constitute generally accepted norms, rules, procedures, or other forms of cooperation -- 'governing arrangements' (Keohane and Nye, 1989, p.5) -- which evolve over time and permit at least certain segments of the international community to cope with various common concerns in a decentralized political system. Implicit in the regime literature is the twofold assumption that formal organizational machinery tends to be not only (1) irrelevant or peripheral to the major struggles of world politics and hence not as worthy of serious scholarly attention as other collaborative vehicles, but also (2) dysfunctional for the international system, given the inefficiencies and other negative features associated with bureaucracies.

Although the regime literature deprecates IGOs generally, it is especially at the global level that formal organizational development is viewed as a dubious mechanism for improving collective problem-solving (Conybeare, 1980). The confluence of anti-globalist and anti-institutionalist thought can be plainly seen in the



observation by Keohane and Nye (1985, p.155) that 'only rarely are universal international organizations likely to provide the world with instruments for collective action.'<sup>8</sup> They note that although 'a crazy quilt of international regimes is likely to arise' without universal approaches, 'better some roughness around the edges of international regimes than a vacuum at the center. Poorly coordinated coalitions, working effectively on various issues, are in general preferable to universalistic negotiations permanently deadlocked by a diverse membership' (p.159).<sup>9</sup>

Suggested here is a pervasive skepticism toward the prospects of international institution-building, and toward the concept of world order, that may be unsurpassed in this century, since international relations first emerged as a distinct academic discipline in the interwar period. It is curious there should be such lowered expectations regarding the parameters of international cooperation at a time when there are some rather impressive indicators of a cooperative impulse at work of a highly developed, formal nature -- when the trend is unmistakably in the direction of international organizational growth, with one study counting over 1000 IGOs in the contemporary international system, most of which are 'relatively recent creations' (Jacobson, Reisinger, and Mathers, 1986, p.144); and when there is also obvious growth in the codification of international law, with another study noting that 'treaties concluded between 1648 and 1919 fill 226 . . . books, . . . [compared to] between 1920 and 1946 some 205 more volumes, and between 1946 and 1978, 1,115 more' (Janis, 1988, p.11).<sup>10</sup> These trends are a function of not only the expanded membership of the international system but also its expanded complexity, in terms of the range of concerns confronting states nationally and internationally. What remains to be seen is whether broadly multilateral, global collaboration will account for an increasing, or decreasing, share of the totality of international cooperation in the future.<sup>11</sup>

Given the fact that one can trace historically an increasingly felt need for more elaborate means of managing interstate relations, it would seem prudent not to rush to judgment about the possibilities surrounding global institution-building based

merely on the current difficulties experienced by the UN. As Claude (1972, p.285) has stated, offering his own explanation of the growth of 'international organizationalism':

It reflects a growing sense of interdependence and an acknowledgment that the pursuit of milieu goals has become a matter of central importance; the state of the world bears heavily upon the state of the state. It indicates awareness of the inadequacies of the traditional multi-state system and receptivity to innovation . . . designed to modernize . . . that system. It involves the recognition that sovereignty is not enough - that the interests of states demand that they give joint attention to the quest for world order . . . . It reveals the growing disposition of states to exploit the possibilities of promoting co-operation and controlling conflict. It represents the nascence of a concept of the general interest, of *international public policy* [italics mine], of an expanding realm of international jurisdiction. When states proclaim the necessity . . . of organized international grappling with problems ranging from war and colonialism to agricultural production and postal service, they confess that the interests of their peoples are tied up with the needs of mankind, and they endorse the proposition that the dividing principle of sovereignty must be modified by the uniting principle of organization if those needs are to be met.

Still, however compelling the logic of increased global organization as the handmaiden of global policy in the contemporary era, the critique of globalism and institutionalism obliges us to ask, not as a hortatory plea but as an empirical question -- in Hoffmann's words (1978, p.193) -- 'will the need forge a way?'

## 2. The Relationship Between Global Policy and Global Organization: Some Theoretical Problems

If the logic of globalism and institutionalism is now being challenged, where does that leave the future of what has been called 'global policy', defined as 'joint responses to common problems that . . . national governments work out with one another,' which are 'products of the international community as a whole' (Soroos, 1986, p.20)? Can global policy be a viable concept in the absence of global organization? Does it have any real meaning even in the presence of global organization, if the latter like the UN must function in an increasingly fragmented, subsystem-dominant, decentralized world polity? One can speak in terms of a global polity, but can one properly speak of global policy?

It can be argued that what typically passes for global policy is a misnomer, something that is neither truly global nor truly policy -- in the normal usage of those terms -- but rather is more aptly conceptualized as the resultant of multilateral problem-solving or at best regime-making. The criterion for what qualifies as 'global' tends to be quite relaxed; Soroos' definition (1986, p.20) might include only a handful of states: 'For a policy to be considered global, it is not necessary that all potential national actors be direct participants in the policy making, but that representatives of each of the principal types of states and geographical regions be involved.' Likewise, 'public policy' in the international realm tends to be defined loosely as little more than cooperation -- a post-hoc construct for whatever potpourri of norms, rules, practices, and other patterned behaviors happen to emerge in a given problem area, as opposed to a more rigorous activity involving purposive collective decisionmaking resulting in a chosen set of general guides to action to be applied to specific situations as they arise.<sup>12</sup> For example, Soroos (1986, p.125) suggests that customary rules 'might be considered international public policy if the definition of the latter is not restricted to a consciously designed course of action laid out by specific policymakers in designated areas.' Taking such definitional liberties begs the question of what is international in contrast to global public policy, and what is policy in contrast to non-policy.

As difficult as cooperative problem-solving can be among the members of a society, policy making and implementation as a relatively structured mode of cooperation is an even more demanding process. As Bardach (1977, p.3) states:

It is hard enough to design public policies . . . that look good on paper. It is harder still to formulate them in words and slogans that resonate pleasingly in the ears of political leaders and the constituencies to which they are responsive. And it is excruciatingly hard to implement them in a way that pleases anyone at all, including the supposed beneficiaries or clients.

Some would contend that 'global policy' is an oxymoron, that it is impossible to engage in policy making, implementation and related operations in a global or any international context, for reasons that are both political and intellectual in nature.

Meehan (1985, p.295) points out that policy cannot be understood except in relation to 'an identifiable actor with some capacity to produce change.' Put another way, policy does not exist in a political system apart from some identifiable 'central guidance' apparatus (a government or the functional equivalent) through which the policy process can occur in its various stages: agenda setting; formulation of proposals; decision adoption and legitimation; implementation; evaluation; and termination.<sup>13</sup> Some such apparatus is assumed to be just as critical if one treats policy as not so much a political as an intellectual exercise -- involving the recognition of some condition calling for action, the specification of goals, the development of a menu of options, the performance of a cost-benefit analysis associated with each alternative, and so forth. Lacking a central government, the international system has no apparent apparatus for performing the various political-intellectual routines associated with the formation and conduct of public policy relevant to the international community as a whole.

Although Soroos has shown how it is possible to apply a global policy framework to the examination of international problem-solving, and how one can observe at least quasi-policy processes with political and intellectual dimensions at work in the international system, the question remains whether such processes can be more fully developed to the point where global policy takes on greater meaning in theory and practice. This is not likely to occur through any dramatic trend in the direction of 'universal bargaining, issue by issue, deal by deal' (Hoffmann, 1978, p.189) within a setting of ever expanding formal, hierarchical governing arrangements. For reasons noted at the outset, global policy will have to be grounded in something less than the latter condition. But if it is to have meaning and utility even in heuristic terms, it will have to represent something more than merely the sum total of assorted international responses to problems of pollution, terrorism and the like, or the outputs of the international political system in specific issue-areas.

Not all international concerns are global in scope or require organizational solutions. One might reason that it is precisely the task of global policy to sort these matters out. It is incomprehensible how global policy in this sense can operate without some degree of global organization that can provide the requisite central guidance apparatus for engaging the international system in policy-relevant political-intellectual routines at the system-wide level; such an apparatus would seem essential if only to permit a determination of how much globalism and institutionalism is optimal for the system. In other words, what is necessary is some structure that can facilitate decisions by the international community as to what type of policy instrument is possible and desirable in a given problem area (in terms of norms, rules, organizations, programs, or other outputs) as well as what the policy scope might be (global or subglobal).

The United Nations remains the only structure that is even remotely in a position to act in such a capacity, although it is presently poorly equipped to do so. If there is a future for the UN proper, as distinct from the Specialized Agencies, it may well be in providing a single institutional framework within which parochialism -- ranging from unilateralism to subglobal multilateralism -- and pragmatism -- including informal as well as formal modes of cooperation -- can safely flourish. As a linchpin of global policy, the UN cannot expect to become the locus for making the major 'decisions that have consequences for the distribution of values in the global political system' (Jacobson, 1984, p.81). However, it could play an important role in allowing international society to evolve from its current state to a more 'mature anarchy',<sup>14</sup> and possibly even higher political order. In the next section the author, using an 'organizational-design' approach (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986, p.772), analyzes competing models of global organization as it relates to global policy, and suggests how the UN might furnish a degree of central guidance compatible with the systemic environment in which it must operate for the foreseeable future.

### 3. The UN and Global Policy

#### 3.1 The Present Model: Functional Eclecticism

To the extent international public policy processes can be observed, they occur through a set of structures best characterized as 'functional eclecticism' (Brown and Fabian, 1975), i.e. a willy-nilly array of collaborative linkages in the international system, operating at various levels, involving various actors, across various issue-areas. Linkages which have become relatively well-developed and institutionalized are commonly called regimes. A regime in a given issue-area can be thought of as being both the product of international policy and in turn a creator of future international policy (or, more properly, a framework within which future policy is constructed). Since our focus here is on global policy, we are interested in understanding how it is that some concerns and not others come to be defined by the international political system as system-wide in character and yield system-wide responses -- in other words, how it is that regimes materialize or fail to materialize at the global level, and how once established they are maintained, changed, or terminated.

A global policy process starts when one actor or set of actors seeks to have a particular demand acted upon by the international system as a whole, whether it is a call for a coordinated international response to one's concern about AIDS or nuclear proliferation or some other matter. Few issues in any society, particularly one as diverse as the international society, are so noncontroversial that they can be labeled purely technical or nonpolitical, although one can distinguish between 'low politics' and 'high politics' issues. All issues have to compete for attention and scarce resources, so that there is a politics at work in any public policy endeavor. The essence of the policy process in any political system is to convince others that, first, one's 'demand' is not so much a self-serving value to be maximized as it is a critical public policy 'problem' to be addressed and, secondly, one's preferred policy outcome is the best societal 'solution'. The latter cannot be attempted until one has succeeded at the former, getting on the agenda.

Is there a 'global agenda' as such? If so, how do political actors gain access to the agenda-setting process, and who gets access? Demands for global policy can originate from a variety of sources, including individual national governments, blocs of states, subnational and transnational interest groups, and officials of intergovernmental or nongovernmental organizations. Networks of state and nonstate actors can be observed performing interest articulation and aggregation in various policy areas (Jonsson, 1986; Ness and Brechin, 1988). If many national political systems like the U.S. are considered 'porous' in terms of having multiple access points (executive agencies, courts, and so forth) whereby actors can supply inputs into the policy process (Jones, 1984, pp.6-7), the international system by comparison is even more so. At least in national systems the access points are bound together within a single institutional framework through which policy must move. In the international system no such matrix exists, with numerous access points having only random connectedness. The chief structures that receive and process global policy demands are the various United Nations organs, subsidiary bodies, and Specialized Agencies, which have disparate memberships and uneven ties with each other. Soroos (1986, p.82) notes that 'these international bodies are the primary arenas in which global policies are made.' The fact that the UN system is rather disjointed frequently makes it hard for observers as well as participants to discern any logic as to which IGOs take up which issues and, at the opposite end of the policy process, how the outputs produced by one IGO relate to those produced by others, especially where several international bodies have overlapping responsibility for a given issue-area (as, for example, in the case of economic development).

As some scholars (Jacobson, Reisinger, and Mathers, 1986) point out, the proliferation of international bodies at the global and also regional levels in recent years has added enormously to an already 'dense web of IGOs' which may be getting out of control. With these bodies offering numerous and sundry forums in which demands can be aired by their nation-state members, NGO affiliates, IGO officials (providing

'withinputs') and others, it is increasingly difficult to keep track of what issues are on the global agenda or are somewhere else in the policy process. Jacobson and his colleagues note (pp.157-158): 'If the U.S. finds it [difficult] . . . to formulate constructive policies for the organizations to which it belongs, . . . what must the situation be like for countries that belong to proportionately more IGOs and have much smaller bureaucracies?' The result is that IGOs are often run by secretariat personnel who have considerable discretion to set organizational goals but little else. The UN has been criticized heavily for the litany of concerns it attempts to deal with, but the entire system is overloaded.

Although many demands turn up on the formal agendas of IGOs, relatively few can meaningfully be said to have made it onto the global agenda in terms of being recognized as a system-wide 'social problem', i.e. 'an alleged situation which is incompatible with the values of a significant number of people who agree that action is necessary to alter the situation' (Rubington and Weinberg, 1977, pp.3-4). Even where there seems to be widespread agreement about the existence of a problem (e.g. the Third World debt burden), getting agreement on the nature and magnitude of the problem, much less the optimal solution, is often extremely difficult. Some problems do manage to occupy the agenda more firmly than others and to become endowed with sufficient visibility and legitimacy that major efforts at policy formulation are undertaken, frequently through commissions or 'groups of experts' which develop proposals to be decided upon by special conferences or other decision adoption vehicles. The most notable examples are the series of world conferences sponsored by the UN over the past two decades on the law of the sea, the environment, population, and other topics. Such efforts, of course, do not assure that any action on a global scale will result or that the actions taken will represent any clear policy directives, particularly if there has been no concerted attempt to weigh both the rationality of various proposals -- that is, the likelihood of their ameliorating the problems they are designed to address-- as well as the political feasibility -- that



is, the prospect of garnering the approval of whatever winning coalition is needed for adoption and subsequent implementation.

One of the main obstacles to the development of global policy is the tendency for the politics of agenda-setting and policy formulation to be divorced from the politics of adoption and other later stages of the policy process. In the UN General Assembly, in particular, several issues such as the apartheid and Palestinian questions can stay on the formal agenda for decades without significant action, while others such as desertification and deforestation can appear one moment and quietly disappear the next. In those IGOs with weighted voting formulas or other arrangements that allow power realities to be reflected more accurately, there is a closer fit between the capacity to control agendas and the capacity to adopt decisions which have policy impacts. What constitutes decision adoption itself is, of course, problematical when it comes to global policy since even those IGOs which approach universality and are empowered to take actions binding on the entire membership, such as WHO and ICAO, allow for selective non-compliance through unilateral reservations or other devices.

Although many different actors can be involved in attempts to develop global policy, global policy adoption in a given issue-area ultimately requires the imprimatur of a combination of states that have sufficiently compatible issue-positions, shared salience levels, and joint power capabilities as to constitute a dominant coalition willing and able to move the international system at large to operate generally in accordance with the expectations embodied in the 'policy'. In the early postwar period the mobilization of these factors in support of global policy was achieved essentially through US-USSR condominium (as in the case of arms control regimes) or, where the Soviet Union opted out of the system, through American hegemony exercised in conjunction with Western allies controlling colonial empires (as in the case of the Bretton Woods economic order). As power has become increasingly diffused in the international system -- with decolonialization producing regional subsystems, blocs becoming looser, and resources less fungible -- it has become more difficult to

move the system in any direction. Hegemony and bipolarity have eroded but have not been replaced with any comparable mechanisms for managing agenda-setting and other global policy processes. Moreover, the growth of the welfare state along with technology-driven interdependence has expanded foreign policy agendas to include more non-security concerns, thereby expanding the number of actors comprising the foreign policy establishment and giving greater play to subnational and transnational interests -- a phenomenon found particularly in the First World but spreading to the Second and Third Worlds as well. These conditions which now drive the global policy enterprise are associated with the functional eclecticism model described above.

While the pluralism which marks functional eclecticism may be viewed as a normative improvement over the power elitism inherent in hegemony and other principles of global organization, the price that is paid is an inability of the international system to engage in international problem-solving in an even semi-rational fashion. In any issue-area, some policy outputs in the form of regimes may emerge which can 'vary with respect to explicitness, adherence, and stability' (Jönsson, 1986, p.44). Some are more global in scope than others, and some incorporate more formal instruments than others, although the matter of *what* rules, norms, tacit understandings, procedures, and/or organizational machinery have been accepted by *whom* tends to be sketchy. So also is the question of when, if at all, regime change or termination has occurred. Indeed, to say that global policy processes amount to 'muddling through', and global policy products to 'disjointed incrementalism' (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963), is to attribute more integrity to global policy than is deserved. References to 'the nuclear non-proliferation regime' or 'the monetary regime' suggest impressive accomplishments engineered by the international system in response to common problems, but it is debatable to what extent these are the fruits of policy -- conscious, deliberate acts of creation and remaking. It may not be too far from the truth to say that regimes tend to be less the work of practitioners engaged in goal-directed

activity than the invention of scholars seeking to uncover some semblance of order and purpose in the universe.

### 3.1.1 International Drug Trafficking as a Global Policy Issue

Let us briefly focus on international drug trafficking, a concern which has attracted increased attention in recent years, and attempt to see if any global policy has developed around this issue. The drug problem has certainly been a long-standing item on the global agenda and has elicited a variety of responses by the international community. Several formal organizations at the global level are involved in drug control, including such UN bodies as the General Assembly; the 40-member Commission on Narcotic Drugs (part of ECOSOC since 1946); the International Narcotics Control Board (created in 1961 by merging the Permanent Central Opium Board and the Drug Supervisory Board which had been inherited from the League); the Division of Narcotic Drugs and the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control (both located in the UN Secretariat, with UNFDAC established in 1971); and several of the Specialized Agencies, notably WHO (which is given an explicit role by treaty) and FAO (which has become involved in crop eradication and substitution programs). In addition, there are many formal rules operating at the global level, including the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs which recodified nine existing treaties governing narcotics control into a single treaty; the 1972 Protocol amended to the 1961 agreement (signed by some 80 states); and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances (signed by some 50 states).

In terms of programs, the UN General Assembly in 1981 formulated an International Drug Abuse Control Strategy, calling for a 'five year action programme' aimed primarily at improvement of drug enforcement machinery, to be implemented by member states individually and with UN assistance and monitored by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The UNFDAC presently is carrying out almost 100 projects in 31 countries in the areas of drug enforcement along with education and treatment. In support of these and other drug efforts, there have been attempts to develop widely accepted norms, such as the 1984 General Assembly resolution embodying a Declaration

on the Control of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse, which tried to define the nature of the drug problem and member state obligations; and the declaration emanating from the 1987 UN-sponsored International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, which contained 35 recommendations and targeted goals.

Given its position as the major market for illicit drugs produced throughout the world, the US has attached especially high salience to the drug problem as a global issue and has attempted to work through the UN to develop a broad international response. The US pays a large share of the UN drug control budget. However, that budget remains a tiny fraction of what the US has committed nationally (through its Drug Enforcement Administration), bilaterally (through such efforts as the 1987 eradication operations in Bolivian jungles), and regionally (through, for example, promoting the 1986 Puerto Valarta Declaration calling for hemispheric cooperation among twelve Latin American states in cooperation with the US).

Does all of this add up to a 'drug regime'? It is hard to say. Even if a regime is said to exist, is it one that has evolved over the years through any sort of policy process wherein one can trace a sequence of political-intellectual routines connected to some end? There does seem to have been a guiding hand at work along the way, manifested by the consolidation of various drug-related rules and organizations through the 1961 Single Convention. When the drug control problem originally appeared on the UN agenda, it was defined in terms of control over legally manufactured heroin and other drugs, a relatively simple task behind which there was considerable international agreement on what should and could be done. However, as the problem has changed to one of controlling illicit drug activity, solutions have been harder to come by, particularly as the international environment has become more complex. It is true that there is the appearance of a policy process at work recently, complete with the language of 'strategies,' 'targets,' and 'programmes.' However, insofar as any 'global policy' presently informs the international community's response to drug control problems, its elements are ill-defined in terms of the relationships between

organizational and non-organizational components and between the global and sub-global levels. In this issue-area as in others, there is a facade of international public policy which has little structural support behind it, resulting in ineffective problem-solving.

### 3.2 An Alternative Model: Dirigible Pluralism

Meehan (1985, pp.291 and 294) argues that if policies 'are to serve as guides to real world actions and be subject to criticism and improvement,' there must be an 'intellectual apparatus' which includes 'both the empirical or scientific knowledge needed to determine and modify the . . . available alternative future states of the world from which a choice is made and the ethical or normative knowledge needed to choose one of those future states rather than the others.' One might add, also, there must be a political apparatus capable of mobilizing scientific and value consensus -- 'consensual knowledge' (Haas, 1980)-- behind some policy and thereby moving the political system to act. Granted public policy, like law, promises to be more imperfect in the international realm than in a national setting; but might global policy processes better approximate political-intellectual routines 'for directing human actions in . . . reasoned, corrigible ways' (Meehan, 1985, pp.291 and 293), so that what comes out more clearly resembles policy? In short, can the world improve upon functional eclecticism?

Keohane and Nye (1989) have suggested that although IGOs are not 'incipient world governments' (p.240), they at the very least can be conceptualized as 'institutionalized policy networks, within which transgovernmental policy coordination and coalition-building' can occur (p.256). Under present arrangements, these networks do not work very effectively at facilitating either coordination or coalition-building. Organization theory posits that 'under conditions of high heterogeneity and instability [as characterizes the contemporary international environment], organizational performance is enhanced by . . . functional divisions of labor, which are linked together by specific integrative mechanisms' (Ness and Brechin, 1988,

p.253). What is lacking at present is a 'linking-pin organization' or set of organizations which can help integrate --steer-- global policy efforts; 'the position of a linking-pin organization is seldom based entirely on formal authority but rests in large measure on its ability to manipulate network characteristics by mobilizing coalitions around specific issues or controlling the bargaining process' (Jönsson, 1986, p.43). As an alternative to functional eclecticism, another model of global organization might be considered which could be labeled 'dirigible pluralism', whose main defining feature is subsystem autonomy within a central guidance system built around the UN.

The dilemma posed by any attempt to improve global problem-solving capabilities through better global organization, i.e. through UN reform, is that those proposals which appear feasible also seem trivial in their likely impact, while those which are potentially far-reaching seem the least practicable. However, dirigible pluralism offers an intermediate set of possibilities between the two poles of (1) merely tinkering with the present institutional machinery -- focusing on reforms mainly of a managerial and administrative character, such as achieving better coordination among the Specialized Agencies, streamlining debate and other procedures in the General Assembly, developing more sophisticated program budgeting, planning and evaluation techniques along with upgrading personnel recruitment and promotion standards in the Secretariat -- and (2) engaging in a major rethinking and overhauling of the organization -- focusing on reform of the basic political arrangements, including the decisionmaking formulas in the General Assembly and other organs, or starting over from scratch. Tinkering has been tried and has failed, reflected in the fate of the 'housekeeping' proposals advanced by the Gardner Group of Experts on the restructuring of the UN's social-economic machinery, most of which were adopted by the General Assembly in 1977 but never had any significant impacts. There have been few attempts at serious political reform; given the recent difficulties experienced in implementing the relatively modest package of recommendations produced by the Group of 18 in 1986,

far more ambitious proposals such as the 'binding triad' scheme seem unrealistic. Both the institutional tinkering and grand political design approaches run counter to the prevailing winds of anti-institutionalism and anti-globalism.

To portray the dirigible pluralism model is to engage in what Cox (1984, p.263) calls 'critical theory', which 'allows for a . . . choice in favor of a . . . political order different from the prevailing order, but . . . limits the range of choice to alternative orders which are feasible transformations of the existing world.' Dirigible pluralism is characterized by three basic operating principles.

First, the model envisions an enhanced capacity of the international system as a whole to respond to problems confronting humanity, without foreclosing or limiting local and regional efforts. Indeed, global and subglobal approaches would not be mutually exclusive or competitive but would have a synergistic relationship, with global-level agencies stimulating subglobal activities (as in the case of the Regional Seas program sponsored by the UN Environmental Program) and subglobal projects providing 'laboratory' settings for experiments in inter-nation collaboration which if successful might be applied elsewhere in the system (along the lines of the function often attributed to the political subdivisions in the US and other federal systems). With a few exceptions such as the UNEP example, global and subglobal approaches at present tend to be viewed as separate rather than interrelated, reinforcing layers of problem-solving activity. This condition might be remedied if the UN were to more self-consciously build subglobal components into its programs, serve as a clearinghouse for information on subglobal collaborative undertakings, and provide better mechanisms for facilitating 'bandwagoning' where subglobal cooperation has the potential to be enlarged to the global level (as with certain limited membership IGOs or multilateral treaties).

Secondly, the model points to increased routinization and rationalization of international governance processes but without sacrificing the benefits of flexibility. On the input side of the equation, agenda-setting, formulation and

adoption phases of global policymaking would be brought more into synch, while on the output side the system would furnish better feedback as to which policy instruments work more effectively than others. UN organizational routines need to be developed so as to permit more demands to be converted into public policy enjoying widespread legitimacy and so as to maximize cooperative learning, although the resulting shared experience may well suggest the less organization the better in certain problem areas. In particular, it should be possible to take better advantage of global policy opportunities presented in those situations where there is already existent or emerging knowledge and value consensus surrounding specific problems and solutions (in the case of, say, AIDS or ozone layer deterioration). If knowledge is to be viewed as authoritative and is to be acted upon by the international community, it would help to have an established multinational research operation in the UN Secretariat reliable for its technical expertise and objectivity, linked to political machinery capable of raising salience levels among governments and their constituencies sufficiently to focus the energies of the system on the problem at hand. Instructive here are the ideas contained in a recent study (UNA, 1987) which proposed the creation of a UN Bureau of Global Watch that would regularly monitor and report on evolving 'human security' concerns, in the service of a 25-member Ministerial Board composed of high-level, national cabinet ministers meeting periodically to discuss issues within their substantive domain (somewhat along the lines of the relationship between the European Commission and the Council of Ministers in the EEC).

The third operating principle is that any efforts to improve the management of global policy processes must take into account the polyarchic characteristics of the international system. This means *inter alia* ensuring that various interests are broadly represented in any new arrangements at the global level; utilizing primarily non-command, consensus-based decisionmaking procedures that minimize threats to sovereignty; exploring creative ways through treaty reservations, IGO associate memberships, and other devices to promote at least partial but explicit commitments to



global policy endeavors; and reducing overlap and duplication in the system while avoiding overcentralization (e.g. developing better control and accountability mechanisms over the Specialized Agencies without destroying their independent capacities for problem-solving and tension reduction within their limited sphere of concern).

The UN, then, would serve as a manager of international cooperation -- a conduit through which regime-making efforts pass and international waters are tested to determine those issue-areas in which some basis for interstate collaboration exists, what organizational or nonorganizational form it might take, and the maximum number of states to be included. In its capacity as a 'regime processing center', the UN would be a place where emerging problems could be identified, monitored, and proposed for consideration on the global agenda; where bargaining could occur which would indicate the degree of consensus mobilizable in support of international action; and where signals ultimately would be furnished as to whether global solutions are possible or whether regime-making should be pursued at some lower level in the system. Decomposition strategies would not be precluded but would not shape the process. Systematic review of regimes could be built into the process to assess how they are working, what alterations might be made, and whether participation can be expanded without undermining or diluting the robustness of existing cooperation. In short, global policy would become a sharper reality.

#### 4. Conclusion

Conceived primarily as a conflict manager, the UN over the years has been judged mainly in terms of its performance in the war/peace area. The UN Charter, as well as practicality, has dictated that the conflict management mission be carried out with the UN as the forum of last (or late) resort, to be used after local or regional efforts have been exhausted. Relatively little attention has been paid to the UN as a manager of cooperation, a mission which if carefully developed would render the UN the forum of first (or early) resort in many instances. The UN cannot be the sole

gatekeeper for international cooperation -- such a responsibility would totally overload the institution -- but it can play a more pivotal role in increasing the capacity of the international system to cope with changing demands and in helping to define the outer limits of collaboration for the international community. As a key agent of global policy, the UN even more importantly might inject a dose of predictability and responsiveness into interstate relations sufficient to move the system beyond 'cooperation under anarchy' toward institution-building in a larger 'world order' sense.

## NOTES

1. It should be added, however, that the ratio of world military expenditures to world GNP has remained relatively static in recent years, while world arms imports have declined somewhat (US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1988, pp. 4-6).
2. For mixed evidence on this point, see Small and Singer (1985) and Gochman and Moas (1984).
3. Pirages (1989) has argued that technological changes necessarily drive human socio-political structures and values, while Waltz (1979, p. 109) notes that 'necessities [in themselves] do not create possibilities.'
4. Even Waltz' well-known caveat about the 'myth' of interdependence does not deny that empirically one can demonstrate growing interdependence. As he says (1979, pp. 144-145), his quarrel is a 'conceptual' one, in that he confines interdependence to a 'relationship among equals' and focuses on interdependence between certain parts of the system, namely the 'great powers.' For data on 'horizontal' interdependence ('interconnectedness'), see Inkeles (1975). On 'vertical' interdependence ('sensitivity and vulnerability'), see Keohane and Nye (1989).
5. It is nothing new to depict the UN as moribund. Witness Carlos Romulo's statement (1954, p. 32) that 'the UN is in a state of coma, and there isn't much time left to revive it'; and 'United Nations in Crisis,' report submitted to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the US House of Representatives by members of the US delegation to the UN (1964).
6. There are, of course, many who continue to utilize 'globalist' frameworks, such as those scholars associated with the World Order Models Project and those who use a 'global policy' perspective as discussed below. However, even these writers have recognized problems with the concept of 'central guidance.' The strategy of building international cooperation through 'decomposition' is becoming an increasingly common view in scholarly and practitioner circles. For the evolution of this thinking as applied to the UN, see Kay (1976); the Atlantic Council Working Group on the United Nations (1977); and the United Nations Association - USA (1987).

7. There are obvious exceptions, such as Jacobson (1984) and Haas (1986), but the trend has clearly been away from a focus on formal organizations. Surveying articles published in *International Organization*, Kratochwil and Ruggie (1986, p. 760) found that the formal institutional focus has declined steadily . . . and now accounts for fewer than 5 percent of the total. Also, see Rochester (1986).
8. In another article co-authored by Keohane, with Axelrod (1985), focusing on the role of 'institutions' in 'achieving cooperation under anarchy,' the term international organization never appears once in either a global or any other context.
9. Regimes can be simply bilateral in scope. For example, see Nye (1987).
10. Bilder (1986, p. 232) reports 'the University of Washington Treaty Research Center estimates that approximately 40,000 international agreements have been concluded in the twentieth century, most of them in the last thirty-five years.'
11. Jacobson, Reisinger and Mathers (1986, p. 145) note that regional IGO growth has exceeded global IGO growth since World War II, although 'the absolute number [of IGOs with potentially universal membership] for the post-World War II era is impressively high.' An overwhelming majority of the more than 15,000 treaties in force as of 1980 were bilateral agreements rather than general 'law-making' treaties of a broad multilateral character (Bilder, 1986, pp. 6 and 233), although the twentieth century has witnessed much more multilateralism than previous eras (Janis, 1988, p. 20); for data on the growth of multilateral treaty-making in this century, and the conclusion that it has 'increased relatively little' over time, see Gamble (1980, pp. 377-378).
12. For definitions of 'policy' along these lines as found in the 'public policy' literature, see Anderson (1975, p. 3); MacRae and Wilde (1979); and Jones (1984, pp. 24-26).
13. These categories, based on Jones (1984), are commonly discussed in one manner or another in the policy literature.
14. Barry Buzan (1983, pp. 96-101) discusses the international system in terms of a 'spectrum of anarchies' and argues that the contemporary system is halfway between high ('immature') and low ('mature') anarchy.

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