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THE ACUTE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

By CHARLES A. McCLELLAND

ACCOUNTS of the acute crises of international politics occupy a substantial place in the diplomatic history of the past hundred years. These compounded events have been interpreted as manifestations of international rivalries among the Great Powers. Intermittently, they have drawn intense public attention and have generated heavy anxieties over the possibility that they may lead into general warfare. After the fact, they have become subjects of historical reconstruction, with students and commentators attempting to describe "what really happened." Thus, both scholarly and popular interest has persisted in the "inside stories" of the several crises belonging to three historical periods: from 1870 to World War I, the interwar period, and the era since World War II.

There is, consequently, a large descriptive literature of the crises, mainly connected with the diplomacy of opposing coalitions and of interstate conflicts during these three periods. The depth and quality of this literature vary greatly, most often according to the recency of the events and the amount of available and relevant historical documentation. The Moroccan crisis of 1905 and the circumstances of the *Anschluss* of 1936 are, quite naturally, better known and more firmly established factually than the inner details of the Suez crisis of 1956. However, the accumulated knowledge of the series of crises of the post-World War II period, uncertain and impressionistic as it still is, has a great deal to do with our understanding of current international affairs. Take away the facts and meanings commonly associated with the crises of Berlin, Korea, Indochina, Suez, Quemoy, the Congo, and Laos and, obviously, the usual estimates of the scope, intensity, and workings of the Cold War will greatly change. Despite this fact, acute crises have not often been made the focus either of theorizing or of intensive analytic research. Students of international relations have not found it important or necessary to consider these events as if they constituted a significant class of phenomena in the international field. The reasons for passing over the acute international crisis as a focus of explanation are worth consideration.

Since the main purpose of this essay is to advance ideas which put the occurrences of acute crises in a more central perspective, it will be useful to identify, at least cursorily, the conceptual settings which

ordinarily have operated to keep systematic approaches to these events in a secondary role.

I

There are, first of all, certain common sense and *ad hoc* interpretations to consider. International crises tend to appear as first-order realities. They seem to be givens of history and, therefore, do not call for particular identification or definition. "Everybody" knows when one happens. The labeling has become virtually instantaneous and world-wide in the Cold War period, but it is interesting to note in passing that the term "crisis" appears also as a "natural naming" in passages of the diplomatic correspondence of the pre-World War I period.[1] The crises fit easily into the major conventional images of the situation of international conflict. What more is there to explain beyond the apparent facts that the foreign policies of certain states are in opposition and that, from time to time, a confrontation or challenge involving these states becomes intense enough to constitute a crisis?

On the same level of common-sense interpretation is the notion that a crisis is but a concrete manifestation of the international clash of public ideas or values. Although the connection is by no means made regularly, this meaning has roots in theoretical inquiries into the general nature of conflict.[2] The Spanish Civil War was seen popularly as a battle between fascism and democracy and the Korean War was regarded as a contest between democracy and communism or, from the Communist angle, between imperialism and socialism. Both were conceived of as crises in the conflict of ideologies.

Still more elemental is the outlook which seizes on the motives and interests of political leaders and elites for an explanation. Leading men plan and execute strategies and tactics of international conflict during "no war" periods. Thus, the accounts of crises have been cast, not infrequently, in terms of Bismarck against Gambetta or Boulanger, Bülow against Delcassé, Izvolski against Aehrenthal, Hitler against Chamberlain, Truman against Stalin, etc. The simplicity of the plan is

[1] See, for example, quoted passages in Sidney B. Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 2nd ed., New York, 1935, I, pp. 31, 205, 290, 336, 435, 451, etc.

[2] Jessie Bernard, "The Conceptualization of Intergroup Relations with Special Reference to Conflict," *Social Forces*, XXIX (March 1951), pp. 243-51; Jessie Bernard, "The Theory of Games of Strategy as a Modern Sociology of Conflict," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIX (March 1954), pp. 411-24; Samuel Stouffer, "An Analysis of Conflicting Social Norms," *American Sociological Review*, XIV (December 1949), pp. 707-17; Raymond W. Mack and Richard C. Snyder, "The Analysis of Social Conflict—Toward an Overview and Synthesis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, I (June 1957), pp. 212-48.

concealed frequently by the dramatic quality of the events: Leader A initiates his line of action, Leader B responds to the challenge with his own brand of action, and Leaders C, D, and E then do various things in reaction to the situation. The concept of crisis is easily transformed into the image of a contest between prominent individuals.

Yet another *ad hoc* type of explanation has been manifested in the notion of the "power vacuum." The idea had a certain popularity in the years immediately following World War II. Although it, too, may be traced to deeper roots—in the traditional power theory—it is able to stand alone in terms of the physical analogy. Strong aggressive states always will move into weak and poorly defended areas unless they are forestalled by other powerful forces which will oppose such expansion.[3] The situation of a "power vacuum" is considered to be crisis-provoking.

The last of the simple conceptions of the reasons for the phenomena of international crises that will be mentioned here is the "problem-seeking-a-solution" idea. In a later passage, it will be proposed more fully that complex modernizing societies are regularly beset by so many chronic problems that there is a normal propensity to become preoccupied only with those which erupt in an acute form. Then, certain instrumental values take control so that it is assumed that the "reasons" for the problem should be exposed, the causes should be removed, and the needed remedies and reforms should be instituted. The problem-solving blanket is thrown over the flames of conflict in the expectation that they will be smothered. Underlying is the faith that no problem can fail to have a relevant solution. The devoted pursuit of causes and remedies will succeed.

Beyond the *ad hoc* level are at least two current explanations which place the acute crisis in a general setting but do not allow it more than a dependent or subordinate role. Both are doctrines which are influential in shaping the meanings of contemporary international relations. These are the Marxist-Leninist theory of international relations and the traditional power theory.

In the Marxist-Leninist perspective, the prevalence of acute crises in the post-World War II period is an expression of the processes of the world revolution. A limited number of changes are rung on the themes provided mainly by Lenin's writing on the theory of imperialism and war.[4] No details need be given here on the ideas of the capitalist encirclement of the "camp of socialism," the impending collapse of capitalism,

[3] For example, George C. Marshall, "Assistance to European Economic Recovery," *Department of State Bulletin*, XVIII (January 18, 1948), pp. 71-72.

[4] V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, New York, 1940.

the "final" conflicts between capitalist states, and the crusade against "capitalist, war-mongering, imperialist" aggression. In this framework, the series of acute crises is represented as part of an inevitable playing out of historical processes and, also, as the consequence of Soviet resistance and counteraction against the imperialist moves of the "capitalist camp." Endless illustrations and examples are at hand. A remark of Khrushchev at the time of the Lebanon crisis typifies this outlook: "The imperialists are prowling around the fence of the socialist camp like wolves around a sheep pen, but our defenses are strong and the defenders are reliable."[5]

The anti-Communist version of the doctrine accepts as true and correct the Marxist teachings concerning the Communist drive for world revolution and world domination. On this basis, the meaning of the recent crises is located in the strategy and tactics of Soviet foreign policies, which are considered to be concentrated exclusively on conflict and expansionism. The interest in the crises lies not in their patterns, in their relationships to decision-making, or in methods of control of their processes and effects, but in specifications and plans for foreign policies which would contain or defeat the aggressive designs of the Communists.[6] In a word, no great mystery or problem of knowledge is seen in the occurrences of crises. Rather they are perceived as rather obvious and expected manifestations of the main line of current international conflict.

If signs of relaxation appear in the conflict or if there is a lengthening of time between major crises, the causes can be found readily in some domestic problem or circumstance. At the time of this writing, for example, commentators whose views reflect the opposing versions of this theory of international conflict and crisis are speculating on the possibilities of a *détente* in the relations of the United States and the Soviet Union on the basis that both countries now need a lull in the conflict in order to carry out large-scale programs of industrial automation.[7]

By far the most important reason for the relative absence of systematic and intensive study of the acute international crisis is to be found in the traditional power theory. As in the case of the Communist theory of

[5] Speech at Smolensk on August 13, 1958, *New York Times*, August 24, 1958.

[6] Robert Strausz-Hupé *et al., Protracted Conflict*, New York, 1959. See also Harold F. Smiddy, "Manageability and Crises," *General Electric Defense Quarterly*, IV (January-March 1961), p. 23.

[7] Jacob Morris, "Profit, Automation, and the Cold War," *Science & Society*, XXIV (Winter 1960), pp. 1-12; and Institute for the Study of the USSR, Soviet Affairs Analysis Service, "Reference Paper," No. 16, pp. 1-3, and No. 17, p. 4 (1960/61), mimeo.

international relations, there is no need to review the fundamental concepts of the power approach. It suffices to note that, under this explanation, significant occurrences in international politics are regarded as consequences of the distribution of power among the members of the existing international system. Variations from this attributed regularity are regarded as contingent and accidental developments, aberrations in interstate relations brought about by the participating actors' lack of skill, or conceptual and ideological misconceptions of the "reality." The basic construct delineates the play of power among member states around points of equilibria with the outer limits of action set by physical capabilities and such other control factors as conventional rules, norms, and laws. Empirical flesh is put on the skeleton of the theory mainly through specific studies of the foreign policies of states. As a consequence, the phenomena of acute crises are accommodated in the scheme in several ways.

First, it is apparent that any acute crisis always can be located and explained with reference to the operation of the balance of power. A crisis is an occurrence in history which reflects the state of the balance or some change in it. Hans J. Morgenthau remarks simply: "At the bottom of disputes that entail the risk of war there is a tension between the desire to preserve the existing distribution of power and the desire to overthrow it."[8] In the context, it is clear that Morgenthau includes under the headings of disputes and tension those encounters which otherwise are called crises. He proceeds to declare that the disputes which involve tensions are not open to rational evaluations of claims, to concessions and compromise, or to orderly problem-solving in the terms of the dispute.

A place for the crisis in the power explanation is provided also in another conceptual corner. The calculation of relative power is held to be extremely difficult in practical situations so that decision-makers may become persuaded, from time to time, to allow "field tests" of the status of the balance. Hence, limited and controlled assaults or campaigns are launched to test the strength and will to resist of the competitor or enemy. If an armed clash takes place in the field, a crisis may be brought to life. A fumbling technique on the part of either protagonist may lead to a much larger and more serious engagement than was originally anticipated. Progressive commitments of forces and the involvement of national prestige through a process now fashionably called "escalation" may expand such an affair into a major war. An interpretation of the Korean War suggests that the genesis of the crisis

[8] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 3rd ed., New York, 1960, p. 428.

was a *Kraftprobe* which was mismanaged and so became a stalemated limited war.

Although the statement is somewhat dispersed, a further proposition on the occurrence of crises may be noted in Quincy Wright's *A Study of War*. The concept, which is categorized properly within the balance-of-power theory, takes this form: the polarization of opposing alliances of an international political system into rigidly structured armed camps results in a series of acute crises, the last leading to war between the armed camps. This indicates a condition in the system which inhibits adaptation to change and creates serious restraints on its members' freedom to act. The crises are symptoms of non-adaptiveness and war is a means for breaking the structural rigidity of the system. This is, perhaps, the most competent conceptual formulation in support of the widespread notion that a series of acute international crises is the prelude to general war. One finds in *A Study of War* an experimental expression of the idea: "The probability of war between two states during a period of time is not the product or the sum of the probabilities of war in all of the crises anticipated in their relations during the period, nor is it the probability of war in the most serious crisis. Rather it is one *minus* the probability of war being avoided during the period. This is the product of the probabilities of war being avoided in each crisis. . . . Assume that A and B during a period of ten years passed through three crises of which the probable eventuations in war were, respectively, 50, 60, and 70 per cent and that states C and D had, during that period, only one crisis with a war probability of 94 per cent. It should be said, at the beginning of the period, if these probabilities were known, that the probability of the members of the two pairs being at war with each other within ten years was equal. With A and B the probability of avoiding war in the successive crises was 50, 40, and 30 per cent. The product of these percentages is 6 per cent, giving a war probability of 94 per cent. If p_1, p_2, p_3, etc., indicate the probability of war in successive crises in the relations of two states and P indicates the probability of war for n crises, then $P{=}1{-}(1{-}p_1)(1{-}p_2)(1{-}p_3)\ \ldots\ (1{-}p_n)$. . . . Even though p is very small, as n approaches infinity the probability of war approaches certainty."[9]

If, as Harold Lasswell has suggested, long-term expectations of highly probable future outcomes feed back and influence current conduct and goals in the manner of a self-fulfilling prophecy, there may be some validity in the idea of the march to war under the conditions of a rigid

[9] Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, Chicago, 1942, II, p. 1272n.

balance and of recurring crises.[10] On the other hand, a more sanguine interpretation of the relationship between a series of crises and the eventual outbreak of general war is contained in the hypothesis that the growth of experience with the tension-ridden and "short of war" events of acute crises may be, actually, a substitute and replacement in the system for general war itself. Raymond Aron has raised the question as follows: "Is the 'cold war' a preparation or a substitute for total war? If the former, the two camps are simply maneuvering for position until the day of final settlement. If the latter, the propaganda battles, the struggles among national parties, the fighting localized in Greece and Korea, constitute the war itself—inevitable because of the incompatibility of the two worlds but limited so as to reduce the ravages of violence."[11]

On the ground that the "cold war" represents some kind of change in the structure of the international system, it may be argued that the long series of crises since 1946 is a part of the process of experimenting with and learning a "new politics" of international relations. In a word, the crises can be conceived as leading, step by step, away from general or total war. Wright's formula might well be reversed to indicate that exposures to crises carrying some probability of general or total war lead progressively to reduced probability of the eventual occurrence of the terminal event. Thus, where P_i is the probability of general war at any time after a number of crisis exposures (i) and p_1 is the probability of war at the first crisis exposure:

$$P_i = \underset{i}{p_1}$$

The trouble with both of these formulations is that they yield too little in the way of meaningful suggestions for a study of crises which would link concepts and hard data. Indeed, we see that the more systematic approaches which have been discussed to this point do not offer appreciably more guidance than do the *ad hoc* explanations to fruitful investigations of the role of the crises in international politics. There is a conceptual tangle of popularized ideas and vaguely applicable hypotheses. The crises are thought to be connected with the international struggles for ideas and also for power. They are seen as indicators of the state of the international system, but they are regarded as prime operations in the system, as well. They seem to be related to

[10] Harold D. Lasswell, "Inevitable War: A Problem in the Control of Long-range Expectations," *World Politics*, II (October 1949), p. 6.

[11] Raymond Aron, *The Century of Total War*, Garden City, N.Y., 1954, p. 226.

going to war and to staying at peace. If the international political system has remained fundamentally as it was in 1870, the crises probably play one kind of role—possibly, as stepping-stones on the path to general war—but if the international system has been transformed lately, the current crises may be symptomatic of emerging processes and structures which do not belong to past experience.

In order to move ahead with inquiries into a subject which common sense indicates is important in international affairs, it appears that some setting and orientation different from the conventional perspectives must be provided. A new start for the investigation of acute international crises has developed in the upsurge of research interest in the nature and meanings of social conflict.

II

A judgment made by Karl Deutsch in 1955 has proved to be correct: "There are some indications that at the present time the problem of interstate conflicts is ripe for a concerted research attack, combining the methods of several of the social sciences. The aim of this research would be to develop techniques to do three things: to identify generally those conflict situations and states which are likely to lead to war; to evaluate particular conflict situations and the probable lines along which they are likely to develop if left to themselves; and to suggest further possible techniques for controlling or containing such conflict situations so as to prevent them from breaking out into war."[12]

So many probings into the general subject of conflict have been undertaken in the last few years that it should be emphasized that the hypothetical formulation which is to be developed here concerning international crises is but one alternative approach among several, dependent on the body of "new thought" on the subject of conflict. Starting with the ordinary apperception that acute crises are concrete phenomena of international history with distinct time and place boundaries, we are able now to pick and choose from a number of research suggestions.

One of these suggestions is that an international crisis marks the time of a turning point in a conflict and a period when major decisions are likely to be made.[13] The advent of studies which analyze such crucial

[12] Karl W. Deutsch, "Mass Communications and the Loss of Freedom in National Decision-making: A Possible Research Approach to Interstate Conflicts," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1 (June 1957), p. 200.

[13] Jacques Freymond, *The Saar Conflict, 1945-1955*, London and New York, 1960, p. xiv.

times in international politics according to the conceptual schemes of decision-making promises important gains in knowledge of the "internal behavior of actors" on occasions when the purposes and procedures of states are revealed at their most fundamental level.[14] The data of crises may be re-examined under the hypothesis that the actions of decision-makers may be narrowed progressively under the impact of mass communications and popular opinion until there can be no turning back from war.[15] By noting the definition of international conflict as a bargaining situation in which the participants operate according to mixed motives in the range between full conflict and full collaboration, we may take advantage of the insight concerning the "impure" character of moves and countermoves in the exchanges during a crisis.[16] We may reconsider the detailed events of the histories of crises as sequences of strategic plays and treat these histories as if, virtually, they were clinical records to be used eventually for comparison with synthetic data derived from experimental games of strategy.[17] "Richardson effects," which are believed to abound in a great many social conflict situations, probably are in evidence in the internal sequences of crises.[18] Some of the data of crises might be open to categorization and arrangement according to short-run developmental effects of interaction of the Richardson type without resort to mass behavior data and the formulations of "social physics."[19]

Other avenues to crises studies can be conceived within the framework of suggestions by Quincy Wright for "a study of international conflicts from four different angles: the relations between the opposing parties, which implies particularly an examination of the 'distance' separating them, from the technological, strategic, legal, ideological, social, cultural, and psychological points of view and from the point of view of their attitudes toward recourse to war; the internal structure and policy of the states under consideration; procedures available and used for

[14] Richard C. Snyder and Glenn D. Paige, "The United States Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea: The Application of an Analytical Scheme," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, III (December 1958), pp. 341-378; Allen Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War*, New York, 1960; Bernard C. Cohen, *The Political Process and Foreign Policy*, Princeton, N.J., 1957.

[15] Deutsch, *op.cit.*, pp. 200-11.

[16] Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960, pp. 5-6, 21-80.

[17] See Thomas C. Schelling's paper in this symposium; Harold Guetzkow, "A Use of Simulation in the Study of Inter-Nation Relations," *Behavioral Science*, IV (July 1959), pp. 183-91.

[18] Kenneth E. Boulding, "Organization and Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, I (June 1957), p. 132.

[19] Anatol Rapoport, *Fights, Games, and Debates*, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1960, pp. 88-99.

the adjustment of opposing interests; and the state of international relations during the period under consideration."[20]

The conceptual framework of decision-making[21] is extremely attractive because it so readily encompasses many of the aspects of international conflict and crisis which were noted above. In addition, there is a possible framework of inquiry whose virtues are not so apparent and whose potential has been developed but little in the study of international relations. This is system interaction analysis.[22] Decision-making and interaction analyses represent different investigative interests and preoccupations. A study of data such as that of an acute crisis can be focused according to one mode of analysis as well as the other.

The subject matter of the acute international crisis is almost ideal for the application of the interaction approach. Prominent international crises are complexes of events which can be dissected, up to a point, to yield numerous sequences of related acts. A crisis temporarily narrows the focus of international politics and accelerates events in the public view so that there is very little difficulty in tracing sequences of action in which Event A calls forth Event B which calls forth Event C, etc., until the track is finally lost. After a number of such sequences have been traced and studied, similarities or identities of form in some of them may appear.

Diplomatic historians are perfectly familiar with the tracing of related events in this manner but, on the whole, they have not been concerned to take particular note of recurring forms in the sequences of interaction. In the second place, historians normally divide their attention in order to search out the motives of actors and the concurrent deliberations and decision-making which occur within the foreign offices of involved governments. Thirdly, published diplomatic history cannot possibly include more than a small selection of the interaction sequences because the recounting of interminable detail would clog and divert the narrative. Hence, the collected materials for interaction analysis, as conceived here, often exist in the files of the historian's research notes but not in the published history.

The concept of conflict as a bargaining process leads one to expect that bargaining going on during intense crisis periods will appear in the details of the interaction. If there are "turning points" or important

[20] Freymond, *op.cit.*, p. xvii.

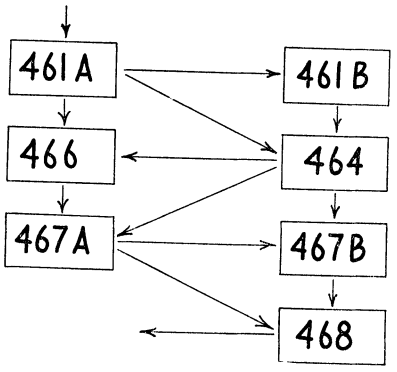
[21] Richard C. Snyder *et al., Decision-making as an Approach to the Study of International Relations*, Princeton, N.J., 1954.

[22] Robert Bosc, "La sociologie américaine des relations internationales," *Revue de l'action populaire*, CXLV (February 1961), pp. 207-14; C. A. McClelland, "The Function of Theory in International Relations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, IV (September 1960), pp. 323-26 and references.

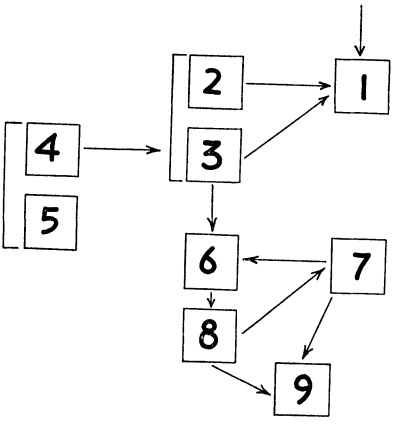
decisions in crises, these, too, will take shape under observations of the sequences. There is a possibility of learning a great deal about a "system" from the record of its performance, even in the absence of much knowledge about its main working parts: not always must one be concerned over the motives and capabilities of the "actors." Two additional points are important.

Verbal descriptions of a series of related events of a crisis are unwieldy and, after a few score have been collected, the recognition of recurring forms and patterns becomes more and more difficult. A technique of recording more efficient than the ordinary description is required. Block diagrams similar to those used in other fields can be adapted for the purpose.[23] Further, the block diagrams, when correctly formed and refined under hypothesis, become a definition of the system which is under study.[24] The crisis is demarcated and traced by the chains of acts which, in translation, become inputs and outputs between blocks, the latter standing for the "units" of the system.

How the multifarious data of a crisis system can be recorded for analysis may be shown readily. Block diagrams of actual interaction sequences, one from the Berlin blockade crisis of 1948 and the other from the Korean War period, are shown in Figs. A and B.[25]



A. "Trade-off" pattern with bids and counterbids; Berlin crisis sequence, February 16-March 3, 1949.



B. Minimal collaboration with mild bargaining; Korean War sequence, June 23-July 8, 1951.

[23] W. Ross Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*, New York, 1957, chs. 2 and 6, in particular; Robert Rosen, "A Relational Theory of Biological Systems, I," *General Systems Yearbook*, V (1960), pp. 29-35: first published in *Bulletin of Mathematical Biophysics*, XX (1958), pp. 245-60. See also Mervyn L. Cadwallader, "The Cybernetic Analysis of Change in Complex Social Organizations," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXV (September 1959), pp. 154-57.

[24] Russell L. Ackoff, "Systems, Organizations, and Interdisciplinary Research," *General Systems Yearbook*, V (1960), pp. 1-8.

[25] The arrow direction indicates output from a block. The "receiving" block at the

Without any reference to the setting of a crisis or to its larger meanings in the politics of international relations, the coding of the events of a crisis in chains of interaction sequences makes possible the identification of patterns and the comparison of forms of crisis behavior. Almost immediately, inferences are drawn and labels for several kinds of sequences are brought to mind. In the due course of an analytical study, a mapping of the complete crisis from its dramatic initial "input" event to its tailing-off into the "normalcy" of routine international relations becomes possible. Studies which are limited to such charting and immediate analysis will have value in putting historical data to a new use and in developing limited explanations of an aspect of international behavior. The ambition is greater, however: we wish to cope with the matter of peace and war and with the problem of control, as Karl Deutsch has indicated. In other words, we shall want to study the structures of many block diagrams according to some assumptions and hypotheses which relate to the more general state of affairs.

The variations in international conduct must arise from one or a combination of three sources of variables at any given passage of his-

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arrowhead stands for an action-in-response (i.e., "it" processes the output and sends its related, "answering" input—the latter indicated by the outgoing arrow). The numbers in the blocks correspond to numbered items in a chronology of events. "A" diagram items are from the writer's "Chronology of Events in the 1948 Berlin Crisis," SFIS 60-17 (ditto), and the "B" diagram uses materials from William H. Vatcher, Jr., *Panmunjon: The Story of the Korean Military Armistice Negotiations*, New York, 1958, pp. 20-25. The relevant chronology items are as follows:

For A—(461a) General Clay requests withdrawal of Soviet repatriation mission at Frankfurt by March 1, 1949. (461b) Soviet Military Governor protests that the mission is still needed and that Clay has no right to order its withdrawal. (464) Soviet note protests Clay's order for removal of Soviet repatriation mission as violating the Crimea agreement on the matter. (466) US authority announces that if Soviet repatriation mission does not leave at once, the premises will be blockaded and the utilities disconnected. (467a) Soviet repatriation mission headquarters blockaded and utilities turned off. (467b) Sokolovsky protests that the action is illegal and breaks repatriation agreements. (468) Soviet authority announces that it has ordered the repatriation mission to leave Frankfurt but, as a reprisal, has cancelled the permits of two US search teams looking for war graves in the Soviet Union.

For B—(1) Yakov Malik broadcast on June 23, 1951, suggesting discussions between Korean War belligerents on cease-fire and armistice. (2) Truman challenges Soviet Union to make Malik's suggestion an official proposal. (3) Truman announces that the United States is prepared to join in talks on peaceful settlement in Korea. (4) Dr. Rhee demands withdrawal of the Chinese and a guarantee of the unification of Korea as prior conditions of an armistice. (5) Dr. Rhee declares against a cease-fire at the 38th Parallel, (6) UNC Commander-in-Chief, General Ridgway, by radio, proposes a meeting with the Communist command in Korea on Danish ship, *Jutlandia*. (7) Generals Kim II Sung and Peng Teh-huai, North Korean and Chinese commanders, agree to meeting but counter with proposal to meet in the area of Kaesong. (8) General Ridgway agrees to Kaesong site to expedite end of fighting and to show good faith. (9) Meeting of liaison officers of both sides at Kaesong on July 8, 1951, to prepare for full meeting.

The foregoing interaction sequences are very simple, brief, and of little independent significance and are included here only for the purpose of illustrating the technique.

tory: from the traits and characteristics of the participating actors, from the effects produced by their contacts and interactions, and from factors of the environment which are external to the first two sources. Our conception is, further, that information concerning conditions created at a certain moment by the effects of interaction and by factors of the environment is returned to the participating actors. The latter are presumed to receive and process such "output" information and to feed the processed results (as inputs) into the next phase of participation in the particular and relevant "system of action." It is the decision-making approach which inquires into the finer detail of the "internal" processing of the incoming streams of "outputs" and of the fabrication of new "inputs" to the system.

Since the strategy of interaction analysis is to exploit a different sector of this unceasing and spiraling process, the investigator of interactions will prefer to deal with approximations and generalizations about the traits of participating actors that would be too inexact and too hypothetical for the purposes of the student of decision-making. In other words, the research bet of an interaction approach is that a large amount of the work of decision-making study can be by-passed safely in arriving at explanations of international behavior. The contention is that the performances of the participants—the interaction sequences—are reliable indicators of active traits of participating actors. Hence, we are free to build hypothetical constructs concerning these pertinent actor traits and to make tentative statements about the patterns of interaction to which the traits are coupled. Then, a series of studies of interaction patterns, recorded in block diagrams, may establish whether we have been right, in any reasonable degree, in the formulation of this structure. If it turns out that we are wrong, we have, at least, the hedge of our detailed tracings and arrangements of interaction sequences which will remain intact for use in further attempts to establish an explanation of the processes of the international crisis phenomena.

In this essay, the testing of a hypothetical structure against the interaction data cannot be reported but only promised for the future. The concluding section, therefore, sets forth no more than several propositions about certain overriding traits and characteristics of participating actors in a crisis system and about the course of the current series of crises between the poles of peace and war.

III

Our basic assumption is that the kind of social organization developed in a nation-state fundamentally conditions its crisis behavior. This assumption is of interest, first of all, because it has appeared so many

times in the past. Secondly, it does not accord fully with historical experience and, therefore, is at least partially untrue. Thirdly, the only responsible alternative is the assumption that the fundamental traits of nation-states which have bearing on international conduct are fixed and are identical in all times and places:[26] we reject this assumption for the fairly casual reason that we doubt intuitively that there exists any strong linkage between the assumption and the empirical world. In the fourth place, the assumption requires attention because we shall make use of no more than a selected aspect of the general hypothesis.

Plato explained the occurrence of warfare between city states on the basis of the progressive elaboration of social function and structure with particular emphasis on the division of labor for the carrying out of economic functions.[27] Between Plato and Comte, the idea reappeared many times. Since Comte, the world has been treated to a whole series of explanations of war and international relations—concerning causes, occurrences, and trends—on the basis of changes in social organization. These doctrines, brought to the fore by Comte, Marx, Spencer, Hobson and the Continental socialists, Lenin, and Schumpeter, have been reviewed many times[28] and most recently by Raymond Aron.[29]

The impulse toward change in social organization (and, consequently, toward change in international conduct) has been attributed most often to the forces generated in business and industry. Thus, capitalism and industrialization have been key terms. It was Joseph Schumpeter, however, who made a major attempt to depart from previous conceptions and, in particular, to counter Lenin on war and imperialism with a more competent explanation.[30] Since Schumpeter's ideas were the intellectual point of departure for the central hypothesis of the present work, it will be well to recall his main points.

Schumpeter argued that history shows two main methods of giving and getting goods and services between independent societies: trade and conquest. By far the more common method has been conquest. Social structure and culture have adapted in a thoroughgoing way to the prime function of conquest. In dozens of societies, war became a way of life,

[26] See Morgenthau, *op.cit.*, pp. 4-5; and his "Another Great Debate: The National Interest of the United States," *American Political Science Review*, XLVI (December 1952), p. 972.

[27] Plato, *Republic*, Book II.

[28] E. M. Winslow, *The Pattern of Imperialism*, New York, 1948; Klaus Knorr, "Theories of Imperialism," *World Politics*, IV (April 1952), pp. 402-31; Eduard Heimann, "Schumpeter and the Problem of Imperialism," *Social Research*, XIX (June 1952), pp. 177-79.

[29] Raymond Aron, *War and Industrial Society*, London, Oxford University Press, 1958.

[30] Joseph Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes*, New York, 1951.

permeating all social strata and affecting all thought and practice. In the modern world, the other method—trade—has become increasingly dominant, causing basic reorderings of social organization and culture. The practice of war departs as the practice of peaceful exchange according to comparative advantage arrives. Only survivals of the social values and structures of the older martial practice among elites continue to bring about war between nations. In current sociological terms, we should say that as social functions changed, social structures became dysfunctional and required reconstruction. In the contemporary historical process, international war may be predicted to diminish both in intensity and frequency of occurrence. Schumpeter, by the 1940's, was quite aware, along with everyone else, that he had been wrong in 1919. Let us now attempt to reshape Schumpeter's idea and at the same time provide a fresh conceptual setting for the occurrence of international crises.

There is in progress, as there has been, in some measure, throughout the modern era, a monumental reordering of national social structures. At different times, presumably because of peculiar concatenations of historical circumstance, societies have been launched on transformations of the social orders which, in due course, have produced behavioral traits of "advanced modernizing nations." The severe phases of transition between old and new appear to take about two generations. Two main waves of modernizing have swept the world during the past century: one in the late nineteenth century and the other presently in progress.[31]

Schumpeter considered that the mode of international exchange was the pivot of national social modernization, while others have named the domestic growth of capitalism and industrialization. The contemporary social science outlook, which is seasoned to the basic ideas of pluralistic phenomena and multiple-factor causation, would hold that a movement as massive as national modernization becomes an intertwining of causes and factors which might be labeled variously as political, economic, psychological, ecological, and cybernetic, with causes changing into effects and ends into means in an endless chain. Single factor analysis is suspect and multiple factor analysis of so complex a change is tremendously difficult. Either the orderly matching of social functions with

[31] Hugh Seton-Watson, *Neither War nor Peace: The Struggle for Power in the Postwar World*, New York, 1960; Cyril E. Black, ed., *The Transformation of Russian Society: Aspects of Social Change Since 1861*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960; Reinhard Bendix, "Industrialization, Ideologies, and Social Structure," *American Sociological Review*, XXIV (October 1959), pp. 613-23; Kenneth Boulding, *The Organizational Revolution*, New York, 1953. A very large literature, beyond the possibility of citation here, exists in recent sociological, anthropological, and economics writings.

social structures or empirical applications of "requisite analysis" become Herculean chores, perhaps beyond any hope of practical execution.

But, in any case, through multiple and varying processes of organizational change and development, nation-states move through their transitional stages and, as they emerge as advanced modernizing societies, they exhibit many similar or at least comparable traits. Some manifestations—the multiple appearances in many societies of small groups of nihilistic teen-agers-in-revolt, for example—have very little connection with international conduct, except contingently. Other traits which appear to be vitally important in international relations can be distinguished in advanced modernizing societies. We venture to point out one set of traits constituting virtually a "cultural focus"[32] of these nation-states in their international relations.

With the exception of China, the nation-states that play dominating roles in international affairs in the present day are either in a final transitional phase or already equipped with advanced modernizing social organizations. The two chief protagonists of the cold war, the United States and Soviet Union, are, without question, in the advanced condition. The "principal actors" of contemporary international relations have become urbanized, secularized, and industrialized. Moreover, they have created and multiplied whole banks of social sub-systems, marvelously intricate, intertwined, and interdependent, within their national boundaries. These sub-systems have a "high metabolism" and ceaselessly undergo change, modification, and reorganization. The services of large numbers of men with technical and specialized skills are required to keep the sub-systems in order and running. Further, a great many persons must become habituated to performing services in different roles virtually as if they were standard replaceable parts of a complex mechanism. Modernizing societies favor and propagate social values which are instrumental and supportive of problem-solving activities.

Whether the modernizing society is open or closed, Asian or European, totalitarian or pluralistic, Communist or democratic, it develops, invariably, ever larger and more differentiated networks of administration in public and private sectors alike. This "progressive mechanization" of the advanced modernizing national society works after its fashion; it invents hordes of novel "needs," both corporate and individual, and then struggles to gratify them. But everything cannot be attended to at once; a great many "problems" can receive little attention before they burst into acute "trouble." The response to "trouble" is a behavioral manifestation with obvious bearing on international crises.

[32] Melville J. Herskovits, *Man and His Works*, New York, 1948, pp. 542-49.

Social attention and social activity are focused most readily on trouble-spots but usually the response has only a brief duration.

"Problems" become legion in an advanced modernizing society, for the simple reason that its sub-systems are complicated and must mesh properly and with the appropriate timing. The structure is forever threatening to collapse in some of its parts and the latter must be braced, patched, repaired, and replaced in endless succession. The cultural focus of the modernizing society is its preoccupation with maintaining its own increasingly complicated structures against breakdown. The strain toward structural-functional consistency is precisely here. In the absence of countering influences, the modernizing society would turn progressively inward on itself, concentrating on its never-finished business of problems and reducing the distractions and difficulties of its external environments.[33] The implications of these observations for international relations are very important.

The pull of domestic interests and practices and, with these, the concomitant system of emergent public values of a modernizing nation-state will cause the international environment to be perceived increasingly as a burden and distraction to the society. Relations with other countries and peoples may be acknowledged to be beneficial or, in some matters, essential for national survival, but the maintenance demands of the national organization set up strains in the contrary direction. The most desirable international situation would be one in which all goes smoothly, with minimum effort, minimum cost, minimum attention, and maximum national benefit. A proper system of international relations would resemble the day-to-day operations of a well-run industrial plant or government bureau. Multitudes of difficulties and problems would be received and dispatched in the work-flow by specialists in handling such business, while the organization as a whole, buffered against shock, surprise, and major disruption, would continue its struggle for self-maintenance and self-organization.

The dominating goals and values of modernizing societies, it is argued, are becoming increasingly those of a bureaucracy rather than those of commercial enterprise, as Schumpeter proposed. Further, the modernizing national society tends to behave toward news of important departures from international "normalcy" very much in the way the shop or office reacts to the information of the cancellation of a large

[33] Karl W. Deutsch, in "Shifts in the Balance of Communications Flows: A Problem of Measurement in International Relations," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, xx (Spring 1956), pp. 143-60, shows data for relative shifts of intake-output ratios which lend support to our general hypothesis of progressive self-concentration of advanced modernizing societies.

contract, a major personnel reorganization, or any other drastic change in procedure. In general, the larger the threat to the stability of routines, the greater the concentration of interest, attention, anxiety, and restorative resources on the impending "problem." All this leads to three summarizing propositions.

(1) Advanced modernizing societies strain progressively toward conservatism[34] in international relations.

(2) "Outputs" received from occurrences and situations in the international environment and from sequences of international interactions are processed by the advanced modernizing social organization according to their perceived characteristics: if these outputs are recognized as familiar and expected experiences met repeatedly in the remembered past, they will be treated in a highly routine fashion.[35]

(3) Those environmental and interactional outputs that, phenomenologically, are unusually novel, unexpected, and threatening will tend to overflow the routine processing channels, to spread into normally inactive and inattentive parts of the organizational structure of society, and to generate extraordinary inputs which are returned to the international environment. When, in this situation, a succession of extraordinary inputs begetting new outputs begetting new inputs, etc., passes some point in volume and intensity, the whole phenomenon begins to be called an international crisis.

The consequences which follow from these three propositions are straightforward. An international system consisting of but two advanced modernizing nation-states as the actors would be one of progressively routine action whose crises would be of diminishing intensity and frequency of occurrence, assuming, of course, that the domestic social structures of each actor suffered no major breakdown or disruption. The system might be expected to evolve toward minimum action and a maximum regulation of the surviving relationships. International relations between the two nations would, in large measure, become administrative.

It is not suggested, however, that the dominant mode of interacting behavior would shift necessarily. Conflict relations would not have to turn into collaboration or accommodation. On the contrary, if relations

[34] Conservatism is intended to refer here to behavior toward policies, lines of action, and preferred values which supports and reinforces "time-tested" social practices, frameworks, and objectives. It is an outlook which tends to resist variation from familiar content or established routine but which, under the pressure of power, persuasion, or innovation, may tend to yield to compromise or a *modus vivendi*. In this sense, conservatism is only a type of conduct, characterized neither by a systematic "falling behind the times" nor by a relationship to a particular political ideology or public philosophy.

[35] James March and Herbert Simon, *Organizations*, New York, 1958, p. 140.

were founded primarily on competition, the competition would fall, more and more, into expected patterns and, perhaps, would be brought under self-enforcing rules of the game. It is even conceivable that chronic warfare could be waged under normal conditions and within controlled behavioral boundaries. It might well drift into the agonistic form which tended to develop in earlier centuries.[36]

When we approach the historical records of acute international crises and begin the analyses of interaction sequences, we shall be on the watch for signs of "routinizing behaviors" and for the rise of "standard" techniques for managing situations which, with the passing of time, have become familiar types. The interaction patterns ought to show much evidence of bids countered by bids, claims countered by claims, stalemates, standoffs, postponements, and no-win, no-solution outcomes; barring upheavals in the system or environmental innovations, the general trend should be toward repetitions of such patterns of action but with a decreasing volume of interaction in succeeding crises (i.e., less action in the mobilization and demobilization of the crisis). If such phenomena appear in the record, they will be taken as evidence in support of the hypotheses of the conservative behavior, the routinizing tendencies, and the spillover effects of crises in advanced modernizing nation-states. Such phenomena would be revealed by the block diagrams discussed above.

We shall anticipate that, in the mobilization of a crisis, many sectors of the national social organization not usually involved in the "normal work-flow" of international relations will become agitated and active, while in the demobilization of the crisis there will be a rapid falling-off of such activities and a return of affairs to routine channels. These processes should take place whether or not issues are settled, problems are solved, or relations are "improved," although we may find that crises recede behind a veritable smokescreen of conflict resolution promises and of problem-solving talk. On the whole, we should anticipate that the actors will become more and more reluctant to resort to escalation of the means of violence as they acquire greater experience with crisis systems. We expect that the level of violence will not be raised readily above the level existing at the time the actors perceive that they are "seized" by an acute crisis.

At this point, we have considered a simple model of international behavior which focuses on crises and which also brings a suggestion of

[36] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-element in Culture*, Boston, 1950, ch. 5; Hans Speier, "The Social Types of War," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI (January 1941), pp. 445-54.

why repeated exposures to acute crises may reduce the probabilities of an outbreak of general war.[37] A mechanism has been isolated and identified—the bureaucratic processing of "problems"—and a view has been expressed that the mechanism will be found to have been operating in historical instances of international relations. It would be quite foolish, however, to imagine that so simple a model will be efficient in establishing satisfying correspondences with the empirical complexities of international relations. To improve the situation, we shall now add other elements to the two-actor system. In fact, we shall bring it close to what is thought to be the current reality: a bipolar system under stress.

The system is expanded to include a number of other participating actors, some of whom have achieved an advanced and modernizing form of social organization and some of whom are still in social transition. Of these, some are bound with one or the other of the two principal actors of the system in opposing coalitions, while some remain free from the coalitions. Thus, the system is dominated by conflict which polarizes in the two principal actors at the head of opposing camps. For reasons already given, these principal actors, being advanced modernizing nation-states, have behavioral traits which would allow the system to run down to a minimum-action, maximum-regulation state of affairs. Although they are committed to "permanent" conflict and mutual opposition, they share (covertly, at least) some common problems. Their conservative propensities lead them to put high value on maintaining their respective leadership positions in the opposing coalitions. Each must stand ready to act to preserve solidarity and cohesion in the coalition it leads. Each must be willing to take vigorous action in local clashes and embroilments which involve commitments or interests of members of the coalition. Cleavages and quarrels within the camp must be attended to, while the modernizing tendencies which influence some allies toward lukewarm and perfunctory adherence to common tasks and causes must be countered. Further, neither principal actor dares to fail to respond to demands and problems arising in the non-aligned and non-committed areas for fear the other side will steal a march, gain an advantage, or otherwise weaken leadership and solidarity in the home camp.

Even were there no ideological complications and no special problems of military technology, the stresses in the bipolar structure would introduce structural-functional ambiguities and induce significant strain (and conflict) within the social organizations of the principal actors.[38] The

[37] See above, p. 188.

[38] Gideon Sjoberg, "Contradictory Functional Requirements and Social Systems," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, IV (June 1960), pp. 198-208.

latter may, in fact, be said to be victims of the "double bind" in several dimensions.[39] Both have vested interests in maintaining their leadership positions and in preserving the system (the prospect of a radical transformation in the organization of the international system would be repugnant to both, in anticipation, and the dislocating effects domestically would be unwelcome). Yet the exertions and cost involved in such maintenance run against the grain of the ascending social values of increasingly bureaucratized societies. Since both principal actors occupy similar positions and experience similar difficulties, they might drift gradually toward collaboration, except that such a movement is blocked by the essential conflict structure of the international system.

Under these circumstances, the mobilization of an acute international crisis may not be as repellent as it seems on the surface. The tension and excitement of a mounting crisis may provide some relief and respite from the "double bind" situation. One of the weaknesses of a system of conflict is the problem of maintaining tension and a sense of motion in the system. Conflicts are subject to obsolescence.[40] The acute crises may play a role here. The waging of a crisis refreshes the stream of conflict interaction, almost as a transfusion to the system. Faltering or wayward members of the coalitions may be jolted into new allegiance by a crisis. The fear of war and the need for national solidarity and efficiency are brought home to domestic publics by the spillovers of information and action connected with major crises.

As long as the leaders of the coalitions can control the interplay of conflict in the mobilization of a crisis, general war, which would be as destructive to the vested interests of the principal actors as any other conceivable eventuality, may be averted. Hence, in the detailed historical records of crisis interaction sequences, we should expect to find evidences of anxious attention to control problems, even to the extent of hidden collaboration on the part of the principal actors, during the early phases of a crisis. A proposition which may be too risky to entertain at full value is that an international crisis, not transformed into a general war during the first week or so of its mobilization, will not lead to such a war.

A more reasonable prediction is that the record will show progressively refined techniques of crisis demobilization on the part of the principal actors as experience with the system grows. The trend toward the routinizing of acute conflict operations and toward the growth of

[39] Gregory Bateson, Don D. Jackson, Jay Haley, and John Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," *Behavioral Science*, I (October 1956), pp. 253-56.

[40] Quincy Wright, "The Nature of Conflict," *Western Political Quarterly*, IV (June 1951), p. 207.

specialized skills of crisis demobilization can be interrupted and reversed in any of three predictable situations, however. First, under the competitive drive to preserve leadership and solidarity, the leading actors will tend to seek out new theaters and new forms for the interplay of their main-line conflict, with the possibility that unexpected control problems will arise. Secondly, the associated actors of the international system whose countries are in the labors of transformation of their social organizations, whether within or outside the coalitions, may create novel crisis situations in unfamiliar arenas. "Standard" demobilization techniques may then fail to work. Thirdly, the bipolar structure of the system may begin to crumble gradually, causing the principal actors to face the difficulties of reorienting their strategies and devising new control techniques.

In any of these eventualities, the duration and intensity of an acute crisis may be increased and the confidence in the demobilization of crises without general war may be decreased. The view may be ventured that crises connected with the third eventuality—the gradual crumbling of the bipolar system—will come closer to precipitating general war than any other. A further thought is that an abrupt and drastic reorganization of the international system into a new form might prove more favorable to the cause of the preservation of general peace than the process of gradual and piecemeal evolution toward the new system.

One obvious device for facilitating crisis demobilization is to allow the affair to be played out under the guidance and auspices of a third party, either an international organization, a non-involved group, or a single non-aligned actor. There are serious liabilities in the third-party device, however. The third party, particularly if it is an international organization, is not likely to survive a series of crisis exposures without losing mutual trust in its non-involvement and non-commitment in the conflict. This shock-absorber technique tends also to work against the leadership interests of the principal actors. It is better if a crisis is demobilized by the efforts of the principal actors themselves. The vitally important sense of controlled motion directed by leaders is thereby preserved.[41]

Some of the complications of the operations of a bipolar system under stress have now been considered. We have, in other words, noted certain

[41] The protagonist who deliberately loses control of his responses in a conflict situation may not be behaving in a wildly irresponsible manner but, rather, may be paying discreet tribute to the underlying reliability and stability of the system he is attempting to exploit by his tactic. See Herman Kahn, "The Arms Race and Some of Its Hazards," *Daedalus,* LXXXIX (Fall 1960), pp. 756-57; and Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict,* pp. 37, 137, and elsewhere.

modifications which must be taken into account in the functioning of the simple model first hypothecated. Of course, it will be understood that such a model, even with its modifications, will not begin to account for the complexities of actual experience. The model is a tool expected to be helpful in the study of international behavior during crises.

Two criticisms are sometimes raised, apparently for the purpose of discouraging efforts toward systematic analyses of patterns and recurring forms in international relations: the first objects that unique events and non-patterned influences are controlling in the unfolding of international affairs, making the search for behavioral regularities and reappearing patterns virtually fruitless;[42] the second trusts in the actual existence of controlling or dominating trends and regularities of behavior but insists on perfectly isolated and specified variables along with the recipe of the exact relationships among such variables. The scholar who takes either advice and who prefers the simple investigation of international phenomena to practical policy-advising is left unemployed. It seems better, therefore, to ignore the criticisms and the problems of precise methodology merely in order to plunge into the work, equipped with little more than some rough approximations about how actors behave and some reasonable techniques for empirical investigation. This essay has sought to establish such a framework as a prelude to later reporting of empirical analyses.

In the case of the present subject, there is now no reasonable basis for declaring that international crises will or will not occur more frequently or more violently during the coming decade than during the last ten years.[43] Intuition and past performances notwithstanding, it remains impossible to say whether the prospects of general war have become stronger or weaker according to the number of exposures to acute crises since the close of the last major war. We have emphasized above that historical behavior as complex and multidimensional as that of contemporary international relations should be examined in different perspectives and through several investigative approaches. We have chosen one among the many with no guarantee of its truth-producing efficacy.

[42] Stanley Hoffmann, ed., *Contemporary Theory of International Relations*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1960, pp. 177-78.

[43] A field of study as future-oriented as international relations might be expected to give much attention to the bases of prediction, whether by officials, commentators, or scholars, but little is, in fact, given to the matter. For a discussion, see Hans H. Toch, "The Perception of Future Events: Case Studies in Social Prediction," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXII (Spring 1958), pp. 57-66.