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THE UNITED NATIONS:
PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

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THE UNITED NATIONS: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL¹

KEY JUDGMENTS

The United Nations, despite the hopes of its champions and the fears of its detractors, does not greatly influence the basic trends and developments of world politics. Occasionally it illuminates international policy decisions; more often it merely reflects them.

Transition from Western to LDC Dominance

The UN was often a useful forum for the US during the years when East-West conflicts were the foremost public issues, because the outcome of votes reflected Washington's diplomatic strength and Moscow's isolation.

The UN has become a frequent source of embarrassment to the US, because global forums and the UN agenda are now dominated by North-South confrontations. The majority of less developed countries

¹This study was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Office for Western Europe by the Office of Political Research of the Central Intelligence Agency. Although the subject matter was discussed with representatives of other offices and agencies, no formal attempt at coordination has been undertaken. The views presented represent the best judgments of the issuing office, which is aware that the complex issues discussed lend themselves to other interpretations. For further information about this study, please call [redacted]

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(LDCs) differ both in interests and ideology from the US and other developed states which they see as defenders of an inequitable status quo.

LDC dominance in the UN results not only from their surge in numbers and militancy, but also from the passive stance often assumed by the US and other developed countries.

The reverses the US encounters at the UN are recurrent but not cumulative. Their psychological and diplomatic impact has, in fact, been substantially reduced through repetition.

Benefits

The UN does continue to provide diplomatic and technical benefits which offset the liabilities of political embarrassment and psychological defeats. These range from its intermediary role in international conciliation and peacekeeping operations to the functional services of intergovernmental agencies and conferences.

To the degree that the US wants substantial improvement of relations with the LDCs, the UN provides a convenient forum for developing points of common interest. On many global issues there is no suitable alternative.

To the degree that the US wants to counter the LDC challenge, the UN, by virtue of its parliamentary, global, and bureaucratic structure, can often serve to delay and dilute LDC demands.

Alternatives

Just as the UN is not the essential source of US difficulties with the LDCs, changes in the US posture toward the UN would not per se uncover solutions to those difficulties.

- If the US and the other major powers retreat still further from active involvement in the UN, the LDCs would probably shift their attacks to other arenas, where they would be less constrained.
- If, instead, the US and the major powers resumed their earlier, more active roles, a strengthened UN could better serve US interests in matters such as peacekeeping and technical services, but at the same time it would likely increase the effectiveness of the LDC challenge.

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DISCUSSION

I. THE CHANGING UN

1. Fifteen years ago the UN was an institution overwhelmingly useful to US policy and congenial to US interests. Today it is less often a help than an all too predictable source of irritation. Once an arena where US policies could find ready support, it is now a grandstand where US policies, together with those of other developed countries, regularly meet the harsh criticisms of the multitude of less developed countries—which now compose 96 out of the organization's 135 members.

2. The UN essentially has no direction or strength of its own; it mirrors developments in world politics and reflects the capabilities and limitations that its members give it. The transformation of UN politics during the past decade and a half is basically the result of the shift in emphasis of global politics from East-West to North-South confrontation. Essentially, the UN has become a difficult arena for the US because North-South relations—now the predominant theme in global forums—are themselves difficult.

3. The LDCs, acutely aware of their individual weakness, see the UN as one of the few available arenas in which they can forcefully

express their views from a position of strength. The UN has become the high ground from which they can present their arguments for direct assistance and for alterations in international political and economic arrangements. They are neither ready nor able to offer much in return. This posture, together with the frustrations and resentments they feel, lead the LDCs to repeated, even dogmatic, criticisms of the US and other major powers.

4. The shift in the UN agenda and voting records also reflects changes in the composition of its membership and in the relative level of interest shown by the various member states. In this light, the persistence of the LDCs' demands and the proliferation of their numbers are only partly responsible for the current state of UN politics. The two superpowers have greatly reduced their involvement in the UN, thus creating opportunities for the LDCs to seize initiative. West European countries have similarly limited their UN roles and yielded to the more activist LDCs. The Chinese and Japanese contributions have been somewhat different. They have recently expanded their UN activities, and in so doing have sought to ingratiate themselves with the

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LDC majority. The net effect of these role changes, assessed in greater detail in the sections that follow, has been to facilitate LDC domination—but of a substantially weakened UN.

A. Great Power Retreat

The United States and the Soviet Union

5. In the “war for the minds of men” of the late 1940s and the 1950s, UN votes were viewed as significant if superficial skirmishes—skirmishes which the West generally won. Within the General Assembly the UN was assured of support from West Europeans and Latin Americans. Various African and Asian states—which now vote with the LDC or non-aligned caucus—also reinforced that majority. In the Security Council the US was never forced to use its veto while the USSR amassed a long record of “nyet” votes which underscored its relative diplomatic isolation. The Security Council’s peacekeeping operations—such as the Congo operation from 1960 to 1964—also tended to support US goals far more than Soviet interests. The USSR, while resenting the US advantage, could not afford to withdraw from UN diplomacy—the stakes of global East-West confrontation were too high and the UN too important a diplomatic arena.

6. The transformation of the UN to a forum much less congenial to US policies has coincided with the efforts of the superpowers to pursue detente and to restrict their involvement in the organization. While the Cold War was fought publicly before a global audience, detente is pursued in private bilaterals, away from the glass buildings and votes of apprehensive allies and clients. As both powers retreated from open and direct global contest, their confrontation ceased to be the predominant public theme of multinational diplomacy and left a vacuum to be replaced by the bur-

geoning North-South confrontation. LDCs discovered they had not only greater freedom from the superpowers but also less attention. When Moscow and Washington no longer competed for their votes and allegiance, the growing numbers of LDCs found that a solid voting majority in the UN was their most effective instrument for underscoring their positions and reinforcing their demands.

7. As non-aligned militancy and numbers grew, both the US and USSR found themselves targets rather than leaders in UN diplomacy. They retreated still further from a UN which seemed increasingly antagonistic—a source of heightened demands and criticisms from the LDCs. The superpowers continue to be active in New York, but they try to avoid using the public forums of the organization on sensitive and major issues. Their proposals, though still plentiful, are now often perfunctory. Both sides invest their most serious diplomatic efforts in defensive maneuvers such as opposition to LDC or Chinese proposals.

8. For the US, the most publicized reversal came in 1971 when, after 20 years of successful opposition, it was no longer able to block the seating of the People’s Republic of China and expulsion of Nationalist China. That defeat was, however, only a symbolic denouement. US ability to direct key votes had been eroding for years, as indicated by a series of defeats, diplomatic embarrassments, and narrow victories.

9. The USSR has reaped little advantage from the decline of US influence in the UN. The Soviet mistrust of this Western-style parliamentary organization has not been abated by the new role of the LDCs—its superpower identity far overshadows its revolutionary credentials in UN diplomacy. Peking, moreover, has made embarrassment of Moscow and opposition to Soviet policies the overriding theme of its UN activities. The disadvantage the

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USSR once suffered in the UN against the US has to some degree been replaced by the disadvantage it now faces against China.

Western Europe

10. West Europeans have also found that with the shift from East-West to North-South confrontations, the UN has become a less comfortable and less important forum. Although a widely diverse group, West European states have followed the same general trend: reduced involvement in the UN. As the US' chief allies in the Cold War, many took active roles in the East-West competition within the UN and shared the benefits of Western dominance. They were major arbitrators in Security Council negotiations and leaders in peacekeeping operations. These roles have been largely abandoned with the muting of East-West confrontations and straining of Atlantic ties.

11. For the members of the European Community (EC) concentration on regional integration has also served to reduce attention to UN affairs. These countries prefer, for example, to pursue economic relations with specific groups of LDCs through European Community arrangements rather than through UN mediums. In Community trade relations with the developing world they receive some reciprocal benefits; in the UN, by contrast, they generally meet greater criticism as former colonial powers and sharper demands for compensatory assistance. To the degree that West European states do accede to LDC pressure—even if only through passive acquiescence—US isolation is further highlighted.

12. West European efforts to establish a working EC caucus have also tended to supplant direct involvement in the UN. The EC caucus even though intended to increase the Community's influence in New York has not thus far made significant progress. Much dip-

lomatic activity is invested in searching for a common EC position—which seldom emerges. The exigencies of reaching common EC positions are not only a diversion but also a convenient rationale for avoiding controversial issues: West Europeans, less involved in the full range of global issues than the US, often have less incentive to enter the fray of divisive UN debate.

13. Of the West European states, Britain and France retain the greatest independent influence in UN diplomacy—they enjoy the benefits of continued special relations with their former dependencies and long traditions of UN leadership. With periodic exceptions, such as Paris' request for UN consideration of the energy crisis, even these Security Council members have greatly reduced their UN activities.

B. China and Japan in Expanding Roles

14. Both China and Japan find a UN dominated by LDCs to be a convenient and useful forum in which to underscore their expanding international roles. These Asian powers encounter far less ideological hostility than Western countries and are actively pursuing better relations with the LDCs through the UN. Although they also face continual demands from the LDCs for political and economic assistance, Peking and Tokyo seem more willing to make such concessions in return for LDC cooperation. Their motives, however, are distinct: Peking is enthusiastically courting LDC allegiance to buttress its position vis-a-vis the superpowers; Japan tries to maintain good relations with them while sustaining good relations with the superpowers through other channels. In particular, Peking seeks wider political influence and support for its ideological battles with Moscow; Tokyo hopes to assure its commercial relations and access to raw materials and to underline its self-image as a global power.

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15. After three years of membership, China remains essentially concerned with opposing Soviet policy and championing non-aligned causes. Peking has accordingly assumed positions sympathetic to LDC policies on various economic assistance proposals. In 1973 China departed from its normal posture of passive support to lead the non-aligned campaign to recognize Prince Sihanouk's delegation as the legal representatives of Cambodia. Peking has, nonetheless, begun to meet with suspicion from its "non-aligned allies." LDCs, competing among themselves for non-aligned leadership, are not anxious to have China join the lists. For all its accusations against "superpower hegemony," China is viewed essentially as a third great power, not as a developing country.

16. Japan has been slowly expanding the scope of its UN policy and responding to non-aligned pressure. Japan has reacted to black African criticism of its alleged trade with Rhodesia and has recently moved toward non-aligned positions on *apartheid* issues. In the wake of the oil embargo, Tokyo has shifted to a more pro-Arab position on Middle Eastern issues. Japan, however, also bears the onus of a rich nation and has found the UN's North-South barrier difficult to penetrate. Tokyo's expansive trade relations inevitably draw criticism as comprising a new kind of economic imperialism. Informal reactions among LDCs to Japan's lobbying for a permanent Security Council seat—a primary goal of its UN diplomacy—are that if any new seats are added, they should be held by non-aligned members. Despite such setbacks, it seems clear that improved LDC relations are sufficiently important to both China and Japan to ensure that they will continue to be actively involved in the UN even if the leading role of the LDCs grows stronger.

C. LDC Consensus and Crosscurrents

17. The paramount influence of the LDC bloc should not disguise the fact that they are a group of very disparate states with dif-

fering interests. The members of the so-called "Group of 77" vary not only in terms of economic development—from Chad to Argentina—but also in the nature of their relations with the US and other developed countries—from Saudi Arabia to Albania.² Nevertheless, on most UN issues these states are able to act as a bloc. Their solidarity in the UN is a matter not only of ideology but also of practical politics. For the LDCs the stakes of UN diplomacy are high and the alternatives—until very recently—have been few. Nowhere else can they find the opportunity for sustained global contacts among themselves and with developed countries or the leverage to draw attention to their causes.

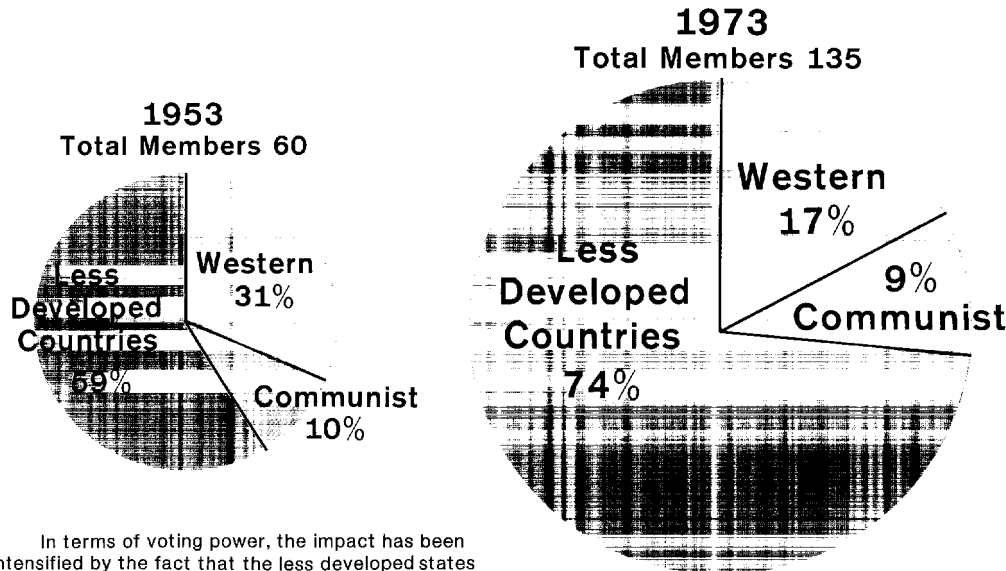
18. Decolonization created sufficient new states to provide the LDCs a solid majority in the General Assembly (they hold 96 out of 135 seats). Their voting power under the UN's formula of one state one vote has been inflated beyond all proportion to their influence outside of the UN. This margin permits them to approve or defeat resolutions as long as there are no major defections from the non-aligned position. Their majority can also be used to prevent introduction and discussion of resolutions as well as deter final votes. Even when an "important question" is declared, the LDC caucus can normally muster the requisite two-thirds majority.³

² The "Group of 77," now expanded to 96 members, is the LDC caucusing group in the UN. It is institutionally distinct from the "Non-Aligned Movement" which is the primary organization of LDC solidarity outside of the UN. The Non-Aligned Movement has a smaller membership—approximately 80 states attended the 1973 Non-Aligned Summit—and is generally considered to be more radical in its policy recommendations than the Group of 77.

³ Declaring an important question is a parliamentary defense which US delegates have frequently employed. It is best known for its repeated application in defeating Chinese membership. To declare a matter an important question, however, usually requires majority approval and such approval has become increasingly difficult to attain as the LDCs gained confidence in their solidarity and greater expertise in the strategies of parliamentary procedures.

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Percent of Total UN Membership



In terms of voting power, the impact has been intensified by the fact that the less developed states in 1953 tended to support Western positions rather than voting as an independent bloc.

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19. The LDCs have now assumed the role of initiators: their concerns, their problems, and their preoccupations have become the principal themes of the UN. Decolonization, apartheid, economic assistance, trade relations, revising of international institutions—these are the LDCs' chief concerns and these are now the major issues before the General Assembly. But these changes in UN roles have not been without costs to the LDCs. The positions they propose and approve with ease run counter to the perceived interests of most industrial powers, which are increasingly silent and withdrawn not only from UN debates but also from the efforts to implement resolutions. To the degree that the LDCs are less able to get attention and assistance from the developed countries, the UN has become less useful for them. As a global organization substantially used by only one group of states, the UN has, in fact, tended to become a weakened instrument for whatever tasks its members prescribe.

II. THE US AND THE UN: A BALANCE SHEET

A. The UN as a Liability

20. As the wealthiest member of an organization dominated by poor nations, the US is an easy target for the envy and indignation of the majority. The US is held politically liable for both the general LDC grievances against the industrialized powers and for specific issues of American policy. LDC causes are repeatedly dramatized by confrontations with the most powerful nation in the one arena where the poor hold some advantage over the wealthy. During the April 1974 Special Session of the General Assembly, US policy was frequently denounced as a symbol of foreign exploitation, occupation, and appropriation of resources. While much of the rhetoric might have been meant only for home audiences, it has had an impact in obstructing US proposals.

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21. Specific disputes of individual countries with the US also become widely supported LDC causes. In the General Assembly, US policies such as the continued military presence in Korea and support for the Khmer regime in Cambodia are perennially subject to non-aligned attack. US "colonialism" in Puerto Rico and the mandated Pacific Islands and relations with the white regimes of southern Africa are also recurring subjects of general debate. A more recent development has seen non-aligned states use the Security Council to focus attention on specific national or regional grievances which were formerly left to the Assembly. In 1973, for example, the Council met in Panama to consider "threats" to Latin American peace and security. The two-week meeting focused, in fact, on the US-Panamanian dispute over the Canal and concluded with a US veto. The US veto, once a rarity, is now too common an occurrence to draw headlines.

22. The recurrent setbacks the US encounters at the UN are in many cases limited in importance precisely because they have become so predictable—the psychological and diplomatic impact has dulled with repetition. While incidents such as the Security Council meeting in Panama are inconvenient and embarrassing, it is difficult to determine what further cost they may represent for the US. Such exercises may tend to fortify the resolve of states which have won "psychological victories" against the US and make them more difficult negotiators. There is little evidence, however, that those states gain more tangible advantages. Perfunctory votes by the LDC bloc in favor of a member country's cause, do not necessarily lead to, or even signify, more tangible forms of support. Such "psychological defeats" also seem to have little lasting impact on the attitudes of US allies. Even the cumulative impact of these defeats appears to be minimal. Certainly the drama of

highlighting the relative diplomatic isolation of the US has been greatly diminished by repetition. A US vote with the non-aligned states—as in the April 1974 Council meeting on an Israeli attack in Lebanon—is the unexpected which now draws attention.

B. The UN as an Asset

23. Despite LDC domination, the UN continues to provide benefits to the US which offset the liabilities of diplomatic embarrassment and psychological defeats. As an organization, the UN provides unique services in peacekeeping and in technical and economic coordination. As a diplomatic center, it tempers and disperses some of the more radical LDC challenges which, if not posed in the UN, might be raised elsewhere on terms even less favorable to the US.

Peace-keeping

24. Security Council deliberations are an effective means of diffusing potentially explosive international disputes. Long debates ending in compromise resolutions have become a ritual of international peacekeeping. The parties to a dispute are provided time for public presentation of grievances and private negotiation. Although such meetings occasionally require the US to take positions on a dispute in which it has no direct interest, they more frequently serve to forestall conflicts which could ultimately trigger a much more costly US involvement.

25. UN peacekeeping operations have played a similar role in reinforcing cease-fire agreements. The great majority of these UN efforts have either directly or indirectly supported US interests. There are presently three such operations in being which have directly assisted US policy positions—the UN forces in Cyprus, Egypt, and Syria. Although the UN forces are seldom capable of militarily en-

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forcing a cease-fire, they constitute a political restraint against reopened hostilities. The necessity of overrunning an international peacekeeping force before reaching enemy lines considerably raises the political costs of a renewal of hostilities and provides the parties with a face-saving rationalization for not attempting to seize more territory.

Intergovernmental Agencies

26. The UN's family of inter-governmental agencies provides a widely used network of functional services. They are sufficiently valuable not only to the US but also to a wide range of developed and developing states to ensure their survival even if the UN's major diplomatic organs fell into disuse. Fifteen agencies serve as centers for the coordination of economic, social, and industrial relations.⁴ Agencies such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and International Finance Corporation are effective centers of economic consultations and multilateral aid programs. The International Civil Aviation Organization and International Maritime Consultative Organization have been useful forums of international regulations of commercial aviation and maritime industries. The US has main-

⁴The fifteen intergovernmental agencies are associated with the General Assembly under the umbrella of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). They are: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank or IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Development Association (IDA), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Inter-Government Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

tained substantially greater influence in these agencies than in the central political organs. LDCs which are unwilling to be counted among US supporters in more visible forums often will concede to US positions in the relative privacy of agency deliberations, where the pressures for non-aligned solidarity are significantly weaker.

27. One of the more interesting recent developments in the UN has been the trend of referring difficult issues from the policy bodies to the technical agencies. The April 1974 Special Session on Raw Materials concluded with a request that outstanding problems—which are monumental—be pursued in the Economic and Social Council. In 1973, Security Council members, determined to avoid a public confrontation on the Israeli diversion of a Lebanese airliner, referred the dispute to the International Civil Aviation Organization. The referral of a topic from the Security Council to an agency was unusual, but it followed what is becoming an established pattern in the Assembly. In addition, UN members are increasingly using these technical bodies to introduce controversial issues before broaching them in the Assembly. North Korean and North Vietnamese membership have both been tested in various agencies for soundings of likely responses in the Assembly.

28. This trend toward greater use of the agencies is valuable to the degree that these bodies are able to serve as safety valves for the major organs and eventually provide a setting for more objective deliberations. It is also advantageous to US interests since American influence is usually stronger in these agencies than in the political bodies. A potential drawback of this development, however, is the possibility that such increased pressures may politicize the agencies and render them less capable of executing their technical responsibilities.

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C. Tempering the LDC Challenge

29. As the diplomatic center for the LDC challenge to the rich countries, the UN represents a mixed political value to the US. The UN arena is a liability in the sense that it has been converted into an LDC tool to publicize their causes and embarrass the developed states. But its very weakness and unwieldiness may make it preferable as an alternative to potentially more radical channels for LDC activities—and hence an asset to industrialized states. The UN tends to modify the more extreme LDC demands against the US and other developed states. Even under the domination of states committed to radical change, the UN remains essentially a conservative institution. Like most institutions in the Western legal tradition, it operates far more easily to protect existing arrangements than to alter them.

— As a *parliamentary* organization the UN encourages consensus-seeking and long deliberations. Extreme proposals are muted in the normal processes of preparing draft resolutions, caucus statements, and committee reports. All the parliamentary alternatives for avoiding a confrontation and delaying decisions are available. Draft resolutions can be left in committee, referred to a panel of experts, directed to a special *ad hoc* committee for further study, postponed until the next session, or rephrased in compromise language and approved without consequence.

— As a *global* organization the UN encompasses the widest possible circle of actors to negotiate proposals. Although its world-wide scale has in many ways been the organization's chief contribution to the LDCs in the establishment of an influential non-aligned movement, that global scale has also meant that the more

radical particular interests have generally been compromised to win the support of the LDC bloc as a whole.

— The UN is also a *bureaucratic* organization which divides authority among its multiple components. Policy approval requires the involvement of numerous bodies. Common procedures for a General Assembly resolution require approval of the agenda item by a General Committee, special committee hearings and approval, a report from the Secretariat, reconsideration by the committee and plenary approval. Implementation normally falls to the Secretariat where the US, by virtue of its placements of appointees and established associations, still maintains substantial influence.

30. All of these characteristics of the UN—its parliamentary, global, and bureaucratic structure—delay and dilute LDC demands upon the US and other developed states. These characteristics also accentuate the internal divisions among the LDCs. Frictions of conflicting interests within this diverse group of nearly a hundred states are, in turn, one of the most effective restraints upon the non-aligned movement. LDCs have traditionally been jealous of their regional identities and separate interests. A newer but equally deep division is growing between the “third and fourth worlds”—the have and have-not LDCs. The recent increase of oil prices, which injured countries such as India far more than the developed states, has underlined the sharp conflicts of economic interests among these states.

31. Competition for leadership is another source of tension which has grown as the LDC group has increased in size and political recognition—the greater the success of the non-aligned group, the sharper the competition. Algeria's request in the name of the non-

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aligned movement for the General Assembly Special Session on Raw Materials stimulated resentment among many unconsulted LDCs and especially among states such as India and Yugoslavia which feel that they also have a claim to speak for the movement. This resentment was one of the reasons the LDCs came to the session with little preparation and little agreement upon specific goals and proposals. Such internal competition is likely to be a continuing impediment to LDC programs in the UN. The LDC consultative arrangements include no formal provisions for designating a spokesman. Informally, the personality, activism, and ideological credits of a particular leader—such as Algeria's Boumediene—are generally the major factors in determining which state can most successfully presume to represent the group. These standards are sufficiently subjective and ephemeral to ensure that leadership competition—like the other divisions among LDC members—will be a continuing check upon their activities in the UN.

III. ALTERNATIVES

32. The US, despite the weakening of its positions over the years, still is the UN's single most influential member. The UN's current decline is as much a product of the major power retreat as of the LDC excesses. Thus, one of the most important questions in the organization's future is whether the US is to become more directly involved in UN affairs or continue its retreat. The UN's weakness and detachment from "real politics" stem in a large part from the fact that its principal constituency is the LDCs who are relatively powerless in world affairs. Greater US involvement in the organization would stimulate the fuller participation of other major countries and do much to correct this imbalance. On the other hand, a continuation of the US movement away from UN affairs would contribute to the further distortion of UN politics and further

erosion of the organization's usefulness as a forum for serious international deliberation. Ignored by the US and other important powers, the UN would almost certainly become for diplomatic purposes a hollow shell. Neither alternative—greater US support of the UN or more systematic neglect—would in itself significantly relieve basic tensions with the LDCs. An adjustment of US policy in either direction would instead find further combinations of mixed benefits and liabilities.

33. A UN in which the US and the major powers were more involved would be more effective in serving those interests which are common to all members. With greater political and financial support from developed countries, the UN could better carry out the peacekeeping and technical services which support the global concerns and activities of the industrialized nations. A UN in which the latter assumed more active roles would also be less preoccupied by the exclusive concerns of developing nations. Industrialized members would regain the portion of UN initiative which they have lost through default.

34. Greater involvement and demonstrated interest in the UN by the US and other developed states would also tend to soften the LDC offensive; many of the LDCs' more strident challenges arise from the frustration they feel at not receiving serious attention from the affluent members. A growing number of LDCs, moreover, are promoting the achievement of tangible economic gains rather than additional rhetorical victories. They realize that stirring resolutions condemning exploitation by the rich and powerful states are counterproductive to the extent that they alienate the industrialized states which must underwrite the economic benefits desperately needed by the poor countries. This pragmatic tendency would be likely to gain more general support among the LDCs—and, in effect, produce softer rhetoric

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and a greater willingness to compromise in UN deliberation—if there were a demonstrated renewal of attention and support from the developed members. Under such conditions, the UN would be a more effective forum for negotiating North-South issues, and for developing whatever interests are shared by industrialized and developed states.

35. These benefits would, however, be alloyed with predictable pitfalls. Although the manner and extent of their domination would be modified, the LDCs would continue to retain the sway of majority voting power. To the degree that they choose to exercise that power, the UN would be a sharper weapon for the LDCs to use in their challenge to the industrialized world—which though possibly muted is certain to continue. A strengthened UN would in this respect present certain greater liabilities to the US. If the UN were taken more seriously by the world community, the psychological defeats and diplomatic embarrassments the US faces there would also be taken more seriously.

36. *A UN weakened by further US neglect* offers a reverse mixture of benefits and liabilities. The organization, largely deserted by the industrial powers, would be an increasingly ineffective tool for dramatizing LDC concerns. The LDCs would be left to perform diplomatic charades before an empty house. But at the same time, the organization would be unable to serve as a forum for serious North-South negotiations—such as the 1974 Law of the Sea Conference—which do serve US interests. It would also be less capable of providing peacekeeping and technical services. Peacekeeping efforts would be difficult to organize and impossible to sustain. The specialized agencies would continue but only under the shadow of increased politicization.

37. A secondary liability of a weakened UN is the prospect that the LDCs would eventu-

ally also become disillusioned with the organization and turn to more radical channels for expressing their concerns. They would be encouraged to vent their frustrations through more specialized forums—such as regional cartels of producers of raw materials—in which they would be not only less restrained but also perhaps more effective in challenging the policies of industrialized powers.

38. The problems which the US faces in the UN would also be encountered in dealings with the LDCs in alternative forums—and most likely under circumstances considerably less amenable to US interests than the conditions of UN diplomacy. The LDCs are becoming markedly more restive over the kind of restraints which the UN's procedures impose on them. Partly because they resent the indifference of the powers to their causes, they have begun to oppose the application in new forums of voting and caucus arrangements which have traditionally been used in the UN. The modifying influences of UN procedures mattered relatively little in the past because LDCs had few alternatives to working through the UN. The LDCs are becoming more conscious of other pressure points; whatever the objective results of the oil embargo, the developing states believe it worked and are ready to use it as a model for other coordinated economic actions. In the future, they may find further sources of leverage—the developed world may need not only their commodities but also their cooperation in managing global problems in such diverse fields as ocean use, food and population concerns, environmental safeguards, trade and monetary regulations.

* * * * *

39. *Few problems or solutions are located in the UN itself.* That organization can only reflect—with certain parliamentary distortions—the stresses of North-South confrontation. At least as long as North-South problems

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continue as the central theme in global forums, the US's policy toward the UN has little chance of being any more successful than its overall relations with the LDCs. To the extent that relations with the LDCs become more important to the US, the UN may become more useful; to the extent that US relations with the LDCs improve, the UN may become more hospitable to US concerns.

40. Both within and outside of the UN, the problems of LDC relations admit few simple or final solutions. The US and other major powers are finding increased needs for interaction with the LDCs, while those countries are discovering a greater capacity to exact payment for their cooperation. The differences

between the developed and developing world are, moreover, ideologically and substantively profound; clashes over the allocation of political and physical resources are unavoidable. Potential US tactics for dealing with such clashes range from efforts to manipulate the LDCs—divide and forestall their challenges—to efforts to find and develop legitimate points of common interest. The UN can assist US policy, as a bureaucratic deflector of the LDC challenge or as an arena for serious negotiations. But the UN cannot be used in either way without incurring certain reciprocal costs. It can only provide a setting for symptomatic treatment of a problem which originates not in its chambers but outside.

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APPENDIX

UN Budget and Bureaucratic Organization

Budget: The UN's regular budget meets all normal operating costs. These include Secretariat salaries, General Assembly and Security Council expenses, conference costs, information activities, and operating expenses of the International Court of Justice and of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Peace-keeping operations, such as the forces now in the Middle East and on Cyprus, are financed through special accounts. Most technical cooperation programs are financed from voluntary donations.

The regular budget is drawn from contributions assessed against the member states. The percentage share assigned to each of the 135 member's contribution is based on a formula in which the major determinant is the state's ability to pay, as measured by such factors as GNP and per capita income. There is, however, an absolute minimum and maximum share which any member can pay: no state may contribute less than 0.4 percent of the total budget, the portion paid by many of the smaller LDCs, or more than 25 percent, a ceiling which in practice applies only to the US. Until 1973 the maximum assessment, and US contribution, was fixed at 31.72 percent. At the US' initiative, however, the General Assembly approved a revised scale of assessments setting the new ceiling. As a result the US contribution to the UN regular budget for 1974 is \$59.5 million or nearly \$20 million less than it would have been under the old system.

While the US contribution has been reduced, the total UN budget has continued to

expand. A \$540.5 million two-year budget was approved for 1974 and 1975—this represents an annual increase from 1973 of approximately 11.4 percent. Requests for services and assistance to the LDCs represent only a relatively small part of the pressures for increased expenditures. More than half of the projected annual increase will be consumed by inflation. Additional activities encouraged by the major powers—such as the Law of the Sea and World Food Conferences, narcotics programs, and enlargement of the truce supervisory force in the Middle East—have also placed further demands on the UN's chronically strained budget.

Bureaucratic Organization: The UN structure follows the basic structure of Western parliamentary governments: there are two representative bodies and an executive: the General Assembly, Security Council, and the Secretariat. The General Assembly's broad mandate—any question related to peace and security or to the promotion of world prosperity and justice—is limited only by a prohibition against considering matters before the Security Council or matters strictly related to members' internal affairs. The Assembly also controls the budget and elects the Secretary-General. In all of its work the Assembly relies heavily upon an extensive committee system. A General Committee recommends what items the Assembly should consider and organizes the agenda. Seven main committees regularly discuss agenda items and propose action and special com-

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mittees are often appointed to consider particular problems.

The Security Council, a much smaller organ and more specialized focus on the maintenance of peace and security, conducts most of its business in full session. Of its fifteen members, the five major powers retain permanent seats while the other ten members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The Council requires a vote of nine out of the fifteen members to pass a decision on what is called a "procedural" matter—any internal question not directly affecting outside interest. "Substantive" matters require a vote of nine, including all five permanent members. Any nation may bring to the attention of the Security Council any dispute that seems likely to lead to a breach of the peace.

The Secretary-General may also bring issues to the attention of the Security Council. In this and his other duties, the Secretary-General is both a political initiator and the organization's chief administrative officer. His office is also responsible for numerous preparatory studies and special reports requested by the other organs and an annual report to the General Assembly on the work of the organization. The Secretary-General acts as administrative officer for the meetings of the Assembly, the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council, and ECOSOC. In these jobs he employs various members of the Secretariat, of which he is the executive head.

The other primary organs of the UN are the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the International Court of Justice, and the Trusteeship Council. ECOSOC is responsible, under the authority of the General Assembly, for the economic and social activities of the UN. It functions through six subsidiary commissions on statistics, population, social development, human rights, status of women, and narcotic drugs. ECOSOC also encompasses four regional economic commissions. The specialized agencies (see page 9) work with the UN through the coordinating machinery of ECOSOC. The Trusteeship Council also acts under the authority of the General Assembly. It bears principal responsibility for the supervision of territories placed under the UN's trusteeship system. The Council consists of all member states administering trust territories, permanent members of the Security Council, and enough non-administering countries elected by the Assembly to ensure that membership is equally divided between administering and non-administering states. The International Court of Justice, which has its seat at The Hague, adjudicates all cases which are referred to it by parties to its statute (all UN members are automatically parties) and provides advisory opinion on any legal question requested by the Assembly or the Security Council. The fifteen members of the Court are elected by Assembly and the Council for terms of nine years.

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