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Theories of Collective Intelligence and Decision-Making: Towards a Viable United Nations Intelligence System

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A Thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield

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Abstract

The idea of a United Nations (UN) intelligence system is widely misunderstood and debates about it seem to be both misplaced and anecdotal. The lack of a consistent theory on intelligence has fostered the widely held view that such a system is not feasible or incompatible with the UN collective security system. This dissertation takes as its central thesis, the question, of whether an intelligence system is both desirable and feasible within the UN structure. In spite of the fact that no known study has so far engaged with the subject matter at the depth presented in this dissertation, the study advances the concept of collective intelligence, and its implications for managing international conflicts.

The dissertation examines existing barriers in efforts to interface intelligence system with the UN structure, and proposes that, with suitable refinements, the concept of intelligence need not be incompatible with the UN system. It is also argued that these constraints should not preclude evolutionary changes to include an intelligence system that is compatible with an organisation such as the UN. By developing a concept of collective intelligence, the thesis proposes theoretical frameworks that suggest a potential nature of a viable intelligence capability within the UN. The analysis is developed normatively and conceptually, which lead to a further conclusion that the UN already possesses an intelligence capability which exists in manner that is not recognised. The lack of scholarly efforts to ground such a system on a reasonable framework creates a vacuum in the study of international organisations, and in particular the United Nations system. At a minimum, this dissertation fills this gap.

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List of Abbreviations

AOR	Area of Responsibility
MI5	British Secret Intelligence Division Five
MI6	British Secret Intelligence (Military) Division Six
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DPPO	Development and Policy Planning Office
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECPS	Executive Committee on Peace and Security
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
EPAU	Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit
EWCP	Early Warning and Contingency Planning Unit
FIS	Field Information Support
GA	General Assembly
GIS	Geographic Information System
HIC	Humanitarian Information Capability
HUMINT	Human intelligence
HEWS	Humanitarian Early Warning System
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross /Crescent
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFOR	Implementation Force
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
EISAS	Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat
IPA	International Peace Academy
IPB	Intelligence Preparation for Battlefield
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IGOs	International governmental organisations
IR	International Relations
ISS	Integrated Support Service
KGB	Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti (or Committee for State Security)
MIB	Military Intelligence Branch
MORE	Multi Optical Review Equipment
MPS	Military Planning Service

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
BMVs	Monitoring and Verification Centres
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NSA	National Security Agency
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFOESA	Office for Field Operations and External Support Activities
ORCI	Office for Research and the Collection of Information
PCRC	Prevention, Control and Resolution of Conflicts
PD	Prisoner's Dilemma
PPU	Policy Planning Unit
RMS	Remote Monitoring Systems
SC	Security Council
SG	Secretary General (of the UN)
SITCEN	Situation Centre
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
TERA	Terrain Analysis
UN	United Nations
UNA-USA	United Nations Association (USA)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNCRO	United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation
UNEF	UN Emergency Force
UNHQ	United Nations Headquarters
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute of Disarmament Research
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMOVIC	United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection commission
UNMOP	United Nations Observer Mission Prevlaka
UNPF	United Nations Peace Force
UNPKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
UNPREDEP	United Nations Preventive Deployment
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAES	United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia

ONUC	United Nations Operations in the Congo
WFP	World Food Programme
JNA	Yugoslav Peoples Army

Introduction

Research aims and objectives

The idea of a United Nations (UN) intelligence system is widely misunderstood and debates about it seem to be both misplaced and anecdotal. This is partly because there is no known detailed study that is dedicated to such a system. The lack of a consistent theory on intelligence tends also to foster the widely held view that such a system is infeasible or incompatible with the UN collective security system, and that intelligence serves the exclusive interest of states. The association of intelligence functions with state actors in mainstream International Relations (IR) theory tends also to blur the rationale for a “collective intelligence” and even create obstacles to research in this field. One such view is that, the nature of the international political system inhibits cooperation among states and efforts to achieve a common objective would be infeasible. Furthermore, the view that states are atomistic and selfish interest maximisers, in constant competition with one another leaves little or no room to think about a collective endeavour of this kind.

This dissertation takes as its central thesis the question, of whether an intelligence system is both desirable and feasible within the UN structure. The study will examine these barriers and propose that, with suitable refinements, the concept of intelligence need not be incompatible with the UN system. In fact, since Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali resurrected the idea in *An Agenda for Peace*, in 1992, little attention has been given to it in academic literature, and only in recent reform programmes has it been revived in the UN.¹ As a result, it seems that any attempt to examine the rationale of a UN intelligence capability would raise questions of both practical and academic importance.

A study of this kind presents multifaceted issues that need to be addressed in many ways. To name but a few, there is the multiplicity of issues and the large number of international actors in the system. Frequent changes in the political environment and members’ preferences and perspectives, as well as uncertainties, are characteristics of political settings that present difficulties in acting on shared intelligence assets, or, in fact, the very idea of accepting such an enterprise as a permanent

¹ *An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping*, Report of the Secretary-General. Adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, United Nations, A/47/277 - S/24111 (17 June 1992)

feature in the system. But these difficulties should not preclude evolutionary changes to include an intelligence system that is compatible with an organisation such as the UN. For these reasons, the search for the kind of arrangement that might be acceptable to most, if not all actors in the organisation, is, indeed highly challenging. This state of affairs is what I shall refer to as “collective intelligence”.

In addressing these problems, the study will need to begin by clarifying the idea of a collective intelligence. This is followed by an examination of more practical concerns, which would include:

- a) Whether a concept of collective intelligence, within the UN system, for example, would involve, collecting intelligence and handing it to states for independent decision making,
- b) Whether states should necessarily exchange or make intelligence available to a central pool within the UN, and
- c) Whether the UN should create and maintain its own “independent” intelligence machinery.

These issues are central to the search for a concept of a collective intelligence system but are by no means exhaustive.² Other combinations are possible. In fact, no categorical answers to these questions immediately solve the problems and no known study has so far directly engaged with them. Thus, in addition to the objectives already outlined, a further aspect of this research would be to advance the concept of collective intelligence, and its implication for managing international conflicts, in the context of the UN system. This would include the various contexts in which intelligence is employed in a collective security setting.

Established concepts in the IR discipline also present a second set of analytical problems. This again prompts two further questions:

1. Whether the dynamics and the nature of social and political interactions within the UN, or the international political system, can be defined in the same terms, as broadly set out in the realist–neoliberal anarchical paradigm. If, as will be argued, such an approach is inadequate for the purpose, then, the necessary question would be:
2. Whether a UN intelligence structure and processes is to be defined in the same terms as state intelligence agencies, for example, the CIA, or similar organisations.

² These three approaches, among others, have been suggested in anecdotal references to viable UN intelligence capability

If this is shown to be impossible, this dissertation will attempt to develop an alternative approach that would facilitate the application of collective intelligence process to the UN system.

Desirability and feasibility

Although the concepts outlined in this research may also be applicable to other institutions, such as regional, governmental and non-governmental organisations, the UN presents a useful case study for the study of collective intelligence. This is largely because of its diversity and complex political nature, and because the UN has, on various occasions, expressed the desire to acquire an intelligence capability. The problem of interfacing these two concepts conceived to be incompatible can be said to be one of “complementarity”, which exists at different levels and dimensions of analyses. This then raises question about the relationship between the desirability and feasibility of the project.

As a first step towards proposing a solution to some aspects of the problems, the present study suggests that there is such a relationship between desirability and feasibility. Comparable studies of information sharing in competitive (market) models suggest likewise. For example, Hurwicz observed, first that the notion of the desirability of a project can be discerned, if there is a demand for such a service and, if the “complementarity of the services is the only ‘troublesome’ aspect of the situation.”³ On the notion of feasibility, it is argued in the dissertation that the rules of the system under study (the United Nations) provide for, to an extent, the applications of intelligence in a manner that is in conformity with the system. Hence, as Hurwicz further argued, a condition of feasibility would be fulfilled if the rules prescribed by the mechanism are compatible either at individual or at group level.⁴

Collective intelligence and developments in international politics

In attempting to examine the functions of intelligence in a complex political institution such as the UN, it is anticipated that the research will make valuable contributions to the development and future of the UN’s collective security system. This dissertation, acknowledges at least two major trends in the study of international relations, especially since the end of the Cold War. The first of these is the changing and evolving nature of the global system of states, and the proliferation of discourses and texts attempting to explain and describe the system. The second and perhaps, the most important is the evolving role of the UN in world security.⁵ An anticipated new direction was emphasised by Secretary-General, Kofi Annan in 1997, when, as reported in the media, he emphasised the need to

³ Hurwicz, L., “On the Concept and Possibility of Informational Decentralisation” *American Economic Review* Vol. 59 No. 2 (1969) pp. 513-524

⁴ Hurwicz, Leonid “On Informationally Decentralised Systems” in McGuire, C.B., and Roy Radner eds., *Decision and Organisation* (Amsterdam: North Holland Pub 1972) pp. 297-336

redefine the role of the UN in view of the changing international political environment.⁶ The organisation, he argued, must look beyond its “traditional preoccupation with peacekeeping and international security” and take on board issues concerning economic and social significance.⁷ It is not unreasonable to interpret this perceived “shift” from traditional roles to mean a comprehensive and holistic approach to the idea of collective security, embracing those barely noticeable but essential social roles, which have traditionally been thought to be outside the organisation’s mandates.

This prompts an obvious question: What does a UN intelligence system have to do with these developments and how does it relate to the debates about the nature of international system or the future of world order? Alternatively, why and how would a strategic intelligence system be necessary in the work of the United Nations? On the other hand, it should also be necessary to consider whether the UN already has access to such an intelligence resource, or something close to “intelligence” and if so, why this might not be publicly acknowledged. Some tentative and brief answers to these questions are possible. In relation to the latter, it can be said, for the moment that since there is no coherent theory on intelligence, it would be difficult to give a precise definition of what may constitute a UN “intelligence” system. Secondly, the sensitive and secret nature of intelligence and the fact that it is prone to controversy are factors that contribute to undermining the organisation’s confidence in being explicit about the application of intelligence assets.

Furthermore, if the resource already exists in some form, why would subsequent Secretary-Generals seek to acquire an intelligence capability? The answer is twofold; first, it can be argued, is due to increasing appreciation of the unique role that intelligence can play in peacekeeping, conflict management and conflict prevention. This understanding has come, not by accident but by accumulated experience and lessons learned from some of the world’s most violent conflicts in recent history. This realisation, as well as the organisation’s perceived role in world security, is, in many ways, manifested in reports which have been commissioned to devise means of making the UN more effective. A second is due to the increasing confidence in the organisation following the end of the Cold War. During that conflict, the UN was sidelined by the two warring blocs. Furthermore, the fact that the UN perceives of intelligence to be significant in its arsenal of tools, can only mean that the rationale for collective intelligence is already well understood within the organisation’s decision-making framework.

⁵ See for example, *Our Global Neighbourhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance*, (Oxford University Press, February 1995)

⁶ *The Guardian*, 28 Feb 1997

⁷ *Ibid*

The idea of United Nations intelligence

What are the expected roles of UN intelligence and how are these different from those of state intelligence organisations? According to *An Agenda for Peace*, a UN intelligence capability would aim to fulfil the following tasks:⁸

- a) Early warning based information gathering and informal or formal fact-finding.
- b) Preventive steps based upon timely and accurate knowledge of facts.
- c) Understanding of developments and global trends based on sound analysis.
- d) And the need to integrate intelligence assets into the United Nations decision process in forecasting and preventing conflicts.

Subsequent UN documents, such as the Brahimi Report and the “Lessons Learned” reports, also reveal a range of other roles, which, strictly speaking, are not different from those of state intelligence. Functions such as deploying intelligence assets for conflict management, peacekeeping and logistics, as well as training and informing field operatives are acknowledged. It is then not a coincidence that the roles outlined in *An Agenda for Peace*, share similar characteristics with those employed by states.

In this regard, “intelligence” is here defined, according to, Maurice-Henry May, as:

Knowledge and analysis designed to assist action and the task of intelligence as prognosis to warning and estimate of future events.⁹

In part, this will serve as a working definition in the present study. By adopting this definition, attention is drawn to the distinction between the processes of informed decision making, (through the systematic use of intelligence resources) on the one hand, and on the other, the more familiar subversive, covert, offensive or rogue operations associated with state intelligence organisations.

The idea of collective intelligence and its implications for the United Nations

From the point of view of the United Nations, it seems reasonable to describe its “intelligence capability” as “collective intelligence”. This expression has a pivotal role in the context of institutions of collective endeavour. In such environments, the idea of a collective intelligence surpasses the general notion of pooling intelligence resources or expecting states to submit to the UN, their stock of intelligence assets as and when they deem fit. Collective intelligence is worthy of

⁸ *An Agenda for Peace*, see especially, chapter III on “preventive diplomacy”

⁹ Quoted in May, Ernest (ed.) *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press 1984) p. 4

being understood as a system of decision making, a process as well as a product. As a product, it is the stock of information in terms of knowledge and as a process its function is located in the decision-making processes of the group.¹⁰ This means that information and decision are both complementary and integral. Independently, they are only partially intelligible as distinct concepts. So when one talks of information analysis, it means its decisional value. This definition is also consequent upon a conception of collective action, as a process of maximising individual utilities through (a system of) collective efforts.¹¹

The thesis therefore assumes that in collective decision-making systems, organisations or groups (by definition consisting of more than one individual) make decisions that reflect the desires and interest of every member of the group. Thus, the UN, in whichever way its decision-making processes, are defined, is a system of collective decisions. If this argument is accepted, then, a second assumption is that collective intelligence can be complementary with the UN system. Acknowledging this compatibility is a first step in the development of a theory of a viable UN intelligence capability.

In sum, the aims of this dissertation are:

- 1) To explore the extent to which the concept of intelligence, largely conceived as a strategic tool for states in a competitive environment, can be transformed and applied to non-conflictual and for non-competitive ends. This transformation is consonant with the definition of collective (security) action.
- 2) To propose a theoretical framework that will provide an insight into the potential nature of a viable intelligence capability within the United Nations system. In other words, to explore and suggest necessary and acceptable conditions for collective intelligence in an environment characterised by conflicting objectives among sovereign states.

General overview and structure of the dissertation

This thesis is structured into three main parts: in part one, the contextual framework and the concepts of a “solution” are discussed. Part two examines the main objects of the research question, i.e., the United Nations system and intelligence, and provides background explanations of the problems of interfacing these two concepts. Part three examines cases, which lead to a general conclusion that the idea of interfacing intelligence with the UN system is feasible. A chapter by chapter summary follows.

¹⁰ The advantage of conceiving information as a product provides us with the opportunity to conceptualise it as a “physical good”.

¹¹ See for example, comparison between collective action and cooperation, explained in 1.2, below

The conceptual and methodological framework of the dissertation is outlined in chapter one. Principally, the chapter discusses the context in which “collective action” is used here and offers minimal criteria for the analysis of collective action. A discussion on model building leads to the proposition that a manifestation of collective intelligence in an organisation such as the UN, may not necessarily be found in the conventional notion of collective action, but may be hidden in contexts, which established approaches have not fully explored. The need to broaden the parameters of the study to include ideas from a wide range of disciplines is acknowledged, and this follows from the assumption that a study of collective action should aim to be inclusive of the various factors that define the collective environment. This proposition provides the basis on which mainstream IR theories are challenged.

Chapter two examines the key tenets of the dominant schools in the IR discipline, in relation to collective action. Taking the centrality of anarchy as a point of reference, this chapter examines the underlying assumptions, its strengths and weaknesses and possible constraints on the concepts of collective intelligence. In addition, a comparative study of centralised and decentralised systems in this chapter leads to the conclusion that, anarchy is not, as claimed by the anarchy-oriented schools, the main reason why collective action is problematic in international relations. This implies that, neither could centralised planning, by way of authority, resolve the incentive problems in this environment. It is argued that a theory of incentives seeks to examine the factors, or generally, the conditions, under which members of a group might participate in efforts towards the achievement of a collective goal.

Chapter three explores incentive problems in collective action more fully and is presented in three sections. Section one broadly defines collective action; section two outlines aspects of typical collective action problems and constraints on “optimal” outputs; and section three explores the concepts of solution, i.e., the conditions under which collective action can be said to be theoretically feasible, with respect to the constraining factors. The aim is first, to show that incentive problems in collective action are not necessarily exclusive to the United Nations, or, for that matter, its efforts to establish a viable intelligence system. Secondly, incentive properties, which are not generally considered as significant in the study of collective action in the IR discipline, are also examined. This chapter concludes that while the empirical and normative properties of groups and their objectives are significantly different, the principles and general theoretical foundations of the problems of incentives remain the same. This therefore challenges the assumptions of anarchy as the main barrier to collective action.

In chapter four, a precise but tentative model that can, arguably, be used as a basis for conceptualising a feasible intelligence system in organisations such as the United Nations, is

developed. The model draws upon key features that enable predictive comparison between centralised and decentralised systems, with the aim of identifying features which are unique to decentralised systems, but consistent with a concept of a “solution” that is appropriate to the environment. The application of this concept should facilitate the examination of a broad range of environments in which different systems operate, and which their relative optimal outcome may be comparable to known and perhaps established systems. The model developed to support this argument leads to the assumption that despite the constraints and disparity of issues, there is nevertheless, a willingness by members to participate, albeit, in varying degree in any particular process. The model also assumes that at the most basic level of analysis, any chosen mechanism of action or degree of participation will be influenced by the environment in which the issues are being contested. Though this might impose some limitations on the system, it need not necessarily obviate an optimal outcome.

Chapters five and six provide in-depth discussion of the two principal objects under study, the United Nations and intelligence. The aim is to show why they are generally conceived to be incompatible. The structure of the United Nations, its functions and decision-making processes are examined to explain the constraints imposed on the organisation with regards to developing an intelligence capability. This chapter concludes that, despite such obstacles, the system of the organisation also provides opportunities for a viable intelligence capability. Chapter six examines the nature of intelligence and explains why it is different from other systems of knowledge production. Although the chapter identifies intelligence as essentially political information, it is argued that the consequences of secrecy as a defining feature makes it difficult to recognise where its functions of knowledge production end and its fictional and arcane nature begin. Nevertheless, the chapter concludes that, intelligence, like most things in nature, works best when it is uniquely designed for a particular environment and functions.

Chapter seven challenges the notion that intelligence is incompatible with the UN. It shows that even as presently constituted, the UN is not entirely, without an intelligence capability. Furthermore, while the rationale for a UN intelligence capability is acknowledged, it is argued that the existence of a market for such a good is, to say the least, a sufficient reason for the feasibility of such a system. This leads to the conclusion that, while, intelligence is not formally recognised as an established feature in the UN system, it is possible to establish that these functions currently exist in various guises within the organisation’s structure.

Chapter eight examines various information/intelligence assets within the UN, their sources, methods and implications for the organisation. With respect to the limitations of existing intelligence

functions, which may be found to be poorly developed, compared to established state intelligence organisations, it is argued that such drawbacks can be found to be common in similar complex environments and not restricted solely to the UN. Nevertheless, it is argued that difficulties arising from, for example, lack of coordination in complex organisations, are second level problems, which could be rectified at the planning stages, with regard to a broadly agreed goals among the key decision makers. Hence, the problem of effectively exploiting intelligence assets within the UN is found to be more profound and located somewhere between the attitudes and behaviour of the member states and their understanding, or lack of an appreciation of, collective intelligence functions.

Chapter nine consolidates various aspects of the study. Principally, some of the means of circumventing the constraints imposed on the UN system, with respect to intelligence capability, are examined. For this purpose, a comparison of the inspections and verification processes, in an effort to disarm Iraq (of banned weapons systems) is discussed. The case studies in these examples, reveal first that, consensus and balance are necessary variables in multi-agency political decision-making, and secondly, that when an optimum solution evades the participants, a third party intervention offers a further option to the decision makers. The notion of intervention proposes that members with conflicting preferences could seek and achieve an optimal outcome, regardless of the complexity of the situation. The conclusion reached from these case studies leads to the argument that, solutions to (some) complex political problems can be enhanced by certain universally accepted doctrines, especially where a high value is placed on the quest for compromise and balance. These elements provide a set of criteria for an acceptable intelligence capability within the UN system. But can these case studies lead to a general prediction on the nature and viability of a UN intelligence capability?

The dissertation is brought to a conclusion in chapter ten, where the case studies are shown to provide plausible arguments and examples of good and bad practices, even though the former provides only a partial solution. For example, consensus among the key decision makers is found to play a crucial role in the processes, nevertheless, this provides an open ended argument about what happens if the Security Council fails to agree or reach a consensus. It is proposed that the notion of consensus is a secondary issue, and that it is those factors which enable consensus that should be of primary consideration. Hence, a general statement, for example, one prescribing conducts and standards of procedures, which could be invoked to support intelligence operations, could provide a useful starting point. This, it is argued is a minimum requirement that is not only practicable, but could also offer the prospect for a viable collective intelligence system. This, however, would also be consequent upon, or in addition to certain transforming influences, such as developments in information communication technologies as well as the inevitability of the forces of change.

Part One

Theoretical Framework and Orientation of the Thesis

Chapter 1

Framework for Collective Action Research

1.1. Contextual framework and criteria for the analysis of collective action

Two often ignored problems in research design are the failure to identify the precise context in which a term is relevant in the study and the failure to state clearly the exact purpose of the research. This may be accomplished by stating whether the study is to be descriptive, prescriptive or indeed both.¹² One approach might be to focus exclusively on describing the nature of the problem; this might be short of offering possible solutions and in principle, would not attempt to recommend a solution. The main purpose of such an approach would be to paint a rich picture of both the material and perhaps abstract environment and variables that define the state of the problem. On the other hand, a prescriptive research might be concerned with examining the nature of the problem with a view to recommending possible solutions.¹³ It would be inconceivable to suggest that any one of these approaches is superior to the other. Both approaches perform different, though complementary functions. For example, a descriptive approach can be useful as a mapping or diagnostic tool, and may point to where a solution might be found. The outcome of this approach is by no means an exact prediction, but rather, a useful guide to prognosis. Nonetheless, danger lurks where a descriptive theory is taken to represent both the problem and the solution. This may give the impression that all social problems have common root causes or that a certain social situation has common relevance to all social situations. An obvious example here is the commonly held view in the IR discipline that most social interactions occur in an intractable environment. These issues are, in fact, significant factors that could influence the final outcome of a study as well as methods and the chosen tools of analysis.

Hence, the aim of this chapter is to set out both a conceptual and methodological framework for this dissertation. In the first instance, the context in which the term “collective action” is used here is clarified, and a provisional outline for the analysis of collective action is also discussed. Furthermore, the discussion on model building leads to proposition that material manifestation of a collective intelligence system in an organisation such as the UN may not be found in a broad and generalised conception of the subject, but may be hidden in a context which conventional approaches have previously not considered useful. This chapter acknowledges the need to broaden the

¹² Robert A. Dahl outlined a range of possibilities for the development of theory. See his *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (USA: The University of Chicago Press 1956) p. 2

parameters of the study to include ideas from other disciplines which may not generally be familiar in IR. The study is also a precursor to examining, at least (some) mainstream assumptions in IR, and their relevance to the study of collective action. Case in point is the application of game theory to the analysis of social interaction and collective action problems. As will be argued, some of these concepts have been applied in a rather simplistic fashion and present a static and short-sighted picture of both the problem and the solution in aspects of collective action.

This suggests that while game theory has its usefulness as a descriptive as well as prescriptive tool, it can only accomplish these objectives in a rather restricted fashion. For instance, the existence of an intractable game situation in a group process might simply point to the obvious lack of efficient communication channels between the participants in a given social situation. To avoid a misinterpretation of the observed phenomenon, a model of collective action should attempt to push the analysis beyond mere description of the characteristics of the participants and their preferences. This means that a study of collective action should attempt to be more inclusive of the various factors in a collective environment. An inclusive approach expands beyond mainstream assumptions but should remain both constructive and plausible.

1.2. On the distinction between cooperation and collective action

As a first step to developing research that encompass various disciplines and focused on a particular issue, it is necessary to state clearly the context in which the concept is being applied. In the IR discipline, it is observable that the application of the term “cooperation”, as a general reference to social and political interaction, tends to be vague. The problem is largely one of overlap between the terms *collective action* and *cooperation*, and the contexts in which these terms are used in the present study need to be clarified. In many respects, these two concepts tend to have interchangeable meanings in the IR discipline. The first problem to be encountered is the obvious lack of coherence and sometimes, definitional confusion in the application of these concepts to the study of social and political interaction. A further problem is that both these concepts can be studied with exactly the same tools. As a result, the context and the situation, as well as the conclusions drawn, would be remarkably different.¹⁴ This, therefore, calls for a precise definition of each of these concepts when applied to the study of social and political interactions.

¹³ A word of caution, such recommendations may be based on a set of value judgments.

¹⁴ A crucial first step to understanding any concept of social or political interaction is the meaning of the terms, as well as the contexts which events are manifested. Such approach should enable the researcher to choose specific tools for the analysis of relevant cases, collect empirical evidence and draw clearer conclusions.

If for instance, one could compare the definition of collective action, as a process of maximising individual as well as social utility through a system of collective efforts, with the definition of “cooperation” offered by Keohane, as “the actions of separate individuals or organisations – which are not in pre-existent harmony – be brought into conformity with one another through a process of negotiation...” or “when actors adjust behaviour to actual or anticipated preferences to others, through a process of policy coordination” and “cooperation, as compared to harmony, requires active attempt to adjust policies to meet the demand of others...” it is clear that there are different concepts involved.¹⁵ The various definitions of cooperation offered in IR take for granted that social interactions are defined by conflict of power relationships. As Keohane explained, “cooperation...does not imply absence of conflict. On the contrary, it is typically mixed with conflict and reflects partially successful efforts to overcome conflict, real or potential”; and the “incentive to cooperate also depends on the willingness of one’s opponent to retaliate against defection.”¹⁶

In contrast, the nature of conflict in collective action is defined not in terms of enmity, historical or otherwise, nor by power relationships, but in terms of the production and distributive efficiency of the common good. Within this concept, the term “cooperation” should be understood from the point of view of its generic meaning, as a *behavioural shift*. What causes such behavioural or policy adjustments on the part of the units is not an immediate consideration here, but would be relevant to specific research questions attempting to explore such phenomenon and in which case the very meaning of “cooperation” would need to be qualified. Cooperation is used here as a function of collective action and not as a system of collective action. When the term is used as a concept to encompass all such adjustments, or to define every aspect of interactions, it becomes meaningless.¹⁷ For example, individuals may conform to or exhibit a certain pattern of behaviour with or without a predefined rule directing their behaviour. They may also conform, behave or interact in an observable pattern without explicitly manifesting a “goal seeking” behavioural pattern or even having any goal attributed to their behaviour, or, even if there exists a goal, the participants may not generally be aware of the importance of the goal.¹⁸ Hence, cooperation, in the general sense, could mean an awareness of issues, or acceptance of a particular status quo, which are expressed variously in different cultures.

¹⁵Keohane, Robert *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984) pp. 51-52

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Hoffman *et al* study of reciprocity in social organisations underline the meaninglessness of a general application of the term “cooperation” as used in IR theory. See for example, Hoffman, Elizabeth, Kevin A. McCabe, Vernon L. Smith “Behavioural Foundation of Reciprocity: Experimental Economics and Evolutionary Psychology” *Economic Inquiry* Vol. 36 No. 3 (July 1998) pp. 335-352

¹⁸ Ibid

1.3. Rational choice and the theory of cooperation

At this point, it would be difficult to interpret every aspect of social interaction as “rational” to the extent that behaviour of the units are generally represented as prisoner’s dilemma (PD), even in situations where other issues may be paramount. PD is an explanatory concept in game theory to depict the complex dynamics discussed in the anarchy paradigm. Essentially, it collapses the multifaceted problem of social interactions into a single (linear) problem. It does not represent a “real world” situation but offers an explanatory tool.¹⁹ Game theory attempts to present a graphic illustration of the nature of conflict in a mixed interest environment, since, it is assumed that the choices individuals make may also depend on the choices of others. The prisoner’s dilemma paradigm is widely used to dramatise this situation. The model assumes that in a situation of choice involving at least two actors, neither player knows what the other will do. Both actors are considered to be rational actors and would consider all logical options possible, given that the other player will do the same. An important aspect of the concept is that the gain or loss of either player depends not only on their own actions, but also on those of their opponent.²⁰ Thus, the strategy chosen by each player determines the *outcome* of the game and only one player can win at any one time.

This situation can be illustrated by looking at the choices available to two actors, A and B, faced with the choice of cooperating or defecting in a collective endeavour which would yield optimum outcome if both cooperate. But both actors might choose to defect to maximise their gains. A’s choice can be expressed as $A = (a, b)$ and similarly, $B = (a, b)$. In the table below (fig.1.3) A’s strategy is arranged in the column and B’s strategy is in the row. A must make a choice that increases his gains to, at least not worse than -1, i.e., $A = (a, a)$. Arguing in similar vein as A, B makes the same choice, they both cooperate and maximise their gains. The idea is for each player to keep losses to the minimum possible. Hence, if B defects and plays row b, b , and A cooperates, in the column a, b ; B gains 1 and A’s gain is 0. In such a cautious environment, if each suspects the other might defect (remembering that A’s gains is B’s loss, and vice versa), their strategy will be $A = (a, b)$ and $B = (a, b)$ and the gains for both will be zero in the absence of cooperation.²¹ Nonetheless, it is assumed that no matter what each player does, and even if they knew what the other would do, this will not necessarily change their initial position.

¹⁹ Straffin, Philip D., *Game Theory and Strategy* (USA: Beloit College 1993) p. 4

²⁰ Vajda, S. *Game Theory and Linear Programming* (Methuen and Company 1967) p. 2

²¹ In the game theoretic sense, a pair or selection of strategy with features of stability is called a solution. A strategy, which appears in a solution, is called optimal. For example, the stand off between the Warsaw Pact and NATO alliance could be defined as a solution, as it provided a form of stability. See for example, *ibid*, p. 8

		Actor A	
		Cooperate	Defect
Actor B	<i>a</i>		
	<i>b</i>		
Cooperate	<i>a</i>	-1	0
Defect	<i>b</i>	0	1

Fig.1.3 Payoff matrix for actors in a game theory

In IR, this “rational behaviour” is said to be the root cause of anarchy in the system. However, Robert Jervis for example, observed that the limitations of cooperation as applied to the anarchy paradigm “blinds us to the broader setting in which behaviour occurs.” Jervis argued that, in many cases, the very meaning of cooperation is unclear, and in some cases, cooperation “usually denotes doing what the other actor prefers”.²² He questioned the basis on which the term is used;

How do we characterise a response that is undesired, but is designed to benefit the other, and/or has that effect? How do we classify behaviour when one side desires a high degree of friction with the other and the other responds with the sought for hostility? What do we say about cases in which neither side thinks about the impact on the other? Does the impact of defection imply something more than or different from, non-cooperation?²³

A concept of collective action does not necessarily ignore these issues. On the contrary, it acknowledges them, but falls short of focusing exclusively on rational calculations of the units or the degree of hostility among them. A concept of collective action, in essence, seeks to explore how conflicts among the units could be overcome to create a common good. It is perhaps, for these reasons that Heckathorn suggested that the analysis of collective action problems be free of the PD paradigm.²⁴ And Sebenius argued that the tendency to treat cooperation as binary, i.e., cooperate

²² Jervis, Robert “Realism, Game Theory and Cooperation” *World Politics* Vol. 40, No. 3 (1988) pp. 317-49

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Heckathorn, Douglas D., “The Dynamics of Collective Action” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61 No. 2 (April 1996) pp. 250-277

versus defect, “direct attention away from issues of distribution as well as integrative potentials.”²⁵ As a result, if a concept of collective action is to be developed with the notion of cooperation in mind, such a model will fall short of its supposed objectives.

Scholars examining issues of a collective nature frequently encounter these semantic problems, and tend to devise a range of analytical tools to overcome the barrier. Mancur Olson, for example, made the distinction between “informal cooperation” and “formal organisations.” The latter, he argued, are designed to move the goals and objectives of the group to “nearly optimal point,” and “to enable an international organisation to approach an optimal level of activity.”²⁶ Cooperation in this context is an element of collective action, since one of the main problems to be analysed is how to induce members of an organisation “to give up what has to be given up” for the collective good.²⁷ This further means that the organisational goal, in whichever way it is defined is a collective good, from which all members may benefit regardless of the nature of their contribution or position in the order of things within the organisation’s structure.

Similarly, Emmanuel Adler identified two types of cooperation; “purposive” and “practical” cooperation, and it is possible to add tactical association. He defined purposive association as “a relationship among those who adopt certain practices as a means to that end, and who regard such practices as worthy of respect only to the extent that they are useful instruments of common purpose.”²⁸ Purposive association he argued “assumes that two or more nations learned the same lessons and developed common political beliefs and goals and are acting together to achieve those goals.”²⁹ These definitions can be taken to suggest that the further away one moves from power politics, the higher the likelihood of purposive or “instrumental” association.³⁰ Practical association, on the other hand, he argued refers to a “relationship among those who are engaged in the pursuit of different and possibly incompatible purposes, and who are associated with one another...only in respecting certain restrictions on how each may pursue his own purpose.”³¹ Practical association, in that sense, has much in common with what might be referred to as tactical association. This could be created by two or more units, possibly with incompatible or different goals but collaborating to achieve a short term objective, such as to confront or avert a perceived threat or enemy, in other

²⁵ Sebenius, James K., “Challenging Conventional Explanation of International Cooperation: Negotiation Analysis and the Case of Epistemic Communities” *International Organisation* Vol. 46 No. 1 (winter 1992) pp. 324-365

²⁶ Olson, Mancur “Increasing the Incentives for International Collaboration” *International Organisation* Vol. 25 (1971) pp. 886-874

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Adler, Emmanuel “The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control” *International Organisation* Vol. 46 (winter 1992) pp. 101-145

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

words, an alliance system.³² The distinctions given here are more meaningful than the rather abstract and imprecise definitions of cooperation. Furthermore, the synonymous use of the terms “pooling”, “coordination”, “cooperation”, “sharing” and “collective” to describe the same phenomenon also adds to the confusion in political research.

1.4. Criteria for the analysis of collective action

Following this, it is now possible to propose some basic criteria around which a concept of collective action could be studied. This approach need not be exhaustive and could vary in sophistication, depending on the tools employed to develop a particular concept. A set of criteria for a collective or group action can be defined by attempting to answer some basic though important questions. In the present case, for example, a model can be developed around the following questions:

- a) Are the goals pursued by the group desirable?
- b) If the goals and objectives are desirable, to what extent are they feasible?
- a) And, would the benefits arising from the collective action have some, or equivalent (distributive) value for every member of the group?

These questions are important in terms of defining the incentive problems, as well as understanding the very purpose of a group. The incentive problem, which is discussed in a later chapter (see 3.5) is central to the study of collective action and may also be relevant as a yardstick to measuring the organising efficiency of the group. The section that follows will attempt to examine some basic analytical tools necessary for the study of these concepts. It is acknowledged that with respect to the complexity of a given research problem, where existing tools in the parent discipline are inadequate for a satisfactory exploration of the issues, it would be useful to employ tools developed elsewhere to facilitate an adequate explanation of the problem.

1.5. Methodological approach³³

The tools employed in the study of political science are diverse and, depending on the subject under study, vary in complexity. These may include approaches from a range of disciplines such as economics, symbolic logic, psychology, communication studies, etc. Not all such tools may be familiar to IR scholars in the strictest sense. As foreign concepts, these tools might prompt questions about stretching the IR discipline beyond its central concerns. To pre-empt such questions, it could be argued that the test for inclusive and perhaps, unconventional approaches would be to show

³¹ Ibid

³² The United States alliance with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan to confront the Taliban regime is an example of tactical cooperation.

³³ A brief discussion on sources, problems and outcomes are provided in “Research Notes”, Appendix I,

whether employing concepts from other disciplines, could somehow bring the inquiry closer to the compound problems envisaged in IR. It can also be argued that exploiting tools from other disciplines provides the opportunity to explore the depth and complexity of IR theories as well as examining the various issues from many different perspectives. For example, many concepts developed in welfare economics are indeed central to the problems of collective action, and could provide useful starting points in the study of similar issues in IR.

While an inclusive approach is desirable, it is perhaps important to emphasise that adopting some such approaches whole-heartedly as templates can be more futile than productive. This is because particular tools could be rather restrictive when transplanted from their original environments. An example mentioned earlier, is the general application of game theory. While this could be a useful tool in analysing aspects of human interaction, the kind of conclusion that might be drawn from a game set in mathematical analysis, could have very limited applicability to settings in political and social situations involving actual human interactions. Similarly, cases in economics could provide useful tools for the analysis and forecasting of social exchange in market situations, but it would be implausible to apply the results as templates for the analysis of all forms of social exchange. Hence, a range of tools adapted from other disciplines should be used with modifications that adequately describe or explain the phenomenon being studied.

1.6. Developing and applying models and variables

One of the main problems in developing a theory of collective action is the complex nature of groups, such as the array of factors that defines individual groups. For example, some features of the UN will include, the security environment, the preferences of member states conditioned by their culture, political tradition and history; perceived power structures, as well as the set of rules governing the organisation. These factors are not fixed. In fact, the extent to which any one single feature will determine the dynamics of an organisation would also depend on a number of other factors. Thus, for any model of collective action to reflect this complexity, it will have to be multidimensional in nature and would also have to be developed at different levels of analysis. For example, each level may attempt to describe the dynamics between variables or the impact of one or more of the factors in a particular decision environment.³⁴ But, sometimes, the environment more or less determines the way units in a collective interact. An example, which is discussed later in the present work, is the extent to which the political environment could be influenced by the value individual actors place on an expected outcome of a political process. Thus, the environment can also be said to be an important factor in the analysis of social behaviour and individual choices.

³⁴ Ostrom uses the term “arena” to describe situations, which particular types of action occur. See Ostrom, Elinor *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press 1990) p. 54

The application of iterated game theory, in this context, to the Cold War interaction not only demonstrates how participants behave in a hostile environment, but also shows how the environment itself structures the behaviour and choices individuals make. However, the failure to adjust the game theory or the Prisoner's Dilemma paradigm, to take account of a changing environment demonstrates an inherent weakness of an inflexible and static model. The Prisoner's Dilemma model is useful where it approximates events at a particular time and provides a useful tool for predicting interactions and outcomes of events in static environments. The weakness of this model can be seen in its failure to anticipate the abrupt end to the Cold War. Hence, it is possible to argue that the limitations of game theory have little to do with the model, but much to do with the rigidity of its application in the analysis of international conflict. In a fluid environment, the tools of analysis would require frequent adjustment, given that a social or political setting could change, sometimes unpredictably.

1.7. Purpose of a model and relevance to the study of collective intelligence

Changes in the environment and subsequent adjustments need not affect the strength of the model. A model would naturally aim to acknowledge both the historical and the present context of a concept. It would also aim to include a (total) definition of the physical environment, known or observable variables, such as established patterns of behaviour among interacting agents, as well as those factors, past and present that have contributed to shaping the system. From this point of view, a model is a set of assumptions that may be used to develop an argument.³⁵ A model is not an exact representation of an entity, but an abstraction of reality. A model attempts to encapsulate, and provide a simplified picture of a rather complex reality. This simple formulation can be achieved through, as Thomas Schelling put it, "...precise and economical statement of a set of relationships that are sufficient to produce the phenomenon in question."³⁶

Horowitz identified two main purposes of models as being to *predict* and to *explain* behaviour.³⁷ But in the same vein, a model may serve to clarify one's information needs. Hence, in relation to prediction and explaining behaviour, new models may also serve as prognostic tools, to identify faults and discrepancies in previously existing models. For example, Horowitz pointed out that it would be generally a useful exercise to explore how particular assumptions influence the implications of a model.

³⁵ For a general discussion on models as tools of analysis see for example, Horowitz, Ira, *Decision Making and the Theory of the Firm* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1970) esp. chp. 1; Schelling, T, *Micromotives and Macrobehaviour* (New York Norton 1978) esp. pp. 87-90; and Ostrom, op cit, esp. chp.

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³⁶ Schelling, *ibid*, p. 87

³⁷ Horowitz, op cit, p. 5

If omitting an assumption does not appreciably influence the model, one may wish to drop it in order to make the model less restrictive. If the assumption exerts an important influence on the conclusions, the assumption may itself warrant further intensive study. If the model suggests that an assumption is invalid even though it is normally taken for granted, this too will be a useful output of the model.³⁸

1.8. Models and nested models

The preceding analysis suggests that a model could be multidimensional, that is, consisting of different parts, each part in turn generating new sets of information which, as a result, require new levels of analysis. One approach to achieving such a goal might be to restrict the study of a phenomenon to a narrowly defined parameter, such that a group or an organisation for example, is referred to as *a special case*. For instance, it could be assumed that the subject of the investigation possesses characteristics that make it unique if compared to similar entities. The idea is to draw conclusions from a range of variables, which, in some cases may not be present if analysis is restricted to a particular field of discipline. The process of developing this kind of a model need not be exhaustive, as it needs only to examine the defining characteristics of the variables in each case.

In reality, it is not possible to draw up a comprehensive inventory of such variables. This is because some of the variables we seek to understand or include in the model may not be immediately obvious at the point of analysis, or they may be nested elsewhere in the same model, to the extent that their existence may not be immediately recognisable and their effect on the outcome may be neglected.³⁹ An example, which is explored in a later chapter (see chapter four), is the view that aspects of a collective activity could exist outside the constitutional form and their manifestation could be missed, if analysis is focused on the demands of existing set of rules. When these variables are identified and grouped, we may label them as sub-sets of variables. The idea of identifying and grouping variables may be compared to the process of decomposing an argument and recomposing the different strands of the issues to develop a new set of arguments. This very process can lead to many positive outcomes. Firstly, it means that we can isolate those variables whose presence in the model are not consistent with the prevailing environment, and secondly, we may simply adopt some of the variables to adjust an existing theory to reflect current realities. Thirdly, the process may provide a clearer understanding of the structure of the system. And because, the functions of the group of variables in a set are understood, it is possible to develop different levels of analysis. Lastly,

³⁸ Ibid, p. 8

³⁹ For example, in attempting to predict human behaviour, we might base our analysis on known factors and variables. But certain actions are known to be spontaneous and would defy existing theories or models of analysis. A manifestation of new sets of data may present opportunities to develop new theories or models.

since hidden variables may be of crucial importance to the study, certain patterns in the system may not be fully recognised. Sometimes these unknown phenomena may already be familiar and well-documented concepts in other disciplines, which as suggested earlier, may require probing outside the parent discipline.⁴⁰ As will be shown in the next chapter, the notion of anarchy in IR seems to cast a spell on the discipline, such that scholars tend to find it difficult to break from its general principles.

The following two chapters will attempt to put the foregoing discussion into perspective. Some of the approaches that are common in the IR discipline with respect to the study of collective action will be examined and a critique of a few of the key concepts which are taken for granted in IR discourse will be discussed. Hence, the next two chapters support the argument that the IR discipline needs to evolve, as well as the need to adopt new approaches in the discipline. This critique will facilitate the development of relevant concepts for the study of collective intelligence. The main frame of reference for the discussion focuses on the centrality of anarchy and its impact on the feasibility of collective action. The critique of these key concepts is set out in chapter three. In chapter four, the analysis is broadened to examine concepts that prove to be more relevant to collective action than the notion of anarchy.

⁴⁰ Schelling, for example, noted that many models cut across different fields of inquiry and different problem areas op cit, p. 90

Chapter 2

Anarchy, Order and the Logic of Centralised Solutions

2.1. Introduction

Why is collective action among states difficult? Is it feasible and under what conditions can it be achieved? Although these questions are central to the study of international politics, the issues raised underlie some of the difficulties in conceptualising a viable UN intelligence system. The study of these issues in IR seems to be dominated by realism and neoliberal institutionalism. Although some of the assumptions made by these schools, regarding the effects of anarchy on cooperation and collective action have been found to be limited, they have been strong enough to serve as a focal point for the framing of research questions in this field.⁴¹

Conventional, and indeed, dominant IR theories argue that the system of international politics lack the necessary and coherent conditions to encourage collective action among the units. The aim of this chapter is to examine the basis of these assumptions, their strengths and weaknesses, and their (possible) constraints on the conceptualisation of collective intelligence. Within the context of anarchy, three major features stand out, these are the *raison d'être* of the state, power, and the absence a centralised system of planning in the international system.

In recent times however, many schools of thought have evolved within the IR discipline to challenge the dominance of the anarchy paradigm. Nonetheless, some of these studies have overlooked some implicit but important defining features of the paradigm, such as the relevance of authority and bureaucracy, in the international systems of states. The present chapter takes as its point of reference, not only the concept of state and power, but also the dependent variables of authority and bureaucracy. It is argued that the manner in which the contrast between the domestic and the international systems is articulated is inappropriate and comparatively inadequate to the purpose of

⁴¹ See for example, Powell, Robert "Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 85 No. 4 (1991) pp. 1303-20; Powell, Robert "Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate" *International Organisation* Vol. 48 No. 2 (spring 1994) pp. 313-44; Dessler, David "What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate" *International Organisation* 43 (summer 1989) pp. 441-70; Wendt, Alexander "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics" *International Organisation* Vol. 46 No. 2 (spring 1992) pp. 391-425; and Milner, Helen "The Assumption of Anarchy in International Relations Theory" *Review of International Studies* Vol. 17 (January 1991) pp. 67-85

developing international political systems theory. It is arguable that this kind of comparison inadvertently implies the superiority of one system over another.

It is not unacknowledged that the anarchy paradigm is intended to be understood as a metaphor, but at the same time, it is not uncommon to find that its application tends to bestride both metaphor and reality.⁴² In summary, the argument is that the domestic and international political systems are two different systems, which exist for different purposes. This distinction seems to elude scholars of the anarchy oriented schools. The present study will also draw attention to the fact that, while bureaucracy and authority may play important roles in centralised systems of order within the states system, these same variables may have the opposite effect in a decentralised environment. There is an underlying conviction in the anarchy paradigm that variables in both domestic and international systems are correlated under the same conditions. For these reasons, the conditions under which certain relationships hold are ignored or understated. It can be argued that one way to break from this restriction would be to acknowledge why certain societies or groups exist in their present states, acquire their distinct characteristics and how these combined factors inform and shape their organising principles. This general appreciation of the differences of conditions within the systems will define the present discussion.

2.2. The notion of anarchy and cooperation in the international system

A major intellectual problem in studying collective action is how to escape the dominating influence of the anarchy paradigm. To break from this tradition, the approach in this dissertation will be oriented towards developing a concept of collective intelligence in a decentralised system. It is assumed that such a decentralised system should meet two basic requirements; first, that the members of the collective, are interdependent and by the nature of the relationship, the group can be

⁴² For example, Baldwin found the use of the terms realism and neorealism in IR discourses misleading and observed that these terms are both connotative as well as denotative. He argued, “The connotation of (‘realism’ or ‘neorealism’) is one of looking at the world as it really is. This was not only the connotation but the denotation as well for two of the intellectual forefathers of neorealism. For E.H. Carr, realism focused on ‘what was and what is’ in contrast to utopianism, which focused on what could and should be. For Hans Morganthau, realism earned its name by concentrating on ‘human nature as it actually is’ and on ‘historic processes as they actually take place’. Inis Claude’s characterisation of the usage of the phrase ‘balance of power’ by an earlier generation of realists reminds us that scholarly debate can be impaired by loaded terminology.” Baldwin, David A., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993) p. 10; see also Rothstein, Robert “On the Costs of Realism” in Richard Little and Michael Smith eds. *Perspective on World Politics* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge 1991) pp. 409-418; Palan and Blair made the point that competition and rivalry between states provide a practical yardstick by which societies measure – or were forced to measure – the level of their own internal coherence. “Competition between states, should not be therefore in terms of purely anarchic struggle between states, but should be understood in a wider dimension: acting in the service of reason and the creation of universal history”. Palan, Ronen P. and Brook M. Blair “On the Idealist Origins of the Realist Theory of International Relations” *Review of International Studies* Vol. 19 (1993) pp. 385-399

defined as a complex whole.⁴³ This means that it would not be sufficient to understand the characteristics of complex organisations merely by looking at the actions or behaviours of certain individual in a particular setting, but the study should also include an examination of the relationship between individuals and the organisation as a group, as well as the contexts of the various processes that produce and institutionalise their patterns of relationships. To appreciate the relevance of a model based on decentralised systems, the key features of the anarchy paradigm should be discussed.

Central to the anarchy paradigm is a fundamental narrative based on structural attributes, which produce the kind of consistency and stability experienced in the domestic system and lacking in the international system. The anarchy paradigm defines these attributes in the narrow sense of differentiation of status positions along lines of communication, and argues that the absence of hierarchy in the system is a major characteristic of anarchy. Furthermore, the concept also points to the “separateness” and “differentiation” of states in the system, as significant factors in states’ inability to form a coherent system, as well as engage in a collective endeavour. From this point of view, the paradigm takes the domestic situation as a necessary point of reference.

It follows that, whereas the domestic structure is constituted in its differences of parts, the anarchy of the international system is rooted in its separateness of parts.⁴⁴ To illustrate the point, Kenneth Waltz, for example, identified two different types of structures, the “mechanical” and “organic” arrangements. With reference to the eminent sociologist, Emile Durkheim, Waltz argued that these two structures correspond “respectively with the anarchic order of international politics and the hierarchical order of domestic politics.”⁴⁵ He described a mechanical society as “consisting of little centers, distinctive and alike” and “having their own needs and interests”. He argued that units in mechanical societies interact, only “variably and sporadically.”⁴⁶ This separateness of mechanical structures, he argued, stands in contrast with the coherence and stability of an organic structure, founded on its differentiation of roles and which enables the system to promote the advancement of

⁴³ By “complex whole”, is meant the extent to which units have integrated to form an entity, with distinctive characteristics which makes it different from other entities. Such a distinction may be manifested in different ways, for example, their manner of interaction, or the very nature of their relationships within the system.

⁴⁴ The meaning and use of the terms “separateness” and “differences” are disputed in IR literature, see for example, Ruggie, John Gerald “Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Towards a Neorealist Synthesis”, in Keohane, Robert ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press 1986) pp. 131-157; and Waltz, Kenneth N. “Reflection on Theory of International Politics: A Response to My Critics” in, Keohane ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 322-345

⁴⁵ Waltz, *ibid*, p. 323

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

its members. “Units become closely linked because they do special jobs and then exchange goods and services in order to meet their common requirements.”⁴⁷

The idea of “organic” and “mechanical” societies is discussed at length in a later chapter (chapter four). Meanwhile, it could be argued that neither “separateness” nor “differentiations” in these terms provide convincing reasons for either stability or anarchy. States in international systems are made up of different communities or groups, which are by their nature unique, in perhaps the same logic as in the “separateness” of the units in international system. In this vein of argument, John Ruggie observed that the weakness in Waltz’s formulation of the anarchy paradigm is essentially its failure to account for significant changes in international politics since the middle ages, for example, “the shift from the medieval to the modern international system.”⁴⁸ Ruggie argued that to ignore these changes and describe the system as anarchical, “would be historically inaccurate and nonsensical.”⁴⁹ Some of these modern changes can also be said to include the development of international organisations, information and communication technologies, as well as established patterns of behavior.

2.3. Relevance of authority in the anarchy paradigm

The absence of authority in the international system provides another key contrast. This argument is the starting point for Kenneth Waltz’ widely quoted *Theory of International Politics*. To stress the distinction between the structures and the processes of domestic and international politics, Waltz outlined the basic features of anarchy as follows:

Structural questions are questions about the arrangement of parts of a system. The parts of domestic politics systems stand in relations of super – and subordination. Some are entitled to command; others are required to obey. Domestic systems are centralised and hierarchic. The parts of international – political systems stand in relations of coordination. Formally, each is equal to all the others. None is entitled to command; none is required to obey. International systems are decentralised and anarchic. The ordering principles of the two structures are distinctly different, indeed, contrary to each other. Domestic political structures have government institutions and offices as their concrete counter points. International politics, in contrast, has been called “politics in the absence of government.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 324

⁴⁸ Ruggie, op cit

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Waltz, Kenneth N., *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley 1979) p. 88

Since for Waltz the absence of authority is synonymous to the state of nature, such a condition is tantamount to a state of war. “Among men as among states, anarchy or the absence of government is associated with the occurrence of violence.”⁵¹ It follows therefore that, because states co-exist in this anarchical environment, the system thus becomes the primary factor that determines how states relate with one another, as well as defining their reasons of existence. The system, it is argued, defines the state in three ways. These are a survival instinct, the concept of interest defined as power, and competition; all of which are also interrelated. For realists, these factors are natural attributes of an anarchical system, in which the only means of survival is “self-help”. A similar distinction between domestic and international system is made by Martin Wight in his *Power Politics*.⁵² Wight argued that the study of international politics presupposes the absence of government, as the study of domestic politics presupposes the existence of one.

What is really achieved from this distinction? Waltz’s intention is not clearly stated but, from the outline of his theory of international politics, it is apparent that both the contrasts and the comparison are intended to achieve two notable objectives, one of which, it can be argued, is to identify a structure that can be seen as an ideal system for social organisations. The association of the features outlined by Waltz are, in fact, rather ambivalent; if at all the aim is to emphasise the superiority of the domestic system over the international system.⁵³ To put the argument in a nutshell, a system lacking a governmental function is anarchic, whereas, one with such a function is ordered. The corollary to this distinction is to identify the reasons of states, primarily as power maximising systems, not necessarily for self-preservation under the condition of anarchy but fundamentally, as a tool to control others, or in its own sake.⁵⁴

In defining anarchy, realism correctly adopted the original Greek word *Anarchos*, meaning “without a ruler.” In this sense, the term defines a structure overburdened by gloom and chaos. For example, an historic interpretation of anarchy suggests the following characteristics:

Laws that are not carried into effect, authorities without force and despised, crime unpunished, property attacked, the safety of the individual violated, the morality of the people corrupted, no constitution, no government, no justice, these are the features of anarchy.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 102

⁵² Wight, Martin *Power Politics* (Penguin Books 1979) p. 102

⁵³ Ibid, esp chps. 9 and 10

⁵⁴ Power, from the point of view of Weber is defined as “a person’s ability to impose his will upon others despite resistance. See for example, Blau, Peter “Critical Remarks On Weber’s Theory of Authority” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 57 (June 1963) pp. 305-316

⁵⁵ Girondin Brissot, in demanding the suppression of the Enragés, whom he described as anarchists, in 1793; quoted in Woodcock, George *Anarchism* (UK: Pelican Books 1962) p. 8

Whether this interpretation of anarchy truly reflects the present day international system, is also contested. This question is the main concern in Hedley Bull's seminal work, *The Anarchical Society*. The conclusions reached by Bull are instructive and therefore worth outlining. Bull found several weaknesses in the anarchy paradigm and principally, the comparison between international and domestic systems, which he refers to as the "domestic analogy".⁵⁶ This, according to Bull, draws on the comparison of the experience of individuals in domestic society to the experience of states. He argued that like individuals, states are capable of orderly social life not necessarily, if, "as in Hobbes's phrase, they stand in awe of a common power."⁵⁷ Bull observed that for Hobbes, states like men in a state of nature, and without government, amounts to a state of war. Under this condition, quoting Hobbes, Bull noted;

There can be no industry, agriculture, navigation, trade or other refinement of living because the strength and invention of men is absorbed in providing security against one another. There are no legal or moral rules: "the notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place... It is consequent also the same condition, that there can be no Property, no Dominion, no *Mine* or *Thine* distinct; but only that to be everyman's, that he can get; and so long as he can keep it."⁵⁸

Yet, as Bull argued, none of these characteristics are truly visible in present day international politics (except for the view that states are predisposed to war and believe war to be one of the options open to them). Bull concluded that the notion of international anarchy is based on a false premise about the condition of order among individuals in the states system, which maintains that the fear of a supreme authority is the only viable form of order in modern society. Thus, he argued, that, since states are unlike individuals, "and are more capable of forming an *anarchical society*,"⁵⁹ the domestic analogy is no more than an analogy; the fact that states form a society without government reflects features of their situation that are unique."⁶⁰ If these descriptions are not then true reflection of the international system, what then is anarchy?

Many scholars have tended to treat lack of order and the lack of government as two different concepts, hence, the view that anarchy has two different meanings. The first meaning of anarchy emphasises the lack of government or central authority as a main condition. The second focuses on

⁵⁶ For the outline of the arguments discussed here, see Bull, Hedley *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan 1977) esp. pp. 46-52

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 46

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ My emphasis, it would be useful to compare Bulls positive connotation to the negative description conceived by realists' application of the term.

the means available to states to defend themselves in the absence of a higher authority that would mediate conflict.⁶¹ In the sense of the latter interpretation, Arthur Stein defined anarchy as “relations between sovereign entities dedicated to their own self-preservation, ultimately able to depend only on themselves, and prepared to use force.”⁶² Whether it is possible to separate the first and the second meaning is, in fact, a matter of emphasis, though, one that makes little or no contribution to the concept. The different meanings may, perhaps, be accounted for by the need to emphasise particular variables in the system, such as the conditions in which states are willing to enter into cooperative agreements, a point which is discussed later.

Anarchy in the Hobbesian sense, and as understood in IR, emphasises no real difference in the use of the term, and sees the proverbial “state of nature as a state of war” *analogy* only as a consequence of the absence of a leviathan.⁶³ This view is explicit in Waltz’s definition of the concept. The problem with trying to find these many meanings for anarchy is noted by Powell. He argued that the first definition of anarchy, (lack of government) “is in some sense transposable, while the second definition (order or potential use of force) is not transposable enough.”⁶⁴ The idea of this *transposability* of a concept is not immediately clear and also seems to point to a lack of precision in the formulation of the anarchy paradigm. However, Powell’s argument seems to suggest that if we do away with the potential use of force in the concept, the idea of international anarchy ceases to make sense. One source of this problem can be traced to the neoliberal institutionalist’s attempts to reinterpret the paradigm and to broaden it beyond the essentially narrow realist’s discourse. This flexible interpretation of the paradigm in many ways accounts for neoliberals’ success in explaining the feasibility of cooperation in the absence of a central authority.⁶⁵ The confusion over the meaning of anarchy may also be accounted for by the overlap of three important concepts in political science,

⁶⁰ Bull, op cit, p. 46

⁶¹ Many scholars start by drawing attention to these differences in the meaning of anarchy. See for example, Powell, Robert “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate” *International Organisation* Vol. 48 No. 2 (spring 1994) pp. 313-44; Stein, Arthur A., “Coordination and Collaboration: Regimes in an Anarchic World” in Krasner ed. *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1983) pp. 115-141; Milner, op cit

⁶² Stein, ibid

⁶³ For a discussion on the appropriation and misrepresentation of Hobbes’s ideas, specially on the notion of a Leviathan in international relations, see for example, Williams, Michael “Hobbes and International Relations: A Reconsideration” *International Organisation* Vol. 50 No. 2 (spring, 1996) pp. 213-236

⁶⁴ Powell, op cit

⁶⁵ See for example, the works of Axelrod, Robert *The Evolutions of cooperation*, (New York: Basic Books 1984); Keohane, Robert O. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984); Krasner, Stephen D., “Regimes and the Limits of Realism: Regimes as Autonomous Variables” in, S.D. Krasner ed. *International Regimes* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London 1983) pp. 355-368; Lipson, Charles “International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs” *World Politics* Vol. 37 (Oct 1984) pp. 1-23; Jervis, Robert “Cooperation Under Security Dilemma” *World Politics* Vol. 30 (1978) pp. 167-214; Snidal, Duncan “Coordination Versus Prisoner’s Dilemma: Implications for International Cooperation and Regimes,” *American Political Science Review*, 1985, pp. 923-942; Taylor, Michael *The Possibility of Cooperation* (Cambridge University Press 1987);

“state”, “government”, and “authority,” which are essential variables in the realist thesis. Though these concepts are different, they are assumed to be main sources of social order and therefore, important elements in the anarchy paradigm.

For realism, order and authority are reasonably linked, and such relationship is both symbiotic and ecological. It is symbiotic in the sense that order and authority are dependent on each other. Order and authority also have an ecological relationship since both are assumed to coexist as conditions for an efficient working system. One last reason for highlighting this minor but vexing problem is that in the analysis of anarchy, the issue may be dealt with as consisting of different variables rather than as having different meanings. However, the significance of these diverse meanings of anarchy is most apparent in its application to the rationale for collective action, which is examined presently.

2.4. Conditions for cooperation under anarchy: The relative and absolute gains debate

Realism contends that the struggle for survival, imposed by anarchy, means that relationships among states are inherently conflictual and, under such conditions, collective endeavour among states is impossible. In his *Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth Waltz noted that this situation (as defined by the structure of the system), limits cooperation among states in two ways. In the first, he contends that in a self-help system, states would rather commit their efforts to protecting themselves against others, rather than cooperating for mutual gain. As a result, Waltz argued, when faced with the possibility of cooperating for mutual gain, states are compelled to ask, “not, will both of us gain but who will gain more?” Thus, realism asserts that a state that gains more will use its disproportionate gain to damage or destroy the other. Secondly, the condition of insecurity, they argue, breeds uncertainty about others’ future “intentions and actions” and this “works against their cooperation.” Because, in a self-help system, states are concerned more about their survival, this fear conditions their behaviour.⁶⁶ Waltz argued that the structure of the system also conditions the choices states make in two ways. First, the structure makes states worry about a division of possible gains that may favour others more than themselves, and secondly, that the structure imposes the concern that cooperation and collective endeavours may force a state to depend on others.⁶⁷ For realism, therefore, international anarchy fosters competition and conflict among states and inhibits their willingness to cooperate, even when they share common interest. Realists also argue that because international institutions are unable to mitigate anarchy’s constraining effects on inter-state

and Wagner, Harrison “The Theory of Games and the Problem of Cooperation,” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 70 (June 1983) pp. 330-46

⁶⁶ ⁶⁶ Waltz, 1979, op cit, p. 105

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 106

cooperation, this presents pessimistic prospects for international cooperation and the capabilities of international institutions.⁶⁸

For realists then, the condition of anarchy forces states to be positional in terms of their power. As Waltz argued, “states’ behaviour varies more with differences of power than with differences in ideology.” For this reason, “competition weighs more heavily” than both ideology and internal politics.⁶⁹ Morgenthau has been more explicit in defining the relevance of power in a self-help system. He defines power as, “comprising anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man... Power covers all social relationships which serve that end, from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind controls another. Power covers the dominion of man by man...”⁷⁰ For Morgenthau, the struggle for power is not only a function of a competitive environment, but, more generally, of human nature.⁷¹ Taken to its logical conclusion, the problem of cooperation, realists assert, is not only limited to the structure and system of international politics (as in systemic courses in structural realism) but inherent in human nature. But under what conditions do realists see the prospects for cooperation?

For realism, states’ survival and security concerns define their primary functions above all other interests, a decision to cooperate or participate in a collective endeavour is consequent upon the conditions imposed by anarchy. This means that, in any such endeavour, states are as concerned about others gains, as they are about their own. As a result, a state’s primary objective in any relationship is defined, not in terms of attaining the highest possible gain, but in terms of preventing others from making any gain relative to theirs. It follows, then, that states are motivated by their need and capability to prevent others from increasing their power. Grieco, for example, argued that “states always assess their performance in any relationship in terms of the performance of others.”⁷² Thus, he argued, states are “positional”, and their positionality encourages relative gains.

That is, a state will decline to join, will leave, or will sharply limit its commitment to a cooperative arrangement if it believes that partners are achieving, or are likely to achieve, relatively greater gains. Moreover, a state concerned about relative gains may decline to cooperate even if it is confident that partners will keep their commitment to joint arrangement.⁷³

⁶⁸ Grieco, Joseph M., “Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutions” *International Organisation* Vol. 42 No. 3 (1988) pp. 485-507

⁶⁹ Waltz, 1986, op cit,

⁷⁰ Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973) p. 8

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 194

⁷² Grieco, op cit

⁷³ Ibid

Realism also asserts that relative gains problem is a function of uncertainty such that states worry about one another's intentions, and so worry about how cooperation might enhance others' capabilities in the future.⁷⁴ For these reasons, Grieco concluded that states are not egoistic but that they find that their preferences exist in mixed-interest situations. "Maximum individual gains and minimal gaps in gains favouring partners", he argued, constrain their willingness to cooperate with the concern that cheating and the fear that gaps in jointly produced gains may favour partners.⁷⁵ Anarchy, according to realism, imposes on a state an "acute" necessity to survive, and this, in turn, compels states to seek to maximise their power, and, at the same time, to prevent others from gaining power.

The difficulty in achieving cooperation under the anarchy paradigm is also addressed by neoliberal institutionalists. Although this school frame their analysis by accepting the basic features of the structural and systemic models defined by neorealism, the schools differ fundamentally in their assumptions and conclusion about the effect of anarchy on international cooperation and collective action. One major dichotomy between these schools is in their assumptions of a state's functionality. In contrast to neorealism's relative gains concerns, neoliberal institutionalists consider absolute gains to be the more important concern of state's functionality. For neoliberal institutionalists, states are more concerned about how they fare in a mixed interest situation, than the concern for others' gains relative to theirs – absolute gains. For this reason, and in spite of the conditions of anarchy, the absolute gains concern opens up opportunities for cooperation. Furthermore, while realism concerns itself with what others might gain from cooperation, neoliberalism more or less worries about the prospects of cheating in cooperation. Compared then to realism, neoliberal institutionalism offers an optimistic prognosis for international cooperation.

For neoliberal institutionalists, the prevalence of "cheating" presents a far less predicament than that arising from relative gains concerns. These scholars contend that the problem of cheating can be resolved by states creating institutions that encourage cooperation, an argument that is largely developed in Robert Keohane's *After Hegemony*.⁷⁶ Although Keohane, like many of the neoliberal institutionalist oriented scholars, bases his analysis on an essentially neorealist conceptualisation of states as atomistic and selfish interest maximisers, he nevertheless, argued that states in absolute gains situation would "calculate costs and benefits of alternative courses of action in order to maximise their utility" in view of existing preferences.⁷⁷ In contrast to neorealism's contention that

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Keohane, 1984, op cit

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 270

conflict and mixed interest situation inhibit cooperation, neoliberalism asserts that cooperation reflects an effort to overcome conflict. Thus, Keohane argued, “cooperation takes place only in situations in which actors perceive that their policies are actually or potentially in conflict, not where there is harmony.”⁷⁸ Other scholars working within the anarchy paradigm have also noted favourable conditions for cooperation among egoists.⁷⁹ However, despite the dominance of these concepts in the framing of collective action research, their use as explanatory tools has been found to be limited.⁸⁰

2.5. Limitations of the neorealist and neoliberal institutionalist approaches

The relative and absolute gains hypotheses have been found to be limited on many grounds, principally, the static nature of the environment in which interactions are played out, as well as the rigidity of the actors and their motives. If the apparent inflexibility of the setting of the debate is about analysing human nature in fluid environment, it can be argued that the relative and absolute gains divide is strictly of very limited value to political science, especially in situations involving more than two states in a conflict situation.⁸¹

The argument here can be explained further by considering two possibilities. The first is that a state behaviour or the degree of its concern for relative or absolute gains is the product of the strategic environment, which is likely to change as the intensity of the security problem changes. In this case, the strategic choice facing states induces a concern for relative or absolute gains, with strict relevance to value associated with expected outcome. The second possibility might be to assume that a state’s degree of concern does not change and is the same regardless of the environment. Powell for example, observed that states’ concern for relative and absolute gains are inherently “linked, not to different assumptions about states’ preferences but to changes in the constraints facing the states.”⁸² In an effort to shift the “focus of analysis away from preferences to constraints”, Powell argued that in attempting to maximise their utility functions within the constraints imposed by anarchy, and where costs of using force is sufficiently low, “cooperation outcomes that offer unequal

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 53

⁷⁹ See for example, Axelrod, 1984, op cit; Axelrod, Robert “The Emergence of Cooperation Among Egoists” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 75 No. 2 (June 1981) pp. 306-18; Axelrod, Robert “More Effective Choice in the Prisoner’s Dilemma” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 24 (1980) pp. 379-403; Adler, Emmanuel “The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control” *International Organisation* Vol. 46 (winter 1992) pp. 101-145; Olson, Mancur “Increasing the Incentives for International Collaboration” *International Organisation* Vol. 25 (1971) pp. 886-874

⁸⁰ Some scholars have gone as far as describing the relative and absolute gains debate as pointless, see for example, Sebenius, James K., “Challenging Conventional Explanation of International Cooperation: Negotiation Analysis and the case of Epistemic communities” *International Organisation* Vol. 46 No. 1 (winter 1992) pp. 324-365

⁸¹ Snidal, Duncan “International Cooperation Among Relative Gains Maximisers” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 35 (1991a) pp. 387-402

⁸² Powell, Robert “Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 85 No. 4 (1991) pp. 1303-20

absolute gains cannot be supported as part of the equilibrium even though the states' preferences are defined only over their absolute level of economic welfare." This, Powell argued is in accord with structural realism. However, "if the use of force is not at issue because fighting is too costly, then the results are more in accord with neoliberal institutionalism."⁸³ With structural realism, Powell argued, no cooperation is feasible; in contrast to neoliberal institutionalism, where relative gains concerns may lead to negotiations and tradeoffs.

Powell's analysis is instructive in two ways: first it suggests that neither relative nor absolute gains hypotheses adequately explain the feasibility of international cooperation. Secondly, strictly speaking, the impact of anarchy on international cooperation only applies to special cases. Similarly, Duncan Snidal also developed a model which showed weaknesses in the relative gains hypothesis outside the "tight bipolar world".⁸⁴ In a study which examined relative gains problems in prisoners' dilemma, he found that "a small increase in the number of actors dramatically decreases the impact of relative gains in impeding cooperation." This result led Snidal to argue that "the realist case is thereby shown to be quite weak outside the pure relative gains tight bipolar world."⁸⁵ Furthermore, he argued that in addition to limiting the range of "viable cooperation" between states, there would be no clear distinction between relative and absolute gains model. This, he argued, is because, "intense bargaining for greater absolute benefits also leads to a concern with the distribution of joint gains from cooperation." And "in the pure zero-sum case there is no analytic or substantive difference between seeking a greater absolute amount and seeking a greater relative share."⁸⁶

The broad conclusion reached is that the assumptions of both relative and absolute gains models present more problem than they tend to solve.⁸⁷ The centrality of anarchy in both the relative and absolute gains theses is as significant in simplifying the models as it is in directing attention away from more complex and more relevant issues in social interactions. Jervis, for example, observed that the anarchy driven thesis, which looks at individual actors, their preference and their choices, "blinds us to the broader settings in which behaviour occur."⁸⁸ The analytical framework in which cooperation and conflict is treated as integral and "not as separable or general" is also observed by

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Snidal, Duncan "Relative Gains and the Pattern of International Cooperation" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 85 No. 3 (Sep 1991b) pp. 702-726; see also, Snidal, 1991a, op cit

⁸⁵ Ibid, 1991b

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ For example, Snidal, ibid; Powell, 1991, op cit; Milner, Helen "International Theories of Cooperation Among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses" *Review of International Studies* Vol. 44 No. 3 (April 1992) pp. 466-469; Wendt, Alexander "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics" *International Organisation* Vol. 46 No. 2 (spring 1992) pp. 391-425; to mention but a few

⁸⁸ Jervis, Robert "Realism, Game Theory and Cooperation" *World Politics* Vol. 40 No. 3 (1988) pp. 317-49

Sebenius as, not only “illusory” but also conceptually misleading and empirically confusing.⁸⁹ Sebenius argued that, not treating cooperation and conflict as separate issues narrow the number of plausible explanatory concepts in a given situation, and thus, disguise the “reliability with which the structure and rules of a given situation can be mapped onto a unique negotiated outcome.”⁹⁰ Similarly, Snidal also noted that the “naïve” characterisation of international politics as “pure struggle for power”, with power treated as constant, is a further source of analytical confusion in the model.⁹¹

It would be unfair to conclude that the neoralist-neoliberal relative and absolute gains debate is obsolete. As pointed out, it has applicability to a range of social situations but in the same vein, the concepts could be useful in the analysis of a strictly limited set of cases. For example, they provide good reference points in the study of Soviet and American Cold War relations and the difficulty in reaching cooperative agreements in areas of arms negotiations. The Cold War oriented models tend to have the characteristics of very restricted definitions of “cooperation” in the sense that they could not be taken to represent all forms of social interaction. Nevertheless, both parties were able to reach agreements in areas which were significant in averting all out war between them.

It is evident now that the further away we move from the tight bipolar world and the Cold war situation, the less relevant the relative and absolute gains theses become in the context of collective action. The idea of “cooperation” used by both neorealists and neoliberal institutionalists suggests a system of competition more akin to “social Darwinism”, where the primary function of the individual is to undermine others’ survival in order to give oneself the greatest possible chance of future progress.⁹² This is not an unusual expectation in the strict sense of anarchy. In a later chapter, an attempt to isolate the relevance of anarchy from the present model will be achieved by examining collective action in a much broader context. The argument will show that the “incentive problems” facing participants in a collective are in fact general and are not necessarily a result of anarchy. Meanwhile, two further features of the anarchy paradigm will be discussed; i.e., the relevance of authority and centralised structure as systems of coordination.

2.6. Centralised and decentralised systems

The relative and absolute gains debate arising from the supposed prevalence of anarchy has led to the contrast between the systems of states and international politics. It should be recalled that Kenneth

⁸⁹ Sebenius, op cit

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Snidal, 1991b op cit

⁹² Jervis, op cit

Waltz's explanation of structural realism also centred on a lack of authority and centralised structure in the international system in contrast to the domestic systems of politics. If, his intention was to acknowledge that these two systems, being characteristically different, deserved to be seen to have different processes and modes of action, which can be said to be (relatively) stable, that admission was not explicit in his *Theory of International Politics*. If also, from a realist' point of view, the concept of decentralised processes is recognised as relevant to international politics, then, that understanding seems to be overshadowed by excessive, and sometimes pointless, over-concentration on conflict and the struggle for power.

The remainder of this chapter will examine the relevance of centralised systems and the notion of authority in the context of international politics. The argument can be illustrated by examining two different modes of organisation; the first consisting of individuals with degrees of autonomy and able to make independent decisions without a close or extensive network of supervision. The second is presumed to consist of individuals with little or no autonomy to make independent decisions, and having a network of institutions to administer close supervision over the rest of the group. These modes of planning correlate respectively with decentralised systems of international politics and centralised systems of domestic politics. The key question, then, is whether productivity and coordination could be improved in decentralised systems, if control mechanisms that are familiar in centralised systems are introduced. Only when the answer to this question is in the affirmative are we thinking in terms of an ideal system. Otherwise, making this kind of contrasts contains the implicit assumption that the properties existing in one system and lacking in the other makes the former superior.

The answer to that question, however, is negative. For example, Stinchcombe's study of production organisation in two industries, suggest that, technical skills of construction workers, which contrast with the low level of skills in mass production, encouraged performance which served as substitute for the bureaucratic hierarchy through which the work in mass production is organised.⁹³ From this study, Stinchcombe concluded that administration in non specialised environments and those in specialised environments are two contrasting and "special" types of administration. The aim of stinchcombe's study was to stress the point that some components of Weber's ideal type structure do not form an inherently connected set of variables. Some of the components of "ideal type", he found, are relatively uncorrelated with others, while some may be correlated. Conclusions such as these

⁹³ Stinchcombe, Arthur L., Bureaucratic and Craft Administration of Production: A comparative Study" *Administrative Science Quarterly* Vol. 4 (1959) pp. 168-87; see also Udy, Stanley H., "The Structure of Authority in Non-Industrial Production Organisations" *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 64 No. 6 (May 1959) pp. 582-584

could be valuable when analysing the usefulness of the anarchy paradigm in the study of the contemporary international system.

2.7. Relevance of order in domestic political systems

The above argument is better understood by stressing the distinctive properties of centralised and decentralised systems. The idea represents an effort to depart from the anarchy paradigm and to emphasise the point that both these systems have distinctive processes and mechanisms for goal attainments, such as order, that is, if order maintenance is prerequisite to the group.

The word “order” has a variety of meanings, but here, the focus is only on those which are relevant to the present study.⁹⁴ One meaning relates to the hierarchical ordering of parts; that is, the arrangement of parts of a unit, positioned according to the ranking of the parts. Defining order in this way presupposes the arrangement of objects according to their functions in relation to the parts. This notion of order more than anything else, describes the social relations of the units in terms of domination and subordination, but also in organisational terms refers to pyramidal arrangements of authority relations, stepwise from top to bottom. It is common to conceive of formal organisation as a hierarchical structure.⁹⁵ The corollary to this understanding of structure also underlies the belief that hierarchical structure is a necessary attribute to a stable and coherent society. This mode of thinking is, in fact, consistent with the anarchy paradigm, and partly explains why realism cannot generally accept the idea of a coherent international system. For these scholars, therefore, hierarchical structure is synonymous with a stable society. In Kenneth Waltz’s definition of anarchy, three main factors stand out as conditions of order or lack of thereof. These are a) *structure* (arrangement of parts hierarchically); b) *governance* and or *authority* (mechanism of order maintenance; and c) *system* (or process of interaction among units). This latter is the idea behind the “positionality”, and in which the function of the units is defined by their role within the structure. This definition of order is also pivotal in the system level analysis of international political theory.

Hedley Bull observed that social order is sometimes defined in terms of “obedience to rules and conduct”, or more precisely, as “obedience to rules of law.”⁹⁶ This assumption leads to the second meaning of order, which refers to the stability of a system. The third, also relates to the ones already mentioned, but refers to order in social life, according to Bull, as “a pattern of human activity that sustains elementary, primary or universal goals of social life.”⁹⁷ Such goals may include a number of security issues, from countering threats to property to ensuring protection from hostile external

⁹⁴ See for example *Concise Oxford Dictionary* where entry for the meanings and usage of the word “order” occupies the best part of two pages.

⁹⁵ See, March, James and Herbert Simon *Organisations* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell 1993) p. 3

⁹⁶ Bull, op cit, p. 7

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 5

forces. Order, then, more generally, are thought to be dependent on institutions with some form of legitimate authority through which order is maintained. In his *Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, Weber identified two main types of order; that which governs group action (administrative), and that which protects members of the group, and, I shall add, maintenance of the stability of the group (regulative).⁹⁸ Pattern maintenance and stability are traditionally believed to be sustained by authority (see fig.2.7a below).

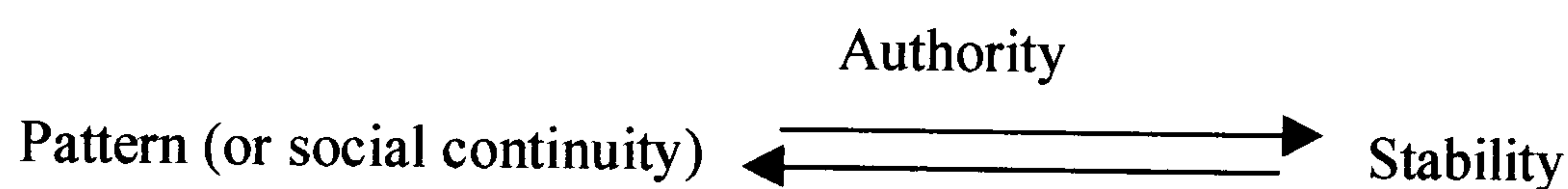


Fig.2.7a Structure of social order

Realism lays emphasis on the first interpretation of order (arrangement of parts). Although this interpretation is not clearly defined in realist discourse, the idea of domination and subordination persist in their conceptualisation of the international system. They take as a starting point of their analysis, the apparent lack of authority and subordination in the system. It then seems pertinent that the existence of “order” both as a measure of stability and as a pattern of social continuity is directly linked with the notion of authority. Here again, we are confronted with even more important issue. That is, how units in systems of pure autonomy, can be encouraged to pledge their allegiance to such authority. For realism, this issue is an important defining feature of anarchy. As Waltz puts it, “the problem is this: how to conceive of an order without an orderer and of an organisational effectiveness where formal organisation is lacking?”⁹⁹ Realism, therefore, argues that international “order” can be maintained by opposing powers threatening to annihilate each other. The idea of balance of power in this context is ambiguous and has strictly limited applicability, though consistent with the anarchy paradigm. The aim here however, is not to study the balance of power but to examine the relevance of authority in the international system.

In Weber’s ideal system, the notion of order is intrinsically linked with authority and hierarchy. Such an idea has a strong appeal to both organisational theorists and to structural realism. Authority and government, it is believed resolve the dilemma of social order in domestic politics. In its purest form, the domestic system is a centralised system for which the typical structure consists of three main variables; state, government, and authority. These three concepts, it must be stressed, are different,

⁹⁸ Weber, Max *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* Translated by Henderson, A.M. and Talcott Parson, (Free Press 1947) p. 150

⁹⁹ Waltz, 1979, op cit, p. 102,

though they have been used interchangeably in the anarchy paradigm, a practice, which, unfortunately, adds further dimension of “anarchy” to the anarchy paradigm itself.¹⁰⁰ These concepts are fused and integral in the domestic system of order, but not necessarily so in the international system. Where they are present, the meanings and functions will apply differently to both domestic and international systems. Precisely how they differ and at the same time integrated will be clearer as this chapter develops. In the meantime, the relationship among these variables can be shown at a glance, as in fig.2.7b. This illustration shows that *states* are forms of “formal organisations” for which governments are the principal agents for coordinating their activities, and the tool of coordination is its authority to do so. Hence, states create governmental institutions, and endow them with the authority to carry out these functions. Governments, in the sense can therefore be defined as systems of coordination.

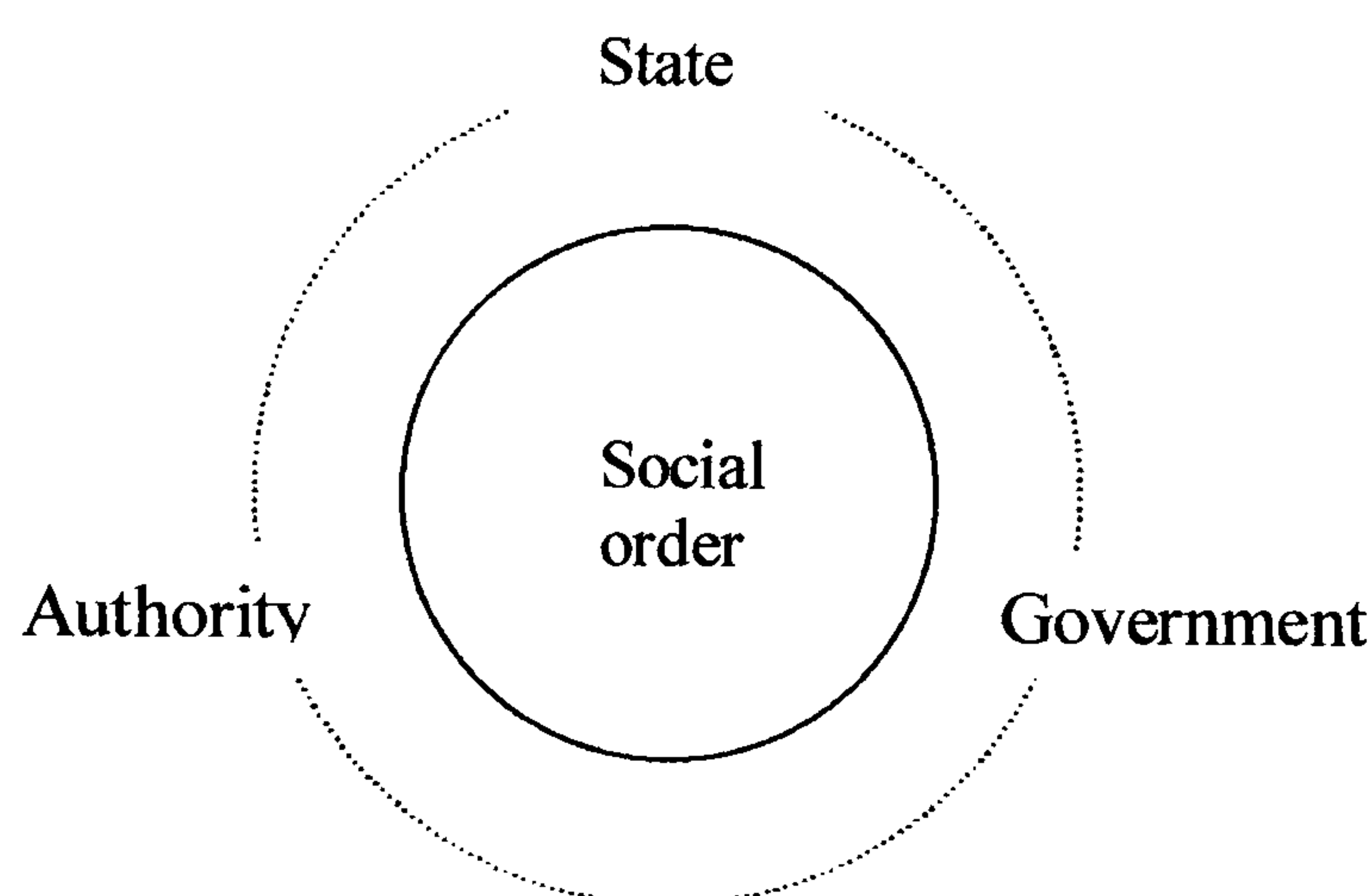


Fig. 2.7b Composite of state, authority and government as a system of social order

2.8. Implications of order and authority for decentralised systems

It is therefore possible to think of government (or governance) in two ways.¹⁰¹ In the first instance, we could think of it in a broad generic sense as organisational system and secondly, as a system of political authority. When we think of government in such generic terms, it invariably means a system of coordinating and optimising production, which can also be interpreted as a means of achieving social goals. Such a definition is in some ways compatible with Weber’s notion of “administrative order”, which sees governmental institutions as performing an administrative function in pursuit of social goals.

¹⁰⁰ Helen Milner observed that many discussions in international politics fail to define government and authority and define them in very different ways. She also noted that scholars tend to use government and authority interchangeably, even though they are two distinct concepts. See Milner, 1991, op cit

¹⁰¹ MacIver, for example, casts doubt on the specific meaning and the “science of government.” See MacIver, Robert M. *The Web of Government* Revised ed. (New York: Free Press 1967) chps 1 and 2 on the origin of government and, esp., pp. 3-9 on the “Myth and Techniques” of government, and how the concept (“myth”) of government changes over time.

When the idea of “government” is applied to decentralised systems, it is possible to show that the system could achieve similar objectives, in terms of optimising its social goals. This means that in decentralised systems, the parts work independently, *self-governed*, but as equals in pursuit of a given goal. The concept of a decentralised system makes it possible to think of a system, whose goals are functions of the constituent units. For instance, it is possible to think of a collegial system, or a team of experts from different fields, each highly knowledgeable in their own field, and equipped with abilities to make independent judgements on professional, ethical and moral grounds. Somewhere along the line, the team’s effort is synchronised, coordinated and optimised. For these reasons, it is also possible to think of an invisible government, constituted not only in their expertise and professional standards but also in their awareness of the group’s goal. In other words, the system is self-governing and self-maintaining, and characteristically would possess features which can be found to be in conflict with the requirements of hierarchical systems.¹⁰²

This, however, is not to say that there might not be an individual or group of individuals within the team that appear to coordinate activities. Their special role, such as making decisions for the group, does not suggest any superior status. The relationship between the coordinating group and the rest of the members, according to Georg Simmel, can be thought of as a process of coordination;

Which in one respect or at one time A is superior to B; in another respect or at another time, however, B is superior to A. In such case the value of superordination and subordination as elements of organisation would be preserved, while their oppressiveness, one-sidedness and injustice would disappear.¹⁰³

Simmel refers to this form of association as “simultaneous superordination and subordination.” He argued that many associations owe their “external” and “internal” stability wholly or in part, to coordinating the disparate attributes where in one respect, one individual may be superior and in another respect to the others, inferior. He noted, therefore, that this system of coordination is one of the most decisive forms of reciprocity and, if properly managed, can “by virtue of this very intimate reciprocity which it signifies, constitute a most powerful bond between individuals.”¹⁰⁴ In the context of both political and organisation theory, the process could be thought of in terms of a division of labour.

¹⁰² Blau, Peter M., “The Hierarchy of Authority in Organisations” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 73 No. 4 (Jan. 1968) pp. 453-467

¹⁰³ Simmel, Georg “Superiority and Subordination as Subject-Matter of Sociology” Part II, *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 2. No. 3 (Nov. 1896b) pp. 392-415

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

The idea of linking authority with planning seems an accepted dogma, to the point that the exercise of authority seems more contingent than the necessity for effectiveness. However, Udy argued that if in organisations, coordination of diverse roles prevails by means of a system of authority, some general relationship between work complexity and authority structure should be discerned.¹⁰⁵ In a similar vein, Simmel also argued that the “subordination of the one to the other persists only as a *technical necessity* within this common relationship to the higher principle.”¹⁰⁶ Simmel noted that the manner in which the relations between superiority and subordination is modified by the fact of the purpose, depends on whether the coordinating individual or group represent the higher objective as against the subordinate. If the superior and the subordinates have similar objectives, he argued, then, “the gradation between them is a matter of technique and organisation.”¹⁰⁷ If this argument is applied to decentralised systems, it could be argued that, in the circumstances, coordination could not prevail by means of authority. On the contrary, “authority” itself is the subject of coordination. For example, the group or individuals that coordinate the activities do so not by way of exercising their superiority or power of authority but only as part of the production technique. Relationships between members of the system are not constituted in a two level structure of “orderer” and “ordered” groups, and communication in this system flows, not vertically, but horizontally.

Three further observations could be added; first that the decisions of the coordinating group will be binding to the rest of the group if the decision making processes is consistent with the rules accepted by all. For example, the rule might specify a coalition of individuals whose decisions are binding.¹⁰⁸ A prototype example would perhaps be the UN Security Council. Secondly, rules binding on superordinates may be achieved in various ways such as vote trading and bargaining.¹⁰⁹ Among superordinates, as Eckstein noted, symmetry is a general end rather than a means for maximising power.¹¹⁰ Thirdly, expression of power in a decentralised system is omnilateral as opposed to unilateral. A power relation is unilateral if only one party in the relationship exercises power over the other.¹¹¹ A power relationship is omnilateral in the sense if all individuals in the group are mutually influenced. The power relationships between officers and privates in an army or teachers and pupils in a classroom are typically unilateral. It is not uncommon that one party in an omnilateral relationship may attempt to influence the others’ behaviour, but this cannot immediately be

¹⁰⁵ Udy, Stanley H., “The Structure of Authority in Non-Industrial Production Organisations”, *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 64 No. 6 (May 1959) pp. 582-584

¹⁰⁶ Simmel, Georg “Superiority and Subordination as Subject-Matter of Sociology” Part I, *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 2 No. 2 (Sept. 1896a) pp. 167-189

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ See, Riker, William H., *The Theory of Political Coalition* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1962) pp. 12

¹⁰⁹ See Eckstein, Harry “Authority Pattern: A Structural Basis for Political Inquiry” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 67 (December 1973) pp. 1142-1161

¹¹⁰ Ibid

interpreted as domination, though the tendency by one party to dominate the other cannot be completely discounted. A system of domination and subordination is consistent and continuous, and clearly defines the social character of the group.

In contrast with decentralised systems, centralised systems are defined by their asymmetric relationships, which involve expression of power and status by certain individuals. The consequences of such relationships form part of the discussion of systems of political authority as constituted in the domestic system. It follows that if we can think of a system that is self-governing; the idea of authority in such a system becomes redundant.

What then is the relationship between organisational processes and authority? This question introduces the second conception of government, as a system of political authority rather than as an administrative or organisational process. When we refer to government as administrative or organisational tools, we are making a direct relationship between the institution and the achievements of social goals. But when government is referred to as a system of political authority, which in many ways is the conventional interpretation, we are referring to a system of hierarchy. What makes this latter problematic is its emphasis on authority and power, which in a sense makes the functions of governmental institutions, mere shadow of the system, in political studies, while treating politics as the pursuit of unlimited power and as an end in itself.

Authority and power are thought to be relevant as systems of coordination in two ways. First, as already noted, is the belief that a system cannot be self-regulated, a problem largely blamed on human nature, and secondly the belief that the efficiency of a system can only be manifested through authority backed by punishment and reward. Hence, governments have been defined variously, for example, as, “the organisation of men under authority”¹¹² or as “complexes of rules and hierarchy” in which the relations constituting them are “items of power, or control, by some men over others.”¹¹³ Governments, in this structural sense, involve asymmetric relationships between the units. It is, as Eckstein wrote, a relationship “in which someone affects more than he is affected, controls more than he is controlled, and/or gets more of what is allocated.”¹¹⁴

Authority patterns express themselves more clearly and comprehensively in domestic political systems (pure types of centralisation) and in highly bureaucratised organisations. In political establishments such as states, the observed institutions in the system are those governing the

¹¹¹ Goldhamer, Herbert and Edward A. Shils “Types of Power and Status” *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 45 No. 2 (Sept. 1939) pp. 171-182

¹¹² MacIver, op cit, p. 6

¹¹³ Eckstein, op cit

¹¹⁴ Ibid

hierarchical ordering of social status, authority, and compulsory regulation of “private” activities. In other words, governments are the focus of the domestic structure. Governments, according to Parsons, are “that complex of collectivities which have political primacy.”¹¹⁵ This means, as he explained that, government organs generate power and make it available to the rest of the society. Apart from their political contents, however, what distinguishes governments from other forms of organisation is their use of force, which implies political authority as an administrative tool, as well as the fact that the members of this group are constituted in a political “state”.

The defining characteristic of political authority is its legitimate use of force. Force and authority thereupon inheres in governmental structure. However, excessive emphasis on these variables contributes only minimally to the understanding of government, which as noted, could better be understood in terms of its administrative functions. Force and authority, therefore, are special tools which governments may employ to pursue their goals.

Governments may derive their political authority from a number of interrelated variables, which can be outlined as follows: Firstly from the notion that governments exist to coordinate and maintain social order. The reasoning behind this is that diversity of opinion and interests make societies necessarily heterogeneous, hence the first object of a government is to protect these diverse groups and opinions (whether this notion is truer in democracies than it is in authoritarian states is a moot question). A second view is that, for a government to maintain these stabilising functions it must acquire the authority “emanating from actual possession of power” and the exercise of such power is in conformity with those political values widely shared by the community.¹¹⁶ It is, nonetheless, taken for granted that these values have been collectively agreed upon or accepted within the political processes. This acceptance imposes the obligation on the rest of the society to conform to the rules. In other words, this commitment confers on the government the power to apply physical force for the benefit of its constituent subjects. The broad conclusion therefore, is that force is, in fact, an important explanation for the very existence of governments.

2.9. Definition of the state as a further source of political authority

The main difficulty in separating the idea of the state from the idea of government is that both tend to have the same functions and are, in many respects, synonymous. For example, in defining the concept of state, as a function of collectivity, reference is often made to the basic functions of providing civil order, collective goods and external defences. However, even when such

¹¹⁵ Parsons, Talcott “Voting” and the Equilibrium of the American Political System” in, Burdick, Eugene and Arthur J. Brodbeck *American Voting Behaviour* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press 1960) pp. 80-120

¹¹⁶ Morgan, Robert J., “Madison’s Analysis of the Sources of Political Authority” *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 75 No. 3 (Sept. 1981) pp. 613-625

interpretation advances our understanding of the meaning of the state, the present analysis will attempt to explain the sanctioning power of the state as a source of political authority, and government as the administrative tool of the state. Though the purpose here is to highlight the idea of the state as the centre of political activity, it will also aim to show that the state and its relevant system of organisation should be treated as a special case, which may not be replicable. The argument indicates that, beyond the closely defined notion of state and authority, the idea of power and authority take different forms, and in the context, render the process of directly contrasting the state and international system rather problematic. By state here is meant the organisation of which government is the administrative organ. This means that actions taken by the government not only reflect the character of the state but also its goals, objectives and the aspirations of its constituent units. In this sense the state is greater and more inclusive than government.¹¹⁷ The institutions of the state comprise the machinery of government, including its executives, legislative, administrative and judicial bodies, laws, procedures and norms by which they operate, and of course a body of citizens. When we think then, of this whole structure we think of the state.

The state is generally considered to be the most important element in the study of organised political groups. Despite its elusive nature as a unit of analysis, especially in International Relations, it is perhaps possible to point to two reasons (among possibly many others) why the state is considered the most important variable. First, that political actions, and sources of political authority, are rooted in the “reason of state.” The second is that in the international system, the state is assumed to be the primary source of contact, representing a myriad of disparate groups in its relations with similar entities. This role of representation gives the impression that a state is necessarily cohesive. However, a state may consist of a range of discrete groups, ranging from religious, tribal or political groups, or even groups with sexual orientation or creeds, which may not be in conformity with conventional or collective value of the majority groups.¹¹⁸ This does not deny the fact that these groups do conflict with one another. More often than not they do, and in more extreme cases they go to war over issues of political allegiance, domination, or ascendancy within the political structure. Within the state, the processes of controlling these conflicts may be punctuated by the use of force and in other cases encourage resistance to force. Hence, since the state generally claims the monopoly on the legitimate use of force, it is then assumed to be the most important actor in political research.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ MacIver, op cit p. 24

¹¹⁸ For a discussion on the difference between nations and states, see Buzan, Barry *People States and Fear* 2nd ed. (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1991); and for further explanatory discussion, on nations, see Stoessinger, John “The Anatomy of the Nation-State and the Nature of Power” in Little, Richard and Michael Smith eds., *Perspectives on World Politics* 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge 1991) pp. 23-35

¹¹⁹ See for example Barry Buzan’s argument that, “as a form of political organisation, the state has transcended, and often crushed, all other political units to the extent that it has become the universal

Another reason why the state is considered to be the most important actor is the significance attached to the notion of sovereignty. The idea of sovereignty has two notable meanings in IR; first, from realists' point of view, the principle of sovereignty, more than any other single factor, is responsible for anarchy of the international system. The second is that sovereignty establishes the legality of the state. For the former, Stoessinger, for example noted, that in the internal affairs of states, "sovereignty has often created political order and stability. In international relations it has led to anarchy."¹²⁰ In the second instance, sovereignty more generally means a legal expression that describes a state's status in its relations with other states in the international system.¹²¹ Internally however, it generally means competence to make law within the territorial boundaries of the state and to the exclusion of any other law-making authorities. Northedge put it succinctly:

Sovereignty does not mean freedom to do as the states pleases, any more than being legally mature within any domestic system of law means that you are free to do as you like. Sovereignty, as a concept in the study of international relations, is essentially a legal expression which refers to a status of equality with other sovereigns within a distinct system of law that is international law. It means competence to enter into international legal contracts on a basis of equality with other member-states of international system; having ones legal rights respected on a non discriminatory basis with other states; and freedom to act within a certain nexus of rights and obligations, opportunities and restrictions, laid down by international law.¹²²

Sovereignty, along with territory and legal equality, are three fundamental rules that define states' relationships with one another in the international system.¹²³ The principle, of sovereignty means that governments are the supreme lawmakers in their own territories. This principle established in the treaty of Westphalia (1648), held that only sovereign (impermeable and independent) states could enter into treaty relations with each other. This implies that a political unit that is not sovereign

standard of political legitimacy". In theory, he argued, "the state dominates both in terms of political allegiance and authority, and in terms of its command over instruments of force, particularly the major military machines required for modern warfare... This theory is close to reality in a large minority of states, and enables the biggest and best organised of them to exert powerful system-wide influence. Even among the majority, where theory and reality are more widely separated, the state still dominates local political life. Most of the non-state units that command political and military power see themselves either as aspirant of state-makers or as seeking more control over political space within an existing state." Ibid, pp. 58-59

¹²⁰ Stoessinger, op cit, p. 24

¹²¹ See Northedge, F.S., *The International Political System* (London: Faber and Faber 1976) pp. 143-4; Holsti, K.J., *International Politics: A Framework of Analysis* (London: Prentice-Hall 1988) pp. 79-80. A reading of the text of the Treaty of Westphalia is also a good starting point for understanding the practical meaning of "sovereignty".

¹²² Northedge, ibid, p. 143

within the context of statehood, could not be legally recognised as such in the system; it also means that sub-units within the state system could not make treaties, or be recognised in any sense as members of the UN or claim rights or duties that are specific to states under international law. This is to say that to qualify as a “state”, a group or political unit must be so recognised by other member states. This does not, however, necessarily imply that the state is the only unit or actor in the international system. Hence, without sovereignty, as recognised by other states, a political unit has a rather restricted legal standing among other states. In sum, therefore, states are free, by virtue of their sovereignty to govern as they wish within their own territory and to formulate their own external policies, though this might be limited by treaty obligations.

Sovereignty also advances the idea of territorial integrity of the state. It follows that if a state is sovereign, no other state or political units are allowed to impose rules or authority within its territory without its consent. In many ways, however, states can attempt to influence each other’s behaviour through established channels, such as diplomacy, and sometimes employing unconventional, immoral and repulsive means to have their wishes satisfied, and in ways that violate the rules. Many studies have focused upon these violations, and have used them as reference points for constructing international relations theories. Realism’s conception of international politics is in some ways oriented towards legitimising these rule violations. The emphasis here is not whether international law or the rules are effective, or whether the equality provided by sovereignty is respected. What is at issue is the body of assumptions on which a system of order rests, not whether that system operates effectively. Thus, compared to the domestic system, the international political system essentially rests on this assumption of legal equality of the units.

To make sense of the notion of sovereignty, emphasis is placed on legal equality and not legal “supremacy.” Northedge argued, for example, that analysis oriented towards equality would aim to stress, not the idea of one unit being higher than anyone else in law-making power, “but on being on the same level as other law-making authorities, that is, other states.” Britain for example, is not, as a sovereign state, supreme over anybody except its own people and, within its own frontiers.¹²⁴ In conclusion, therefore, it is possible to summarise by stating that sovereignty defines two important functions. In the first, internally it defines the relationship between the state and the citizens, and externally, defines the system of interaction between the units. These two meanings converge to define the status of units in their relation to a specific system of order. In these terms, the domestic system of order can be described as a prototype of centralised systems and international system as a prototype of decentralised systems.

¹²³ Holsti, op cit

Furthermore, what makes centralised systems different from decentralised structures is essentially the legitimate concentration of power within ruling elites. In the international system, no such concentration of power or authority is legally acknowledged, although it is not uncommon for states to attempt to impose their authority over other states, or for a state to willingly acknowledge such domination. The tendency to dominate others with force in decentralised systems often leads to conflicts. This is because authority structure consists of superordination and subordination. The relationship between these elements is characterised by the fact that one group or an individual in the system is able to impose their authority on the others.¹²⁵ Authority is said to be legitimate if the subordinate group has a duty to obey the orders. In the sense, those in superior position are imputed with the power to induce or influence those in inferior position to carry out the superiors' directives. Power, then, as an important function of the relationship, is defined as the ability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his or her own will despite resistance.¹²⁶ The condition of authority and subordination is known to operate under two general conditions: a) the bases of the legitimacy and b) its acceptance. In the first instance, Weber defined, as fundamental to the criterion of authority, "a certain minimum of voluntary submission."¹²⁷ This means that the subordinate group generally acknowledges their existing status and accepts the condition of authority.

2.10 Acceptance of authority and leadership in decentralised systems

One aspect of this relationship that is frequently ignored is the acceptance of authority by subordinates or any subsection of a group. The traditional approach has been to examine the phenomenon narrowly from the point of view of those in position of authority and power. This misunderstanding seems to be rooted in scholars' reading of Weber's definition of power and control rather literally, with the result that the subordinates in the equation are reduced to insignificance. The definitions provided by Weber illustrates the point: "Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance and regardless of the basis on which this probability rests." And "imperative control" is the probability that a

¹²⁴ Northedge, op cit, p. 143

¹²⁵ Freund, Julien *The Sociology of Max Weber* Trans from French by Mary Ilford (Penguin 1968) p. 222

¹²⁶ Goldhamer, Herbert and Edward A. Shils "Types of Power and Status" *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 45 No. 2 (Sept. 1939) pp. 171-182

¹²⁷ Weber identifies three main categories of legitimate authority: 1) authority on rational grounds – resting on a belief in the "legality" of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue command (legal authority); 2) The traditional grounds – resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial tradition and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them (traditional authority); and 3) Charismatic grounds – resting on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (charismatic) Weber, Max *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* Translated by Henderson, A.M. and Talcott Parsons, (Free Press 1947) p. 324-328

command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons.”¹²⁸ These definitions taken at face value imply that obedience can be sustained by force. This belief in force also tends to underline realism’s thinking about international politics. But force alone is not a sufficient instrument to secure obedience. MacIver points out that force alone cannot hold a group together and there must be other objective conditions on which the acceptance of authority and its validity rest.¹²⁹ Since the exercise of authority also tends to frustrate the subordinate’s wishes and dispositions, it thus means that obedience must be based on certain mutually accepted legitimate grounds. Weber outlined these as:

1. Any legal norm established by agreement or by imposition, on grounds of expediency or rational values or both, and accepted by members of the group.
2. That the body of law exists in a consistent system of abstract rules which have been intentionally established, and the administration of law is held to consist in the application of these rules to particular cases.
3. The person in authority occupies “office” and the action associated with his status, including the commands he issues to others is subject to an impersonal order to which his actions are oriented.
4. That those who obey do so, only in their capacity as members of the group and what they obey is only “the law.”¹³⁰
5. It is also believed that the members of the group, insofar as they obey a person in authority, do not owe this obedience to him as an individual, but to the impersonal order. Hence, there is an obligation to obedience only within the sphere of the rationally delimited authority, which in terms of the order, has been conferred on the subject group.

From the point of view of subordinates therefore, the validity of a command rests ultimately on its legitimacy, and from the superordinate’s point of view, legitimacy is a guarantee that a command will be adhered to with a minimum of effort. At this point, it is obvious that there is a clear difference between power exercised on legitimate grounds and attempts to secure obedience through coercion. Authority therefore is legitimate if it is so acknowledged by the subordinates as valid. If it

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 153

¹²⁹ MacIver, op cit, p. 12

¹³⁰ They may in this connection be members of an association, of a territorial commune, citizens of a state or such other organisations.

is not recognised as such, the act can be interpreted as *coercion* (provided that the intention of the power-holder is realised).¹³¹

The point here is to underscore those conditions that simplify action in centralised systems in terms of superior-subordinate relations. It shows that, exercise of authority does not in itself exist in a vacuum, but is an integral part of that relationship. Exercise of authority outside such relationships tends to display a high degree of tension. Goldhammer and Shils argued that, a person whose general position as a power-holder is recognised as legitimate might exercise force, domination or manipulation. But persons who are subject to force (especially as an initial form of influencing behaviour and not as a sanction) frequently do not recognise the legitimacy of such acts of power. They wrote, “generally, therefore, the recognition of a power-holder as a legitimate exerciser of power rests on the recognition of the legitimacy of his acts of domination.”¹³² This argument could be applicable to many situations. For example, an army commander may impose his will upon his army, but he does not have authority over enemy soldiers. Only his own soldiers will obey his command since only they, through authority relation, are duty bound to do so, while the enemy soldier could only be forced to yield through coercion.

Since authority entails voluntary compliance, with the superior’s directives, as Blau argued, it obviates the need for coercive force or for sanctions. “Resort to either positive incentives or coercive measures by a person in order to influence others are *prima facie* evidence that he does not have authority over them.”¹³³ If he did, Blau argued, their voluntary compliance would serve as an easier method of control over them. Thus, voluntary obedience is not a sufficient condition for authority either. An authority-subordinate relationship then, involves unconditional willing obedience on the part of the subordinate.

By their nature, authority systems operate by means of imposing frustrating limits on the need disposition of the subordinate groups. Subordinates are subject to constraints by techniques such as role differentiation, control of non-human resources and use of force (sometimes for its own sake) to achieve organisational goals. In a well-known critique of Weber’s theory of bureaucracy, Henderson and Parsons found a number of difficulties with the rationale of authority in organisations.¹³⁴ They noted, first, that tendencies to stretch the limits of official authority to take in “personal interests” are commonplace in authority-oriented institutions. As a result, they cast doubt on the consistency and presumed conflict-free nature of the very institution on which the authority system stands. In

¹³¹ Goldhammer and Shils, *op cit*

¹³² *Ibid*

¹³³ Blau, Peter “Critical Remarks On Weber’s Theory of Authority” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 57 (June 1963) pp. 305-316

¹³⁴ Weber, *op cit*, pp. 68ff

centralised systems, for example, the segregation of roles, according to Henderson and Parsons, “involves a kind of abstraction of a part of the human individual from the concrete whole which is in a sense ‘unreal’ and hence can only be maintained by continual discipline.”¹³⁵ Secondly, they argued that a fundamental consideration in systems of discipline and authority would be the probability that such systems would generate forms of resistance and resentment. Thus, for the system to continue to exist, they argued that it would be, “naturally a condition that it should, with relative efficiency, ‘take care’ of this resistance and prevent it from undermining the institution of authority.”¹³⁶

Empirical evidence suggests, however, that certain functions of centralised systems tend to invariably corrode the relationship between superordinates and subordinates.¹³⁷ This is because the nature of authority inherent in centralised systems requires the subordinate to act upon direct order of the superior. This situation shows, in the first instance, “who is boss” and as a result underlines the often unnecessary condition of equality of the units. A further consequence in this context is the view that the authority subordinate setting tends to exaggerate the differences in power and privilege, which, by themselves, become sources of tension, and especially so if status differences do not correspond with the expected independence of the units.

The relationship between superordinates and subordinates opens up a number of unresolved issues in IR discourse and importantly, the relevance of authority in the international system. One such challenge is the question of leadership, although this has been given extensive coverage in IR research. Concepts such as the “core-periphery hypothesis”, “hegemonic stability theory”, “regime theory” and generally the “power” oriented schools have all sought, not only to describe the system and its functions, but also to hypothesise power structures in the system. The main problem with these approaches, apart from being broadly Euro-American centred, is also the fact that they are limited in time and space, and only explain a theory of leadership in narrowly defined and often contingent situations, which would have little relevance to decentralised structures. These concepts offer very little in terms of providing a general theory of leadership in a system which is both autonomous and dynamic.

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Weber, op cit, p. 69; See also p. 71, where Henderson and Parsons argued that “there is reason to believe that a social order of which a system of rational-legal authority is an important part is considerably more subject to this kind of disorganisation than is a highly traditionalised society. “The rationalised structures are never exhaustive of the whole social structure, and there is often important strain between them and the parts which are predominantly traditionalised, a strain which seems to provide the principal basis in fact for the “cultural lag” theory which has been so popular in recent years.”

¹³⁶ See for example, Gouldner, Alvin W., *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* (London: The Free Press 1954) p. 161

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Ibid

Concepts of leadership in IR scholarship tend to be generally oriented towards domination and control, regardless of other functions and see the use of force as necessary to that purpose. This in part also explains the conventional IR research orientation towards structure and the lack of emphasis on functional theories of politics. On the other hand, the problem of leadership in domestic situations are counter balanced by the very condition of acceptance by the subordinate group, and as noted earlier, the possibility that the subordinate groups, largely, tend to identify with the overall function of the leadership. Empirical work on organisations points to some convincing reasons why force is not a necessary prerequisite for the acceptance of authority. One such finding, for example, is the view that group members will accept a leader, as Donald Pelz argued, “to the extent that he helps them achieve their goals.”¹³⁸ Experience of leadership in international relations suggests itself more to exploitation and pursuit of narrowly defined objectives, and to this, as in colonial years, many local communities became victims of subordination to the extent that many experienced extensive exploitation, annihilation or near total extermination.

A further observation on the nature of leadership with relevance to IR research is the propensity for leaders to be consciously or unconsciously biased towards a certain group. With the international system being culturally diverse, and nationalism as well as ideology playing an important role in defining state characteristics, the analysis of leadership in this environment would be a difficult task.¹³⁹ Even in democracies, as Morgan pointed out, dominant legislators frequently use their position to develop standards of conduct that suit their interests and mirror dominant interest in society.¹⁴⁰ Morgan concluded:

This prospect is real because every government, once it has attained “a certain degree of energy,” has a “tendency” to increase its power. Furthermore, a self-directed course ... is the natural propensity of every government... Therefore, founders who establish a self-controlled republic and wish it to endure must understand how the energy of government increases its power at a certain point and why its tendency toward autonomy is natural.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Pelz, Donald C., “Leadership Within a Hierarchical Organisation” *Journal of Social Issues* Vol. 7 No. 3 (1951) pp. 49-55

¹³⁹ Little and Brown suggested that, the process which nationalism and identification with the state is generated may take place, “largely in the illogical, irrational, and fantastic world of the unconscious.” Little, Richard and Michael Smith eds., *Perspective on World Politics* 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge 1991) p. 25; See also Stoessinger, op cit, p. 27

¹⁴⁰ Morgan, Robert J., “Madison’s Analysis of the Sources of Political Authority” *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 75 No. 3 (Sept. 1981) pp. 613-625

¹⁴¹ Ibid

The objective of the preceding discussion has been to examine those features, claimed in the anarchy paradigm to be lacking in the international system and as a result, limiting opportunities for international collective action. The analysis, thus, leads to a number of conclusions. First, it shows that the features found in centralised systems are neither relevant nor necessary in decentralised systems, and hence, the contrasts made between these systems by the anarchy oriented studies are unjustified and short-sighted. Furthermore, anarchy, by the nature of things, does not recognise leadership; hence, efforts to explain the nature of leadership in the international system have been more precarious than useful. For example one may be forgiven to think of “balance of power” as a form of leadership, since the model succeeds in telling us about two opposing “powers” being restrained by fear of being annihilated by the other power. The core-periphery hypothesis succeeds in resonating colonial politics; while states that attempt to impose their will on “less powerful” states have found themselves caught in quagmires and pointless bloodshed.

One final observation is that anarchy is not, as claimed by the anarchy oriented school, the main reason why cooperation is problematic in international relations. Neither has centralised planning in the form of coercive leadership been found to resolve the incentive problems in decentralised environments. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, the problems of collective action are general to most, if not all, situations of collective endeavours or group actions. The following chapter, therefore, will examine these problems, including alternative approaches as well as proposed solutions.

Chapter 3

The Rationale for Collective Action

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the principal issues in collective action. The discussion is presented in three sections: Section one broadly defines collective action. In section two, aspects of typical collective action problems and constraints on “optimum” output (incentive problems) are outlined; and section three looks at some solution concepts, i.e., the conditions under which collective action can be said to be theoretically feasible, taking account of the constraining factors. The overall aim is twofold; first, is to show that the problem of collective action is not necessarily exclusive to the United Nations or for that matter, its efforts to establish a viable intelligence system. Secondly, the chapter also aims to introduce incentive properties, which are not generally considered as significant in the study of collective action in the IR discipline. The first of these goals shows that while the empirical and normative properties of groups and their objectives are significantly different, the principles and general theoretical foundations of the problems remain the same. Hence, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, the IR discipline tends to ignore some of these general properties, with important consequences for the study of collective action. Meanwhile, these problems can further be examined in two closely related analytical categories; 1) problems of incentives and 2) problems of utility maximisation. These features are examined in the present chapter.

A theory of collective action attempts to explain, first and foremost the reasons why individuals or states come together to pursue agreed goals and objectives. A study of collective action also seeks to examine if the agreed upon goal is feasible and to identify and explain existing constraints in the process. With respect to the goals and objectives, this could range from the acquisition of physical and quantifiable goods to the pursuit of abstract objectives, which might include a general state of affairs; for example, maintenance of peace in the international system. Furthermore, a theory of collective action takes for granted that the individuals sharing a common problem could not, on their own, produce the expected good or produce the good in sufficient quantity, hence they create a collective to lessen the burden of costs and risks involved. Perhaps, the best examples of its kind in world politics are the ideas of alliance system, collective security, and institutions or programmes to manage issues like the environment and perhaps communicable diseases whose effects transcend national boundaries. This general problem is summarised by Bruce and Sullivan thus:

Nation-states seem to form a collectivity to produce a collective good, then when they are faced with external diseconomies which they cannot handle as individual actor. In economic terms, when they are unable to 'purchase' desired capacity, such as an effective deterrent, in the international market place, they are forced to seek an alternative arrangement to generate that resource.¹⁴²

In spite of the obvious benefits promised by collective efforts, Bruce and Sullivan also observed that the very idea of a collectivity presents those concerned with real political problems. These they observed include issues such as how the collective can be "structured to facilitate optimal production of the desired good at lowest cost"; how others might be "induced to share the costs of producing the good" and what strategies may be used "to ensure maximum participation with the lowest potential for conflict".¹⁴³

3.2. Institutions and regime theorists

Models attempting to explain the rationale for collective action include that developed by Michael Akerlof, in a seminal paper on "quality uncertainty and the market mechanism."¹⁴⁴ Taken to its logical conclusion, the model suggests that collectives (or institutions) are developed and maintained as a form of insurance for the members. This means that, even if the individual could afford to purchase the stated good, the continuous supply of the good in the market is not guaranteed; and neither is the quality of the good. Hence, "institutions" perform the useful function of counteracting the effect of "quality uncertainty."¹⁴⁵

Akerlof's thesis has provided a degree of inspiration for neoliberal institutionalists and regime theorists in the IR discipline.¹⁴⁶ These theorists acknowledge the coordination functions of collectives with respect to convergence of collective expectations. Institutions, then, according to these scholars, are created to facilitate the provision of desired goods and to enable the units achieve their desired objectives. Institutions, it is argued, need not constitute formal organisations with administrative headquarters and specialised staff, but more generally consist of "recognised patterns

¹⁴² Bruce, Russett and John D. Sullivan, "Collective Goods and International Organisations" *International Organisation*, Vol. 24 No. 4 (1971) p. 845-865

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ Akerlof, M. "The Market for 'Lemons': Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 84 No. 3 (1970) pp. 488-500

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ There is a tendency to use the terms, institutions and regimes as overlapping concepts, see for example, Keohane, R. "Institutionalist Theory and the Realist Challenge After the Cold War," in David, Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (Columbia University Press, 1993) p. 273-74

of practice around which expectations converge.”¹⁴⁷ In these terms, institutions are expected to perform legitimating and delimitating functions.

The exact meanings of the functions of institutions vary, though not significantly; depending on whether one is reading institutionalist texts or regime theory (see my comment in footnote 146). The terms are used interchangeably in the literature, though a close reading shows a slight variation.¹⁴⁸ For example, institutionalists tend to emphasise the role of institutions as established pattern of behaviour, by implication not necessarily supported by a legal framework (though this argument can be significant in customary law).¹⁴⁹ Regime theorists on the other hand, stress practices constituted in law, or at least, in rules.¹⁵⁰ Hence, international regimes have been defined as “sets of norms principles, rules, or decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge.”¹⁵¹ By stressing the importance of rules, regime theorists aim to advance the institutionalists thesis. Furthermore, regime theorists also recognise the existence of administrative structures to coordinate the functionality of institutions; an example noted by Keohane is the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and International Energy Agency (IEA is an intergovernmental body committed to advancing security of energy supply, economic growth and environmental sustainability through energy policy co-operation) initially created to coordinate the energy crisis of the 1970s.¹⁵² The combination of both the regime and institutionalist theories provides the main material for the neoliberal institutionalist theories of global politics, which in recent times have emerged as one of the main challengers to realism.¹⁵³

However, the institutionalist and regime scholars remain vague in their attempt to explain *why* collective action occurs. Their theses, essentially oriented towards explaining *why* states participate in collective action, argue that those in collectives are driven by rational self-interest, hence, institutions or regimes are created to provide exploitable functionality for the members to maximise their own interests. These schools take as their starting point the view that states or units in collective endeavours are atomistic, rational interest maximisers and these, combined with the anarchy of the

¹⁴⁷ Keohane, Robert O., *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984) p. 246

¹⁴⁸ See Keohane, 1993, op cit

¹⁴⁹ See for example, Cox’s critique of the institutionalists theory in his “Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory” in Little, Richard and Michael Smith eds., *Perspectives on World Politics* 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge 1991) pp. 444-455

¹⁵⁰ Conybeare, John “Tariff Protection in Developed and Developing Countries: A Cross Sectional and Longitudinal Analysis” *International Organisation* Vol. 37 No. 3 (summer 1983) pp. 441-467

¹⁵¹ Milner, Helen “International Theories of Cooperation Among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses” *Review of International Studies* Vol. 44 No. 3 (April 1992) pp. 466-469; Ruggie, John Gerrard “International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order”, *International Organization*, Vol. 36 No. 2 (1982) p. 379-415 and Krasner, “Structural Causes and Regime Consequences” in, S.D. Krasner ed. *International Regimes* 1983 pp. 1-21

¹⁵² Keohane, 1984, op cit, p. 225; See also, IEA home page, <http://www.iea.org/> (accessed Jan 05)

system, inhibit cooperation among them. Institutions, according to these theorists, serve states' objectives "not principally by enforcing rules (except when they coordinate rule enforcement...) but by facilitating the making and keeping of agreements through the provision of information and reduction in transaction costs."¹⁵⁴ It follows that participants create and maintain institutions in so far as they enable members to pursue their "valued" objectives.

A common problem with both institutionalist and regime theories is the tendency to disproportionately emphasise the intentions of the participants and ignore other reasons why groups exist. As a result, the functions of institutions are reduced to essentially legitimating individual behaviours and the pursuit of their selfish interests. This approach unavoidably leads to the framing of research questions, not about production and distribution functions of the group, but about individual calculations, their gains and their losses, and in keeping with the anarchy paradigm, how the goods may be obtained through coercion, where necessary. On the one hand, there is an attempt to embrace the importance of collective action, but on the other, it is evident that these scholars allow themselves to be distracted by the anarchy paradigm.

3.3. Micro-motives and macro-behaviour in theory of collective action

This leads to the question; how do institutions develop if actors are atomistic and reluctant to cooperate? This question is the genesis of the much-researched prisoner's dilemma, where actors can either cooperate or defect (see also 1.3, above). If they cooperate they will all benefit from the outcome, if they do not they are worse off. The broad assumption is the view that cooperation is infeasible if one or more of the participants defects or is likely to do so. This argument is the inspiration for Axelrod's influential work, aptly titled "Emergence of Cooperation Among Egoists", and developed in a later work, the *Evolution of Cooperation*.¹⁵⁵ In the first work, Axelrod explained that cooperation could emerge as a consequence of actors pursuing their own interests, but with the effect that these disparate interests converge in a complex whole. The foundation for Axelrod's thesis can be traced to an earlier work by Thomas Schelling, *Micromotives and Macrobehaviour*.¹⁵⁶ Schelling's study examined how individual actions (in the absence of coordination), may lead to an aggregate collective action. Schelling argued in the study, that in such situations, the individual need not know, or even be aware of the consequences of their action, because they may simply be doing what others are doing. Thus he argued; "it is that people are impinging on other people and adapting

¹⁵³ See collection of essays in Baldwin, 1993, op cit

¹⁵⁴ Keohane, 1993, op cit, p. 273-74

¹⁵⁵ Axelrod, Robert "The Emergence of Cooperation Among Egoists" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 75 No. 2 (June 1981) pp. 306-18; Axelrod, Robert *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books 1984)

¹⁵⁶ Schelling, Thomas *Micromotives and Macrobehaviour* (New York: Norton, 1978)

to other people. What people do affects what other people do.”¹⁵⁷ Another way to interpret this argument is that humans are habit-forming and that exposure to new environments has the effect of modifying their existing preconceptions, enabling them to react subconsciously to the demands of the present situation. For example, Hoffmann *et al* observed that repeated interaction in a game theoretic setting led to mutual cooperation between the participants.¹⁵⁸

These studies generally suggest that several factors, other than rational interest maximisation, account for the rationale behind collective action. For example, based on the notion of continuous interaction, Axelrod argued that cooperation could emerge even in a world of unconditional defection, where the situation might not necessarily allow for cooperative behaviour. What is required, he maintained, is that there exists a degree of interaction among “discriminating individuals.”¹⁵⁹ His thesis is further developed in *Evolution of Cooperation*, and demonstrates that continuous interaction, even in an extremely hostile situation, can lead to mutually beneficial cooperation (positive outcomes for both parties, compared to *zero-sum* outcomes in classical Game Theory). To illustrate the point, Axelrod cited as an example, the “live and let live” analogy, a situation where frontline soldiers in WW1 trench warfare, refrained from shooting to kill, “provided their restraint was reciprocated by soldiers on the other side.”¹⁶⁰ Although cooperation between the warring parties was sustained by the threat to retaliate (reciprocity) in the “TIT for TAT” model, Axelrod argued that the chances of cooperation getting started was enhanced by the extended period in which the units faced one another in the field.¹⁶¹

Continuous interaction, could, in fact, lead to the formalisation of the group’s interest. This is an important main step, if only that it relocates the basis of the group from the spiritual or metaphysical to a more material entity. Importantly also, David Truman observed that this formalisation of the group’s interests is, in fact, generally a manifestation of, and therefore an index of a fairly high frequency of interaction within a group. Hence, “the degree of a group’s cohesion is frequently indicated in its formal organisation.”¹⁶² Truman identified other significant consequences of formalising group interaction. He noted first, that the existence of formal organisation in a group suggests a measure of permanence or the expectation that the arrangement will be a continuing one. Hence, he argued that the degree of stability in a group pattern usually precedes formal organisation, and the regularisation of such arrangements implies the expectation that they will continue, at least,

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 27

¹⁵⁸ Hoffman, Elizabeth, Kevin A. McCabe, Vernon L. Smith “Behavioural Foundation of Reciprocity: Experimental Economics and Evolutionary Psychology” *Economic Inquiry* Vo.36 No.3 (July 1998) pp. 335-352

¹⁵⁹ Axelrod, op cit, 1981

¹⁶⁰ Axelrod, 1984, op cit, p. 21

¹⁶¹ Ibid

¹⁶² Truman, David B., *The Government Process* (New York: Knopf 1958) p. 112

as long as the circumstances that brought them together persist.¹⁶³ Truman's argument suggests that formal organisations are in the sense a precipitate of the ideals shared by the group. "At least at its inception" he argued; "these values are a function of the personalities and experiences of the participants; though, their expression in the form of group organisation is affected by the organisation and political technique of other groups."¹⁶⁴

The point therefore is made that collective action is not necessarily driven by selfish interests alone, but by a variety of factors. Furthermore, these studies also demonstrate that collective action can develop and be sustained without the coercive role of a leviathan. These conclusions therefore challenge the assumptions based on the anarchy-oriented paradigm, essentially, its significance as a main barrier to cooperation and importantly, the need for an overarching authority to coordinate and sustain cooperation. Theories derived from these discourses also tend to overlook key issues in group dynamics, such as the fact that the constitution of a group could also have the effect of changing certain selfish dispositions that members bring to the collective. In essence, the rationale of a group is the function of its origin and continuous existence. Karl Popper, for example, reminds us that the nature of a thing is its origin; "or at least it is determined by its origin." Thus he wrote:

The method of any science will be the investigation of the origins of things (or their causes). This principle, when applied to the science of society and of politics, leads to the demand that the origin of society and of the state must be examined. History therefore is not studied for its own sake but serves as the method of the social sciences. This is the historicist methodology...¹⁶⁵

How then does this explain the origin of collective action? Popper argued that:

According to historicist methods, *the* fundamental question of sociology must be formulated in this way: what is the origin of society and of the state? The reply given by Plato in the *Republic* as in the *Laws* agrees with the position described... as spiritual naturalism. The origin of society is a convention, a social contract. But it is not only that it is, rather, a natural convention, that is, a convention which is based upon human nature, and more precisely, upon the social nature of man... This social nature of man has its origin in the imperfection of the human individual. In opposition to Socrates, Plato teaches that the human individual cannot be self-sufficient, owing to the

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 112-113

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 113

¹⁶⁵ Popper, Karl *The Open Society and Its Enemies* 2nd revised ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1952) pp. 75-76

limitations inherent in human nature. Although Plato insists that there are very different degrees of human perfection, it turns out that even the very few comparatively perfect men still depend upon others (who are less perfect); if for nothing else, then for the dirty work, the manual work, done by them.¹⁶⁶

The conclusion reached so far is not to suggest that all of the concerns of the anarchy oriented schools, regarding collective action, have been examined or answered. Of crucial importance at this point is how to coordinate the disparate interest of the members of the group to obtain optimum production of the social good. A related question is whether the outcome of the group's efforts would be beneficial to, at least, a large number of the participants? These two issues are at the heart of collective action research, and will form the bulk of the study in the remaining parts of this chapter. The study of these problems can generally be couched under incentive theories, and the context of the argument assumes, first, that the group under discussion has an interest in producing a certain social good or goods. It is also assumed that it will be in the members' interest to participate fully for the group to obtain an optimum production of the collective good.

3.4. Incentives and the logic of collective action

Opinions are broadly divided on the incentive problems. One school of thought suggests that individuals will act, out of selfish interest, to attain the group's goal, since it is believed that they will also benefit from the outcome if the group succeeds. A second school suggests that an optimum may never be achieved, since the group would inevitably be plagued by defection, or indeed, cheating, through free riding. Incentives, therefore, in collective action and as used here, refer to factors that may directly or indirectly influence an actor's choice on whether or not to participate in a collective endeavour and whether the benefit of defection would necessarily outweigh the benefits of participation.

A critical point of reference for research on the incentive problems is whether the situation under study is centrally coordinated or lacking in any formal coordination. As a result, research on the subject has focused largely on the relevance of coordination and the techniques for encouraging cooperation. The scenario is often illustrated by the "market failure" analogy. This is a situation where the group is unable to meet the full social costs for the production of the desired good because participants would not cooperate. The situation of market failure is akin to, though not exactly the same as the anarchy paradigm (discussed earlier) where agents are free to make independent decisions. Market failure assumes that the "market" operates in an environment of decentralised

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

decisions, which adversely affect its overall performance.¹⁶⁷ The implication, as Bator explains, is that “decentralised market calculations correctly account for all ‘economic’ costs and benefits to which the relevant welfare function is sensitive.”¹⁶⁸ It is then suggested that if these independent decisions are left unchecked, the problems would lead to sub-optimal output. Market failure has been given as the reason for authority and for institutions to coordinate group action, a concept formalised in Akerlof’s “Market for Lemons.”¹⁶⁹ A closely related concept to market failure is the existence of externalities which adds further impetus to the rationale for institutions or government-oriented approaches to incentive problems. Externalities are said to exist when one’s interest is in conflict with their neighbour’s interests. For example, “whenever the production by a firm or the utility of an individual depends on some activity of another firm...”¹⁷⁰ externality-inducing activities would include, among other things, acts like, spewing smoke into the air, dumping litter on the highways, or giving to the poor etc. More precisely, I shall define externalities, as an abstract concept that links two independent entities. The existence of externalities may suggest a commonality of interests and the nature of these interests form a part of what is studied in collective action.

The term “externalities” has broad and flexible application depending on whether one is applying it as a tool to analyse economic problems, a consequence of group action, or as a basis for conflict analysis in political science. In more general terms, the concept can be interpreted as a function which, when acknowledged, may assume to narrow or broaden independent actors’ choices. These functions can be said to include elements such as; rules and regulations, competing goals and objectives at group level, or individual goals competing against social goals, customs, and treaty obligations. This linkage between independent action and social goals is perhaps what Nath referred to as “untraded interdependencies” (the relevance of externalities as a key concept in collective action is explored further in 3.7 below).¹⁷¹ Many scholars adopt a broad interpretation of externalities. Analytically, this has the usefulness of not tying the incentive problem to purely “market” type properties, or in fact treating it as a primary issue. Broader interpretations would embrace such issues as uncertainty, and a variety of symmetric and asymmetric problems in collective action.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Johansson, Per-Olov, *An Introduction to Modern Welfare Economics*, (Cambridge University Press 1991) p. 60; Bator, F.M., “The Anatomy of Market Failure” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 72 (1978) pp. 351-79 ; Akerlof, op cit

¹⁶⁸ Bator, ibid

¹⁶⁹ Akerlof, op cit

¹⁷⁰ Nath, S.K. *A Reappraisal of Welfare Economics* (London Routledge and Kegan Paul 1969) p. 64; see also, Buchanan, James and W.C. Stubblebine “Externality” *Economica* Vol. 19 (1962) pp. 371-84

¹⁷¹ Nath, op cit

¹⁷² Hardin, Russell *Collective Action* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press for the Future 1982) p. 30-70

The notions of market failure and externalities have impacted on collective action research in a number of ways. First, they have prompted the recognition that independent actions may impose extra burdens or costs on other members of the group (negative externalities). Secondly, there is the recognition that negative externalities might exist in a form that requires a collective effort to counter the problems. The question, then, is whether all members of the commune will generally identify with the problem, to the extent that they are encouraged to cooperate fully. “A rational choice” approach suggests that, if there is an alternative means for which individuals can obtain the same good or deal with the problem at a lesser cost than they would incur if working collectively, it is assumed that they would opt for the latter option. These issues are at the heart of the incentive problems.

3.5. Assumptions about incentive problems

Incentive theory assumes that there are two categories of goods, private and social goods, which may be similar in kind but differ only in the nature of their demand and use. Private goods are characterised by their exclusivity and non-divisibility.¹⁷³ Private goods, by their nature, are amenable to individual demand and may be customised to suit individual needs.¹⁷⁴ Collective or social goods on the other hand, according to Paul Samuelson, refer to goods “which all enjoy in common in the sense that each individual’s consumption of such a good leads to no subtraction from any other individual’s consumption of that good.”¹⁷⁵ In its general and “extreme” form, the public good in question is “pure”, which means that the good conforms to two basic criteria, *nonexclusivity* and *jointness* of supply.¹⁷⁶ It seems important to identify these two categories of goods, for two main reasons. First, it is assumed from a “public goods” point of view, that every member of the group would participate towards the production of the good. Secondly, it is also assumed that whether or not an individual contributes towards the production of the good, they cannot be excluded from the consumption of it.¹⁷⁷ Several public utilities fall within this category of “goods”, including the police force, public parks, and a nation’s security, and, at international level, collective security.

From the public goods point view, two further assumptions are made that provide the basis for the analysis of collective action. First, is the assumption that since a public good is nonexclusive, some members may be discouraged from contributing towards the production of the good (free ride). The

¹⁷³ Bowen, H.R. “The Interpretation of Voting in the Allocation of Economic Resources” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 58 (Nov 1943) pp. 27-48

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

¹⁷⁵ Samuelson, Paul A., “The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure” *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 36 (Nov. 1954) pp. 387-389

¹⁷⁶ Russett, B.M. and J.D. Sullivan “Collective Goods and International Organisation” *International Organisation* Vol. 25 (1971) pp. 845-865

¹⁷⁷ A theoretical equivalent of this type of public good is the theory of collective action, which is examined, elsewhere in the present work.

second consideration is that, by realising that there may be a degree of defection that would lead to suboptimal output, some members may choose to defect with the consequence that the good may be provided, and if it is, it will be suboptimal. This very situation has been described variously as situations of “social dilemma” or “tragedy of the commons.”¹⁷⁸

The explanatory concept of a collective goods dilemma is consistent with the view that actors in a collective situation are rational utility maximisers. For example, it is argued that both uncertainties, as well as actors’ expectations as to what strategy others would adopt, are as much incentives to defect as to cooperate. Thus, one hypothesis suggests that participants are more likely to contribute towards a collective good if they are certain about the other members’ motives. In deciding whether to participate or not, the rational actor (or at least some of them) may calculate that contributing towards a collective good may impose greater costs than benefits. Hence, before deciding whether to participate in the collective, the actor would ask the simple straightforward question: “What is there for me?” This question, according to Olson, calls to attention two distinct difficulties that an individual in a (non-market) group must consider.

One is whether the total benefit he would get from providing some amount of the collective good would exceed the total cost of that amount of the good. The other question is how much of the collective good he should provide, if some should be provided, and the answer here depends of course on the relationship between marginal, rather than total costs and benefits.¹⁷⁹

An equally important question for the rational actor, which is also consistent with Olson’s *logic*, is the very “distinct” question of the group’s ability to provide an optimum amount of the good. This issue is relevant in at least two respects. In the first instance, it is assumed that there is a relationship between the level of resources contributed toward the production of the good and the level of the good that is provided (production function).¹⁸⁰ Secondly, Burgess and Robinson argued that organisational performance could be measured, first by its effectiveness in satisfying the demands of its members and secondly, by existing arrangements for sharing burdens among the members for an

¹⁷⁸ Kollock, Peter “Social Dilemma: The Anatomy of Cooperation” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 22 No.1 (1998) pp. 183-215; and Harding, Garrett “Tragedy of the Commons” *Science* Vol. 162 (1968) pp. 1243-1248

¹⁷⁹ Olson, Mancur *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and Theory of Groups* (Cambridge: HUP 1965) p. 27

¹⁸⁰ Kollock, op cit

optimal production of the good.¹⁸¹ For Olson, as an example, output is said to be optimal when the gain to the group increases at the same rate as the cost of providing the good.¹⁸²

Olson argued that the necessary condition (for optimal provision) should be such that the marginal cost of additional units of the collective good must be shared in exactly the same proportion as the additional benefit. “Only if this is done will each member find that his own marginal costs and benefits are equal at the same time that the total marginal cost equals the total or aggregate marginal benefits.” Otherwise, he argued, “the amount of collective good provided will be suboptimal.”¹⁸³ This summation led Olson to conclude that the incentive to participate will depend on the advantages for the individual ($A_i = V_i - C$) of T ; (where T = collective output, C = Cost to the individual, V_i = gross benefit, i =individual, A_i =net benefit to the individual.).¹⁸⁴ The conclusion, then, according to Olson’s logic, is that for a group to succeed, for the individual, $A_i > 0$. This is to say that individuals in the group will find it reasonable to contribute only if their personal gain of the collective good exceeds the total cost of providing “some amount of the collective good.” If however, $A_i < 0$, for all i , the good would not be provided and the group would fail.¹⁸⁵

There is no doubt that these incentive conditions could apply, to an extent, to certain organisations. However, whether not contributing towards the process, can, in general be interpreted as “cheating” or “defection” would require a different level of analysis.¹⁸⁶ Presently, the point can be made, and as shall be shown below, that individual gains or needs in a group or organisation are rarely compatible and there may also be a broad divergence in their ability to contribute to the social good.¹⁸⁷ In the international system, for example, there may be an agreement to cut down on the amount of carbon monoxide or the release of harmful substances into the atmosphere. The ability to contribute towards the reduction of carbon emission might, in the end, depend on a nation’s resources, or it might also be that the country depends economically and perhaps politically, on dated technologies that produce a considerable amount of carbon monoxide. The argument here is that individuals in an organisation may have unique interests, preferences, or *utility functions* which may not be compatible with those

¹⁸¹ Burgess, Philip M. and James Robinson “Alliance and the Theory of Collective Action: A Simulation of Coalition Process”, in James N. Rosenau ed. *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory* (London: Macmillan Publishers 1969) pp. 640-653

¹⁸² Olson, op cit, p. 27

¹⁸³ Ibid, p. 30

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 23

¹⁸⁵ Olson, op cit, p. 33

¹⁸⁶ Hurwicz defines cheating as “behaviour that can be made to look ‘legal’ by misrepresentation of the participant’s preferences or endowment, with the proviso that the fictitious preferences should be within certain plausible limits” Hurwicz, Leonid “On Informationally Decentralised Systems” in McGuire, C.B., and Roy Radner eds., *Decision and Organisation* (Amsterdam: North Holland Pub. 1972) p. 322

¹⁸⁷ Hardin has outlined some possible asymmetries, which may constrain collective action. See Hardin, op cit, pp. 67-82

of others. The fact that some individuals may gain more or less than others, as we shall see, need not necessarily affect the total optimum, to the extent that the group is conceived to have failed.

3.6. Incentive compatibility and the feasibility of collective action

The preceding discussion leads us to two important but very general questions, which may be put simply: how or what can encourage participants to contribute to a collective good, knowing, in the first instance that their gains might not be greater than the costs, or that others might not be committed to contribute fully to optimum production of the collective good? In this vein, we could also consider one further important question; how could the group's *optimum* be measured, in view of the possibility that some members may not contribute towards the group goal, or that some members may not directly benefit from the collective good? Before examining these issues in some detail, two general points can be made. First, both questions present conceptual rather than empirical problems. Secondly, the questions are also consequent upon the nature of solution expected from the analysis. Presently however, I shall discuss these issues by examining some well established approaches, which can be studied under two main schools of thought: the *authority* oriented school, somewhat inspired by neoclassical ideas of the Pigouvian thesis, and what I shall here describe as *transactionalist* approaches, which are influenced by emerging concepts such as “new welfare economics”, “public choice” analysis and the so called “new institutionalism”, to mention but a few.

The authority oriented approaches of the neoclassical school, in both economics and in political science, revolve around the work of Arthur Pigou, the eminent British economist known for advancing Alfred Marshall's concept of externalities in his *Economics of Welfare*.¹⁸⁸ To reduce the argument to its basics, Pigou argued that the existence of externalities was a sufficient justification for government intervention. In order to discourage negative externalities, Pigou advocated taxes on such activities and to encourage positive externalities, he advocated compensations in the form of subsidies.¹⁸⁹ These incentives to discourage or encourage certain kinds of activities are sometimes referred to as “Pigouvian taxes and subsidies” respectively.

The Pigouvian approaches have attracted a number of followers in the social sciences and, in particular, political science, where the concept is generally used as arguments for authority and structure as general solutions to the problem of collective action (structural realism is, in no doubt, partly inspired by this concept). For example, Snidal argued that the lack of strong institutions and authority structures at the international level make the provision of public goods (such as security or

¹⁸⁸ Pigou, Arthur Cecil *The Economics of Welfare* (London: Macmillan 1929)

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 174-205

the environment) very difficult.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, O’Neal argued that greater international efforts in sharing the cost of collective security could be either voluntary or obtained through coercion. In the event of a lack of cooperation, he argued, “powerful states may not allow the weak to act independently and free ride on the public goods they provide. Instead, weak nations may be forced to contribute to collective action or even to pay tribute in excess of its costs.”¹⁹¹ What scholars find particularly useful about the neoclassical approaches is its reliance on authority and coercion, and the concept has provided the rationale for authority oriented approaches.

A notable deviation from the Pigouvian understanding, though keeping to the same general principle, is Olson’s *Logic of Collective Action*. Perhaps, it represents only a slight deviation because Olson’s thesis aimed to describe a situation where coercion or other forms of inducements may not be necessary prerequisites for an optimum output. The core of Olson’s argument is that whether a group succeeds or fails without coercion or other “outside inducement” very much depends on the number of participants in the group. The logic is simple enough: it states that the larger the group the less likely that the group’s goal will be optimum. In comparing small groups to large groups, Olson outlined a number of possible properties that set small groups apart from larger groups. He argued, firstly, that small groups might well be able to provide themselves with a collective good simply because of the attraction of the collective good to the individual members. Olson argued: “The larger a group is, the further it will fall short of obtaining an optimal supply of any collective good, and the less likely that it will act to obtain even a minimal amount of such a good. In short, the larger the group, the less it will further its common interests”;¹⁹² and unless “there is coercion or some outside inducements that will lead the members of the large group to act in their common interest.”¹⁹³ For Olson, a group that can obtain an optimum supply of the collective good, (generally smaller groups) is said to be privileged, whereas a (large) group for which output would be suboptimal is described as latent.

Secondly, Olson doubted that even in “smallest of groups”, the collective good would be provided on an optimal scale, since the good, is by nature a collective good, and by definition no one may be excluded once the good has been provided.¹⁹⁴ Hence, Olson argued that the good may not in fact be provided at all unless one of the members or a coalition of members will find that, their “personal

¹⁹⁰ Snidal, Duncan “Public Goods, Property Rights and Political Organisations” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 23 No. 4 (December 1979) pp. 532-566

¹⁹¹ Oneal, John R., “Theory of Collective Action and Burden Sharing in NATO” *International Organisation* Vol. 44 No. 3 (summer 1990) pp. 379-402; see also Burgess, Philip M. and James Robinson “Alliance and the Theory of Collective Action: A Simulation of Coalition Process”, in James N. Rosenau ed. *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory* (London: Macmillan Publishers 1969) pp. 640-653

¹⁹² Olson, op cit, p. 36

¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 44

gain from having the collective good exceeds the total cost of providing some amount of the collective good.”¹⁹⁵ This is to say that the relative significance of certain individuals in the group is just as important as the number of individuals in the group. Olson thus stated:

A group which has members with high unequal degrees of interest in a collective good, and which wants a collective good that is (at some level of provision) extremely valuable in relation to its cost, will be more apt to provide itself with a collective than other groups with the same number of members.¹⁹⁶

A group that can provide the collective good, or at least have an individual or small group of individuals to provide the good, Olson argued, is “fortunate” or “privileged” and a group which cannot provide the good at an optimum is said to be “unfortunate”.¹⁹⁷ These distinct differences between small and large groups led Olson to draw three distinct conclusions that he argued keep large groups from attaining their goals. These are: 1) the larger the group the smaller the fraction of the total benefits that any individuals in the group will receive. 2) The larger the group the less likely that there would be a coalition of individuals with sufficient interest that would act to obtain the good. 3) The larger the number of individuals in the group the greater the cost of obtaining the good, and hence “the higher the hurdles that must be jumped before any of the collective good can be obtained.”¹⁹⁸ For these reasons, Olson argued that large groups will fall short of obtaining an optimal supply of the good in the absence of coercion or outside incentives.

In sum, it seems obvious that Olson’s thesis is an amalgam of the essential attributes of the rational actor behavioural model and Pigou’s dictatorial kindness approach. For the former, Olson showed that it would be consistent with rational behaviour for an actor not to contribute to the collective good, if it conceived that enough others would not contribute to an optimum supply of the good. In the latter, he aimed to show that large groups would not succeed unless coercion or inducement was applied to encourage cooperation.

Olson’s logic of collective action is widely criticised for its extensive reliance on the function of numbers as central to the success or failure of collective action. Many of these criticisms are outlined in Russell Hardin’s *Collective Action*. First, on the rationale behind collective action, Hardin observed that Olson’s analysis depends not on “jointness” but on the apparent difficulty of excluding

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 34-35

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 33

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 45

¹⁹⁷ Ibid pp. 47-48

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 48

those who might benefit from the good without making necessary contributions.¹⁹⁹ Secondly, on the division of groups into privileged and latent groups, Hardin argued that such a division has no logical connection between group size and the two categories. This, he argued, is because it is quite possible to define conditions under which the smallest groups (two-member group) can be latent or suboptimal.²⁰⁰ Thirdly, on Olson's claim that "the larger the number of people who must be coordinated, the higher the costs of organising them to an effective level"; Hardin argued that, while this may be true for some classes of goods, there might be different effects for other classes of goods. For example, he argued that the production costs of many goods might show increasing returns as the number of consumers increased.

The average cost of such good might be greater than its average value to a group member until the group finally reaches a large enough size. As the group size increases there after, average cost might continue to fall for some time, so that the excess of value over cost increases considerably. In this case, the larger the group, the larger may be the incentives to an entrepreneur or a sub-group of fixed size to organise the group for collective benefit.²⁰¹

This means that the incentive to contribute may increase with group size. Perhaps, a perfect example of this rule would be collective security, which, in theory, should increase as the cumulative benefit become more obvious. The only exception Hardin argued is for classes of goods that might be subject to crowding. He defined a good that may suffer from crowding in these terms: "if the ratio of individual benefit to total costs declines as the number of people who use or enjoy the good increase."²⁰² Examples of these might include certain tangible goods, such as community finance or a stock of books in a public library, for which the stock would continue to decrease as demand increases. The argument here emphasises the need to distinguish between goods that have subtractable properties and those that are "pure in jointness".²⁰³ A good that is subtractable in character decreases in quantity as the number of users increase. On the other hand, it would be difficult, if not impractical to exclude anyone from public security, and as Ostrom observed, individual consumption of public security does not reduce the general level of security available in the community.²⁰⁴ Hardin therefore concluded that whether larger groups are less likely to succeed than smaller groups, is not entirely a logical matter, but also in part an empirical question of what

¹⁹⁹ Hardin, op cit, p. 19

²⁰⁰ Ibid p. 44

²⁰¹ Ibid, p. 43

²⁰² Ibid, p. 44

²⁰³ Ostrom, Elinor *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press 1990) p. 32

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 32

conditions correlate with size, as well as, and among other things, the very nature of the good in question.

Other scholars have also argued that neither the size of the group nor rational behaviour constitute the only necessary conditions for collective action. For example, Stroebe and Frey found first, that the problem of group function could be attributed to several other factors other than incentives or motivation or even group size.²⁰⁵ Secondly, that in a game experiment, when group members were permitted to discuss their dilemma before making decisions, there was more willingness to cooperate and the tendency to defect was considerably reduced. Thirdly, they also found that it was not essential for all members of the group to contribute equally for an optimal output to be achieved. The latter argument raises an important issue that is neither fully explained in Olson, nor tacitly challenged in Hardin, that is, what is meant by “optimum” supply to the individual, which is indicated as a necessary condition in the analysis of collective action. The issue is discussed in a later part of this chapter. However, Ostrom further observed that the reasons why some groups may fail to obtain an optimal outcome in their efforts have as much to do with external factors as with internal variables.

Ostrom lists some of these variables as including, for example, a lack of communication and consequent lack of trust among the participants that may blind the group from realising that they stand to share a common failure. On the other hand, she noted, powerful individuals who stand to gain from the existing disarray may block efforts by the less powerful to change the rules of the game.²⁰⁶ Certain external factors may also be found to impose the burden of adjustment on some members of the group. Rapid changes in technology, for example, may mean that some small and perhaps poor countries could find it difficult to adjust their internal structure quickly enough to avoid suboptimal outcome. One such example that can be cited is the increasing demand for computerised passport system to combat international terrorism. Another factor that can be cited that might lead to suboptimal outcome is perhaps a perverse incentive system, where, for example, a “powerful state”, as noted earlier, might attempt to coerce rather than negotiate compliance on the part of a less powerful state.

The analysis of Olson’s approach and indeed, the authority oriented models, would not be complete without a mention of alternative approaches that influenced scholarly research on collective action theories. As a matter of convenience, I have coined the term *transactionalists* to encompass the gamut of these tools applied in the analysis of collective action and which exclude the direct

²⁰⁵ Stroebe, Wolfgang and Bruno S. Frey “Self-interest and Collective Action: Psychology of Public Good” *British Journal of Social* Vol. 21 (1982) pp. 121-137

²⁰⁶ Ostrom, op cit, p. 21

intervention of an overarching authority. The term would include elements from concepts such as, “new institutionalism”, the “public choice” school, “new welfare economics”, or indeed studies of political processes. The basic idea is to identify feasible systems of collective action where coercion is not a necessary function, or in indeed, the primary basis of a stable solution. An important ingredient in this regard, among others, discussed in the relevant literature, is that participants in a collective are able to communicate in terms that enable them to seek a way out of the dilemma.

The collection of work under the transactionalist frame of reference has emerged in opposition to the view that authority or coercive measures are necessary conditions for an optimum outcome, if not the feasibility of collective action. Ronald Coase is, perhaps, the most celebrated proponent of the challenge to the authority-oriented schools. In his ground breaking work on the problem of social costs, commonly referred to as “Coase theorem”, Coase argued that it was possible for individuals suffering from common externalities to negotiate an agreement to resolve the problem without government interference.²⁰⁷ Recall, for example, Pigou’s solution to the externalities problem, which suggests, for instance, that if a farmer’s herd of cattle is grazing in his or her neighbour’s field and the neighbour objects, it would be necessary for the government to impose a sanction, such as tax on the farmer. Otherwise, according to the traditional Pigouvian view, the farmer will not have the incentive to stop his herds grazing in the neighbour’s field, if the farmer did not have legal liability to do so. Coase, however, challenged this view and suggested that the farmer and his neighbour could negotiate an agreement that would satisfy both the farmer and his neighbour, if the cost of reaching such an agreement (transaction costs) were zero. Coase pointed out that the landowner (having no legal rights) to stop the farmer could pay the farmer, under a mutually beneficial agreement, to cut down on the number of grazing cattle. For example, the farmer could accept some amount exceeding his expected net profit per head of cattle to cut down on the same number of roaming cattle. If, for instance, each cow was doing ten pounds worth of damage to the field, then the field owner will be willing to pay up to ten pounds per cow to the farmer to get rid of enough cattle.

The problem that Coase sought to explain was how to resolve the conflict arising from externalities without harming either of the parties, for example, without loss of income to either party or having to make the choice between discontinuing crop output to increase meat stock in the market. The question, according to Coase is: “should A be allowed to harm B or should B be allowed to harm A? The problem is to avoid the more serious harm.”²⁰⁸ The Coase theorem is often criticised on two main points: the very function of transaction costs in reaching agreements, and secondly, his

²⁰⁷ Coase, Ronald “The Problem of Social Cost” *Journal of Law and Economics* Vol. 3 (1960) pp. 1-44

²⁰⁸ Ibid

supposed dissatisfaction with government intervention.²⁰⁹ Scholars, it seems, have generally latched onto these points as bases for criticism and in some ways have consequently misrepresented Coase's core arguments. For the latter issue, it is perhaps possible to emphasise that the Coase theorem is not essentially against government intervention.²¹⁰

It appears, from a close reading of the text that Coase, generally aimed to make the point that the problem of externalities should be approached in its totality with the aim of seeking the best possible solution for both parties and at the lowest possible cost. It is possible to conceive of a situation in which neither the government nor the market could provide the best solution to all cases of externalities. As Coase argued;

All solutions have costs and there is no reason to suppose that government regulation is called for simply because the problem is not well handled by the market or the firm. Satisfactory views on policy can only come from a patient study of how, in practice, the market, firms and governments handle the problem of harmful effects.²¹¹

The argument here is three fold. First, Coase argued that the rearrangement of legal rights through the market would be efficient if it leads to an increase in the value of production. This is possible assuming that transaction costs in the market amount to zero. If transaction costs exceed the expected net benefit, it would be pointless to resort to the market system. Secondly, there might be alternative systems that may yield the same result at less than any costs that might be incurred by using the market system. The firm, Coase argued, is such an example, which can act as an intermediary between the field owner and the cattle farmer. The firm, among other things, will replace the transaction function of the market with an integrated administrative function. "This solution would be adopted whenever the administrative costs of the firm were less than the costs of the market transaction..." Thirdly, he argued, the costs of handling the problem within the firm might be so high that it might not be possible to opt for such system. An alternative solution then would be direct government intervention. This option might be necessary if the situation is so complex that implementing legal rights is impossible. The government may impose regulations either directly or through agencies which could define the limits of various activities. However, Coase cautioned that government action or its agencies might add to the list of "nuisance". In sum, the argument for Coase is not necessarily about which agency is best in dealing with all social externalities, but rather, the need to choose the appropriate social arrangement to deal with the problem.

²⁰⁹See for example, Canterbury, E. Ray and A. Marvasti "Two Coase or Two Theorems?" *Journal of Economic Issues* Vol. 28, No. 1 (March 1994) pp. 218-227; and Veljanovski, Cento G., "The Coase Theorem and the Economic Theory of Markets and the Law" *KYKLOS*, Vol. 35 (1982) pp. 55-74

²¹⁰ See for example, Canterbury and Marvasti's fierce critique of Coase, *ibid*

²¹¹ Coase, *op cit*

How relevant are these concepts (authority-oriented approaches and transactionalism) to international collective action? The significance, up to this point can be found to be considerable. In the first instance, the notion of authority as a function of order stands in direct contrast to a system lacking such characteristics (anarchy), and which underlies realism's formalisation of the international system.²¹² Similarly, both the regime theory and neoliberal institutionalism have generally been inspired by Coase's suggestions that the firm could act to reduce the costs and perhaps, risk of market transactions. In other respects, Conybeare also pointed out that the persistence of international externalities have forced states operating in environments similar to "market exchange" to develop systems of property rights and liability rules consistent with global welfare in the absence of authority. For example, the existence of mechanisms to deal with marine, freshwater, aerospace, and radioactivity externalities are noted, and these rules, established under international law, do not require direct intervention from an overarching authority.²¹³

Of particular relevance to the present study is the fact that certain classes of collective action are characterised by the reassignment of rights, which change the nature of the good from a strictly private to a collective good. Furthermore, since a good may be characterised by the value and the nature of control the original owner placed on it, the same good may be subject to change once rights have been transferred. Davis and Whinston have observed that the very definition of property rights can affect the manner in which delimitation of rights is determined.²¹⁴ These, they noted would include the use of the material as well as the possibility of exclusion. Such an argument is critical for the analysis of collective intelligence. An example here, which needs no further emphasis, is the very nature and sensitivity of strategic intelligence, which is, by its nature, subject to stringent control and rigorous official secrecy laws and therefore considered as "national" asset; privately owned by sovereign states.

3.7. Consideration of efficient output as a function of incentives in collective environments

The analysis so far has shown that what the authority oriented approaches and the transactionalists' school have in common is concern for efficient outcomes, which as noted earlier, is the second defining feature of the incentive problem in collective action. But what do scholars mean by "efficiency" or "optimal" outcomes? These terms are intrinsically linked to the many ways to which solutions to collective action problems are defined. The conventional interpretation of efficiency refers to the maximisation of both the production as well as the allocative functions of the group. By

²¹² Waltz, Kenneth N., *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley 1979) p. 102

²¹³ Conybeare, John, A.C., "International Organisation and the Theory of Property Rights" *International Organisation* Vol. 34 No. 3 (summer 1980) pp. 307-334

²¹⁴ Davis, Otto A., and Andrew B. Whinston, "On the Distinction Between Public and Private Goods" *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (May, 1967), pp. 360-373

maximisation also is meant that no other system could yield greater value given certain but specific criteria. However, traditionally, scholars have used the “Pareto optimum” criteria as rules to determine the efficiency of group actions. Named after the Italian economist, a Pareto optimum criterion refers to a situation whereby, in reallocation of rights, as noted earlier in Coase theorem, no one individual is made better off while making the other worse off. In Pareto’s words:

We will say that the members of a collectivity enjoy *maximum ophelimity*²¹⁵ in a certain position when it is impossible to find a way of moving from that position very slightly in such a manner that the ophelimity enjoyed by each of the individuals of that collectivity increases or decreases. That is to say, any small displacement in departing from that position necessarily has the effect of increasing the ophelimity which certain individuals enjoy, and decreasing that which others enjoy, of being agreeable to some, and disagreeable to others.²¹⁶

The Paretian rule could be said to contain three general efficiency criteria:

- (i) *Production efficiency*,
 - (a) That factors or costs of production be the same for all participants
 - (b) That the production of one good does not lead to a reduction in any other good within the system.
- (ii) *Allocative efficiency*
 - (a) Consumption of the good must be identical for all users.
 - (b) The incentive to contribute toward a change in social state (marginal rate of substitution) must be the same for all units.
- (iii) *Efficiency in demand*

Sometimes referred to as product mix efficiency, suggests that the marginal rate of substitution must match the marginal rate of transformation. Simply put, the good produced must meet the demand or users’ needs for the good.

This last condition is perhaps central to the Paretian system, since it is anticipated that it would be impossible to increase the production of one good without the diminution of another. Hence individual or society must agree upon the units of, for example, good A to be substituted for an increase in the production of good B. It is assumed that since individual preferences and, in fact,

²¹⁵ For ophelimity, read “utility” or benefit

²¹⁶ Pareto, Vilfredo *Manual of Political Economy* (Macmillan 1906) pp. 261. The Original text *Manuale di Economia Politica* was published in 1906

their utility functions may not be exactly the same at all times, society or a group must find a point for which the marginal rate of transformation is in harmony with the marginal rate of substitution.

The general Paretian optimum then suggests a situation where a mix of all the criteria is in simultaneous equilibrium, and once reached, no other combination of factors can improve the value without decreasing others in the system, or “being agreeable to some and disagreeable to others.”²¹⁷ Application of these rules anticipates that, with the various constraints imposed by the criteria notwithstanding, any improvement or gains for some, would not leave others worse off.

3.8. Relevance of the Paretian optimum to collective action

Recall from our earlier discussion, that Pigouvian recommendation for government intervention was criticised for not accounting for the possibility that an imposed solution could benefit a section of the society while making others worse off. In fact, the Paretian system can be interpreted as attempting to predict such a situation. Similarly, the Paretian optimum is criticised in the same vein, but largely for its rigidity in its definition of efficiency criteria, as well as being inadequate as a policy tool. For example, Amartya Sen, observed that, according to the Paretian optimum, an economy can be optimal in that sense, even if a small part of the population is rolling in luxury and a greater number of the population are starving and no action can be taken to improve the life of those starving without cutting into the pleasure of the rich.²¹⁸ At a glance however, it can be argued that aspects of the Paretian criteria are inadequate as tools for the analysis of collective action. In general, it is expected that a policy change in a situation of complex externalities would produce winners as well as losers, and the Paretian criteria cannot account for such outcomes. The point here is that since the Pareto optimality conditions are both rigid and infeasible, considering that those in the group would have different levels of need and expectations, the approach imposes restrictions on the processes of organising for collective action, at least in most real-world situations.

Nonetheless, it is possible to conceive of the Paretian system as a general guide or as a certain benchmark that a group could work towards, where an immediate achievement of an optimum is not feasible and not to be considered as a general criterion that must be satisfied. As is evident in some of the concepts examined earlier, scholars, especially of the authority-oriented schools, have, in view of the infeasibility of meeting such strict criteria, suggested the need for authority as an alternative. It would also be useful to emphasise that the notion of “optimum” can be misleading; scholars tend to imply this to mean absolute equilibrium in the Paretian sense.

²¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 261

²¹⁸ Sen, Amartya K., “Choice Function and Revealed Preferences” *Review of Economic Studies* Vol. 38 (1971) pp. 307-17, see also Snidal, Duncan “Public Goods, Property Rights and Political Organisations” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 23 No. 4 (December 1979) pp. 532-566

Could there then be other alternative optimal criteria apart from those implied in Paretian logic? There are in fact several but there is no known concept of optimum criteria that can be considered to be useful enough as to provide a satisfactory condition for all cases of collective action. This means that each situation would contain a seed of its own solution that must be explored to develop a suitable optimum criterion. Apart from this approach and to obtain a general condition, von Neumann and Morgenstern reckon that we would need a comprehensive or universal definition of an “optimum.” This, they argue, can be obtained in two ways. The first is to give an exact and plausible definition, which can be generally applied to every situation. The other is to find a definition that is more or less relevant to a given situation. The former, they acknowledged, is indeed nonexistent, since there may be different ways to obtain an optimum solution.²¹⁹ This means that understanding both the contexts, as well as a plausible definition of an environment in which viable intelligence system could operate in a complex political setting, is perhaps, most critical in any attempt to formulate a tentative theory of collective intelligence.

In the chapter that follows, I present a precise but tentative model that can be used as a basis for understanding viable intelligence systems in organisations such as the United Nations. The study will, first and foremost, draw upon key features that will allow us to make predictive comparison between centralised and decentralised systems. The idea is primarily to identify those features which are, though unique to decentralised systems, but consistent with what we shall describe as a “solution”. The concept of a solution, as we shall see, suggests that, it is possible to examine a broad range of environments in which different systems operate, and which their relative optimal outcome may be comparable to known and perhaps established systems. For example, it is possible to compare aspects of stability in centralised (state) systems with those of decentralised (international) systems, and we could similarly compare the political or decision-making processes between these systems. The fact that the processes appropriate to these structures could be found to be relatively consistent in their own rights enable us to define a conceptual description of an optimal outcome, with respect to the environment as a “stable solution”. The study will therefore suggest that most, if not all political systems are adapted to their specific environments, and their relative optimal performances are primarily, consequences of the demands of those environments.

²¹⁹ Neumann, John Von and Oskar Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1953) p. 9

Chapter 4

Concepts of the Feasibility of Collective Intelligence in Decentralised Actor Environment

4.1. Definition of conceptual solution and the feasibility of collective intelligence

This chapter aims to explore the feasibility of a process of collective intelligence in complex political organisations. The idea is to identify a certain course of action, which may exist but is not immediately obvious or previously thought to be infeasible because it does not entirely appear to conform to established and known patterns.²²⁰ The notion of “feasibility” does not necessarily suggest a physical manifestation of a process. It implies a concern with the extent to which it is possible to demonstrate that a process is not in the sense infeasible when compared to others which are at once obvious and easy to predict. The point of reference for the present discussion, therefore, is the *optimality* of the group described in an earlier chapter. It is anticipated that a number of hypotheses will be generated. It is expected also that such propositions would not be forced but should emerge from, as well as reflect observed realities as well as being rooted in theory. It is also expected that the assumptions generated will reflect the composite of issues found in the cases studied in later chapters of the dissertation. The aim, then, is to outline possible criteria that would enable us to predict the feasibility of collective intelligence in decentralised environments characterised by complex political systems.

Complex political organisations are here defined as systems in which the units are, first and foremost, independent, but are unavoidably pulled together by shared and perhaps, inevitable sets of values and objectives. The fact that the units in the collective environment are completely autonomous, that is, no one individual actor or coalition of actors dominates, in the sense that they can authoritatively set the rules, suggests that the process of dealing with their shared problems operates in a decentralised setting. Furthermore, the constraints on individual members, as well as on the collective are considered to be of such extreme complexity that a concept of solution in that environment would be implausible if considered under static equilibrium criteria, such as those outlined under the Paretian system in chapter three. The theoretical implications are obvious. Since we are here attempting to engage with a problem of a particular abstract nature, for which no direct

²²⁰ See chapter one above, esp 1.8 on “models and nested models”

and coherent concept of a solution is currently known, the present chapter also has the express task of clarifying the criteria for evaluating the feasibility of collective intelligence.

4.2. Paretian optimum and the solution problem in decentralised systems

The need to establish a formal notion of collective optimum is contingent upon the problems thrown up by, among other things, the Paretian equilibrium models. It should be recalled that the Paretian criteria presuppose that incentive properties for all states must be in equilibrium, and, as has been noted, such a balance might not exist in most real world situations. However, the Paretian system has served as a main point of reference and as a catalyst for scholars to stretch their imagination in the search for collective optima in various social settings. The challenge for scholars has focused, first, on ways to circumvent the strict equilibrium criteria and secondly, on efforts to develop innovative and effective tools that are applicable to real life social situations, or at least provide alternative explanations. On the other hand, some traditional approaches have involved treating the problem as monotone (or linear), such that the situation is easily resolved by a simple assertion based on centralised processes. In the strict Paretian sense, we would not expect differences in the needs and expectations of the units, or expect the units to have alternative or multiple preferences. Von Neumann and Morgenstein observed that, in such situations, “the structure of the society under consideration would then be extremely simple”. Hence, they argued, “there would exist an absolute state of equilibrium in which the quantitative share of every participant would be precisely determined.”²²¹

In fact, the need to obviate the strict Paretian equilibrium underlies von Neumann and Morgestern’s groundbreaking work on the *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour*. The main problem for these scholars was how to circumvent the Paretian notion of “solution”, in order to develop a theory of collective optimum. They were generally encouraged by the fact that a reasonable solution may not be found in an environment characterised by many and perhaps incompatible problem dimensions. As a result, they proposed that the notion of a solution would have to be broadened to include inherent features of social organisation that are well known from a common sense point of view, but have not been conceived of in proper perspective.²²² These, they argued would include “the possibility of irrational behaviour on the part of others.” Hence, “in whatever way we formulate the guiding principles, and the objective justification of ‘rational behaviour’, it would be necessary to make room for every possible conduct of ‘the others’. Only in this way, they argued, can a satisfactory and exhaustive theory be developed.”²²³ They noted;

²²¹ Neumann, John Von and Oskar Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953) p. 34

²²² Ibid

²²³ Ibid, p. 31

Our mathematical analysis of the problem will show that there exists, indeed, a not so inconsiderable family of games where a solution can be defined and in the above sense, as one single imputation. In such cases every participant obtains at least the amount thus imputed to him by just behaving appropriately, rationally. Indeed, he gets exactly this amount if other participants too behave rationally, if they do not, he may get even more.²²⁴

This was to lead these scholars to develop new and exciting interpretations of game theory, which included concepts such as pure and mixed strategies, as well as methods of solving simple strategic zero-sum games. Their analysis also led the authors to conclude that a constituent theory of the kind described can only result from looking for solutions which are not single imputations, but rather systems of imputations. We shall see how this logic impacts on the search for a viable collective intelligence system within the United Nations.

4.3. The notion of a solution

What do von Neumann and Morgenstern mean by systems of imputation? There are two possible interpretations. First, with respect to the solution problematique and in distributive terms, conceptually, systems of imputation can be thought of as a process for choosing from among several analytical tools, and in which the choice is also conditional upon the constraints imposed by the social environment. Secondly, a system of imputation also promises to identify the process that is uniquely relevant to a particular group. The second is contingent upon the view that within a system, there may be many different strategies available either at individual or group level, through which the desired goal could be achieved. A system, for example, may possess many solutions, even in the Paretian sense, but this is not to suggest that all of these solutions are useful, or practical in the sense of a collective optimum.²²⁵ A system of imputation then can be said to consist essentially, in the search for an optimum, which best describes the group's constituent properties and also reflects their relevant systems of action.²²⁶ This is to say, as Malmgren noted, that equilibrium for individual

²²⁴ Von Neumann and Morgenstern also noted in a footnote: "in games – as usually understood – the total proceeds are always zero; i.e., one participant can gain only what the others lose. Thus there is a pure problem of distribution – i.e. imputation – and absolutely none of increasing the total utility, the "social product" (for imputation read gain or benefit to the individual from the collective good, minus costs. See also the discussion on the "assumptions about incentive problems in the previous chapter, esp 3.6) Ibid, p. 36

²²⁵ Schelling, Thomas C., *The Strategy of Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963) p. 295

²²⁶ Parthasarathy, T. and T.E.S. Raghavan, *Some Topics in Two-Person Games* (New York Elsevier, 1971) p. 221

groups exists only for actions, which make up a consistent plan. This, he described as “expectational equilibrium.”²²⁷ Presently, I shall discuss the basic properties of this concept.²²⁸

To make sense of this, we need to consider those characteristics (at least, some of them) which are taken as a given in centralised (state) structures, and not generally considered to be significant in decentralised settings. Some of these, for example, would include the coherence of the group, their *raison d'être* or the notion of goals, and also the functions of rules and regulations, to mention but a few. These features, as identified below, are assumed to provide the rationale for the consistency of a system. From an analytical point of view, if these qualities are found to be present in a decentralised system, the idea of a “viable solution” in these circumstances could be said to be comparable to those associated with established and widely acknowledged systems.

A system consists of many different elements that give it a meaning. Among these are first, those properties that inform us that the individuals that constitute the group coexist in an interdependent environment, and by the manner of their relationship, they could be described as a coherent whole; we shall call this property, “stable equilibrium.” In the context in which the term is used here, stable equilibrium refers to a system whose characteristic properties enable it to withstand degrees of disturbance without being seriously perturbed.²²⁹ This is to say that one of the many ways in which we can conceptualise a solution in complex organisations would be to understand how the group copes with a range of pressures and yet maintains its essential composition. This, in fact, is what Myrdal meant by “dynamic stability”. That is, a system that is “adaptable and flexible to movement, and which can withstand minor disturbances.”²³⁰ As Bendor and Swistak explained:

²²⁷ Malmgren, H.B. “Information, Expectations, and the Theory of the Firm”, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 75 (1961) pp. 399-421

²²⁸ Bales, for example, suggests three equilibrium problems that are relevant subjects of analysis in small groups; a) With regard to *Orientation*, members of the group have some degree of ignorance and uncertainty about the relevant facts, but individually possess facts relevant to decision. Their problem of arriving at a common cognitive orientation or definition of the situation must be solved, if at all, through interaction. b) With regard to problems of *Evaluation*, the members of the group ordinarily possess somewhat different values or interests and the task is such that it involves several different values and interests as criteria by which the facts of the situation and the proposed course of action are to be judged. The problem of arriving at common value judgments necessary to a concrete plan must be solved, again, if at all, through interaction. c) With regard to problems of *control*, (that is, attempts of the members to influence directly the action of each other and arrive at a concrete plan) the acceptance of the task sets up in most instances a moderately strong pressure for group decision, with the expectation that the excellence of the decision can and will be evaluated by each of them as well as by the experimenter, so that the decision will affect their status. There are a number of possible alternative decisions or solutions, with uncertain degrees of potential frustration or satisfaction associated with various choices. See Bales, Robert F., “The Equilibrium Problem in Small Groups” in Parsons et al, *Working Papers in the Theory of Action*, (New York, The Free Press 1953) pp. 111- 114

²²⁹ See for example, Myrdal’s notion of “static” and “dynamic” equilibrium; Myrdal, Gunnar *An American Dilemma* (New York: Herper and Brothers 1944) Appendix 3, pp. 1065-1071.

²³⁰ Ibid

A ball perched on a hill is in equilibrium: As long as no force acts on the ball, it will stay where it is. But this is not a stable equilibrium, for a slight push will send the ball into a valley. Once the ball is in a valley it is stable. A small disturbance will move it only part way up a hill, and it will then roll back down into the valley. Intuitively, the deeper the valley the more stable is the equilibrium, for deeper valleys require larger shocks if the ball is to be dislodged.²³¹

What then are the necessary properties of stable equilibrium? Since, as Bendor and Switstak argued, the depth of the valley is an indicator of the robustness of the stability; it would be necessary to identify some conceptual equivalent that represents this state of affairs. It is therefore proposed that the group's goals and constitution are significant indicators of stability.

Defining a group's goal as a factor of its stability makes it possible to develop an analysis of collective action based on the assumption that the structure of the group is a reflection of certain shared values or objectives among its members. The idea of a group's goal, then, it need be emphasised, is not an abstract construction. The goal is indeed, a manifestation of a desired social state on which the members have initially agreed. The point can be illustrated thus: that there may be two alternative social states; peace and war, that the group, for example, the international community has chosen peaceful coexistence as their desired social state.²³² The choice of peaceful coexistence and of peace maintenance, in turn, can be said to be manifested in the creation of the United Nations and the process of achieving this goal is articulated in the organisation's rules (or Charter).

In a sense therefore, it seems reasonable to define groups and organisations by the goals and objectives they set for themselves. Briefly thus, as far as developing a model for collective action is concerned, it is possible to take the view that organisations are goal oriented. The goals and objectives the group set for themselves reflect the inner nature of the group. Thus, an understanding of the group's goals becomes an important part of the analysis of a group, as is for the individual. In fact, the very nature of the group goal has the tendency to reveal the true nature of the group itself.²³³ The idea of goal orientation has also been noted as an important factor in defining the structure and pattern of relationships in the group. Talcott Parson, for example, defined the function of goals as “a

²³¹ Bendor, Jonathan and Piotr Swistak “The Evolutionary Stability of Cooperation” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 91 No. 2 (June 1997) pp. 290-307

²³² I wish to thank members of the JDM-Society, for their helpful suggestions to my query on the choice of social states.

²³³ See for example, Truman, David B., *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958) p. 29. He argued that groups are “real” in the sense that the interactions that define the group can be observed. Thus, within the consistent pattern of their interaction, we “designate them by collective terms: group, institution, nation, legislative, political party, corporation, labour union, family, and so on.”

directional change that tends to reduce the discrepancy between the needs of the system, with respect to input-output interchange and the conditions in the envioning systems that bear upon the 'fulfilment' of such needs."²³⁴ All organisations, international or otherwise meet these criteria, insofar as the goals or objectives constitute the reason for participation.

Scholars it seems, have been misled to believe that among the reasons why some groups succeed and others fail in their collective endeavour, is that one group, ("privileged" group) is judged to exist as a concrete whole, while the other (a "latent" group) is assumed to operate as separate individuals. On this account, the idea of goal as a factor is lost in the analysis, and the tendency has been to contrast groups which operate as organic entities with those that do not. The problem, it seems, has been due to a misreading of Jean Jacques Rousseau's famous treatise on the social contract. Rousseau wrote;

The individual, by giving himself up to all gives himself to none; and, as he acquires the same right over every other person in the community, as he gives them over himself, he gains an equivalent for what he bestows, and still a greater power to preserve what he retains... If, therefore, we take from the social compact every thing that is not essential to it, we shall find it reduced to the following terms: "We, the contracting parties, do jointly and severally submit our persons and abilities, to the supreme direction of the general will of all, and, in a collective body, receive each member into that body, as an indivisible part of the whole... This act of association accordingly converts the several individual contracting parties into one moral collective body, composed of as many members as there are votes in the assembly, which receives also from the same act its unity and existence."²³⁵

This treatise has been interpreted along the lines that the constituent members of a group will have similar expectations, have similar values, make similar decision, as well as develop and disintegrate together. Contemporary political theorists (for example, Karl Popper, Robert MacIver, Talcot Parsons, James Buchanan and Tullock among others) have, observed that the *organic* state generally refers to the confluence of interests rather than actual fusion of the separate units or the total surrender of their independence or unique characteristics. Popper, for example, clarified the issue by identifying two different kinds of societies; *closed* societies, which he noted, are characterised by "magical" and "tribal" collectivism, and *open* societies, populated by individuals confronted with personal decisions. The former, he argued, can be truly compared to an organism. A closed society,

²³⁴ Parsons, T., "An Outline of the Social System", in Parsons et al, (eds) *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory* (New York, The Free Press, 1961) p. 39

²³⁵ Rousseau, Jean Jacques "On the Social Contract" in Parsons *et al* eds. *Theories of Society* (1961) pp. 119-125

Popper observed, "resembles a herd or a tribe in being a semi-organic unit whose members are held together, sharing common efforts, common dangers, common joys and common distress." He continued;

"It is still a concrete group of concrete individuals, related to one another not merely by such abstract social relationship as division of labour and exchange of commodities but by concrete physical relationships such as touch, smell, and sight."²³⁶

These aspects of organic theory, Popper noted, cannot be truly applied to an open society in the manner, which it applies to closed societies. For Popper, "open societies" are characterised by the fact that many members strive to rise socially to take the places of other members. In other words, open societies have the potential for continuous conflict, and such a "social phenomenon as class struggle", he argued, cannot be found in an organism.²³⁷

Furthermore, unlike the organism, the individual is a self-directing unit with degrees of autonomy. This means, as MacIver also explained, that society does not prescribe their every behaviour; neither does it control their every thought or activity, even when it controls some specific behaviour of the individual. He wrote, "the social unit is still a self, a focus of being, an individuality. Even in pursuing the ends of the group, he is seeking own ends as well. If he works for others he works also for his own..."²³⁸ The problem, then, for society is the adjustment of ego and group interests. "This is the problem not merely of social order but of every social relationship."²³⁹ The outcome of such adjustment is often seen to represent a unity of purpose of some sort, a social goal or shared value, and generally acknowledged by many, if not most of the group members. The general manifestation of this adjustment is what is commonly referred to as organisation. Theories of organisation, according to James March and Herbert Simon, attempt to describe the delicate conversion of conflict into cooperation, mobilisation of resources, and the coordination of efforts that facilitate the joint survival of an organisation and its members.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Popper, Karl *The Open Society and Its Enemies* 2nd revised ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1952) p. 173

²³⁷ Ibid, p. 173

²³⁸ MacIver, Robert M. *The Web of Government* Revised ed. (Macmillan: 1967) p. 312. Parson, similarly argued, "It is true that the individual person is the unit of composition of group structure. But it does not follow that the same person cannot at the same time be a member of a plurality of groups. On the contrary he generally is a member of many at the same time. Thus, his whole personality is not involved in any one group." Parsons, Talcott *The Structure of Social Action* (New York, The Free Press 1949) p. 747

²³⁹ MacIver, ibid, p. 309

²⁴⁰ March, James and Herbert Simon, define organisations as "systems of coordinated action among individuals and groups whose preferences, information, interests, or knowledge differ *Organisations* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell 1993) p. 2

As the organisation attempts to internalise the various interests of the members, the concept of a goal tends to disappear from the analysis. Buchanan and Tullock, for example argued that, outside the organic theory, it would indeed be difficult to see why group decisions should be directed toward the achievement of any specific goal.²⁴¹ However the point is made that the concept of goal is not a fixed or final destination, but a continuous process, which attempts to reconcile various conflicting interests within the group. That is, as Parsons observed, "elements of action formulated in terms of the intrinsic means-end relationship" and directed towards the realisation of the rational norms conceived as binding on the actors in the system.²⁴² This again, leads us to a third conception of a viable solution which focuses on the function of rules in the system.

4.4. Conventions and rules as functions of stability

A system can also be thought of as a composite of rules, conventions or a constitution through which, firstly, the framework of the group is outlined, and secondly, a statement about the nature of the goals to be pursued and guidelines on how the goals can be attained. The set of rules also sets out the standards of behaviour or norms, which guide individual behaviour in the group. Examples of these rules and conventions are; United Nations Charter, a nation's constitution, and any such general statement that describes a group's purpose.

With regards to the rules, the question is, what preconditions are to be met before a system can be considered to be optimal, i.e., does the existence of rules tell us that a group is functional or efficient? The answer to this question would also depend on the following problems: a) whether all individuals in the system agree to the rules or accept all the contents of the set of rules? b) Are the rules uniformly interpreted? c) Must all decisions be constitutional or strictly adhere to the set of rules? d) Does the set of rules exist in such a form that it predicts or should be able to predict all possible actions or events? e) Is the set of rules the only source of action available to the group? f) Does the set of rules guarantee absence of conflict in the group? These preconditions cannot be subjected to individual analysis, because they are intrinsically linked, in the sense that where one fails, the others fail too. Furthermore, it is not the object here to test the validity of these properties by way of detailed analysis or to prove their relevance to the stability of groups. We need only to consider them as analytical reference points, rather than criteria for making blanket judgements about the efficiency of groups.

²⁴¹ Buchanan, James and Gordon Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundation of Constitutional Democracy* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 1962), p. 11

²⁴² Parsons, op cit, 1949, p. 751

However, to cite an everyday example of the relevance of these preconditions, they have been used as a basis on which to challenge the effectiveness of the United Nations and to condemn its Charter as being weak and inconsistent. Such criticism has implicitly contrasted the United Nations system with those of centralised systems of states. This comparison and the conclusions drawn are fundamentally erroneous, not only because the systems under consideration are significantly different, but also because, these conditions, if they constitute a set of equilibria would be impossible to attain in any system consisting of human beings. In fact, no evidence exists in the history of human kind to suggest that such a balance has ever been achieved, even in extreme authoritarian states. If such total balance is what is considered to be “stability” or “optimality”, then, these terms are misconceived.

Nevertheless, these properties have, at one level or another, occupied the minds of political philosophers and theorists, and there is a consistency of belief that total adherence to the rules by every member of a group is a not central determinant of optimal function of a group. For example, Karl Popper considered the issue in his philosophical study of the development of modern democracy, or as he put it, the transition from “closed society” with its submission to magical forces, to “open society” which sets free the critical powers of man.” To understand the relevance of rules in this transformation, Popper distinguished between “natural laws, or law of nature” and “normative laws or norms.”²⁴³ Natural law, Popper observed, are “unalterable”, and “there are no exception to it.” Furthermore, Popper argued that since natural laws are also unalterable, they can be neither broken nor enforced and they are beyond human control. Normative laws, which may be described as “moral commandment” or “legal enactment” cannot be said to be true or “false”, since such laws do not describe facts but lay down directions for human behaviours. If such laws have any significance, Popper argued, “then it can be broken; and if it cannot be broken, then it is superfluous and without significance.”²⁴⁴

We can interpret this understanding of rules in two ways. Firstly, the observation that rules are neither true nor false, points to the diversity of opinion and the individuality of the constituent members of a particular group. This is to say that although some members may not agree with the contents of the rules, nor adhere to the rules at all times, this is not to suggest that the group is not stable or optimal. David Truman observed that deviating from the norm is a characteristic of group life and such behaviour is noticeable in complex modern societies, “namely that no individual is wholly absorbed in any group to which he belongs.”²⁴⁵ Secondly, the fact that the rules are also

²⁴³ Popper, op cit, p. 57

²⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 58

²⁴⁵ Truman, David B., *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958) p. 157

susceptible to being flouted might, in fact, suggest the dynamic nature of group processes. Truman described this function as perhaps the most fundamental aspect of group life, and “the requirement necessary to its evolution and survival.” The rules, Truman argued, “are not and need not be unanimously accepted or uniformly understood provided that they can be effectively articulated and authoritatively defined by appropriate actors in the system, whether governmental or nongovernmental.”²⁴⁶

The prevalence of rebellious behaviour and conflicts of interest in group life, which in some cases leads to changes to existing rules, may be an indication of “incompleteness” of those rules. Furthermore, rules are not expected to predict all possible actions or events occurring in future, nor could they be the only determinant of the nature of actions available to the group. This observation forms an important part of Professor Dahl’s study of contemporary democracy in representative institutions (“polyarchies”). Dahl observed the “definite” and “significant” limitations imposed on polyarchies, firstly, by the very characteristics of the institution, and secondly, by the drive for efficiency.²⁴⁷ In an attempt to unravel the significance of constitutional rules in democracies, Dahl concluded, among other things, that they were not crucial (or independent factors) in maintaining democracy, “rather, the rules themselves seem to be functions of underlying non-constitutional factors.”²⁴⁸

Professor Dahl went on to propose that, in most cases, neither the root of certain social conflicts nor their solutions may be found in the “constitutional form” and in such cases, both the symptoms and the cures may be found in “extra-constitutional factors.”²⁴⁹ Examples of this kind are not uncommon in international politics, in the sense that conflicts between member states are neither anticipated nor are they resolved by strict reference to the United Nations Charter, or in fact, to constitutions of relevant regional organisations.

Sebenius, for example has shown that a process of value creation, which can lead to mutually beneficial agreements can prevent escalation and help sustain cooperation.²⁵⁰ One possible

²⁴⁶ *ibid*, p. 159; Dahl similarly noted, “All we need to specify is that whatever the constitutional rules may be, they must not lead to behaviour incompatible with the rule. Likewise we do not need to decide whether individuals agree to the rule, or, if they do, what proportion agrees. Again, all we need to specify is that whatever the state of agreement may be, it must not produce behaviour incompatible with the rule. Thus, what is asserted in proposition 1 is that if the conditions of popular sovereignty and political equality are to be satisfied, then the individuals in the political system must behave in accordance with the rule.” Dahl, Robert A., *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1956) p. 38

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 36

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 137

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 134

²⁵⁰ He argued that this is possible if participants perceived that gains can be derived from “profitable dovetailing” of different interests. Sebenius, James K., “Challenging Conventional Explanation of

illustration of this can be found in the evolution of nuclear arms control between the Cold War superpowers.²⁵¹ In the late 1950s, when the idea of nuclear arms control was initially proposed, nuclear deterrence was, according to Adler, only a concept that could neither be taken for granted nor ruled out. When it became apparent that the United States nuclear arms programme left it vulnerable to reciprocal surprise attack, scholars making up the US epistemic community, with interest in arms control, consisting of the military, scientific, and policy-making elites, were to conceive a strategy. They anticipated that both the national security of the United States and the chances of avoiding nuclear war would be enhanced if the superpowers would collaborate to stabilise the nuclear balance through arms control. The development of this idea, Adler recalled, led to the signing of the 1972 Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and both powers saw it in their interest to conform to the arms control agreements.²⁵² Progress to the ABM treaty, Adler argued, would have been impossible without the work of this community. Similarly, the processes leading to the treaty could be ranked among extra-constitutional devices. Dahl's thesis can also be interpreted to suggest that although the main solutions could be found in the "precondition and characteristics" of the group, it is, nevertheless, these extra-constitutional devices that give meaning to the group.²⁵³

Since many political activities tend to be manifested outside constitutional forms, one might question the usefulness of the rules and their stabilising functions. Truman argued, for example, that actions supporting and strengthening the rules and actions otherwise contributing significantly to the survival of the system are essentially in the group's interest. He cautioned, however, that this is true so long as one does not make the error, directly or implicitly, of assuming that this interest is universally acknowledged throughout the society.²⁵⁴ It can then be concluded that both the goal and the rules can thus be interpreted as control mechanisms, necessary for both the group's stability as well as in the theoretical sense.

However, an understanding of such "extra-constitutional" devices make more sense if we take account of the various techniques available to circumvent the constraints without necessarily falling foul of the rules, or in fact, in the analytical sense, judging that the rules are suboptimal. These various techniques are what political theorists have described as the "equilibrating processes" of group politics. Such processes can be measured by observing the consistency of interactional

International Cooperation: Negotiation Analysis and the Case of Epistemic Communities" *International Organisation* Vol. 46 No. 1 (winter 1992) pp. 324-365

²⁵¹ Adler, Emmanuel "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control" *International Organisation* Vol. 46 (winter 1992) pp. 101-145

²⁵² Ibid

²⁵³ See for example, Dahl, op cit, p. 135

²⁵⁴ Truman, op cit, p. 159

patterns in the group.²⁵⁵ These would include factors, such as the mechanisms or techniques of goal attainment, in whatever way the group's goals might be defined. Technically, concepts of "equilibrium processes" attempt to identify the various factors or mechanisms that enable a group to maintain a degree of consistency, in spite of tensions or potential conflicts; (recall our discussion on "stable equilibrium, see 4.3 above). Similarly, a "theory of action" attempts to extend this process into the nature of the political activity of groups. In the following section, I shall examine at least one such process and outline the consequences for the feasibility of collective intelligence.

4.5. A tentative criteria for the feasibility of collective intelligence

The obvious question, even at the risk of repetition, is to ask whether the mechanisms or technologies available enable the group to achieve, or pursue its stated objectives, and also, whether such mechanisms are compatible with the rules. If the answers to these questions can be shown to be in the positive, then, it is possible to propose that some actions can be said to be plausible, in terms of the feasibility of a project. At least, two basic models can be tentatively proposed to support the conditions under which such action is possible. One of these, examined presently is derived from "theories of action", and the second explains what could be accepted as an optimum outcome in a process which has so far been thought to be infeasible.

In view of the choice of "social states" discussed earlier, that is, assuming, for example, that the collective goal can simply be stated as the maintenance of international peace and security, the equilibrating processes in this case, would simply be the means by which these goals might be pursued. In the sense considered here, it is not necessary to state whether such a goal could be attained in one swoop of action, since, the goal itself might be the result of a long and continuous process and combining different techniques. In this case, the reality of the goal would be such that it might not be possible for it to be attained in its totality. What we need to know is in fact, that there are some efforts toward the achievement of these goals. Hence, what is studied in the action continuum is primarily the means by which a complex organisation achieves certain objectives, given the constraints.

"Action", as Talcott Parsons informed us, "consists of the structures and processes by which human beings form meaningful intentions and, more or less successfully, implement them in concrete situations."²⁵⁶ These processes generally involve some modification to the existing environment, either at individual or group level. In a similar vein, a process of action also involves some alteration,

²⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 27

²⁵⁶ Quoted in Savage, Stephen P., *The Theories of Talcott Parsons: The Social Relations of Action* (Macmillan Press, London 1981) p. 91

Parsons argued, of the “conditional elements in the direction of conformity with norms.”²⁵⁷ Action, then, it can be said, has the dual role of modifying the constraints, as much as it attempts to modify individual or group expectations to the constraining environment. This adaptive role, Savage observed, is a condition of the context in which action is played out. Such a circumstance would contain two different components; “the condition of action and the means which are available in the action complexes.” Savage defined these as “objects which are out of the control of the actor”, including “physical, social and symbolic objects with which the agent of action must come to terms.” Thus, with respect to Parsons’ theory of action, Savage concluded;

Although the situation of action must be subjectively organised in the actor’s orientation, in so far as it is a realm beyond his manipulation and control, it is a level which imposes definite limits, constrains and determinations on the actor. The actor cannot alter the conditions of action nor prevent them from being altered, in conformity with his own particular ends.²⁵⁸

When this concept of action is applied to complex systems with a natural multiplicity of issues and objectives at group and individual levels, the model can be seen to suggest that certain constraints impose limits on the extent to which individual actors may pursue or achieve certain goals (and this would also apply in the rational actor environment). Therefore, the actors’ orientations are naturally pointed to specific directions.²⁵⁹ Such directions might range from choosing strategies that are less costly, not being particularly concerned about the nature of the expected outcome, (i.e., if for example, the expected outcome promises little or no significant utility to certain members), to the extreme end of adopting every possible strategy to attempt to direct the outcome in one’s favour, if such an outcome is conceived to be crucial to the actor.

This concept may well help to explain why some states participate in international actions and why others do not (or in fact, why some states, even powerful states may not be able to respond to objectives, which they may have rhetorically defined as crucial to their national interests). This is not the same as defection, since some actors’ choices or directions could be influenced by their political or cultural dispositions, or in fact, they may be limited by the resources (material or otherwise), they could devote to either collective or individual objectives. The constraints, then, impose varying limitations on the actors and they are often forced to adopt a range of adjustment strategies (some aspects of these strategies are examined below). This observation generally leads to the suggestion that the diverse directions and abilities may, in fact, limit the group’s ability to achieve their overall

²⁵⁷ Parsons, Talcott *The Structure of Social Action* (New York, The Free Press 1949) p. 732

²⁵⁸ Savage, op cit, p. 91

²⁵⁹ Savage, op cit, p103; Parsons, ibid, pp. 241-47

objectives, but this is not to suggest that the group has failed, or in the sense described earlier, is suboptimal; this argument will become clearer as we explore further features of the equilibrating processes.

Thus, with respect to goal orientation, Parsons anticipated that a system of action generally consists of a concrete whole, which can be broken down into parts, or smaller subsystems. “This is the ‘smallest’ unit of an action system which still makes sense as a part of a concrete system of action.”²⁶⁰ A set of political processes, in these terms, would consist of a number of “concrete elements”, each of which is a complete unit act and are also choices of available means to an end.²⁶¹ As far as the overall process is concerned, all the concrete elements are integrated and none can be ignored in the analysis of a political process.²⁶² However, it would be useful to identify and isolate certain elements in a set of processes for analytical purposes. It is possible to suggest that a unit act attempts to address a specific conflict. Thus, it is very likely that the equilibrating problem of a group will more specifically be centred on the constraining factors. This means that at both individual and group level, a significant amount of energy will be directed towards negotiating constraints or some aspect of it which are incompatible, either with individual or group expectations. Analytically, therefore, the problem will by and large consist of examining how, at group and at individual level, the system adjusts to these constraints.²⁶³ The discussion that follows will aim to examine what is adjusted as well as illustrating one such system of adjustment.

4.6. Sliding scale and interest articulation model: assumptions and characteristics

As is now obvious, in a complex political setting there are many complex problems or a multiplicity of issues that are in play at any one time. Each of them would, inevitably, have its own unique solution relative to the problem environment. The idea of unique or relative solutions suggests that not all the issues can be satisfactorily resolved. That is also to say that some members of the group with relatively strong interests in a particular issue may not be satisfied with outcomes that are not compatible with their expectations. Similarly, other members may perceive that the situation being contested is, in fact, not critical to their values, and may tailor their participation to that effect. A sliding scale model, then, assumes that in view of the asymmetry in the salience of certain issues to individual members of the group, there would be varying degrees of willingness of members’ participation in any particular process. It is also assumed that, at the most basic level of analysis, any

²⁶⁰ Parsons, *ibid*, p. 732

²⁶¹ *Ibid*

²⁶² Savage, *op cit*, p. 92

²⁶³ Camacho, for example defines adjustment thus: “Intuitively we think of an adjustment process as a set of rules for exchanging information among the economic units, regarding their components of the environment, in order to reach an agreement about an economic programme to be implemented.” See Camacho, Antonio “Externalities, Optimality and Informationally Decentralised Resource Allocation Processes” *International Economic Review* Vol. 11 No. 2 (June 1970) pp. 318-327

chosen mechanism of action or degree of participation will be influenced by the environment in which the issue is being addressed.

At the analytical level, it would also be difficult to predict issues that would be of significant interest to individual actors. However, Dahl has suggested that an actor's behaviour in any situation can be taken as an index of the "relative intensity" of a problem. The more active or committed to the issue the actor appears, the more significant the issue would be for the actor, and consequently, the more energy the actor would devote to seeking an outcome that approximates their expectation. This means that the outcome of a policy decision will be determined by the relative intensity of preferences among the members of a group.²⁶⁴ The intensity problem in political action is defined as the importance an actor attaches to the outcome of a particular process in the international sphere, in relation to domestic demands, and, with respect to the constraints in the political environment. It is also considered that the defining nature of the environment (or political environment) is a function of the intensity problem. This is to say that the setting in which the domestic demands impact on the actor's choices of strategies may also be conditioned by certain unique events.²⁶⁵ For example, a dire economic situation in the domestic sector could force an actor to intensify a campaign in the international arena to address the economic problem. A given political process may also take place in an environment conditioned by inability of actors to predict others' intentions or decision rules.²⁶⁶ However, this factor will only be useful as a condition for analysis if actors are unable to communicate their intentions or expectations, in which case uncertainty may add to the intensity problem.

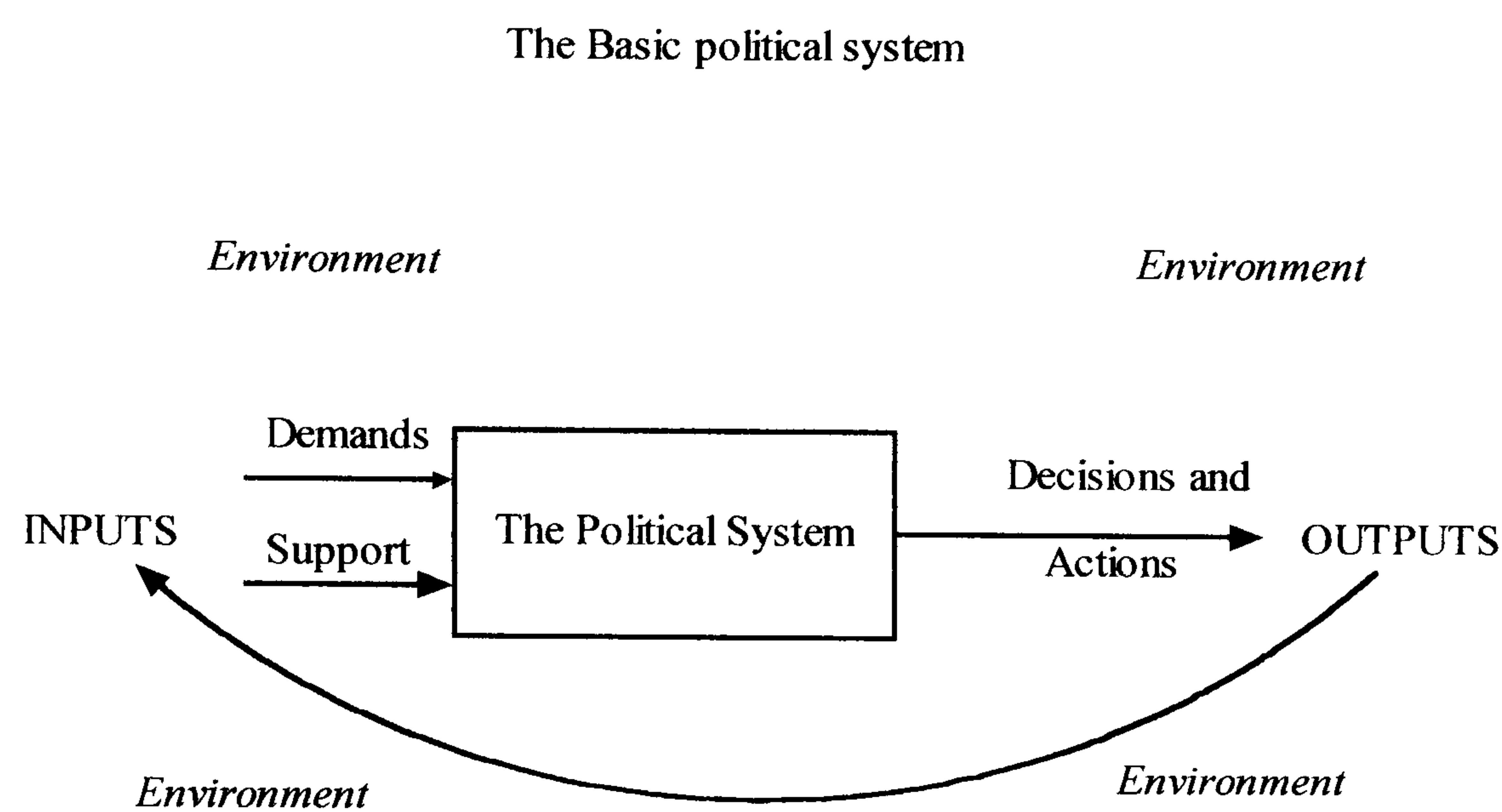
The analytical schema can be said to consist of identifying the constraints on a given political process, and relating these to the intensity problem. This leads to the suggestion that what motivates an actor's behaviour and the ease with which he or she can resolve the intensity problem are important variables in the action continuum. While there may be several motivational factors, including the actor's personal or cultural values, psychological disposition, or indeed, local political traditions, the analysis could be made simpler by taking the domestic environment or their general orientation as the intensity problem in international politics, that is, the extent to which their

²⁶⁴ That is, as Dahl suggested, that "if political activity is to a significant extent a function of relative intensity." Dahl, *op cit*, p. 134,

²⁶⁵ Parson's notion of "time category" can also be interpreted as referring to a context of unique event referred to here. He asserts for example, "the first important implication is that an act is always a process in time. The time category is basic to the scheme. The concept end always implies a future reference, to a state which is either not yet in existence, and which would not come into existence if something were not done about it by the actor or, if already existent, would not remain unchanged. The process seen primarily in terms of its relation to ends, is variously called "attainment," "realisation", and "achievement." Parsons, *op cit*, 1949, p. 45

²⁶⁶ Davis O.A. and A. Whinston "On Externalities, Information and Government-Assisted Invisible Hand" *Economica* (1966) pp. 303-318

demands overlap with the international political environment (see fig.4.6, a basic input output model of a political system).²⁶⁷



Source: Clarke: "The Foreign Policy System: A Framework of Analysis" (1989)

Fig.4.6a

The intensity problem can be said to be a consequence of actors’ orientations, choices of strategies, or expectations which come into conflict with those of others or indeed violates established conventions. However, actors’ (individual) directions should not always lead to conflict. For instance, an actor’s exploits may attract little or no attention in the sense that other members of the group do not perceive the action as conflicting with their values, even if the action is contrary to the rules.²⁶⁸ Furthermore, the system might also allow for a coalition of decision-makers, whose decisions are generally expected to be acknowledged by the rest of the group, even when these violate accepted standards or rules. This latter has been referred to as “authority-possessing group,”

²⁶⁷ In fact, as several scholars have argued, an understanding of issues in the domestic environment is an important requirement for predicting events in the international environment. First, as Milner noted, domestic politics enable us to understand how “preferences are aggregated” and national interest defined. On the other hand, international agreements might not be implemented if the domestic constituency is in disagreement with the contents of such an arrangement. Milner, Helen “International Theories of Cooperation Among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses” *Review of International Studies* Vol. 44 No. 3 (April 1992) pp. 466-469; see also Wendt, Alexander “Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics” *International Organisation* Vol. 46 No. 2 (Spring 1992) pp. 391-425; and Oatley, Thomas and Robert Nabors, “Redistributive Cooperation: Market Failure, Wealth Transfer, and The Basle Accord” *International Organisation* vol. 52 No. 1 (winter 1988) pp. 35-55

²⁶⁸Parsons for example suggests that, “the choice of alternative means to the end, in so far as the situation allow alternatives, there is a normative orientation of action, but must in some sense be subject to the influence of an independent, determinate selective factor, a knowledge of which is necessary to the understanding of the concrete course of action.” Parsons, 1949 op cit, p. 44-45

of which the Security Council is one possible example, as long as such a comparison does not lead to expectations of the type of authority system known in centralised institutions.²⁶⁹

Economists use the term “decomposable” to describe environments where an independent action is not challenged or indeed, that the outcome of the action does not conflict with other members’ expectations. In other words, the environment is totally free of all externalities.²⁷⁰ Therefore, an environment is said to be decomposable if, first that the units are independent with “respect to achievability” and secondly, each unit is “selfish”.²⁷¹ In a decentralised but interdependent environment, no such independence of action is possible.²⁷² Consequently, where independent action or strategy is potentially in conflict with other members’ expectations or the rules, the environment is said to be nondecomposable.²⁷³ Use of force, in fact, does not qualify as “decomposable”, since resistance to force is a characteristic of the intensity problem. Soviet enforced communism in East European countries during the Cold War years, colonisation, and more recently, American led coalition occupation of Iraq, only succeeded in galvanising fierce resistance.

Since we are here interested in analysing action in an environment that is characteristically “nondecomposable”, the proposition is that the less an actor can act independently in a decentralised system, the more likely the intensity problem will increase, that is assuming that such action will inevitably impact on others’ expectations with the result that the affected actor is encouraged to challenge such action. Relative intensity can therefore be said to be inversely relevant if expected outcome is of little or no significance to other actor’s values, or domestic demands.²⁷⁴

The argument can be illustrated by a diagram showing (fig.4.6b) a *sliding scale* of actor’s interests, values or preferences. The intersection where domestic and international demands collide is assumed to be the zone of conflict (high intensity). The reason why the zone of conflict exists is that international environment creates opportunities and incentives for units to advance their interests.

²⁶⁹ Riker, William H., *The Theory of Political Coalition* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1962) p. 12

²⁷⁰ Hurwicz, Leonid “On Informationally Decentralised Systems” in McGuire, C.B., and Roy Radner eds., *Decision and Organisation* (Amsterdam: North Holland Pub. Co. 1972) p. 307

²⁷¹ Camacho, op cit

²⁷² International relations scholars of the realist and neoliberal persuasion tend to represent this concept in terms which imply that states are atomistic and are independent in their actions. But such an assumption is valid only in terms of the state’s territoriality (the idea of *sovereignty*). A state, for example, may have the independence to impose the death penalty on certain categories of criminals within its territory, but cannot impose the burden of such action on other states

²⁷³ Camacho, op cit

²⁷⁴ Easton for example, points out that local or domestic cultures embodied in a particular society are often at the heart of potential conflicts. “If the valued things are in short supply relative to demand, the typical demands that will find their way into the political process will concern the matters in conflict that are labeled important by the culture.” Easton, David, “An Approach to the Analysis of Political System”, in Cantori, *et al*, eds. *Comparative Politics in the Post-Behavioural Era* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner 1988) p. 101

However, the further away from the intersection, the less important the issue becomes as a source of conflict, for those individuals whose interests are relatively far from the centre. The more

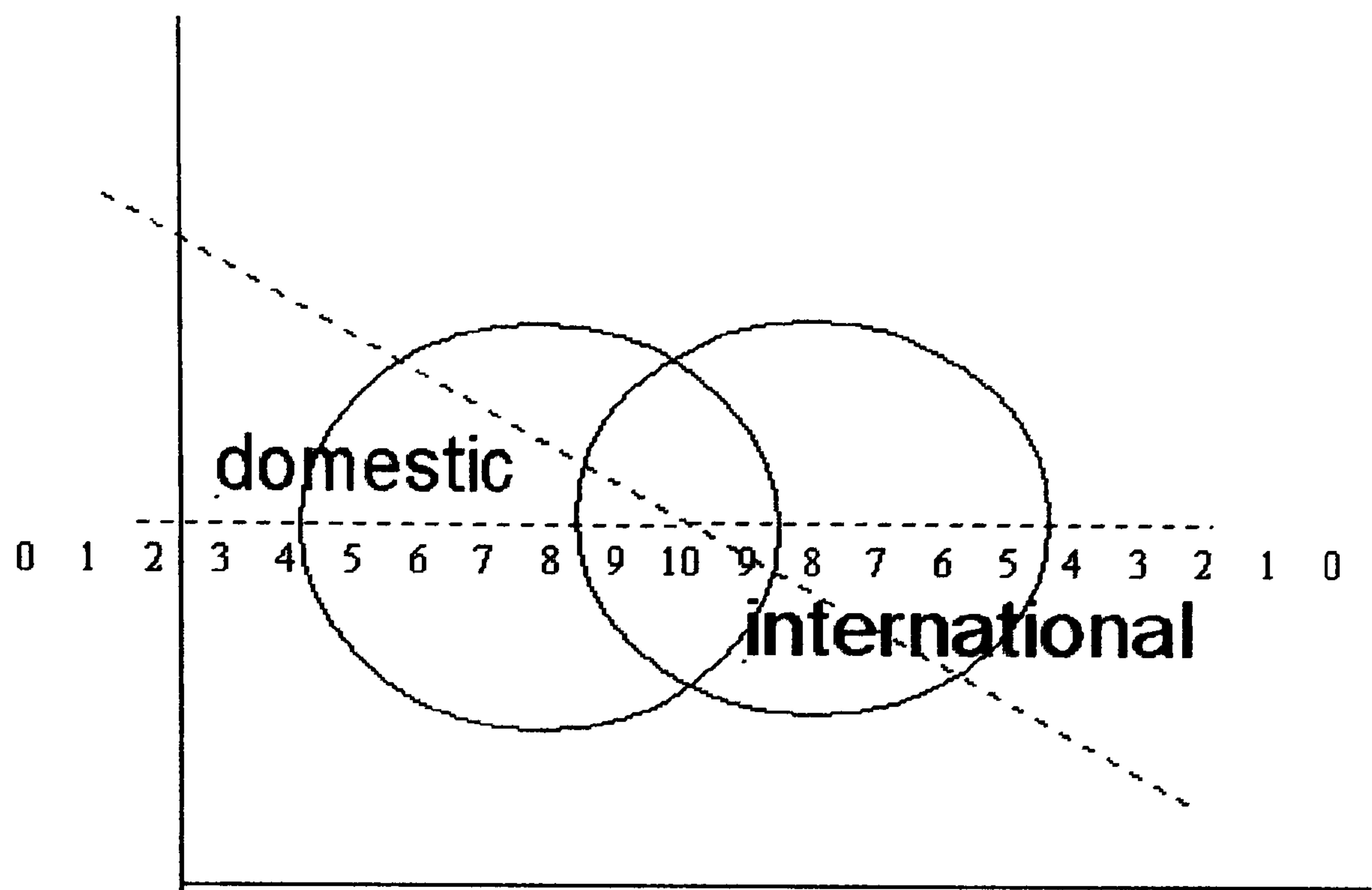


Fig. 4.6b Interests articulation and the zone of conflict

a domestic political agenda acquires an international dimension or slides towards the middle point, the greater the degree of relative intensity, that is, increasing on a scale of 0 – 10.

The model can also be interpreted to show that certain core values are not negotiable, for example, a state’s sovereignty would naturally be ranked at 10 (not negotiable), and that items outside the immediate bounds of the circles, 0-6, respectively acquire lesser political importance. With this in mind, it is also possible to anticipate the circumstances in which states might be willing to share their intelligence assets in a collective (this aspect of the model is evident in the UN’s efforts to disarm Iraq of its “weapons of mass destruction”, discussed in chapter nine below). However, we can also, intuitively speculate that where there is array of issues in the international agenda, an actor would naturally arrange items closer to their objectives around the middle point and formulate appropriate strategies to deal with them.

One example of such interest articulation which springs to mind is perhaps, that which occurs at the G8 summit meetings. These summits, which started in 1975, are forum for participants, usually, the leading industrial countries, including the European Union, to set agenda and develop problem solving strategies for a range of issues such as the environment, security, economic and various other political issues. What is perhaps, interesting about these meetings is that participants generally use the forum to press issues closer to their political agenda. For example, the 1997 Denver summit provided an opportunity for President Clinton to promote his policies towards Africa, and in 1998, concerns about unemployment level in the United Kingdom encouraged Prime Minister Blair to

advance issues about the unemployment and social security.²⁷⁵ The 1978 summit in Bonn also saw the European Community (as the European Union was then known) working as a coalition to articulate Community-wide concerns. Hainsworth, for example, noted that ten days before the Bonn summit, the European Council met at Bremen (6th and 7th July 1978) to develop a Community-wide consensus.²⁷⁶

The 1978 summit provided the basis for Robert Putnam's essay on diplomacy and domestic politics.²⁷⁷ Putnam's thesis primarily aimed to explain how domestic and international politics interact, and to suggest that neither of these factors could be ignored in the analysis of international actions. However, Putnam observed first, that the choice of agenda by each country would essentially be perceived to be in the nation's interests, or in the politician's "own political interest, too, even though not all his constituents might agree." Secondly, Putnam also found that the less a state stands to gain from the issue, as he described it, the state's "win-set", the less it would be involved in the process and the more the state stands to gain, the harder it would bargain.²⁷⁸

Although Putnam's thesis identifies with some of the issues defined in the sliding scale model, the latter suggests a broader applicability to the study of political action, especially in the context of collective action. For example, apart from explaining why actors would or would not participate in international action, the sliding scale model can also be used to demonstrate how certain issues might be elevated to the surface of international agenda and assume some significance. We may also be able to anticipate when aspects of domestic issues assume international significance. For example, a state might find that its efforts to achieve a particular domestic objective are intertwined with those of others in the international arena, and hence, efforts to resolve the issue could also be such that will attract wide ranging international consequences. On the other hand, the outcome could also have beneficial functions for other members.

Oatley and Nabor, for example, observed that the Basle accord on common capital requirements, 1988, whose purpose was to standardise bank-capital regulations among twelve leading industrial countries, was initiated by the United States as a response to voters demands at home, to redress Japanese dominance of the financial market.²⁷⁹ Although the accord was initially intended to address

²⁷⁵ Bayne, Nicholas "Decision making in the G7/G8 System" Paper for ECPR Workshops, Grenoble, April 2001, International Relations Department, London School of Economics and Political Science <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/conferences/2001/rome/bayne-conflict.pdf> (Accessed 16, Sept 2004)

²⁷⁶ Hainsworth, Susan "Coming of Age: The European Community and The Economic Summit" <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/scholar/hainsworth1990/bisbon78.htm> (Accessed 16 Sep 2004)

²⁷⁷ Putnam, Robert "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-level Games" *International Organisation* 42 (autumn 1988) pp. 427-60

²⁷⁸ Ibid

²⁷⁹ Oatley, and Nabors, op cit

an essentially American domestic issue, it had a broader redistributive effect. Raghavan, noted, for instance, that since the accord was adopted by the G-10 countries, at least a hundred other countries have, either adopted or are in the process of signing up to its common requirements.²⁸⁰ The present model, it must be said is tentatively developed; however, the aim is to demonstrate some aspects of political actions which might have consequences for collective intelligence.

4.7. Towards a definition of the feasibility of collective action in relation to optimal output

With respect to the general orientation of interest articulation, the issue we shall then seek to examine is the optimality of a particular process, with regard to collective action. This examines the extent to which we can define a process as satisfying some basic conditions in a complex political environment. One way to present this argument would be to show that the examples so far discussed meet relevant conditions in the action continuum. The general criteria would be, first, that the group at least, in principle, accepts both the processes and the outcome. By signing up to the Basle Accord, for example, the group generally accepts the consequences of the process with an aim of adjusting their preferences accordingly. Lindlom, for example, observed that “where everyone agrees on a set of values sufficiently complete and well-structured to provide adequate criteria for decisions, one could simply say that the decisions are coordinated whenever their relationships are such as to satisfy the agreed criteria.”²⁸¹ Secondly, we can also propose that the process or the outcome leads to some adjustment in the existing rules or status quo. For example, it would be practical to establish whether the process leads to the setting of new standards or precedents for future actions. This means that such processes could have much broader consequences than those currently observed. Thirdly, a particular process defined as a unit act is considered to constitute an important element of the criteria if it leads to a fulfilment of at least some aspects of the collective goal. This means that a net result of a particular process would have some community-wide benefit; or as Scitovsky argued, so long as the effect is not “retrogressive from the point of view of social justice.”²⁸²

Traditionally, IR theorists tend to interpret collective outcome in purely individualistic terms and in terms of power relations. In this sense, it is assumed that a process is generally calculated to maximise the utility (power) of an actor. From this point of view, utility maximisation is defined in terms of a zero-sum game, in which individuals or states aim to maximise their gains at the others’ expense. Oatley and Nabor’s study of the Basle accord is an example of this individualistic interpretation of such an outcome. They agree that the accord did not “correspond to a functional

²⁸⁰ Raghavan, Chakravarthi “Some Perceptions of the Basle Accord”

<http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/basle-cn.htm> (accessed Sept 2004)

²⁸¹ Lindblom, Charles E., *The Intelligence of Democracy: Decision Making Through Mutual Adjustment* (New York, The Free Press 1965) p. 22

²⁸² Scitovsky, Tibor., “A Note on Welfare Propositions in Economics”, *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. 9 (1941) pp. 77-88

joint gains logic”, since, the US used its power to “demand and transfers wealth from foreign producers to compensate domestic firms for the cost of the regulation”.²⁸³ In keeping with realism, their argument can be taken to suggest that the process enabled the United States to maximise its power position. Considering the redistributive effect of the accord noted earlier, the Basle accord could also be conceived as a collective process. This interpretation is also consistent with Buchanan and Tullock’s argument that collective political action should be viewed, “essentially as a means through which the ‘power’ of all participants may be increased, if we define “power” as the ability to command things that are desired by men.”²⁸⁴ If this argument is plausible, a collective goal is maximised if, as Dahl also suggested, we define such an outcome “as a state of affairs approaching a limit, and all action approaching the limit as maximising action.”²⁸⁵ In contrast with centralised systems, a process is considered to be satisfactory in its own right, considering the environment and constraints imposed on the actors.

A second optimal condition in the sense could also be justified from the point of view of the feasibility of particular processes. For example, how can we account for a programme such as a United Nations intelligence capability, so far thought to be implausible? Maulinvaud has shown that a programme with well defined parameters and purpose can be said to be “Efficient” if it is feasible and if there is no other feasible programme, such that the benefits derived from such a programme cannot be compared to a non existent one.²⁸⁶ This argument could be interpreted in two ways; in the first instance, it could be viewed from the proverbial sense, that half a glass is better than an empty glass. A person stranded in a desert would find that untreated pond water would “maximise” his chances of existence, if we could use that phrase. Secondly, and even more relevant here, we could also interpret this, from an evolutionary point of view, to argue that the benefits derived from such a programme could also be compared with those obtained from established systems. It should be recalled that with the Paretian general equilibrium, no solution in the sense is possible. The argument is summarised by Lipsey and Lancaster thus:

- 1) If a Paretian optimum cannot be achieved a second best optimum requires a general departure from all the Paretian optimum conditions.

²⁸³ Oatley, and Nabors, op cit

²⁸⁴ Buchanan and Tullock, op cit, p. 23

²⁸⁵ Dahl, op cit, p. 63

²⁸⁶ Maulinvaud, E., “The Analogy Between Attemporal and Intertemporal Theories of Resource Allocation” in M.J.Farrel ed. *Readings in Welfare Economics* (1973) pp. 215-232

2) Furthermore, there are unlikely to be any simple sufficient conditions for an increase when a maximum cannot be obtained.²⁸⁷

The question at this point is, whether the foregoing analyses meets some optimality criteria as defined earlier. If it does, then it is possible to argue that the thesis provides sufficient grounds for the development of a theory of a viable intelligence capability within the United Nations system. Such a concept will be consistent with the view that a partial but concrete and unique equilibrium is as good if not better than an idealised equilibrium, for which, technically no project might be feasible without violating the strict Paretian conditions. Thomas Marschak, for example has also shown that compared with centralised system, to guarantee a “perfect equilibrium” (in the Paretian sense) in decentralised systems, an absence of externalities must be assumed between units. In a study that aims to examine the performance of two different processes (centralised and decentralised systems) with externalities as a factor. Maschak observed that where there are multiplicities of constraints, it would be difficult to conceive of a process which meet all the Paretian conditions and, “which are far from total centralisation.”²⁸⁸ Furthermore, he also argued that, even in centralised systems, the greater the constraints, the less likely it is that the system would perform to meet the full Paretian optimal conditions.

To make this study applicable to collective intelligence in an organisation such as the United Nations, what we generally seek to establish is identifiable patterns. A history, and also a degree of consistency that suggests that a given activity, such as the production and utilisation of intelligence exists in one form or another, and in a manner that does not violate the rules of the organisation. Rules or parts of it thereof, would be violated if an act is considered not to be in conformity with expected norms, by at least a significant number of other participants.

Another way to put this is to argue that what we seek to identify in a very broad sense is the existence of a *process*. A process is defined here, as a consistency of behaviour or events leading to action. Organising for action, observes Ostrom, is a process, and “organisation is the result of that process.”²⁸⁹ A process or a collection of discrete activities is generally described as an institution if the phenomena have notable pattern, a degree of consistency or “high degree of stability.”²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Lipsey, R.G. and K Lancaster “The General Theory of Second Best” *Review of Economics* (1956) pp. 11-32

²⁸⁸ Marschak, Thomas “On the Comparison of Centralised and Decentralised Economies” *The American Economic Review* Vol. 59 No. 2 (1969) pp. 525-532; see also Hurwicz, L., “Optimality and Informational Efficiency in Resource Allocation Processes” in, K.J. Arrow, S. Karlin, and P. Suppes (eds.) *Mathematical Methods in Social Sciences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1960) pp. 27-46

²⁸⁹ Ostrom, Elinor *The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press 1990) p. 39

²⁹⁰ Truman, op cit, pp. 26

Furthermore, the range of activities that constitute the process need not be frequent or in fact predictable; this means that certain occurrences within the process could be seen to be *ad hoc*. We cannot dismiss these infrequent occurrences as negligible; what we need to know is that there is an established system of dealing with such contingencies. An important question in the study of the feasibility of a system is whether the method of organising identified in a system is generally compatible with the group's interest.²⁹¹ If, as is demonstrated in the present chapter the answer is in the affirmative then, the incentive problem of the subject under study is partially solved. The nature of this solution will become clearer in the cases studied below.

In the chapters that follow, the subject of the dissertation is examined in much greater depth. First, the background and structure of a complex organisation, the United Nations, as well as the concept and processes of "intelligence" are examined. The aim is to demonstrate the apparent incompatibility of the two systems under study. However, I will present a series of case studies, which might suggest that the United Nations does, in fact, possess an intelligence process, which, in its present state, is not adequately recognised as such at either academic or political levels. This lack of recognition (a form of pervasive political and intellectual ignorance), the cases would also aim to show, is perhaps the most basic factor underlying the lack of development of the process as well as of the efficient use of intelligence assets in the organisation.

²⁹¹ Hurwicz, *op cit*, p. 298

Part Two

Interfacing Intelligence with the United Nations System

Chapter 5

Background and Structure of the United Nations

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide some necessary background information about the UN's systems and structure. Together with chapter six, it provides a basis for conceptualising a UN intelligence system, and taking as a point of reference the key problems of interfacing strategic intelligence with the UN system. One of the main obstacles, as this chapter and the subsequent one aim to show, is a set of flaws inherent in both the theoretical and structural conceptions of both institutions (intelligence processes and the UN system). Nevertheless, from the point of view of the UN, the discussion that follows will also explore how the organisation's structure and system may provide opportunities and solutions to meet its collective intelligence needs; in later chapters, it will be possible to explore how these opportunities are developed to further the UN's functions.

5.1. The United Nations: an overview

The United Nations was formally founded on October 1945, when its charter entered into force, after ratification by representatives of 51 countries who met in San Francisco. Since its inception, the membership has grown, and, by 2004, stood at a total of 191.²⁹² Member states of the UN are bound by the Charter, which sets out their rights and obligations, as well as establishing its organs and procedures. The rationale of the UN, its purpose, and *raison d'être*, as outlined in the Charter (discussed below), centres on the maintenance of international peace and security. Six principal organs have been established to carry out these functions, these are; the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. In addition to these organs, several specialised and autonomous agencies, some by way of funds or programmes, have been established to perform functions, which account for a broader interpretation of the UN's "peace and security" objectives. The importance of these agencies is also underlined by the fact that they have their own governing bodies and budgets, and are able to set their own standards and guidelines.

²⁹² "Basic Facts About the UN" Department of Public Information, United Nations (2000) (<http://www.un.org/Overview/growth.htm#2000> (accessed 27 August 2004))

The United Nations itself is funded by the member states. In theory, all members should make adequate contribution, but member states are assessed by their ability to pay. This means that the states’ relative total gross national product is taken into account, as well as adjustments to account for a number of factors, including their per capita incomes. States are also assessed in accordance with a modified version of the basic scale for the costs of peacekeeping operations which stood at around \$2 billion in 2000.²⁹³ The organisation’s expenditure may vary depending upon its programmes, but more especially, on the degree and the extent to which it is involved in peacekeeping activities and other collective measures.

Characteristically, international organisations can be studied under four main headings. These are; (1) Aims and objectives of the organisation, this underlines the organisation’s reasons for existence; (2) the Charter (or constitution), which outlines rules and obligations for the members; (3) Membership and status (this is subject to the entities meeting the conditions of statehood).²⁹⁴ (4) Operational instruments and procedures. These may include a range of structures such as administrative facilities, and decision-making rules and procedures necessary for the efficient and smooth running of the organisation. For the UN, the six principal organs and their associated agencies and programmes mentioned earlier provide for these arrangements and may be classed under the heading of operational facilities. These elements will form the basis for detailed analysis of the UN system, though they could also be applicable to other international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs).

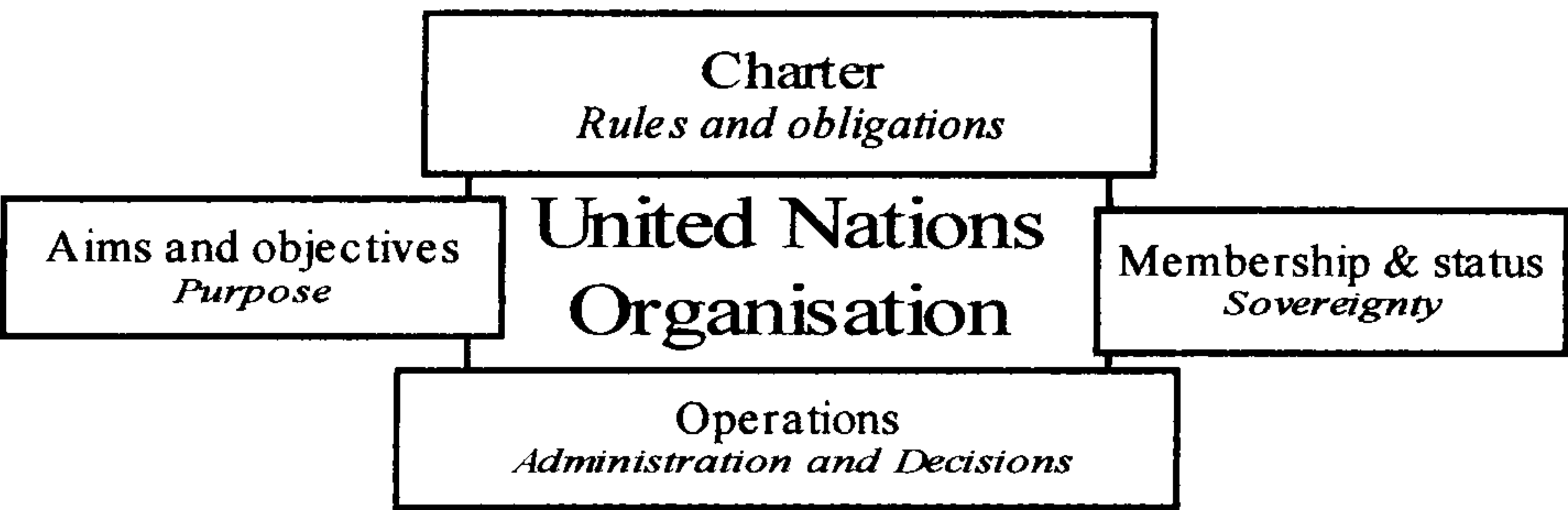


Fig 5.1 Schematic structure of the United Nations system

5.2. Operational and decision structure

The operational instruments and procedures can be studied under two further categories that focus on the primary organs of the UN; these are; the “operational” and “decision-making” frameworks. The latter consists of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the office of the Secretary General

²⁹³ Ibid
²⁹⁴ Chapter 4 of the UN Charter states that membership is open to all “peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgement of the Organisation, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.” However, the process of admission involves the Security Council making a

(the Secretariat). These three organs can be described as the main power bases of the United Nations. The operational framework can be said to include those elements that are supportive of the decision-making structures. These consist of three central organs: the Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice, and the Economic and Social Council. These latter three elements are by no means of lesser importance, but since they are not directly relevant to the present project, will be given only minimal attention.

The *Security Council* has the primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security. It is made up of fifteen member states, five of which are permanent members - China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.²⁹⁵ The Assembly elects the other ten (six before a Charter amendment came into force in 1965) for two-year terms. The Council can be convened at any time, whenever there is a threat to the peace. Member states are obligated by the Charter to implement the Council's resolutions. For the Council's decisions to be sustained, nine positive votes must be cast (except in votes on procedural questions). A decision cannot be taken if there is a negative vote by a permanent member (known as the "veto"). The Council has the power to enforce its decisions by imposing sanctions, which may range from economic to military measures. Decisions of the Council are binding on all member states. The Security Council also has the power to make recommendations to the Assembly on a candidate for the post of a Secretary General as well as the admission of new members to the UN.

The Council may respond to a threat to the peace in a number of ways. Among these are enforcement measures (which may have broad interpretation, including information gathering as well as military measures), and undertakes investigations by appointing special representatives or requesting the Secretary-General to do so or to use his or her good offices to facilitate the implementation of a resolution. The Council may also establish principles for the implementation of its resolutions. In this sense then, the Security Council represents the first function in the decision making structure of the United Nations.

The *General Assembly* is the main deliberative body of the organisation and one in which all its member states are represented.²⁹⁶ All member states have equal votes and a simple majority takes decisions on ordinary matters. Important questions require a two-thirds majority. The Assembly

recommendation (this is subject to a veto by any of the permanent members) as well as a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly.

²⁹⁵ See Article 23 through 32 of the Charter, which describe the structure, functions and power of the Council.

²⁹⁶ The composition, functions and power of the General Assembly are outlined in Chapter IV, Article 9 through 19 of the Charter.

meets annually and its decisions are by means of resolutions. On this account, the Assembly forms the second tier of the decision making structure of the United Nations.

However, although the General Assembly does not have the extensive decision making power of the Security Council, it by no means lacks power to act on important issues or make recommendations. For example, the Charter requires that the “General Assembly may call the attention of the Security Council to situations that are likely to endanger international peace and security.” The Assembly’s ability to exercise some degree of authority as well as to effect action is much broader than generally acknowledged. However (without a deeper interpretation of the Charter), the Assembly may discuss and make recommendations on all matters within the scope of the UN Charter. Among others, it also sets policies and determines programmes for the Secretariat, directs activities for development programmes and approves the UN budget, including that for peacekeeping operations. The Assembly receives reports from other organs, admits new members and appoints the UN Secretary-General. All these come across as administrative duties since the Assembly has no power to compel action by any state, though its recommendations may carry the weight of world opinion.

The United Nations *Secretariat* is worthy of being considered as a power base of sorts, largely because it exists to facilitate the work of the Secretary-General. Although it is rare for the Secretary-Generals to assert their authority, the ability to do so was demonstrated when Dag Hammarskjöld occupied the post. However, as far as the Secretariat is concerned, its role is mainly to administer the functions assigned to the Secretary-General.²⁹⁷ Thus, the Secretariat can be said to be the central coordinating organ of the UN. The Secretariat has a staff of about 9,000, working both at the Headquarters and in United Nations offices around the world. It is also responsible for administering peacekeeping operations, organizing international conferences, studying world economic and social trends, preparing reports on such subjects as human rights, disarmament and development, providing simultaneous interpretation and translation services, and providing information on the UN to media the world over.

As hinted earlier, functions such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Trusteeship Council, and the International Court of Justice are of no lesser importance, though in the present frame of analysis, they fall under a different category. This is because their functions are much more precise and more narrowly cast, and that they work under the authority of the General Assembly. An important point worth noting about these organs is that their existence alone reflects the multi-faceted character of peace and security, as well as the breadth of the UN’s functions. Importantly

²⁹⁷ The structure and functions of the Secretariat are outlined in Chapter XV, article 97 through 101

also, these organs form part of those structures necessary for the development of an international civil society.

5.3. The Charter

Organisations can be understood in terms of the purpose for which they were founded. A statement to this effect is usually included in the organisation's constitution. For the UN, its purpose, aims and objectives are outlined in the Charter and it seems necessary that any analysis of the organisation should start with this document. As well as outlining the UN's objectives and principles, the Charter stands as a yardstick by which the success, failure or general performance of the UN can be measured. For the members who make up the UN, the Charter is a multilateral treaty that establishes patterns of relationships among members and their obligation to the objectives of the organisation. The working of the organisation, its organs and the basis of its power to pursue its objectives are consequently outlined in the Charter.

A thorough analysis of the Charter may also reveal the objective and subjective weaknesses, strengths and opportunities that have contributed to the evolutionary character of change in the UN system. These changes have not come through dramatic or deliberate amendments to the charter, but through forces that have challenged and often presented the need for creative interpretation and application of the Document.

Many of the purposes and objectives of the UN are outlined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter. Taken together, they define the primary purpose of the organisation. Its main aim is "to maintain international peace and security." Until recently, this objective has been narrowly defined in terms of avoiding military conflict among states. But current thinking, both among scholars and within the UN framework itself, is increasingly shifting towards less celebrated objectives of the UN, which are nevertheless emphasised in the Charter, such as "preventive measures", economic and social developments, respect for human rights, as well as action on environmental issues as, in fact, necessary conditions for the promotion of peace and security.

Having been founded upon the ashes of two catastrophic wars, emerging and developing doctrines about the role and objective of the UN now seem tilted towards principles of prevention rather than cure. This shift appears to broaden the notion of the UN beyond its original conception, by way of emphasising means to security other than the use of military power and extreme forms of coercion. Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary General of the UN from 1953 –1961, summarised the end goal as, "to save future generations from the scourge of war," but emphasised that this goal could not necessarily be achieved through military means but by a combination of those objectives contained in the

principles of Charter. Some of these, he outlined as “equal economic opportunity, political equality, and the rule of law or justice.”²⁹⁸

Other scholars have extended the interpretation of the purpose of the UN beyond the “maintenance of peace and security” and have seen the project as a way of establishing a more organised international system. Mark Zacher, for example, remarked that the rules outlined in the Charter, reflect the standards accepted as binding for life within states. Thus, he argued:

They appear, in the main, as a projection into the international arena and the international community of purposes and principles already accepted as being of national validity. In this sense, the Charter takes a first step in the direction of an organised international community.²⁹⁹

Similarly, Stanley Hoffmann argued that the Charter can be considered as a statement of the “best moral goals statesmen can pursue.”³⁰⁰ These, he noted, could be achieved if states assigned themselves to moral ends, and allowed their policies and activities to be guided by moral judgment.

The UN Charter is explicit on two major issues among others; it outlines the duties and obligations of the members with respect to the organisation’s aims and objectives. In the second instance, it also defines the members’ legal status. A set of principles are outlined at various parts of the Charter, but some of these can be briefly mentioned here (though, not in any particular order or importance): (1) *the right of members* to “sovereign equality” and independence from United Nations “intervention” in matters of “domestic jurisdiction”; (2) the *duty of members* to “fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter” and “to give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with” the Charter, and “to refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action”; and (3) the *duty of the United Nations* to respect the rights of its members and to ensure that non-members “act in accordance with these principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security.” The Charter also requires that states refrain in their international relations from “the threat or use of force”, except as permitted by the Charter.

²⁹⁸ Zacher, Mark *Dag Hammarskjöld’s United Nations* (New York: Columbia University press 1970) p. 22

²⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 23

³⁰⁰ Hoffmann, Stanley “The Role of International Organisations: Limits and Possibilities” in Waters, Maurice ed., *The United Nations: International Organisation and Administration* (New York: Macmillan 1967) pp. 46-53; see also Bennett, Leroy *International Organisation: Principles and Issues* 4th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall 1988) p. 54

The principles outlined in the Charter are important for a number of reasons. They define processes for action and give meaning to the aims and programmes of the organisation. However, many of the inconsistencies with which the UN is charged tend to reflect the different interpretation of these principles. From a scholarly point of view, the problems tend to arise when attempting to reconcile the content of the Charter with theories of collective security (which is discussed below in this chapter). These theories, however, attempt to explain what can be achieved. In part they describe an ideal world and, in more realistic terms, attempt to explain what international organisations strive to achieve.

A second issue of importance concerns the pattern of relationships between the members and the organisation. Unlike systems of states, where the constitution, the body of law, cultural as well as social norms bind the individual to the system, the United Nations is a weak confederation of states whose members obligations are limited and only their cooperation can bring about realisation of the anticipated objectives. Again, unlike states, which have established institutions that ensure adherence to rules, the United Nations has no means of enforcing its decisions, and even the final interpretation of the Charter obligations is very much subject to the members' whims. The consequence, as Bennett observed, is that, such a "statement of objectives or goals... guarantees nothing towards their fulfilment."³⁰¹ In the circumstances, however, and considering its present stage of development, it might make sense to place greater emphasis on the processes of fulfilling these objectives rather than on a total manifestation of idealised objectives. Quincy Wright, for example also observed that, "judging by the activity of its organs, the policies of most of its members, and the attitudes of most of its peoples, the provisions concerning purposes and principles are more fundamental and persistent aspects of the Charter than those concerning organs and procedures."³⁰²

Considering also the hopes and expectations invested on the text of the Charter, it is no wonder then that some of the charges against the UN, in particular, concerning its alleged weakness in exercising authority, may, in some cases, be considered valid. From this point of view however, a case can be made that some of the arrangements stated in the Charter appear to present degrees of difficulty rather than to provide tools for problem solving. For example, statements about the sovereign equality of members (referring to legal status rather than size, power, or wealth), equal votes for every member, as well as the idea of sovereignty have been pointed to as obstacles to action. In particular, sovereignty places drastic restrictions on the independent power of the organisation. Sovereignty requires that states reserve the power of ultimate decision and consequently, give no real

³⁰¹ Bennett, *ibid*, p. 53

³⁰² Wright, Quincy "Analysis of the Charter" in Waters, Maurice *The United Nations: International Organisation and Administration* (New York, Macmillan 1967) pp. 78-87

authority to the United Nations. In theory, then, the UN is denied any real power of independent action, and therefore has to depend on the willingness of states to support its decisions.³⁰³

5.4. The domestic jurisdiction rule

The sovereignty principle is reinforced by the domestic jurisdiction clause (Article 2 of the Charter). This clause restricts the UN from intervening in “matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.” An exception to this rule is granted to permit actions under Chapter 7 of the Charter, whereby the Security Council may act in respect to threats to peace or acts of aggression. The domestic jurisdiction rule presents several problems with respect to implementing United Nations actions, two of which are worth mentioning here. First there is the difficulty in drawing clear distinction between what is domestic and what is an international situation, for example, whether certain cultural practices or local conflicts may be tantamount to breaches of the peace or threats to peace. And secondly, apart from such obvious cases as military action and clear acts of hostility, actions that may qualify as intervention can be wide-ranging and open to subjective interpretation. A statement of condemnation or drawing attention to a situation, for example, may contravene the domestic jurisdiction rule. Evidence suggests that specific interpretation of any of these situations is difficult. However, these questions can be answered, perhaps, partially, by looking at existing practices, as well as by a closer understanding of what the Charter intended.

A classic example of this problem is the case of apartheid South Africa. In 1952, the general problem of *apartheid* led to the charge that race conflict also threatened the peace. The idea that racism within the domestic sphere could pose such a threat was recognised in 1945, as the horror of Nazi concentration camps became apparent.³⁰⁴ At San Francisco, France proposed that the domestic jurisdiction reservation should not apply if serious violation of human rights became a threat to the peace. Article 2(7) was phrased so as to make that or any other internal source of international disorder subject to the enforcement authority of the Security Council.³⁰⁵ In recent times, the UN, largely basing its practices upon this interpretation, has acted on local conflicts in Rwanda and Somalia, among others. At other times, states have exploited the contents of Article 2(7) to carry out unilateral action against weaker states, even when the UN had not sanctioned the action. A more recent example is the American-led coalition war against Iraq.³⁰⁶ Such unilateral actions may not, of

³⁰³ See for example, Bennett, op cit, p. 2 and 55

³⁰⁴ Russel, Ruth B., “Changing Patterns of Constitutional Development” in Waters, *The United Nations: International Organisation and Administration* (New York: Macmillan 1967) pp. 88-96

³⁰⁵ Ibid

³⁰⁶ In an interview on the BBC World Service, broadcast on 15 September 2004, Secretary General Kofi Annan famously declared, “I have indicated it (War on Iraq) was not in conformity with the UN charter. From our point of view and from the charter point of view it was illegal... Iraq war was illegal and breached UN charter.” *The Guardian online*
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,1305709,00.html> (accessed 16 Sept 2004)

course, set a precedent or form the basis for future actions, but, could in fact, create divisions among member states.

A major problem with concentrating much effort on short term practices, however, is the fact that such a focus directs attention away from long term objectives of the Charter and draws inferences from immediate political gains. From the point of view of the Charter, then, sovereignty and the domestic jurisdiction rules are not deliberate devices designed to frustrate the organisation's efforts. The essence of these principles, it can be argued, is immediately three fold. In the first instance, sovereignty and the domestic jurisdiction rules exist to protect member states from arbitrary interference, military or otherwise, from other states.³⁰⁷ Secondly, these rules aim to give the assurance that any such interference should be in accordance with the aims of the organisation and thirdly, that these set of principles exist to support the UN's independence and neutrality in dealings with its member states.

In fact, these principles were central to the founding of the United Nations, because they were the principal rallying point in the war against the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Sovereignty and the domestic jurisdiction rules are also important to the United Nations system because, apart from helping to define the structure of the system, these principles were born of the experiences and motivations that led to the founding of the United Nations, after the First and Second World wars. For these reasons, they were devised to change the traditional system of international relations in Europe, which essentially focused on war, conquest, and domination. As Secretary of State Stettinus, chairman of the United States delegation at the San Francisco Conference, said of the Charter, noted in his official report to the president:

Its outstanding characteristic and the key to its construction is its dual quality as declaration and as constitution. As declaration, it constitutes a binding agreement by the signatory nations to work together for peaceful ends and to adhere to certain standards of international morality. As constitution, it creates four over-all instruments by which these ends may be achieved in practice and these standards actually maintained.³⁰⁸

The perception that the organisation does not appear to operate as smoothly as its Charter intended, should not mean that it is dysfunctional, nor can its present situation be interpreted as failure. On this account, it is possible to provide two general explanations. Firstly, the organisation is still in its infancy, or relatively so, and as I argue below, is going through a rather uncharted evolutionary process, as well as being shaped by its experience, actions of the member states, and evolving

³⁰⁷ Wright, op cit, p. 85

political environment. The second point is that its infancy, structure, the circumstances of its creation and the current operating environment leave it open to the many shortcomings of “collective security theories.” Both of these factors have important consequences for the development of a United Nations intelligence capacity. If the system is viewed as static, it presents obstacles, but viewed as an evolutionary process, it presents opportunities. In the following section, I shall examine these consequences from the point of view of the theory of collective action.

5.5. The United Nations and collective security: concepts, opportunities and practical difficulties

From the point of view of theories of collective security, it is assumed that member states share a primary interest in the goals and objectives of the United Nations. By becoming a member, it is supposed that states pledge their support for these purposes. The theoretical implication is that the conceived objective, “peace” and “security” is indivisible and threats to these objectives, anywhere must be treated as a concern of all members of the international system.³⁰⁹ Also, as expressed in the UN Charter, the concept of collective security requires member states to cooperate against threats to peace. However, an important requirement of this rule is the assumption that members must cooperate in collective action, even if the action is against members with whom they are allies or friends.³¹⁰ The concept of collective security further assumes that a situation demanding collective action can be agreed upon and that an aggressor can be easily identified.

The concept of collective security is somewhat different from collective defence or the alliance system. Collective security is an all-inclusive system, compared to the alliance system, which operates an exclusive membership and whose objective is mutual protection against outside attack. Examples of this kind of arrangement include NATO and the defunct Warsaw Pact. By its nature, the alliance system is primarily oriented towards preparation for war against perceived enemies. Alliances may or may not have established administrative structures, and, in the absence of such structures, could operate on an *ad hoc* and consultative basis. The United States collaboration with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, against the Taliban regime, in 2002, is typical of this *ad hoc* type. It is also not unusual for alliance systems, whether *ad hoc* or permanent, to disintegrate when the threat for which they were created ceases to exist.

In contrast to the alliance system, in which the nature and direction of the threat might be known, a main problem in the collective security system is establishing when a threat to the peace or breach of peace has occurred and which of the conflicting parties should be held responsible. Since aggression

³⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 79

³⁰⁹ Bennett, op cit, p. 135

³¹⁰ Ibid, p. 135

is difficult to define, this leaves the answer to the subjective judgement of the member states. Even when this is determined, members may still be left with the problem of deciding whether the situation demands international action.

It also seems obvious that the difficulties of defining the boundaries between domestic and international situations within the domestic jurisdiction sphere apply as much to the entire concept of collective security. For example, when can a situation be so defined as to justify international intervention? In answering such questions, the subjective judgements of the member states tend to be substituted for objective standards. Bennett, for example, acknowledged that states are influenced not only by national interpretation of conflicting evidence and by economic and political ties to the disputing parties, but also by the reluctance of a state to participate in a collective action if there is little promise of advantage to that state from such participation.³¹¹ In summarising the difficulty of forging a collective front in Europe, during the Balkan crisis, Josef Joffe, noted:

Instead of bringing the world's weight to bear on the aggressors there, things happened that routinely stultified the exercise. First, the collective could never agree on the key question: who is the aggressor? Second, instead of acting in common, the collective "bipolarised", lining up behind one or the other belligerent. Third, as a result, war took its course, and its outcome was determined by the usual factors – national strength and support from allies, be it tacit or explicit.³¹²

A more recent example is the US-led war against Iraq, in the so-called, Gulf War two, circa 2003. The situation exemplified most of what can go wrong in a collective security system. But in this case, instead of "bringing the world's weight to bear" on Iraq, those members of the collective who abstained from hastily sanctioning war, Russia, France, Germany, Belgium etc; it seemed, chose to bring moral weight to bear. This was against the background of a widely publicised evidence of intelligence forgery, lying and intimidation, on the part of Britain and United States, in their attempt to carry world opinion in favour of war. As far as France and Germany, and to an extent those who opposed unilateral action, were concerned, collective action was not to be taken unilaterally. France Germany, Russia, Belgium, and China insisted that the issue be handled by the United Nations, for which several diplomatic tools other than war could be explored. Stating the French position in response to a resolution drafted by Britain and United States, to authorise war, Jacques Chirac, the French President stated, "France will vote 'no' because she considers tonight that there is no reason

³¹¹ Ibid, p. 137

³¹² Joffe, Josef "Collective Security and the Future of Europe" *Survival* Vol. 34 No. 1 (spring 1992) pp. 37-50

to wage a war to reach the goal we set ourselves, that is the disarmament of Iraq."³¹³ Further to this, America and Britain also lacked concrete evidence to prove that Iraq had acquired weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which United States and Britain argued threatened their security.³¹⁴

The lack of unanimity among the permanent members of the Security Council (see chapter 9 below) and other main players, such as Germany and Belgium, over a course of action regarding American and British charges against Iraq, can be shown to have led to two main developments in the United Nations. In the first instance, while it was unanimously agreed at the time that Iraq posed a security problem, the question was not about the reluctance to participate in a collective action, but which course or courses of action were best. Britain, the United States, Spain and their allies proposed war, but France, Germany, Russia, China and their supporters opted for diplomacy and peaceful change. The strong opposition to American-led action marked a sort of departure from traditional Cold War practice, where western countries instinctively, and without question, backed American leadership.³¹⁵ It can also be argued that this break in tradition is a manifestation of the fact that some members have faith in the United Nations' goals and objectives.

This argument leads to a consideration of the second point, which from the point of view of collective security theory, is the lack of emphasis on pacific settlement and peaceful change. Thus, a major problem with collective security theory, and one which also leads to the difficulty of its application, is its concentration on the identification of an aggressor and application of sanctions. In a sense, the need to punish wrongdoers takes priority over other means of conflict management and resolution. Those countries who opposed a resolution to sanction war against Iraq, in the Council, it can be argued, were attempting to explore options other than blood letting. Claude, for example, observed that collective security shares with pacific settlement the belief that governments, or the peoples who may be in a position to influence their governments, are amenable to moral appeals against the misuse of force. Such a consideration, he argued, can also be described as a "rationalistic" approach to peace.³¹⁶ This is not to say that the idea of pacific settlement may stop those who prefer violence as a means to an end. However, as Claude argued, the "necessary

³¹³ Quoted in, ITV News <http://www.itv.com/news/1459459.html> (accessed July 2003)

³¹⁴ By September 2004, despite the US and Britain's insistence on the existence of WMD in Iraq, emerging evidence suggested the contrary. For example, a final report by Iraq Survey Group's (ISG), circulating in the month of September, and widely reported in the media "found no sign of alleged illegal stockpiles that the US and Britain presented as the justification for going to war, nor did it find any evidence of efforts to reconstitute Iraq's nuclear weapons programme." See Guardian Online, "Iraq had no WMD: the final verdict" by Julian Borger, Saturday September 18, 2004 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,1307529,00.html> (accessed 23 Sep 2004)

³¹⁵ Some scholars argue that France, Germany and Russia had selfish motives for not supporting the war, but it would have been very rare for France and Germany to break ranks to the extent of vetoing allied decisions in the height of the Cold War.

³¹⁶ Claude, Inis L., *Swords into Plowshare: The Problems and Progress of International Organisation* (New York: McGraw-hill 1971) p. 228

prerequisite of pacific settlement is investigation, conciliation, arbitration, and the like – equipment for inducing rational decision to follow a morally respectable course” and which must be “exhausted before exploring the stock in trade of collective security.”³¹⁷ This would include diplomatic, economic, and military sanctions, or such functions that enable politicians to bring about rational decisions.

The foregoing analysis highlighted at least one conceptual difficulty that could have potential consequences for collective intelligence within the UN. However, as noted earlier, the organisation is evolving and, within these evolutionary changes, come new experience and opportunities, with potentially wide ranging implications for the entire system. The section that follows examines a number of these change and some of the factors that have been responsible for an evolutionary UN system.

5.6. Evolution, change and the United Nations experience

It is possible to identify two contesting theories that attempt to explain the historical development of the United Nations. The first of these suggests that the United Nations was created as an alternative to the League of Nations, following the latter’s failure. From this point of view, it is supposed that the League contributed little, if anything to the development of a coherent international system, which the United Nations today symbolises.³¹⁸ The second argument, which tends to have far more logical consistency, takes the view that the United Nations Organisation evolved out of the League’s failures, and that the emergence of the UN from the League represented one of many evolutionary stages of international politics. This latter argument can be found to be more plausible because, first, it is impossible to attempt to separate the origin of the UN from the demise of the League. In fact, as Goodrich argued, the UN emerged with both the structure and the underlying philosophy of the League.³¹⁹ He noted that there seemed to be little difference in the main objectives and principles of the two organisations, nor in their basic characteristics. The main difference, it can be argued, is that the United Nations emerged as a more powerful and perhaps, more coherent organisation.

Similarly, former Secretary-General U Thant argued that even those principles now generally accepted by states were mainly developed in the League’s Covenant, which made it “possible for the United Nations, when it came into being in 1945, to build on firm and already existing

³¹⁷ Ibid, p. 228

³¹⁸ See for example, the argument presented by Niemeyer, Gerhart in “The Balance-sheet of the League Experiment” *International Organisation*, Vol. 6 No. 4 (Nov. 1952), pp. 537-558; Goodrich, Leland M., “From League of Nations to United Nations” *International Organisation*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (1947) pp. 3-21; and U Thant, “The League of Nations and the United Nations” *UN Monthly Chronicle* Vol. 1 No. 1 (May 1964)

³¹⁹ Goodrich, *ibid*

foundations.”³²⁰ In fact, as U Thant also noted, many of the changes that have occurred between the League and the United Nations have occurred through processes of modification and adaptation. For example, one such modification of the Covenant is the abandonment of the unanimity rule that prevailed in the League Council in favour of vetoes in the SC, and a two-third-majority rule in the Assembly. The change from the Council system of voting to existing practice resulted in a far greater flexibility to the Charter than existed in the Covenant. In a nutshell, to talk about the history of the United Nations is to talk about an evolutionary process of change, adaptation, and modification.

By their very nature, organisations either disintegrate, or evolve and adapt to new environments and to the growing needs of their members. In his classic work on international organisations, aptly titled *Swords into Plowshare*, Claude drew the following conclusion: “international organisation is a process; international organisations are representative aspects of the phase of that process which has been reached at a given time.”³²¹ From this point of view, it follows that every historical phase influences the shape of the organisation. And whatever shape or form the UN now assumes, has more or less to do with changes in the international environment. S.J. Michael also observed that “the success or failure of international organisations stem not so much from their formal-legal covenants as from changing configurations and distribution of power, systemic issues and forces and the attitudes and resources of member states.”³²² On the other hand, the effects of these changes have been mutual; states tend to adapt to the evolving character of the organisation as the organisation adapts to new environments. This mutuality of interaction, according to Claude, is a factor influencing the course of international politics.³²³

How do we understand these stages of evolution? To answer this question fully would require an exhaustive analysis of the development of international organisations and world political history. However, a brief and partial answer focusing on the present role, achievements and a possible direction of the future of the UN will suffice to provide a snapshot of a particular stage of its development. The objectives of the UN Charter, perhaps, provide the criteria for measuring its achievements to date. Some of these objectives have been met in ways which are not generally acknowledged. Processes of international organisations, Claude argued, have facilitated a more coherent international system, in many ways than has been generally recognised. Such progress, he asserted, is certainly not acknowledged, especially by “those who adhere to the doctrinaire view that government and anarchy are the two halves of an absolute either or formula.”³²⁴

³²⁰ U Thant, op cit

³²¹ Claude, op cit, p. 4

³²² S.J. Michael, quoted in Archer, Clive *International Organisations* (London: Unwin Hyman 1983) p. 26

³²³ Claude, op cit, p. 4

³²⁴ Ibid, p. 394

Some of the achievements of the United Nations may be said to include developing tools and methods for managing a relatively stable world community, and thus meeting some of the requirements of its collective security goals. Tools such as peacekeeping, establishing a United Nations presence and various forms of pacific settlements of disputes sponsored by the organisation are believed to have prevented or limited the scope of violent conflicts. The vast array of work in which the UN is engaged, ranging from election monitoring, promoting development programmes; to facilitating academic and cultural exchange and such like, are a reflection of a phase that anticipates both the present and the future of the international system.³²⁵

5.7. Change and adaptation

A useful guide to some of the forces of change is, perhaps, the end of the Cold War. This event afforded the United Nations the opportunity to make its collective security efforts more effective, or at least, an attempt to move in that direction and to create a more peaceful environment. The task had not been simple, nor is it expected to be, as pockets of violent conflict persist around the globe. However, the prevailing idea has been concerned with developing effective means to minimise, if not avoid such conflicts. Two main ideas underline the new direction. In the first instance is a broadening of the concept of security from an essentially military focus to exploring conditions that may contribute to or inspire military conflicts. Broadly speaking this includes what some have dubbed “human security”. According to the *Commission on Global Governance*, this is a “people-centred” approach to security and includes “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruption in patterns of daily life.”³²⁶ Dealing with these broad concepts of security depends on an effective application of preventive measures.³²⁷ As outlined in *An Agenda for Peace*, these include:

- Identifying at the earliest possible stages situations that could create conflicts, and to try through diplomacy to remove the sources of danger before violence results;

³²⁵ For a list of what the UN counts as some of its achievements, see, “Major Achievements of the UN” <http://www.un.org/aboutun/achieve.htm> (accessed, Sept 2004, last updated Aug 2002)

³²⁶ Commission on Global Governance *Our Global Neighbourhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance* (Oxford University Press 1995) p. 80

³²⁷ The term “preventive diplomacy” is broadly associated with this new direction, and indicates that all concepts of security are integral. In the *An Agenda for Peace* the following definitions are given:

“Preventive diplomacy is action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.

Peacemaking is action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

- *Peace-keeping* is the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peace-keeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict and the making of peace.”

- Engaging in peacemaking aimed at resolving the issues that led to conflicts;
- Preserving peace, through peacekeeping, where fighting has been halted and assisting in the implementation of agreements;
- Standing ready to assist in peace-building in its differing contexts: rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife; and building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war;
- And addressing the deepest causes of conflicts: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression.

It is suggested in the *An Agenda for Peace*, and perhaps this seems to be the general consensus, that the success of this scheme inherently depends on reforming the United Nations by way of re-examining its existing working practices and tools. These concerns have generated several working groups and reports that reflect upon issues raised in the *An Agenda for Peace*.³²⁸ More importantly, their recommendations have drawn largely on the United Nations' experiences. Of note is the collection of reports on "Lessons Learned" from UN operations, which include operations in Rwanda (UNAMIR, 1992-1996), Somalia (UNOSOM, 1996-1998), Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES, 1992-1995). Following from these is the Brahimi Report, whose recommendations included the reform of existing structures and the establishment of new ones.³²⁹ The significance of these reforms will be examined at later parts of the dissertation.

5.8. Obstacles and innovations

Drawing on past experiences, these anticipated reforms have been geared towards efforts to circumvent some of the obstacles that have stifled the UN's ability to perform its tasks. This is not to say that major constitutional provisions, such as those outlined in the Charter, may easily be avoided. The reports (especially, the Brahimi report) it can be said, have two practical purposes. In the first place, they highlight the inherent difficulties faced by the UN in such a complex political environment and in so doing, focus attention on matter of fact problems in achieving collective security goals. The second purpose of the reports is to offer recommendations for restructuring and

³²⁸ Since the publication of *An Agenda for Peace*, at least six major working groups have been set up to examine and report on different aspects of reforms of the United Nations. These include: The Working Group on *An Agenda for Peace*, 1996; Working Group on Agenda for Development, 1995-97; Working Group on the Security Council; Working Group on the General Assembly of United Nations Reform, 1995-97; Working group on the Financial Situation, 1994 - 97; and Working Group on the Strengthening of the UN System, 1995-1997

³²⁹ General Assembly, Fifty-fifth session, "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects", August, 2000, United Nations, A/55/305-S/2000/809

adapting the UN to new realities. A good part of these reports have focused on modernising the administrative machinery of the UN. In the final analysis, however, though they also aim to draw member states' attention to their obligations to cooperate with the UN, it is not to be expected that they will have much impact on existing decision making structures within the United Nations or that they will drastically change the motivations of member states. James Paul, for example, observed that while politicians expect increased productivity and efficiency from the UN, members, he noted, favour reforms that conform to their national interests and promote national power.³³⁰ The reform processes, he argued, are more or less about battles over policy, rather than a "management upgrade" of the system. These battles take place in many fronts, he argued:

Less vs. more environmental regulation, less vs. more initiative on disarmament, less vs. more concern for human rights and poverty, and so on. But the overarching policy issue is the struggle between Keynesianism and neoliberalism: should there be a strong state that provides regulation and social protection, or should capital and the international market make the rules...³³¹

This is just one aspect of the problem but points to the fact that, any major restructuring of the present system, such that some members may perceive as threatening to their vital interests or challenging their legal rights and status, will always present particular difficulties for the organisation. For wide ranging changes to occur, both the political and constitutional issues will have to be negotiated and experience informs us that this is a particularly difficult task. Two practical reasons may explain this problem. First, as Ruth Russell observed, is the fact that the United Nations is not an independent centre of political power and as such, cannot, by itself implement changes or create new structures without the explicit consent of its members.³³² On the other hand, even when most members are in favour of changes by way of majority voting in the General Assembly, problems often arise if the anticipated change is perceived, especially by any of the veto wielding nations, to be directly or indirectly adverse to their interests. As has been hinted and shall be shown in the following chapter, the idea of a United Nations intelligence system also faces many of these difficulties.

The argument here is not intended to suggest that the United Nations cannot overcome particular difficulties, nor can it be assumed that the present structure of the organisation must be the permanent framework of action. As argued earlier (see chapter four above), and as Stanley has noted,

³³⁰ Paul, James "UN Reform: An Analysis", *Global Policy Forum*, 1996
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/reform/analysis.htm> (accessed Sept 2003)

³³¹ Ibid

³³² Russell, op cit, p. 88

“it may well be that the objectives cannot be reached within such a framework.”³³³ It should not then be too difficult to anticipate further adaptations to new conditions of complexity, which Claude observed, “necessitate the redefinition of jurisdictional boundaries to correspond with the expanding territorial scope of problems requiring solution.”³³⁴ All of this raises the question of how the United Nations will negotiate these obstacles. The answer to this question will provide a useful backdrop to understanding and developing a concept of a collective intelligence system within the UN.

However, many of the reform-oriented reports noted earlier have included intelligence components in their recommendations. One example, which will be studied in some detail, is that concerning the “Executive Committee on Peace and Security Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat” (EISAS).³³⁵ As will be argued, the shape of such a structure would not emerge from within the pages of committee reports and managerial reforms, but as a result of a combination of factors, including political manoeuvrings within the organisation, as well as innovation and flexible interpretation of the Charter. How these factors affect changes to the system in turn depends on the degree and nature of the trends and how the main players interpret and respond to situations. By the nature of things, situations in the international system tend to develop so rapidly that it allows little or no opportunity for a long drawn-out process of constitutional change. As such, constitutional changes in a period of serious political conflicts tend to be made through informal interpretation and usage rather than through formal interpretation and amendments.³³⁶ Such innovative approaches gave birth to peacekeeping, which is now the predominant mechanism employed by the United Nations for conflict management and which had not been anticipated in the Charter.

Creative interpretation of the Charter has also enabled the organisation to circumvent established decision-making rules. For example, on certain occasions, the General Assembly has been able to invoke the simpler two-third majority rule, where the unanimity rule of the Security Council (SC) had been stalled.³³⁷ A lack of common understanding in the Security Council on the nature of a

³³³ Hoffmann, op cit, p. 46

³³⁴ Claude, op cit, p. 35

³³⁵ “Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the report of the Panel on United Nations Operations”, United Nations, A/55/502, October 2000

³³⁶ Russel, op cit, p. 88

³³⁷ Certain ambiguity persists about the legal interpretation of the *unanimity rule* in the Security Council. Quincy Wright for example argued that; “scrutiny of the text and of the history of that instrument suggests that this unanimity is merely a procedure of limited applicability. The concurrence of all the permanent members is required explicitly only for non-procedural “decisions” of the Security Council and amendments of the Charter. The line between procedural and non-procedural matters is not defined and it is not clear from the text whether “recommendations” on such matters as pacific settlement of disputes, admission of new members, and appointment of a Secretary-General are to be regarded as “decisions,” although practice has, up to date, so regarded them. The provisions concerning the unanimity of the great powers is not included among the “principles” of the Charter, the organs other than the Security Council are not affected by them, and the members have by overwhelming majorities sustained the use of alternative methods, permitted by the Charter and not involving the great power veto, when the Security

conflict and how best it should be approached sometimes undermine the Council's effectiveness. In these circumstances, the GA has resorted to a number of devices to circumvent such obstacles.³³⁸ These have included broadening interpretations of Assembly powers and functions as stated in the Charter, and the development of special decision instruments such as the Interim Committee and the Uniting for Peace Resolution. Since first adopted in 1950, the Uniting for Peace Resolution 377(A) has served as a basis for calling nine emergency special sessions of the General Assembly, each of which dealt with a dispute that the Security Council was unable to resolve.

In other cases, where the SC had been unable to act, the role of the Secretariat had been expanded to accommodate the situation, such as the constitutional functions in the field of economic and social development.³³⁹ Similarly, the role of the Secretary-General has developed in answer to the demand created by the difficulties of achieving a consensus in the SC. Some of these innovative approaches adopted by both the General Assembly and the Secretariat have expanded beyond the 1945 concepts to fit the changing nature of the problem as perceived in the organisation.³⁴⁰ Given this evolving patterns and flexible interpretation of the Charter, it should be possible to anticipate that future developments in the organisation will have to draw upon these experiences. Unfortunately, it must also be added that these innovations might not necessarily provide a legal framework for consistent policy changes.

That notwithstanding, it is necessary to add that, as the organisation evolves, it is faced with new and varying demands, many of which will impact on its decision-making processes. One of these is the requirement to manage and process information. However, before discussing the rationale of its information requirements and the extent to which the UN has developed an intelligence capacity, it is necessary to look at the concept of intelligence itself. This is examined in the following chapter. As it will be evident in the analysis, even the question of a conceptual definition poses its own problems for would-be UN reformers.

Council veto stood in the way of achieving the purposes and maintaining the principles set forth in the Charter." Wright, "op cit, p. 778

³³⁸ Bennett, op cit, p. 128

³³⁹ Russel, op cit, p. 96

³⁴⁰ Ibid; and Bennett, op cit, p. 128

Chapter 6

Perspectives on Intelligence: Theory, Practice and Process

6.1. The nature of intelligence

A number of factors distinguish intelligence from other types of knowledge. However, attempts to carry out such comparison to support a general theory of intelligence would possibly have to be studied under two major headings. First, is the proximity of the intelligence community to the sponsoring institution, what comes to mind is the state or governmental institution, and secondly, the veil of secrecy under which intelligence operates. The relationship between these two factors may provide a useful basis for comparing intelligence with other forms of knowledge. The argument is simply that there are many similarities between conventional research, such as that done by academic, scientific and commercial institution, and the unconventional, that is, activities couched under “secret intelligence.” The most basic commonality is that the final product of their efforts is knowledge. I shall generally refer to this knowledge as intelligence. This will become clearer as the analysis progresses.

However, in comparing secret intelligence work with conventional research, it is also necessary to acknowledge those situations where these activities share basic characteristics of secrecy and closeness to their sponsors, even though their goals are different. For example, some commercial organisations may have policies of secrecy for certain grades of information. In terms of their functionality as tools for knowledge, the differences is limited and scholars sometimes attempt to separate government or state-sponsored intelligence from other kinds of intelligence products by prefixing terms such as “strategic” or “secret” etc., to “intelligence”. In fact, these terms are by themselves ambiguous. For example, the term “strategic” contributes little to our understanding of intelligence’s special functions. Although the term, “strategic” might be appended to emphasise long range or comprehensive governmental planning, many organisations now use the term “strategic intelligence” to designate certain grades of information, or to add significance and importance to information products for commercial purposes. Similarly, the application of the term “secret intelligence” also adds little to our understanding of the concept and, in many ways, helps to reinforce the mythical and the arcane side of intelligence work. For the purpose of this study, I shall suggest the term *political intelligence* as a working description, in the light of its processes and

products.³⁴¹ This term seems more useful, since intelligence as conceived of here, serves a rather restricted political audience, and its knowledge *products* are specifically designed for that audience. The analysis below will make this distinction clearer.

The proximity of the intelligence community to the political establishments has enabled it to evolve distinctive features, patterns, rationales, and even technologies whose applications are only restricted to those sponsored by states, and whose applications can only be sanctioned by appropriate political authorities. Some of these features include, for example, the use of formal military language and concepts, in which, as Michael Herman observed, their “external limits are usually fuzzy; and where they are tightly defined it is often in terms of bureaucratic convenience rather than real differences of function.”³⁴² Herman argued that in defining “governmental intelligence” in relation to other systems, “we need to think of foci or centres of gravity rather than precise boundaries: as on primitive maps of seas and continents and their relative locations rather than precise modern cartography.”³⁴³ This closeness and material developments in intelligence sets it further apart from other forms of knowledge systems.

In essence, the focal point of intelligence work has revolved around adversarial politics. Both the history, as well as the conventional understanding of the functions of intelligence, underline these characteristics. Intelligence is primarily concerned with “foreign” targets, but in a broader context, includes individuals or groups generally perceived as “enemies of the state”. The latter includes citizens, according to Herman, “who are also ‘foreign’ in some way... or posing threats transcending normal crime”.³⁴⁴ With this in mind, the role of intelligence is simplified in terms that focus on identifying and thwarting the enemy. For this reason, also, intelligence has been defined as “a solution looking for a problem.”

Proponents of this “special role” argue that this unique position, and the unconventional methods employed by the intelligence community, enable it to build “knowledge of calibre that is far above *ad hoc* guessing”, in contrast to other forms of research.³⁴⁵ They also argue that the rigour of intelligence analysis can add to the immediate understanding of events. However, while it is easy to identify the unique position of intelligence in terms of its closeness to the sponsoring authority, the value of the “calibre” of its knowledge and the effect of its perspectives on events remain questionable.

³⁴¹ For convenience and simplicity, I shall continue to use the term “intelligence” as a term of reference.

³⁴² Herman, Michael “Government Intelligence and its Role” *Journal of Economic and Social Intelligence* Vol.2 (1992) pp. 91-113

³⁴³ Ibid

³⁴⁴ Ibid

³⁴⁵ Evans, Allan “Intelligence and Policy Formation” *World Politics* Vol. 12 (October 1959) pp. 84-91

The idea that intelligence ought to predict the enemy's intentions also leads to the view that, in both peace and war, knowing what your friends or foes are planning is a crucial part of the intelligence function. According to this view, such knowledge gives a state the leverage or power in its relations with others, whether in diplomatic negotiations or trading partnerships, planning war strategies, or devising foreign policy goals. This is a very powerful argument that impacts on both intelligence doctrine and practice. For example, in the 1960s and 70s, when the remaining British colonies were pushing for independence, the British Secret Intelligence Division Five (MI5) monitored the negotiating parties by secretly planting bugging devices in Lancaster House where conferences were held. Apparently, this was an attempt to have a fore knowledge of the negotiating strategies of those pushing for decolonisation. Peter Wright noted in his book, *The Spy Catcher*, that such practices were commonplace in monitoring high-level diplomatic negotiations.³⁴⁶ Similarly, in the build up to the second Gulf War 2003, the United States directed its intelligence services to carry out surveillance on delegates at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. According to an internal National Security Agency (NSA) memo, which was leaked by the London-based *Observer* newspaper, the targets of the surveillance efforts were the delegations from Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Mexico, Guinea and Pakistan at the UN headquarters in New York, the so-called "Middle Six" delegations, whose votes were being fought over by the US and Britain to sanction war against Iraq; and the party arguing for more time for UN inspections, led by France, China and Russia.³⁴⁷ The memo, which was (according to the *Observer*), allegedly sent by Frank Koza, chief of staff in the "Regional Targets" section of the NSA stated:

As you've likely heard by now, the Agency is mounting a surge particularly directed at the UN Security Council (UNSC) members (minus US and GBR of course) for insights as to how membership is reacting to the on-going debate RE: Iraq, plans to vote on any related resolutions, what related policies/negotiating positions they may be considering, alliances/dependencies, etc - the whole gamut of information that could give US policymakers an edge in obtaining results favourable to US goals or to head off surprises. In RT, that means a QRC surge effort to revive/create efforts against UNSC members Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Bulgaria and Guinea, as well as extra focus on Pakistan UN matters.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Wright, Peter: *Spy Catcher: The Candid Autobiography of a Senior Intelligence Officer* (New York: Viking Penguin 1987) p. 58

³⁴⁷ Martin Bright, Ed Vulliamy and Peter Beaumont "Revealed: US dirty tricks to win vote on Iraq war" *The Observer*, Sunday, 2 March, 2003

³⁴⁸ Acronyms are undefined and are as quoted in original NSA copy

In the build-up to the war against Iraq, the United States, Britain, and Spain had sponsored a resolution that would sanction war, but they needed nine votes with no veto to carry.

The view that intelligence can change the course of events seems widely embraced in several other aspects of international relations. For example, Stanfield Turner (United States Director of Central Intelligence, 1977-81) noted in an article, back in 1991: “Imagine what help it would be in international trade negotiations to know precisely what internal subsidies and other trade devices the other side is employing.” “Information”, he argued, “always has been power...”³⁴⁹ The view that intelligence can perform all these functions make it difficult to separate the true nature of intelligence functions, from its fictional exposition. These, in some ways also tend to inform what politicians expect from the intelligence community. Yet, politicians rarely discuss the extent to which intelligence affects their decisions.

6.2. The functions of secrecy

Perhaps the most important defining feature of intelligence is its element of *secrecy*. Secrecy is “consciously willed concealment”, that is, information, events or activities kept hidden.³⁵⁰ The object of secrecy is known only to the initiates and these include the structure, membership and rationale of the secret group. What generally come to mind under such descriptions are the Freemasons, or the *Ekpe* and *Ekpo* cults of the *Efik* and *Ibibio* tribes, respectively, of south eastern Nigeria. Another characteristic of many secret organisations is their close association with the occult and related rituals. The difference between secret intelligence and such secret organisations is that governmental intelligence, though somewhat esoteric in kind, operates in a material environment and has acknowledged political function. Yet little separates its sociology and functions of secrecy from that of the occult-based organisations.³⁵¹ I shall discuss these functions of secrecy in terms of consequences for intelligence work and structure rather than for the occult.

Secrecy, then, can be found to play two main roles in intelligence system. These are, first, the internal function, which concerns intelligence processes and their impact on the community. Secondly the external function, directly or indirectly, influences how the institution is perceived from the outside. The external function also identifies two *outsider groups* as targets of both surveillance and concealments; i.e., the domestic and the international (See Fig.6.2). The international component provides the main target of intelligence operations. This generally consists

³⁴⁹ Turner, Stanfield “Intelligence for a New World Order” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 70 No. 4 (1991) pp. 148-166

³⁵⁰ Simmel, Georg “The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies” *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 11 No. 4 (Jan 1906) pp. 441-498

of foreign states, and to an extent, citizens who are suspected of collaborating with “enemy” states or are themselves, for reasons known only to the intelligence community, found to be relevant targets. This would include every member (citizens) of the state bar those initiated in the intelligence community and their sponsors. The material manifestation of membership of a state sponsored organisation is, for example, the *Official Secrets Acts*, in the United Kingdom, which may have various levels of secrecy (security) clearance. Such legislation legally commits the signatories to protect state secrets, as well as forbidding citizens from any knowledge of concealed information. In comparative terms, such material documents also mark the distance between the intelligence community and the more esoteric groups, whose initiation rites may involve elaborate ceremonies and mystical rituals.

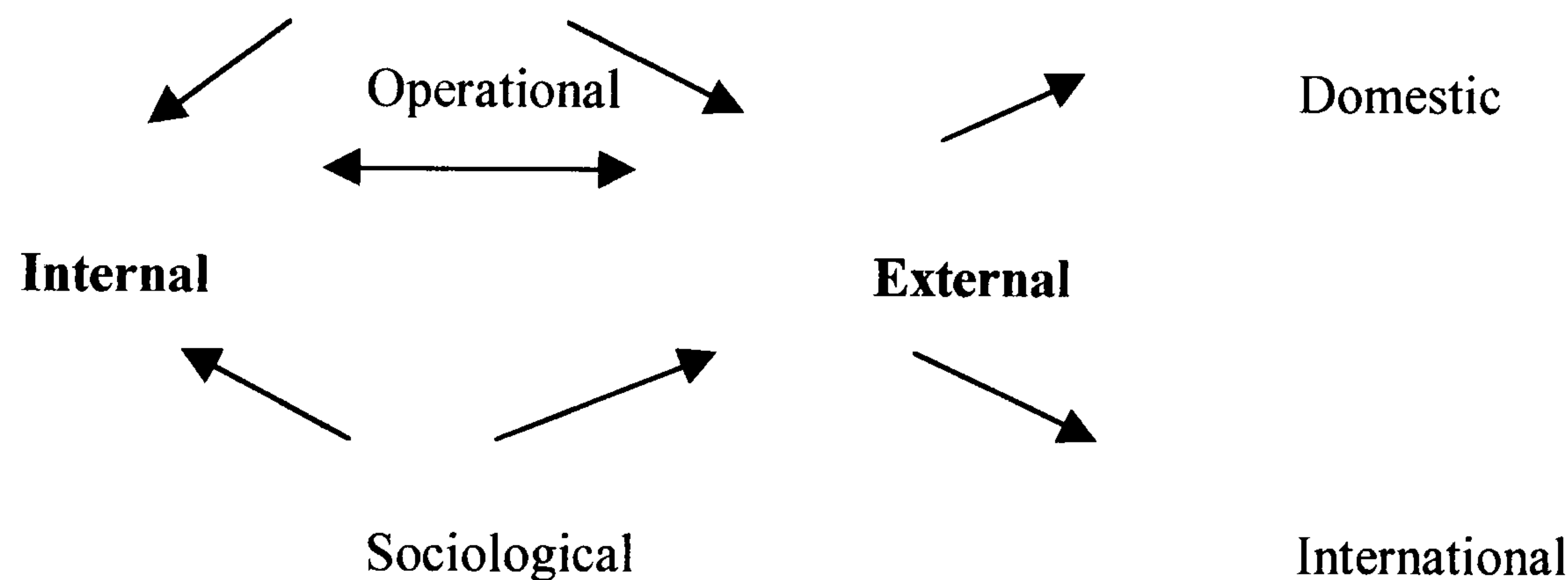


Fig.6.2 Functions and structure of intelligence secrecy

Whereas secrecy in esoteric organisations would make sense from a sociological and psychological point of view, it is possible to discern certain operational and sociological significance in the political intelligence structure. Such meanings, at a minimum, concern the functionality of intelligence in the international environment, to which operational resources are directed. Apart from concealing information, intelligence work also concerns collection and analysis of secret, as well as of open information. For this reason, it is important that the target is not aware that it is being surveyed or that it should know what conclusions might be drawn from the information.³⁵² Furthermore, the collection of secret information may involve unconventional means, and often, extensive acts of criminality and, for this reason, governments or the sponsoring institutions invest a

³⁵¹ The term “sociology of secrecy” is used here to reflect the dynamic relation between the initiate and the outsider. See for example, Simmel, *ibid*

³⁵² There are several other reasons why states conceal information, which nevertheless, cannot be examined in the present work, see for example, works by Franck, Thomas M., and Edward Weisband eds. *Secrecy and Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press 1974); Leigh, David, “The Frontiers of

great deal of effort and resources in protecting their sources and agents from being found out.³⁵³ The other side of this argument is that intelligence can be deployed to exploit and manipulate an opponent's action, in the sense that the less the opponents know, the more prone to deception they would be, hence, the popular saying "intelligence is power".³⁵⁴

The fact that the fabled aspects of intelligence are so dominant that it pervades both academic and popular belief can be explained partly by the historical development of intelligence and partly by the sociology of secrecy.³⁵⁵ Sociology attempts to explain the relationship between individuals or groups in a social setting and their pattern of interaction. Sociological investigations also seek to understand the kinds of structural patterns which are generated from certain kinds of social interactions.³⁵⁶ Since relationships between the internal and external groups in the structure (discussed earlier) take place under conditions of secrecy, it is possible to expect a unique pattern of relationship, which borders on superstition, mutual misperception and mutual mistrust within the interacting groups. Secrecy thus, it can be discerned, among other things, performs a modifying function for all actors, including those deploying it and its targets.

With regard to what we know so far about secret intelligence, it is not possible to comprehend its rationale, its place and role in society without taking account of its sociological form, as manifested in its element of secrecy. The work of Georg Simmel on the "Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies" provides an insight into the nature and function of secrecy. Some of the issues he raised are worth mentioning here, because his observations bear heavily and provide insightful background to this aspect of intelligence functions. His descriptions and concepts of secrecy are also as relevant in contemporary societies as they are of age-old "primitive" societies, and they are as pertinent to present-day secret intelligence as they are to primeval secret societies.

Secrecy, according to Simmel is a "universal sociological form", which, by its nature, hides its real meaning from normal standards of morality. Hence, behaviours that may be questionable are kept

Secrecy: Closed Government in Britain" (London: Junction Books 1980); Michael, James The Politics of Secrecy (United Kingdom: Penguin Books 1982)

³⁵³ Herman, op cit

³⁵⁴ A rather banal interpretation of the operational significance of secrecy is the commonplace view of "intelligence is power" argument. From an academic perspective, this argument is of limited utility, though it helps to perpetuate the myth of intelligence. One way to understand this interpretation is to think of intelligence as a poker game, where a player wins with the most valuable combination of sequences or set of cards. It is also an important aspect of the game for an opponent to try and guess the other's combination, while keeping his secret. Thus, the more confidence a player has in his winning combination, the more bluff he can call by raising the stakes. It follows that if a player is able to predict the other's combination, such knowledge enables the player to dominate the game.

³⁵⁵ See for example, articles by Sheldon, Mary on the history of intelligence, "The Roman Secret Service" *Intelligence Quarterly* (July 1985) pp. 7-8; "Hannibal's Spies", *International Journal* Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1986) pp. 53-70; "Toga and Dagger" *Washington Post* 16 July (1985) p. A15

secret, even though, as Simmel argued, such acts might not be socially punishable.³⁵⁷ Although secrecy, according to Simmel, is, among other things “also a sociological expression of moral badness, although, the classical aphorism, ‘no one is so bad that he also wants to seem bad’, takes issues with the facts”. This, he argued, could be exploited to exaggerate the importance of a secret group. “To the degree that sometimes immoralities which do not exist are seized upon as material for self advertisement.”³⁵⁸

The circle of secrecy, according to Simmel, needs acceptance by those they seek to exclude. For this very reason, secrecy, he argued, is applied as a sociological technique to the effect that, without it, certain social goals could not be attained.³⁵⁹ The application of this technique in issues of “national security” or in the name of “national interests” in some ways supports this argument. For example, Sherman Kent famously argued that the knowledge which intelligence “must produce deserves a more forbidding adjective than ‘useful’. You should call it knowledge vital for national survival.”³⁶⁰ Simmel, however, observed that the very success of this technique derives from the charms and values that the secret group possesses over its very significance as a means, and the attraction is mysterious regardless of its content.³⁶¹ Thus, as well as constructing how the excluded perceives the intelligence establishment, secrecy also constructs the manner in which intelligence (or secret group) conceives of their own significance in society. Simmel, argued:

In the first place, the strongly accentuated exclusion of all not within the circle of secrecy results in a correspondingly accentuated feeling of personal possession... Moreover, since exclusion of others from a possession may occur especially in the case of high values, the reverse is psychologically very natural, viz, that what is withheld from the many appears to have a special value. Accordingly, subjective possessions of the most various sorts acquire a decisive accentuation of value through the form of secrecy in which the substantial significance of the facts concealed often enough falls into significance entirely subordinate to the fact that others are excluded from knowing them... Secrecy gives the person enshrouded by it an exceptional position; it works as a stimulus of purely social derivation, which is in principle quite independent of its casual content, but is naturally heightened in the degree in which the exclusively possessed

³⁵⁶ Champion, Dean J., *The sociology of organizations*, (New York: McGraw-Hill 1975) p. 3

³⁵⁷ Simmel, op cit

³⁵⁸ Ibid

³⁵⁹ Ibid

³⁶⁰ Kent, Sherman, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy* (Princeton, New Jersey: PUP, 1966) pvii. See also Ransom, who argued that intelligence agencies utilise the special even logical privilege of secrecy, to sometimes engage in deliberate deception with regard to intelligence functions. Ransom, Harry Howe “Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Policy” *World Politics* 27 (Oct 1974) pp. 131-146

³⁶¹ Simmel, op cit

secret is significant and comprehensive... Out of this secrecy, which throws a shadow over all that is deep and significant, grows the logically fallacious, but typical, error, that everything secret is something essential and significant. The natural impulse to idealisation, and the natural timidity of men, operates to one and the same end in the presence of secrecy; viz., to heighten it by fantasy, and to distinguish it by a degree of attention that published reality could not command.³⁶²

The belief that the aspects of secrecy in intelligence work confers power to modify fortunes, produce surprises, or as Simmel put it, “joys and calamities, even if the latter be only misfortunes to ourselves”,³⁶³ looms large in popular imagination and helps sustain the objects of secrecy.

Exclusivity, by its nature, can also be conceived of as an important element in the sociology of secrecy. In the circumstances, it would have a modifying function on both the internal and the external components of the system. Simmel described the relationship between the secret group and its subjects, as a kind of “aristocracy building”, underlined by the sense of “special” with regard to their perceived value. This implies a degree of mental superiority which enables the secret group to express its power over others. Secrecy, then, Simmel concluded, is a “spiritual first-law” which acts as selective tool for the breeding of “superior minds”. It is, he noted, “a means of enabling a certain few for whom others must labour, to secure leisure for production of the higher cultural good; or in order to furnish a means of leadership for the group forces.”³⁶⁴ The closeness of intelligence to political institutions, in fact, conforms to this aristocracy building model. Furthermore, Simmel noted, that the significance of secret association, as intensification of sociological exclusivity in general, also appears in political aristocracies. Hence;

Among the requisites of aristocratic control, secrecy has always had a place. It makes use of the psychological fact that the unknown as such appears terrible, powerful, and threatening. In the first place, it employs this fact in seeking to conceal the numerical insignificance of the governing class. In Sparta, the number of warriors was kept so far

³⁶² Ibid

³⁶³ Ibid

³⁶⁴ Simmel, *ibid*, compared the situation to a school playground where small, closely attached groups of comrades, through the mere fact that they form a special group, come to consider themselves an elite, compared with the rest who are unorganised; while the latter involuntarily recognise that higher value. Under such condition, “secrecy and pretence of secrecy are means of building higher the wall of separation, and therein a reinforcement of the aristocratic nature of the group.” Closer to political reality in recent times, is, perhaps, the kind of secret police forces that operated under authoritarian regimes in the guise of intelligence, and reminiscent of Cold War era East German Stasi and Soviet KGB (Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti or Committee for State Security).

as possible a secret, and in Venice the same purpose was in view in the ordinance prescribing simple black costumes for all the *nobility*.³⁶⁵

A further explanation of how secrecy constructs and modifies the intelligence establishments would require an in-depth study in the psychology of secrecy and human behaviour. For example, studies in childhood development suggest that early childhood experiences of secrecy are intimately tied up with the emergence of self-identity.³⁶⁶ Similarly, anecdotal studies in the intelligence literature suggest that secrecy plays a role in constructing and modifying the intelligence establishments (and sometimes their sponsors), and this permeates, not only the way they perceive themselves but also the products of intelligence. For example, John Le Carre (David John Moore Cornwell), author of several spy novels, and a former intelligence officer for the British Foreign Office, wrote of intelligence secrecy;³⁶⁷

If you live in secrecy, you think in secrecy. It is the very nature of the life you lead as an intelligence officer in a secret room that the ordinary winds of common sense don't blow through it. You are constantly looking to relate to your enemy in intellectual, adversarial and conspiratorial terms. It is absolutely necessary to the intelligence mentality that you put the worst interpretation upon your adversary.³⁶⁸

Secrecy also bears significantly upon the intelligence product. Eickelman argued that, because intelligence establishment require secrecy, they are generally less conscious than their "open" knowledge-oriented counterparts, including academic communities, of how informed norms and expectations shape and constrain what information they perceive, interpret and report.³⁶⁹ This, he argued, impedes policymakers and consumers of the intelligence product, from recognising how social and cultural factors shape the production of classified knowledge, which, he pointed out, could lead to a downgrading of analysis based on open sources. To put this metaphorically, secrecy becomes the intelligence community, as the community becomes secrecy.

Sherman Kent, argued, however, that, with respect to the operational significance of secrecy, the negative effects of secrecy on intelligence work could be understandable. He reasoned that, based on

³⁶⁵ Ibid

³⁶⁶ van Manen, Max and Bas Levering *Childhood's Secrets: Intimacy, Privacy, and the Self Reconsidered* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press 1996)

³⁶⁷ "Le Carré Breaks his Silence" <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/lecarre/author.html>, (accessed July 2003) and "John Le Carre" <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbc7/drama/progpapes/lecarre.shtml> (posted 3 July 2003)

³⁶⁸ Le Carre, John "We Distorted Our Own Minds" *Time* (5 July 1993) pp. 36

³⁶⁹ Eickelman, Dale F., "Intelligence in an Arab Gulf State" in Godson, Roy ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence* (United Kingdom: Pergamon-Brassey's 1988) p. 90

the theory that the degree of secrecy is a function of the number of people who know about it; a highly important secret cannot be too widely known. “A man cannot produce the good hypothesis in the matter of an important secret if he does not know as much as there is to know about it... yet intelligence people are constantly confronted with this very sort of argument.”³⁷⁰ Nevertheless, he acknowledged that though security comes at a great cost in terms of results, it should be allowed to interfere only if it is absolutely necessary.

These unique characteristics also underlie the ambiguity surrounding the role of intelligence establishments. The closeness of intelligence to the politician is, in itself, a telling obstacle to fair and independent collection and analysis. Secondly, the veil of secrecy creates a barrier to understanding the authenticity, the validity, the verifiability (those things that give substance and meaning to conventional research and knowledge production) of intelligence product and how useful it can be in a particular situation. These characteristics have also given critics the opportunity to question the very coexistence of intelligence agencies and democratic values. For example, William Webster, former Director of the CIA, noted how the agency is portrayed as a “loose cannon” and outside the law” and “all of those things which I think, in democratic society make people feel threatened and worried.”³⁷¹ Such descriptions of the intelligence establishment are not unfamiliar. But intelligence secrecy also provides a cover for politicians lying, covering policy errors, or as a tool for manipulating and misinforming their citizens, especially in time of crisis. With these general characteristics in mind, along with its associations with political bigotry, malicious deception, and roguery, the difference between intelligence as a process of informed decision, and its criminal and manipulative functions tends to fade. On the other hand, critics have also pointed to intelligence failures to predict events, which proponents claim is an important aspect of intelligence work and necessary for the survival of the state.

Some of these criticisms could be found to be valid, in particular, with respect to how the intelligence establishment is understood in popular imagination. The following discussion will attempt, first, to separate the myth from the reality, and secondly provide a useful reference point for interfacing intelligence with collective decision structures. The analysis will also aim to clarify the definition of “intelligence” as a process as well as a product. The overall aim can be summarised as an attempt to posit the argument in a theoretically viable context, as well as encouraging us to think differently about a United Nations intelligence system.

³⁷⁰Kent, op cit, p. 175

³⁷¹ Quoted in Maas, Peter “Do we Still Need the CIA?” *Parade Magazine* (19 May 1991) p. 4

6.3. The myths: intelligence in the popular imagination

The fact that the true nature of intelligence is shrouded in secrecy also means that very little is known about its functions and processes. Until recently, much of what was known about intelligence was largely derived from representations of the subject in fictional literature, such as those portrayed by John Le'Carre and Ian Flemming's James Bond (Agent 007) and a range of other spy genres. In such circumstances, it has been difficult to identify where the real world of intelligence ends and where its fictional one begins. The use of the terms such as *spies* and *espionage* to dramatise the fictional world of intelligence and the fact that this usage, and their meanings tend to overlap with those in more serious literature also undermine efforts at providing a clear definition of intelligence functions.

The fictional literature exploits as well as reinforces three main myths that are closely associated with intelligence organisations and which also tend to penetrate scholarly work. The first of these is the view that intelligence has certain magical or unlimited power to fix most, if- not all political problems, through its supposed invincibility. This belief remains at the heart of many covert operations, and to an extent, also informs the development of the theory of intelligence functions and process, but also penetrates policymaking institutions. For example, in 1990, during the stand off before the campaign to remove Iraq from Kuwait, many believed, and it was widely reported in the media, that intelligence agencies were capable of overthrowing Saddam Hussein's regime with a well-directed covert operation. The reality, though, was that such an operation needed a full-fledged and highly coordinated military campaign to end Saddam Hussein's regime in a second war in 2003. This understanding of covert action also guided American policies in Iran, Libya, Panama, Nicaragua and Cuba, to name a few.

A second myth strongly suggests that intelligence is omnipresent, all-seeing and all-hearing. This belief is potentially reinforced by developments in technologies such as "spy" satellites and computers, and this is made even more popular by science fiction cinemas, such as "The Enemy of the State."³⁷² In the popular imagination, these technologies are capable of, not only seeing, but also able to make photographic impression of everything that stands or moves under the sun, and perhaps, even hear whispers. The third myth sees intelligence as both infallible and indispensable for its predictive power. This last assumption seems to form the genesis of studies in intelligence failure. In some ways also, Cold War propaganda and intrigue helped to reinforce some of the fantastic aspects of intelligence work.

³⁷²A Jerry Bruckheimer production starring: Will Smith and Gene Hackman; directed by Tony Scott, 1998. The film shows how an intelligence agency can penetrate and observe the daily lives and movements of individuals using a spy satellite.

6.4. What is intelligence?

To separate the myth from the facts, a certain understanding of what intelligence is needs to be established. I have used the term “certain understanding” to qualify the approach here, since intelligence lacks either a coherent or consistent theory. The fact that intelligence is characterised by secrecy means that both the myths and the facts tend to coexist in one theory, and what I have here described as myths can well be articulated into an “intelligence theory” elsewhere. In attempting to analyse the theory of intelligence, it is possible to focus either on the *functions* or on the *psychology* of intelligence as analytical criteria. Whereas the former has some visible and logical pattern, the latter makes sense only at the level of perception. In my view, however, both the functional and the psychological contexts are linked. Intelligence as generally defined here is a political process, and for this very reason, it will be difficult to separate the political doctrines that guide intelligence analysis from other roles expected of it.

The term intelligence means different things to different people, starting from its generic meaning as defined in dictionaries to the most complex as conceived by participating individuals and institutions. Collins English Dictionary defines intelligence as the capacity for “understanding” or the ability to “perceive and comprehend meaning.” In a more restricted form, intelligence also means military information, or a group and department that gathers or deals with such information. As noted earlier, intelligence products have been referred to as a special kind of knowledge, which by its nature gives meaning to the institutions involved. Whether these definitions provide enough material for understanding what is referred to as “intelligence” is a matter of analysis and interpretation. In the language of the trade, the word “intelligence” is used not merely to designate the types of knowledge and the organisation to produce this knowledge, but also as a synonym for the activity which such organisations perform.³⁷³ The rest of this chapter will examine these functions and systems of organisation and, despite the secrecy; enough material now exists to inform us on the nature of the systems and their processes.

As previously noted, the product of intelligence is political information, and its functions are primarily to produce such knowledge. This is not necessarily because intelligence forms part of a governmental structure, like the courts of law, the police force, a standing army, or regular research departments. It is more so because intelligence is directed towards adversaries, and politics tends to coexist with the existence of adversaries, either real or imagined, and intelligence is seen as a function of political activity in a hostile environment. On this account, Harry Howe Ransom, in his essay on “Strategic Intelligence”, summed it up as a “governmental function” and as “intellectual

³⁷³ Kent, op cit, p. 151

enterprise,” in which the mission of intelligence involves understanding events and accurately predicting conditions. The result, he argued could be influential in policy decision making.³⁷⁴ In similar vein, Andrew Marshall defined intelligence as “knowledge and analysis designed to assist action”.³⁷⁵ It is argued that since politicians rarely think in terms of “carefully reasoned...judgements”, intelligence therefore involves simplifying the complexities of existing maps of a situation to aid the policy makers. The task of intelligence, argued Marshall, falls into four categories:

1. Foreseeing potential conflicts (intelligence supports long range planning and the design and sizing of military forces)
2. Comparing strengths and predicting outcomes in given contingencies (intelligence on potential enemy strength is necessary for military planning and weapons procurement)
3. Monitoring current developments and being alerted of developing problems, (bears more on diplomacy), and,
4. Warning of imminent military danger (to effect readiness levels of military forces)³⁷⁶

The net result, it is argued, is to enable decision-makers act efficiently. Therefore, the nature and accuracy of intelligence could be decisive in planning and decision making. In an address to the Royal United Services Institute in 1875, on the “the intelligence duties of the staff abroad and at home,” Brackenbury asserted that these duties consist of “sifting and arrangement of all information required by government and military authorities to enable them take such measures in peace as will insure the rapid commencement and vigorous prosecution of any war whether at home or abroad.”³⁷⁷ These functions, as well as the products to support them, comprise of a complex intelligence process.

6.5. Intelligence process and cycle

Opinions are divided as to what intelligence processes are. This is perhaps, because intelligence functions are never clearly defined and some scholars define intelligence rather broadly to include any governmental action that lacks precise description and undertaken by the intelligence organisation or associated agencies. Such a broad definition of intelligence systems may include, anything ranging from collecting secret data needed by analysts; to interference in foreign elections,

³⁷⁴ Ransom, op cit

³⁷⁵ May, Ernest (ed.) *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press 1984) p. 3

³⁷⁶ Ibid

³⁷⁷ Brackenbury C.B. (Major) “Intelligence Duties of the Staff Abroad and at Home” *RUSI Journal* Vol. 19 No. 18 (1876) pp. 242-267

political assassination, and paramilitary adventures.³⁷⁸ This broad definition of intelligence adds to its wide-ranging haphazard functional definition, if not confusion.

However, a close reading of the literature on the subject suggests that intelligence processes can be defined so as to embrace a complex interrelationship between intelligence activities. Recalling earlier discussions in this dissertation, we can find many examples that can be used to illustrate the meaning of intelligence processes. For example, recalling our discussion on political intensity, it is possible to say that a process cycle (discussed below) may be structured by a particular environment, or by how participants conceive of their part in a given political process. In these terms, we can think of a system responding to a setting that is either crisis free or crisis driven. On the other hand, intelligence processes generally tend to reflect the perceived role or political orientation of the sponsoring state. For example, states that perceive a potentially or continuous threat to their security, or define their relationships with other states as positional, may model their systems as crisis-driven, while those who might not relate strictly to this situation might model theirs as crisis-free systems. An example might be to compare the United States system with that of a country such as Norway or Switzerland. Another factor that could also impact on the intelligence process might include the decision making structure of the institutions for which intelligence is designed. In other instances, the degree of the accountability of the intelligence community could also constitute a factor. However, in whatever way the system is designed, it is expected that its process will be oriented towards facilitating both immediate and long-range policy objectives of the sponsoring institutions.³⁷⁹

Intelligence processes need not be confused with the intelligence cycle. The latter informs us about the production-line-process of intelligence activities, that is, the acquisition of intelligence assets from the tasking stages to the decision stages (see fig.6.5). A process tells us that all of these stages together constitute a complex whole, driven by the decision (political) environment from which the intelligence system is developed. It also means that, from the production-line point of view, one or more of these stages need not be present in certain processes. For example, any combination of the cycle stages may be possible depending on the decision structure and rules which the intelligence system is designed to support. In essence, an intelligence system is a consequence of the intelligence functions, and this also determines both the process and the cycle. Naturally, then, an intelligence process would consist of a cycle. To be sure, each part of the cycle feeds and develops the other, as discussed below.

³⁷⁸ Ransom, op cit

³⁷⁹ Bozeman, Adda B., *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft* (Brassey's 1992) p. 2

Collection and analysis are planned in the *Tasking* stage of the cycle. It is presumed that the decision environment provides guidance (requirements) as to what kind of information to collect and how it would be used. Tasking may be ad hoc, so as to support immediate, short term policy demands, or it could be continuous, to be integral to the institutional framework. Either way, it would not be far fetched to suggest that the tasking stage is crucial in the intelligence process, since the quality of intelligence product will depend on the personnel's understanding of what is required of them. If one were to analyse intelligence failure, it is possible that the tasking stage would produce a useful starting point, though the specific difficulties inherent in tasking are often associated with collection and analysis problems. This planning problem can be thought of, to a degree, as mutual misunderstanding between the intelligence community and the policy makers. In the first instance, the intelligence community may pay little heed to specific policy needs to effectively adapt their operations.

Intelligence scholars have observed that data collection more often than not reflects less on policy requirements, than "the desire of the professional to amass as much information as possible in the hope that this will make for better decision-making."³⁸⁰ The problem, it seems, is that policy-relevant information is either ignored or hidden in the mass of useless information. Robertson thus argued that 'good intelligence, "be it information or activity, does not exist *a priori*; rather, it must be judged on the degree to which it satisfies the policy objectives set for it."³⁸¹ Similarly, others have pointed out that the very closeness of intelligence to the sponsoring political regime could mean that tasking and collection could be fashioned to satisfy the whims of politicians, for their personal objectives, rather than actual policy requirements.³⁸²

This brings us back to the role of the policy makers in the cycle range, whose lack of understanding or exaggerated conceptions of the capability of intelligence, contribute to poor planning, as well as poor collection and analysis. Part of the difficulty, as Kent explained, is that the intelligence consumer may ask for something the organisation is not set up to deliver. "Or he may ask for so wide a range of information that the totality of resources of the organisation would be fully deployed for months, or he may ask for something which, though procurable, is not worth the effort."³⁸³ The problem however, is not only ignorance on the part of the policy maker, but also, that "the impenetrable wall of secrecy" is an encouragement for the intelligence consumer to abuse the system. The consequence, he argued, is that personnel are "plagued by difficulty to shape work along

³⁸⁰ Robertson, K.G., "Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s" in *Intelligence Requirements and National Security* Vol. 2 No. 4 (Oct. 1987) pp. 157-167

³⁸¹ Ibid

³⁸² Handel, Michael "Politics of Intelligence" *Intelligence and National Security* Vol.2 No.4 (Oct.1987) pp. 5-46

³⁸³ Kent, op cit, p. 168

lines of greatest utility for the consumer.” For these reasons, he argued, the intelligence community is, “constantly in danger of collecting the wrong information and not collecting the right one.”³⁸⁴

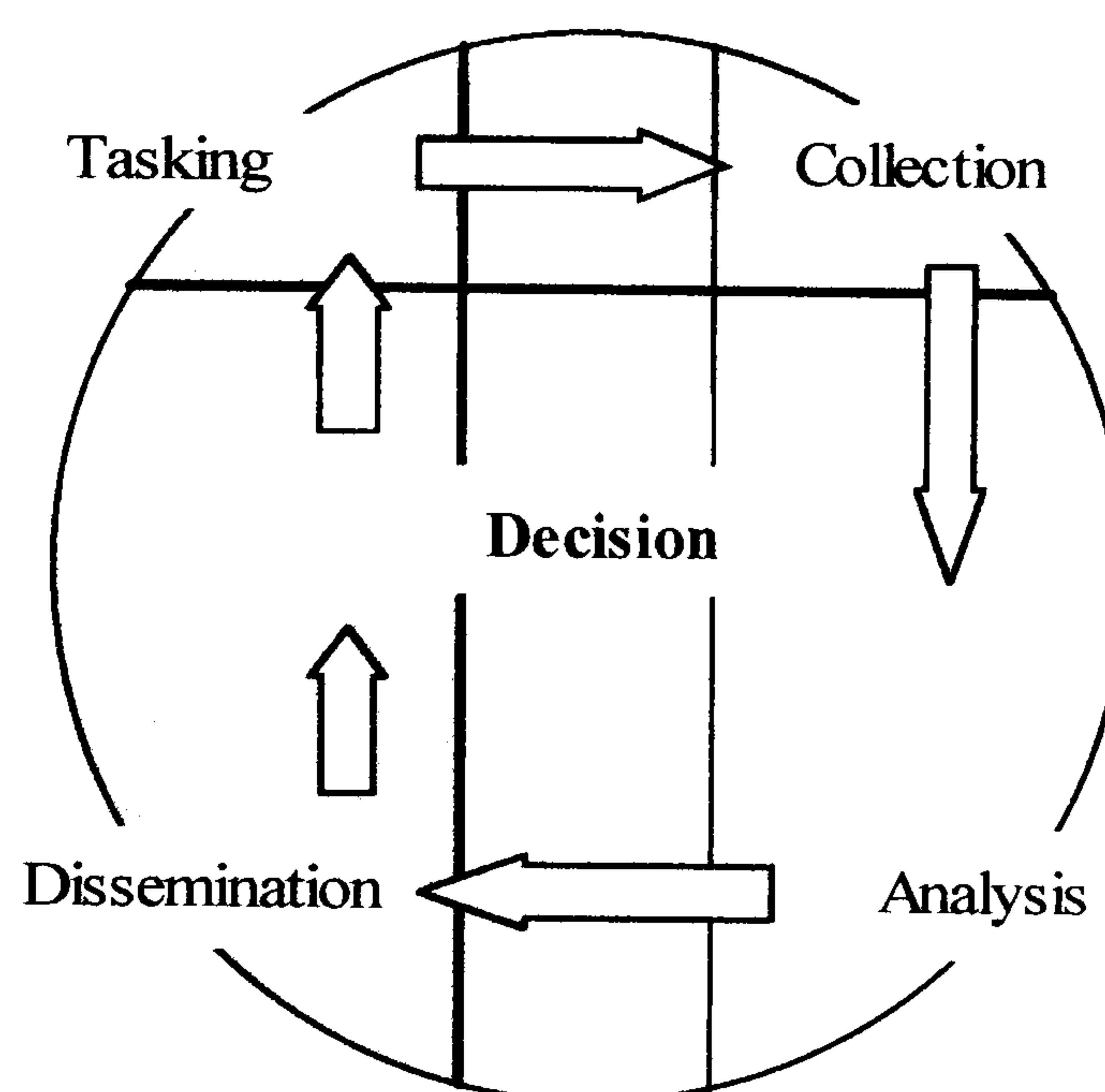


Fig. 6.5 The intelligence cycle

Collection is the process of acquiring the information, as directed by the decision environment. This aspect of intelligence work is both dramatic and fantastic in equal measure and as we shall see shortly, is also extremely controversial. At this stage, however, the information collected may be described as raw, since it is not yet processed (analysed) and made relevant to the decision environment. Raw intelligence is collected from different sources, which can be categorised as “open” and “closed” or secret. Open source information is generally any manner of information available in the public domain, such as, in the news media, periodicals – academic and professional, as well as on the Internet. To the open sources, we can also add information willingly offered or shared in diplomatic and international business circles. Depending on what one needs to know, much of the raw intelligence data are extracted from open sources. In fact, it is estimated that at least 90 per cent of raw intelligence is found in open sources.³⁸⁵ In many cases, open source intelligence also has the potential of providing far more reliable and adequate information compared to “closed” sources, because the authenticity of open source data can be verified or challenged.³⁸⁶

When the term “open and “closed” are appended to sources, this is done for analytical rather than technical reasons. Technically, the application of these terms to collection methods is ironic because from the intelligence point of view, information from an open source is still treated as if it was from

³⁸⁴ Ibid

³⁸⁵ Robertson, op cit

³⁸⁶ See for example, Stone, Norman in May, E.R., ed., *Knowing One's Enemies* (New Jersey: PUP 1986) pp. 43-44

a closed source. For example, information publicly available in news media around the world may be classified and treated as secret the moment it becomes an intelligence product. In a nutshell, all sources are secret and intelligence is so defined as to exclude open sources.³⁸⁷ The use of the term closed or secret (sometimes referred to as *covert* or *clandestine*) allows us to separate that aspect of intelligence work that requires unconventional technique compared to straightforward research methodologies.

Again, this usage should not be confused with certain other non-information related activities couched under covert or clandestine operations, which do not necessarily qualify under our definition of “intelligence”, as information oriented. The term “clandestine” and “covert” has recently been expanded to include a broad range of activities. It may describe any kind of secret operation carried out by governments or their agents to influence foreign governments, events or organisation. Covert operation may take the form of political and economic sabotage, propaganda, blackmail, and paramilitary operations.³⁸⁸ Covert operation is so planned and executed so as to conceal the identity of the sponsor or else permit the sponsor’s denial of the operation.³⁸⁹ These activities, in fact, have little or nothing to do with intelligence.³⁹⁰

Closed or secret sources, then, involve “special means” of getting to the source of the information and the technique may include the manipulation of human sources (HUMINT), including interrogations of prisoners of war, torture, use of technical devices, as well as extensive use of criminal methods (HUMINT). These techniques and sources are said to be costly, time consuming, and laborious (including identification and recruitment of human sources that might have access to the required information) compared to open source methods.³⁹¹ In some cases, covert collection methods have strong association with the criminal world. Noam Chomsky observed that there are good reasons why the intelligence services are so closely linked with criminal activities.

³⁸⁷ Robertson, op cit

³⁸⁸ Goodman, Allan E., “Reforming US Intelligence” *Foreign Policy* Vol. 67 (summer 1987) pp. 121-136

³⁸⁹ In a desperate effort to make this activity morally acceptable, revisionist scholars have attempted to put a different spin on the meaning of covert operation. Bozeman defines clandestine operations as “activities conducted in secret by an intelligence service.” She argued, “they encompass collection of intelligence, counterintelligence, and covert action. Here the term covert, though synonymous with *clandestine*, describes an activity or event that generally occurs in the public domain, observable by those who happen to be at hand. It has an identifiable instigator or sponsor, and its covertness lie in the relationship between the latter and some hidden, unacknowledged authority or source of assistance... Covert action... entails activity in which the US government’s involvement is deliberately concealed. Its aim is to get something done in ways that are compatible with US interests. We are taking sides in a local issue, i.e., intervening in a manner that infringes on the host country’s sovereignty.” See Bozeman, Adda B., *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft* (Brassey’s 1992), p. 80

³⁹⁰ Godfrey, Drexel Jr. “Ethics and Intelligence” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 56 No. 3 (April 1978) pp. 624-642

³⁹¹ Bozeman, op cit

“Clandestine terror”, he argued, requires hidden funds, and criminal elements, to which the intelligence agencies naturally turn, expect a quid pro quo.³⁹²

In the light of these problems, why are covert methods so important to intelligence work? The answers to this question have been discussed in some detail on the section on “functions of secrecy” (see 6.2 above). However, we can add that the hallmark of intelligence work is to find the kind of information which others wish to conceal. Intelligence, it is argued, must circumvent the barriers put against the desired information and this requires “methods not generally familiar to the average person.”³⁹³ An intelligence system that is not equipped with covert methods, Kent argued, could not deliver this special kind of knowledge.³⁹⁴ The target treats such information as secret and the methods applied to the acquisition of that kind of knowledge itself should also be secret.

Covert methods are complicated and fraught with danger, but also raise both ethical and moral questions. In the first instance, intelligence personnel stand the risk of committing the crime of treason in the target country and may be subject to the death penalty or life imprisonment. The problem here is complicated by the way intelligence operatives collect secret data. A well-known technique, for example, is the manipulation of human agents to acquire human intelligence. The process, known as “controlled source development”, may involve extensive use of psychological manipulation, blackmail, and financial rewards.³⁹⁵ It is further complicated in that the intelligence practitioners apply these techniques with the presumption that they are operating in hostile environments, which preclude reliance on normal rules, and which legitimises their constructive use of illegal means.³⁹⁶ In spite of efforts to perfect these techniques, it is never guaranteed that the information they provide will be reliable or useful. At best, argued Kendall, the process stands the risk of becoming an end in itself and the practitioner is confused between the ends and means of his trade.³⁹⁷ Kendall argued that there are cases on record, “where clandestine intelligence has exploited a difficult and less remunerative source while it has neglected to exploit an easy and more remunerative one.” He argued that the importance of covert collection is “enormously exaggerated” yet it is permitted to yield “shockingly small dividends.”

Intelligence, Kent argued, could be likened to all familiar means of searching for the truth.³⁹⁸ In view of the rather unconventional techniques employed to obtain this “truth”, the relationship between

³⁹² Chomsky, Noam *Deterring Democracy* (Vintage Press 1992), see esp. chps four and five.

³⁹³ Kent, op cit p. vii

³⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 166

³⁹⁵ Godfrey, op cit

³⁹⁶ Ibid

³⁹⁷ Kendall, Willmoore “The Functions of Intelligence” *World Politics* Vol. 1 (July 1949) pp. 542-552; see also, Kent, op cit, on whom Kendall’s article is based

³⁹⁸ Kent, op cit, p. viii

truth, and intelligence processes is a contradiction in terms. As Godfrey reminds us, “to accept the approximation of truth as the purpose of intelligence is one thing. To accept the methods by which truth can be obtained poses ethical dilemmas.”³⁹⁹ Intelligence, unlike any other profession, does not operate under known moral or ethical standards. Though a case can be made for the various oversight bodies set up by governments to guard against illegal practices, for example the Canadian Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), or the British Parliamentary (oversight) Security and Intelligence Committee (SIC), some of these tend to be at best cosmetic. The justification for abuses seems paramount. The argument is that anything that is vital to national survival is acceptable, under any circumstances, even when the method challenges all that is democratic. Nevertheless, as I have hinted earlier, the means are very rarely reconciled with the ends. In the first instance, in the light of intelligence failure, the idea of the intelligence “truth” or indeed the quality of the “truth” is seriously questionable. In the second instance, critics have argued that more often than not, there seem to be only a limited relationship between the quality of information that is labelled “intelligence” and decision outcome.⁴⁰⁰

The notion of clandestine operations remains still unclear in international law and very little scholarly research on the subject exists. The problem is also compounded by the fact that covert military or political intervention is often couched under intelligence activities. However, a distinction is made between two types of covert activities; obtaining intelligence by covert means and “covert action” that refers to efforts “to influence the internal affairs of other nations, sometimes called “intervention”.⁴⁰¹ This distinction is not in itself as simple as it sounds, since both activities may be carried out by the same intelligence organisation. On the other hand, the shroud of secrecy also means that the intentions of the agents or their sponsors are seldom clear and it would not be surprising that the target assumes the worst. With respect to “collection” Robert Barosage of the Centre for National Security Studies, Washington DC, argued that open source activities, including systematic monitoring of documents or radio broadcasts, of another country, or means such as sonar and satellite surveillance, are considered to be legal under international law.⁴⁰²

This notwithstanding, Breckinridge has observed two opposing views on the general conduct of intelligence. One view, drawing on international documents, holds that clandestine intelligence

³⁹⁹ Godfrey, op cit

⁴⁰⁰ Ransom, op cit

⁴⁰¹ “Introductory Remark by the Chairman”, *Proceedings of the American Society for International Law* Vol. 69 No. 2 (April 1975) pp. 192-194; See also Falk, Richard “President Gerald Ford, CIA Covert Operations and the Status of International Law” Editorial Comments, *American Journal of International Law* (April 1975) pp. 354-358

⁴⁰² Comment by Robert Barosage of Centre for National Security Studies, Washington DC. “Covert Intervention and International Law” in *Proceedings of the American Society for International Law* Vol. 69 No. 2 (April 1975) pp. 203-206

activities are illegal under international law, at least, in time of peace. With reference to an earlier writing by Quincy Wright, Breckinridge noted,

In time of peace... espionage, and in fact, any penetration of the territory of a state by agents of another state in violation of local law, is also a violation of international law imposing a duty upon states to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of other states.⁴⁰³

This view, Breckinridge also noted, is based on Article 2 of the UN Charter, which states:

All members shall refrain in their international relations from threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purpose of the United Nations.

While these provisions, according to Brekinridge, appear to address overt acts, they also provide the basis for the case against all forms of clandestine activities, thus, “at least in peacetime, it being implicit that in time of war the usual rules of international conduct are subject to extravagant modification.”⁴⁰⁴

Such potential modification of the rule has provided the basis for the opposing view, which Brekinridge observed, overshadows, the “goal of world peace based on applying codified rules of international conduct”. According to this view, clandestine action (broadly defined to include convert intelligence) is legitimate under international law if it is deployed for the purpose of self-defence. Like the previous argument, Article 51 of the Charter also provides the justification for individual or collective self-defence, and these would generally include “espionage to gather information on relevant world situations.”⁴⁰⁵ Such practice was, at least, elevated to some prominence during the Cold War years.

6.6. Information analysis, decision-making and the theory of intelligence functions

The analysis stage of the cycle takes us back to the purpose of intelligence (or, to put it differently, what could be described as a theory of intelligence functions). Although scholars tend to pay a great deal of attention to collection, inspired by the fantasy and drama attached to the methods, significant attention is also given to analysis and planning. These latter elements are not as theatrical as the

⁴⁰³ Breckinridge, Scott D., “Clandestine Intelligence: International Law” *International Studies Notes* Vol. 9 No. 1 (1982) pp. 8-11

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid”

former, but they are, in fact, at the heart of intelligence work. Analysis is, for example, where all the intelligence efforts converge prior to action. This, as Codevilla noted, involves “turning disparate facts into focused conclusion.”⁴⁰⁶ Emphasis on analysis gives meaning to intelligence by conferring on it the informational value it requires outside the cloak and dagger environment.

The conventional view is that no one definition is truly conclusive in clarifying the meaning of analysis. One reason, as mentioned earlier, is that intelligence processes are not necessarily confined to a mechanical cycle. Furthermore, certain classes of information do not need elaborate interpretation and description and some raw data generally speaks for itself. It is also possible that the decision-maker may be better placed to make more sense of the data than the analyst. The person at the heart of the decision process may be more experienced or have better clarity about the decision environment than the analysts, and, as Betts also noted, the decision-maker will know more about high-level activities and the day-to-day development of events.⁴⁰⁷ Other classes of data may need a range of expertise, for example, cipher or satellite imaging, output translators to make sense of electronic or coded messages etc. On the other hand, the issue area might be so broad that the organisation might require experts from a variety of disciplines; including political scientists, economists, sociologists, historians, etc., to cover the range of problems that could arise.

In a different context, the same person or group of persons may perform a multiplicity of roles in the process cycle, such as tasking, collection, analysis as well as decision-making. A good example of this scenario can be seen in ad hoc situations. For example, the team of experts searching for evidence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq can be said to have performed the full process cycle. However, they could depend on contributing states, for much of the raw data, if for instance, they were not already equipped with a dedicated team to carry out this function.⁴⁰⁸

In a broader context, analysis may involve several discrete tasks, from sorting and filing the information into meaningful categories in a database system, to making the data directly relevant to action. The latter means that the information is put into context and the decision taken is based on the assessment of events, depending on the content of the information. As such, the analyst’s report will aim to describe and explain situations, as well as attempting to link causes to effects (or make predictions). On this account, analysis, should, in fact, provide a useful basis for conceptualising intelligence functions. I will call this aspect of intelligence work the “estimate” and “prediction”

⁴⁰⁶ Codevilla, Angelo *Informing Statecraft: Intelligence for a New Century* (New York: The Free Press 1992) p. 16

⁴⁰⁷ Betts, Richard K., “Intelligence for Policymaking” *Washington Quarterly* Vol. 3 (Summer 1980) pp. 119-129

functions. If this description of analysis is correct and the discussion that follows is reasonable enough, then, we would have obtained a basis for developing a plausible description of central functions of intelligence.

Intelligence, in its basic form, is a function of decision. This means that a typical decision problem or action is primarily a consequence of information signals, in whatever form such signals are defined or generated, be these “intelligence”, a command, historical records, experiential data, or, directives received or available to the decision-maker.

A decision is characterised by two main functions: (1) making choices or judgements among competing alternatives, and (2) making choices and judgements under conditions of uncertainty. The former is a set of available actions for which the one with an optimum yield can be chosen.⁴⁰⁹ A condition of choice under uncertainty arises from a consideration of imperfect knowledge (usually subjective), and especially when choices are made about future commitments. A classic definition of a condition of uncertainty is that given by the early 20th century economist, John Maynard Keynes. Under the condition of uncertainty, “there is no scientific basis on which to form any calculable probability whatever. We simply do not know.”⁴¹⁰ Nevertheless, the decision-maker may be compelled to take action whose consequences are unsure. This is to say that, in making a decision, individuals may take their chances in the absence of adequate knowledge about the consequences of their choices (i.e., random, known and unknown probabilities). On the other hand, they could base their choices on predictions of the future, an exercise in subjective reasoning.

To make sense of the relationship between intelligence (for intelligence here, read analysis) and decisions, consideration is given first, to how the information set is generated, and secondly, the “characterisation of an information signal” in terms of the environment that gives rise to that signal.⁴¹¹ It follows that the choices available to the decision-maker will depend on available information and the expected outcome of the decision. Thus, in a typical decision environment, a decision-maker would choose from a set of information (in a given environment) function that will yield an optimal (the opposite being sub-optimal) decision function from a set of all possible functions. Radner described a characteristic optimal decision as follows: “For each signal, an optimal

⁴⁰⁸ This argument was kindly suggested by Chris Wright of the Institute for International Affairs, Chatham House, UK

⁴⁰⁹ Arrow, Kenneth “Exposition of the Theory of Choice under Uncertainty” in C. McGuire and R. Radner, eds. *Decision and Organization* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1972) pp. 19-55

⁴¹⁰ Keynes, J.M. “The General Theory of Employment” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 51, (1937) pp. 209-23

⁴¹¹ Radner, Roy “Normative Theory of Individual Decision: An Introduction” in C.B. McGuire and Roy Radner, eds. *Decision and Organisation* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1972) pp. 1-18

decision maximises the conditional expected utility of the consequence, given the signal.” This principle is described as “maximising conditional expected utility”⁴¹²

The signal – information continuum assumes a strong relationship between decision function and principally two types of information functions, deterministic and non-deterministic (information structures). The difference between these two types of information is that given a decision function, one set of information, call this, set *A*, would yield higher “expected utility”⁴¹³ (optimal decision) than the second set, *B*.

The state of the information function in a decision environment (considering the *set*, information and environment) is described as *information structure*. For the state of information for which the outcome is optimal, for example, set *A*, the information structure is deterministic and set *B* (the set with sub-optimal yield), the structure is said to be non-deterministic; this latter signal is sometimes described as noisy.⁴¹⁴ In a classical decision environment, this may suggest an *ordering* of information functions, and this forms the basis of the rational choice approach.⁴¹⁵

In the classical approach, there is a presumption that there would be a statistical relationship between information and decision. As a result, an information function is characterised by its pay-off relevance to events. The classical model assumes a complete ordering of information functions according to their value. But as Marschak and Miyasawa observed, this kind of comparison has the potential to disregard variations of payoff functions from user to user.⁴¹⁶ For example, each user in a group may have different expected utility for a given set of information. For convenience, I shall call this latter concept the *subjective model*.

Marschak and Miyasawa, argued that information value depends, not only on the statistical relations between messages and events but also on the payoff function to the individual. “The latter expresses the user’s ‘tastes’ and their values is therefore at most a partial one.”⁴¹⁷ To an extent, the idea of “noise” as a characteristic of information structures is then more or less relative, according to Marschak and Miyasawa. For example, information that comes across, as noise for a particular decision-maker could be relatively useful for another. They argued, “Indeed, if ‘noise’ is defined to increase with equivocation, a ‘noisy’ information system may be more valuable to a given user than

⁴¹² Ibid

⁴¹³ Ibid

⁴¹⁴ Ibid

⁴¹⁵ Arrow, Kenneth J. “The Value and Demand for Information” in C.B. McGuire and Roy Radner eds. *Decision and Organisation* (Amsterdam: North Holland Pub. 1972), pp. 131-139

⁴¹⁶ Marschak, J. and K. Miyasawa, “Economic Comparability of Information Systems,” *International Economic Review* Vol. 9 (June 1968) pp. 137-74

⁴¹⁷ Ibid

a noiseless one.”⁴¹⁸ Both the classical and the subjective interpretation of information would have their relevance as analytical concepts, depending on the observed environment.

However, the notion that individuals may attach a different meaning and expectations to the same messages is as relevant as situations where individuals in a group with the same problems may possess different and contradictory information. The line separating “noise” and misperception is in fact very thin. In a complex and perhaps interdependent political environment, actors are apt to draw conclusions which sit comfortably with their expectations, either from the point of view of their culture, values, or anticipated goals.⁴¹⁹ This argument will form part of the discussion on “the rationale for collective intelligence” (see chapter 7 below).

Scholars have used concepts such as “incomplete information” and “decisions under uncertainty” to study group interactions, based on the (subjective) nature of information that actors possess. For example, Andrew Kydd used the incomplete information model to explain Jervis’s “spiral model of escalation in arms races.”⁴²⁰ In the study, Kydd presented a game theoretic argument that shows how a state would prefer to arm because it interprets another state’s arms build up as a sign of hostility rather than of insecurity. Kydd used this model to study the circumstances in which two states that have no hostile intent might arm, and, due to the actors’ inherent psychological bias (in information function), may eventually go to war because they fear that the other is hostile. The theory of decisions under uncertainty also belongs to this family of behaviour under incomplete knowledge, or actions conditioned by subjective feelings. As Kenneth arrow noted, “uncertainty” means that the agent does not know the state of the world.”⁴²¹

Though it could be said that knowledge is prone to partiality and often filtered through subjective feelings, these examples suggest that fear may lead actors to collect even more information with the aim of optimising their decisions or to enhancing their understanding of the state of the world. A classic example of this scenario could be seen in the behaviour of Soviet and American intelligence collection efforts during the Cold War years.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid

⁴¹⁹ Rothstein, Robert L., “Consensual Knowledge and International Collaboration: Some Lessons from Commodity Negotiations” *International Organisation* Vol. 38 No. 4 (autumn 1984) pp. 733-762

⁴²⁰ Kydd, Andrew, “Game Theory and the Spiral Model” *World Politics* Vol. 49, No.3 (April 1997) pp. 371-400; Kydd, “Arm’s Race and Arm’s Control: Modelling the Hawk Perspective”, *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 44 No. 2 (April 2000) pp. 228-244 ; See also Jervis, Robert *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1976) esp. chp. 3; For the relevance of this concept to anarchy” in world politics, see for example, Powell, Robert “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate” *International Organisation* Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring1994) pp. 313-44

The goal of analysis, then, is to attempt to avert risks inherent in the decision process. In the first instance, the analyst may attempt to circumvent the decision-makers underlying beliefs, and secondly, to narrow the choice parameter, through “objective” reasoning. Both of these, it can be assumed, could be achieved through two further processes; (1) by improving the quality of information available to the decision-maker and (2) by attempting to predict future occurrences based on the available information. The first of these involve, processing, sourcing, sorting, checking reliability of information, and drawing conclusions. The second takes on an entirely different and complex meaning. From an informational point of view, this involves acquiring complete information about the present but bearing on the future, to the point that a prediction about future occurrences and events can be made. That only applies, as Arrow suggested, if a complete description of the state of the world is available and known, the consequences of every action will be known.⁴²² The chances of this being wholly true is, perhaps, as good as finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, but herein, lies the logic of “intelligence”, which is more generally referred to as the analysis and estimate processes.

Some states, such as the United States, for example, have dedicated departments for these tasks. The US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) performs this role, first by coordinating information from various agencies and then attempting to make projections of future trends, either in economics, politics, or military affairs and assessing the likely implications of these trends for US foreign policy.⁴²³ Estimate and analysis processes can be broad, and the areas covered and depth of analysis would depend on the policy requirements. In spite of the skills and technology involved, analysis and estimate processes do not guarantee the kind of clarity or a certainty of conclusions expected of them. Several theories attempt to explain the apparent foggy of estimative conclusions, but perhaps, the principal reason is that one can apply all forms of analytical skills and technologies, but the conclusion can, more often than not, be probabilistic. Analysis, as Codevilla put it, is “what you do when you don’t know for sure.”⁴²⁴ Walter Laqueur similarly observed the central weakness of intelligence estimate reports, which use adjectives such as “probably”, “likely”, “possibly” etc in their conclusions, indicating the difficulty associated with reaching precise conclusions.⁴²⁵

There is presently, no exact theory on “how-to-do” analysis and estimates; nor is there an exact science describing “how to” get it right. This is perhaps, because confusion, controversy and doubts

⁴²¹ Arrow, Kenneth “Exposition of the Theory of Choice under Uncertainty” in C. McGuire and R. Radner, eds. *Decision and Organisation* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1972) pp. 19-55

⁴²² Arrow op cit

⁴²³ Richelson, Jeffrey T. *The US Intelligence Community* (Boulder: Westview Press 1999) p. 320

⁴²⁴ Codevilla, op cit, p. 16

⁴²⁵ Laqueur, Walter *World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson 1985) p. 34, see also Robertson, op cit, p. 164

surround the extent to which intelligence affects decisions.⁴²⁶ Nevertheless, certain logical rules and techniques in conventional research methods and decision theories are more or less consistent with analysis and estimate processes. As a starting point, it is possible to think in terms of some basic rules of analysis in conventional research. One such familiar rule works under the assumption that there may be a certain consistency relations among different sets of “possible actions”, and that these sets of actions may belong to restricted classes of events. From these assumptions, which may be “stronger or weaker”, it is possible to deduce some propositions about the observable behaviour of individual agents.⁴²⁷ Accordingly, analysis and estimates can best be described as processes of forming hypothesis, developing theories, and drawing conclusions.⁴²⁸ Consequently, the strength of a proposition may be tested with available data and integrated into assessments, explanations and predictions.

6.7. Analysis and the logic of intelligence failure

In view of the difficulties of predicting the future, the expectation that intelligence “must get it right” underlies the basis for many hypotheses about intelligence failure. Recent examples are the failure to predict or even anticipate the end of the Cold War, and events such as terrorist attacks at the heart of US cities (9/11). These events led reinforced questions about the predictive power of intelligence. For example, failure to predict the end of the Cold War led Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former Senate Intelligence Committee (1977-1988), to suggest that the work of the CIA be returned to the State and Defence Department. He noted: “you have to ask yourself, why something called intelligence service is so blind to what was coming?”⁴²⁹ Such criticisms will continue to plague the intelligence institutions as long as these somewhat unrealistic expectations persist.

Such criticisms seem appropriate, however, because intelligence agencies are generally attributed with the capability of making predictions on the basis of information they acquire.⁴³⁰ Such potentials, though sometimes exaggerated, have generated a large body of literature on intelligence failures,

⁴²⁶ Berkowitz, Bruce D. and Allan E. Goodman, *Strategic Intelligence for American National Security*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1989) p. 85

⁴²⁷ Arrow, op cit

⁴²⁸ See for example, Berkowitz, Bruce D. and Allan E. Goodman, *Strategic Intelligence for American National Security* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1989) p. 85; Ben-Israel, Isaac “Philosophy and Methodology of Intelligence: The Logic of Estimate Process” *Intelligence and National Security* Vol. 4 No. 4 (Oct.1989) pp. 660-717. Betts, also noted that the analysis and estimate processes involve using theory to “make sense of numerous pieces of information by explaining or predicting relationships among variables and by clarifying which causal factors are essential and which are peripheral.” Theory, he argued, “simplifies: it embraces a large number of concrete facts within a small number of conceptual assumptions and propositions”, Betts, Richard K. “Warning Dilemma: Normal Theory vs. Exceptional Theory” *Forum, Orbis*, 1983, pp. 828-833

⁴²⁹ Quoted in Madison, Christopher “In From the Cold” *National Journal* (21 Sep 1991) pp2271-2273

⁴³⁰ Ofri, Arie “Crisis and Opportunity Forecasting” *Orbis* Vol.26, No.4 (winter 1983) pp. 821-828

often referred to as “intelligence surprises.”⁴³¹ The problem for this attribute is that prediction, which may be defined as knowing in absolute terms what will happen in the future, is in itself an ambiguous exercise.⁴³² Even with the aid of state of the art technologies, prediction is “reasoned guess”, and this makes predicting for long term policy goals rather problematic. A comparison can be made with predicting the weather. For example, Neville Brown observed that tendencies for error exist in trying to predict local weather too many days ahead, let alone predicting climatic change several years ahead. He argued that, within a period of ten years, climate changes might be masked or exaggerated by short-term cycles. “Time lags and threshold effects also assume more importance within that span.”⁴³³ Similarly, the processes of predicting human agents or their future actions are also complex and could be found to be unreliable.

The reasons for intelligence failure are as complex as they are numerous, and no post-mortem formula has successfully provided an unchallenged explanation of any known intelligence failure.⁴³⁴ Reasons have included lack of sufficient data, incorrect evaluation of the available data, as in Wohlstetter’s *Warning and Decision* in the Pearl Harbour case. There are also issues about inflated self-confidence leading to preconception and misconception, as examined in Knorr’s study of national intelligence estimates and the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Jervis’s *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Camouflage, deception, noise and signals are examined in Whaley’s *Codeword Barbarosa*. Further explanations have included, on the part of the policy-maker, policy orientations, outright ignorance, disinterest and arrogance.⁴³⁵ To these we could add, unintentional negligence and analytical bias: for these latter we can say the analyst is only human.

⁴³¹ One of the most popular approaches to the study of intelligence is that based on the concept of surprise. This emerges from international relations and the role of intelligence services in time of national crisis, particularly war. In particular, it asks if intelligence can assist in crisis management and whether adequate, let alone complete information can provide the key to successful crisis management. See for example, Robertson, “The Study of Intelligence in the United States” in Godson ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence*, (Pergamon-Brassey’s 1988) pp. 7-42. The surprise school takes the view that, if it can be shown that “failure” is not the product of inadequate or incomplete information, and the role of intelligence is reduced in significance.

⁴³² Willmoore Kendall argued that an absolute prediction would be, for example, “General De Gaulle will come to power this day six months” or Japan will attack Pearl Harbour on x-day at y-hour. Kendall, Willmoore “The Functions of Intelligence” *World Politics* Vol. 1 (July 1949) pp. 542-552

⁴³³ Brown, Neville “Ecology and World Security” *The World Today*, (BBC Mar 1992) p. 53

⁴³⁴ see for example, Betts, Richard K., “Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failure is Inevitable” *World Politics* Vol. 31 No. 1 (1978) pp. 61-89; Knor, Klaus “Failure in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missile Crisis” *World Politics* Vol. 26, (April 1964) pp. 455-467; Allison, Graham T., and Philip Zelikow *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* 2nd ed. (England: Longman 1999); Jervis, Robert “Hypothesis on Misperception” *World Politics* Vol. 20 (April 1968) pp. 454-478; Stein, Arthur A., “When Misperception Matters” *World Politics* Vol. 34 No.4 (Jul 1982) pp. 505-526; Herwig, Holger “Imperial Germany” in May, Ernest (ed.) *Knowing One’s Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press 1984) pp. 62-97; Gaddis, John Lewis, “International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War” *International Security* Vol.17, No.3 (winter 1992/93) pp. 5-58; Betts, 1980, op cit

⁴³⁵ Robertson, 1987, op cit, p. 164 ; Codevilla, op cit, p. 16

From an analytical point of view, it is possible to anticipate two main categories of intelligence surprises; military (strategic) and political surprises. Many of the studies mentioned above have essentially been concerned with military strategic surprises. In a rather restricted sense, this means that the analytical failures of military strategic surprises belong to special classes of study not generally considered as political. Most of these tend to involve armed conflicts, although the case can be made that military conflicts are naturally extensions of political conflicts. Nonetheless, concepts of political surprise are far less developed than those of military surprise. Unless one is strictly engaged in analysing the particular battle strategy of an opposing force, drawing a line between what is political and what is military is in itself a clear recipe for analytical failure. Though it is sometimes useful to isolate classes of events for a thorough analysis, the intricate relationship between the military and the political tells us that a refusal to recognise such relationships may present only a partial picture of the development of events. In fact, Walter Laqueur argued that military information must be analysed against the political context in which it arises.⁴³⁶

Political intelligence is all encompassing, including every aspect of a cultural dynamic that constitutes the political energy of a society. Unlike traditional military intelligence, this aspect of the intelligence process is particularly difficult to analyse. At most, both analyst and scholars alike, tend to play down the importance of this sort of approach. Pipes, for example, described political intelligence as a “kind of orphan” in intelligence work and argued that analysts tend to ignore this aspect of intelligence complex, preferring to concentrate on those aspects of intelligence that are “impressionistic and elusive.”⁴³⁷ On this account, Pipes argued that many errors and failures have occurred as a result of extremely narrow concept of what constitute political intelligence.

Analysis of political intelligence presents a much greater challenge. In the first instance, it is one thing to try to analyse the cultural and political dynamics of another society, but something totally different when one tries this exercise from one’s own cultural viewpoint. Intelligence analysis as a political activity is itself heavily laden with one’s cultural and political biases, and consequently, these are factors in the analysis process. Even those scholars who sought to develop this concept have demonstrated an apparent inability to depart, even temporally, from their deep-seated cultural bias in their efforts to explain phenomena in far away societies. For example, Bozeman, and Pikes (above), disregarded the background in which the Iranian revolution took place. They also seemed to have failed to acknowledge that events such as the Iranian revolution may have been rooted in the historical development of the country and their culture, and hence inevitable. Nevertheless, Bozeman argued that the revolution was rooted in power centres that were “chronically feuding in secret...

⁴³⁶ Laqueur, op cit, esp. chp. 9

⁴³⁷ Pipes, Richard “Intelligence in the Formation of Foreign Policy” in Godson, Roy ed., *Intelligence Requirement for the 80s: Intelligence and Policy* (Lexington Books 1986) chp. 3

Conceived in unmitigated hatred of the west, in particular the US, it aims solely at humiliating this foe and at exorcising his 'satanic' corrupt influences for all domains of Iranian life and thought."⁴³⁸ Here Bozeman's view contradicts her more convincing argument on the importance of cultural and political factors in the analysis process. Such contradictions prepare little or no ground for the understanding of political surprise.

The consequences of poor analysis in political intelligence are political surprises. But when does a political surprise constitute an intelligence surprise? For example, was Iranian revolution a political/intelligence surprise? Was the sudden outbreak of mass killing in Rwanda political/intelligence surprise? Was the sudden outbreak of conflict in former Yugoslavia political /surprise? First and foremost, these questions are relative and very much depend on who is interested in monitoring outcomes. The traditional view is that *surprise* occurs if there are two opposing camps, A and B, engaged in conflict and B failed to anticipate a sudden move by A. An example would be the case of President Nasser's sudden nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company on 26th July 1956, thereby taking the British and French by surprise. It is also supposed that surprises are necessarily violent, as in the elementary sense, a function of two conflicting camps. To this we may also ask if the mass killing in Rwanda was an intelligence surprise, and to whom it might constitute a surprise beyond the warring parties, since the incident had more or less world-wide ramifications. It is not possible to address these issues at presently, but they nevertheless raise important questions in the study of intelligence processes and may provide opportunities for further research.

However, it is possible to think of political surprises differently and in a way that overcomes the definitional tight rope imposed by traditional viewpoints. First, it can be assumed that political surprise may not necessarily be a deliberate attempt by a country to affect another; the incident may simply create an effect. For example, a coup d'état in Nigeria may emanate from a range of internal cultural, political and historical problems, but the consequences might be felt internationally, or even to the point of altering the existing regional political balance. If this happens in a manner that has not been anticipated, then there is a political surprise. In contrast to military surprises, political surprises might not necessarily consist of elements of deception, noise, or signals or other forms of camouflage, or efforts to conceal the impending action.⁴³⁹ This means that the main perpetrators of the event themselves may not have anticipated the outcome of their actions. The event, on the other hand, may have begun differently and later grown out of all proportion. From an analytical point view, whether an early warning indicator (EWI) is present or absent would also depend on whether any institution was monitoring or anticipating the development of events in that particular context.

⁴³⁸ Bozeman, Ada "Covert Action", in, Godson, Roy (ed.) *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980s: Elements of Intelligence* (Washington D.C., National Strategy Information Centre 1983), p. 41

This approach, it is hoped, will enable the identification of aspects of intelligence surprises, rather than attempting to treat every event as intelligence surprise or failure.

6.8. Consequences for collective intelligence and for a viable UN intelligence capability

Amidst this plethora of complex and sometimes, irreconcilable issues, emerges the search for a viable UN intelligence system. Such a task is gargantuan but not totally impossible. From the foregoing discussion in this chapter, it is possible to identify at least two main impacts on the notion of a collective intelligence system. In the first instance, the study of both the United Nations system as well as the nature of intelligence, revealed extensive difficulties, but also far-reaching opportunities. With respect to the difficulties, there is the obvious incompatibility of the United Nations system, with some of the conceived aspects of intelligence institutions. Two such notable features can be highlighted here. These are, first, in the context of state intelligence, is the necessary focus on adversaries and the need to attempt to predict enemy intentions. Strictly speaking, this aspect of intelligence work is not compatible with the notion of collective security outlined in the previous chapter. Secondly, the notion of secrecy, as an important defining characteristic of intelligence also stands in the way of interfacing intelligence with the UN. Secrecy as argued earlier, is not limited to confidential information or protecting source identity, but also carries sociological association with exclusivity. The idea that an “intelligence possessing” group could conceive of a superior status over others, is, in fact, contradictory, from the point of view of a decentralised system, discussed earlier. This very scenario, for example, might raise issues about where such an institution might be located, or to whom it might be accountable within the framework of the United Nations.

With regard to the opportunities, the analysis here directs us to acknowledge the many functions of intelligence, and to choose those that are compatible with, and strictly relevant to the UN system. For instance, it has been shown that, regardless of the association of secrecy with intelligence, there is a basic commonality between all forms of knowledge production. Simply put, its aim is to assist decision-makers act efficiently.

Furthermore, since there is no fixed prototype or universal structure for an intelligence system, this means that, like most things in nature, intelligence works best if it is uniquely designed to fit a particular political culture and environment. For example, any attempt to conceptualise a UN intelligence system must start with an attempt to eliminate, precisely, the non-information-related activities couched under covert or clandestine operations, which do not necessarily qualify under our definition of “intelligence”. Also, to understand the form in which a United Nations intelligence

⁴³⁹ Laqueur, op cit, for example, argues that (*certain*) political surprises are calculated to produce

process might take, it would be useful to examine other conditions that could have relevance to both the theoretical and normative understanding of such a system. A first step will have to consist of an understanding of the rationale for a United Nations intelligence capability, which is examined, in the following chapter.

Part Three

Towards a Theory of Collective Intelligence: Concepts and Evidence with Respect to United Nations Collective Security Functions

Chapter 7

The Rationale for Collective Intelligence

“Then you probably know there is no intelligence in the UN system. Nothing to study!... I just think it's a non-starter. At least for this century”⁴⁴⁰

7.1. The concept and the rationale for collective intelligence

The question, perhaps important in its own right, of whether the United Nations needs an intelligence system, is not uncommon.⁴⁴¹ For example, when confronted with the question about the feasibility of a UN intelligence system, one respondent retorted, “Why does the UN need an intelligence system, what does it need intelligence for?” The simple answer, noted in chapter six above, is that since “intelligence” is a function of decision, then such a system is necessary to support the organisation’s peace and security endeavour. Another question in this vein has been, whether the organisation is equipped to effectively exploit the results of intelligence assets. The argument in this regard is, for example, that the UN is given advanced warning (appropriate and specific intelligence) about impending conflict, for instance, the Rwandan genocide, Somalia (1992) or Yugoslavia (1991). Would the UN have been able to act upon such intelligence to prevent these conflicts escalating or at least manage these situations, with the result that its intelligence capability is acknowledged? These questions tend to distract attention from more deserving ones, such as, whether an intelligence system within the organisation is feasible, and if so, whether such a system is capable of delivering what might be expected of it, and in what form it might be constituted. These questions are partly explained by the rationale for collective intelligence.

To begin with, the absence of a formal intelligence structure in the United Nations tends to support a widely held view that such a system is infeasible or incompatible with the organisation. The problem is compounded, among other things by the notion that intelligence serves the exclusive interests of states. The strong association of intelligence functions with power politics also tends to blur the

⁴⁴⁰ Reply from a United Nations official to my query about the prospects for a UN intelligence capacity

⁴⁴¹ There seems to be an acute sensitivity to the term itself even more than its content. A mention of the word “intelligence” to United Nations officials may elicit a rebuke. Even scholars and “experts” in the field of UN affairs and international security tend to respond to the link between intelligence and the UN with abject cynicism. This demonstrates, on the one hand, a widespread ignorance about the subject

rationale for a theory of collective intelligence and create obstacles to the study of such a concept. The argument that states in the system are atomistic and selfish interest maximisers, in constant competition leaves little or no room to think about a model of collective intelligence, or its benefits to the UN. However, these difficulties have not been ignored and have been covered in previous chapters.

The aim of this chapter and the following two chapters will be to show that the UN, even as presently constituted, is not entirely without an intelligence capability. These studies also challenge the view that, a viable United Nations intelligence system is infeasible, and which as a result, some scholars have argued, that a study of the subject itself is a waste of time to begin with. The present chapter, therefore, compliments an earlier proposition, discussed in chapter four, that with respect to the nature of the organisation, and given the environment, it is possible to provide a plausible description of a system of collective intelligence for an organisation such as the United Nations.

The analysis is developed along two main lines of argument; first, with respect to the relevance of the study, it is argued that since there is a market for a “good” such as collective intelligence, there also should be sufficient reasons to examine both its desirability and the feasibility of such a process. The relationship between desirability and feasibility of a “good” was noted in the introductory chapter. Presently, the linkage is made more relevant to the concept of collective intelligence, by also examining the reasons behind the UN’s demand for an intelligence capability. The second argument extends the notion of the rationale for collective intelligence and examines its historical development within the UN. If such a history is plausible, it will be possible to argue that the United Nations is equipped with an intelligence capacity that exists in a form that is not presently acknowledged. This proposition will be augmented in a later chapter by showing how the UN attempts to recognise and deal with issues concerning its intelligence capabilities.

7.2. The idea of pooled knowledge

It would be useful to begin by recalling the discussion in the previous chapter about the relationship between information and decision. One aspect of this is the view that individuals may attach different meanings and expectations to the same messages. The present chapter expands that argument and propose that individuals in a group with the same problem may also possess different and contradictory information which could impact on the group’s objectives. Although this concept is not, by itself be at the heart of the notion of collective intelligence, as conceived in this dissertation, it can in many ways help to explain the rationale for a UN intelligence capability. As it

matter, and on the other, the sensitivity and perception of intelligence as a contaminant of United Nations neutrality.

is now familiar, the organisation is a system of collective decision-making, and this calls for a brief discussion on the idea of pooled knowledge in such an environment.

A concept of pooled knowledge, assumes, to a point, that disparate information held by individuals may itself be incomplete. Private and biased information in a group working towards a declared common goal, could generate uncertainties among members, and have a significant impact on the ability of the group achieving their expected objectives. In international relations, uncertainties tend to breed security problems, which encourage members to collect private information in an attempt to counter their perceived threats. To put this differently, because states seek to resolve the problem of uncertainty, they accumulate information about the world around them. And because they collect different sets of information based on their interpretation of the world in real time, the result is to continuously create further degrees of uncertainty, especially, where the information may lack credible corroboration.

The issue, then, for the United Nations or similar organisations, is not necessarily the lack of “knowledge”, but the fact that such knowledge does not exist in concentrated form within the organisation. Hayek, for example, argued that in most cases, information in a collective exists “solely as dispersed bits of incomplete and frequently contradictory knowledge which all individuals possess.”⁴⁴² From the point of view of a collective intelligence, and specifically within the UN, the problem cannot be resolved by merely pooling private intelligence. The idea of pooled knowledge can be thought of, in terms of how to secure the best use of the knowledge, which the member states possess, and, as Hayek argued, for ends whose relative importance only these individuals have conceived.⁴⁴³ In a nutshell, we see that one aspect of the problem of collective intelligence is what Hayek described as, “a problem of the utilisation of knowledge not given to anyone in its totality.”⁴⁴⁴ This, however, will encounter difficulties in environments of competing ideologies and interests, as well as differential perspectives to agreed goals among individuals or nation states., Helen Milner, for example, argued that, given states concerns about their “relative position”, they are likely to disagree about the amount of information they will release to others and about the principles that define the goals.⁴⁴⁵ Thus, the provision of information is a highly political issue. In a similar vein as Hayek (above), Nath also observed that the most important cause of failure to reach a Paretian

⁴⁴² Hayek, F.A., “The Use of Knowledge in Society” *The American Economic Review* vol. 35 No. 4 (Sep 1945) pp. 519-530

⁴⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁴⁵ Milner, Helen “International Theories of Cooperation Among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses” *Review of International Studies* Vol. 44 No. 3 (April 1992) pp. 466-469

optimum in an interdependent environment is imperfect knowledge. This, he argued, is because uncertainties contribute to factors which are in principle avoidable but likely to be common.⁴⁴⁶

With this in mind, it is possible to argue that a concept of pooled knowledge assumes a need to optimise the quality of information in the group, with respect to anticipated goals. This is because an optimal outcome in a group action, necessarily require a high degree of homogenisation of aspects of disparate knowledge held by independent units in the group. How this is coordinated will depend, first and foremost, on the nature of the organisation, and secondly, on the decision environment, as well as on the nature of the outcome expected at individual and at group level.

The notion of pooled knowledge can then be developed, first, with the acknowledgement that a group's goal may constitute efforts to resolve existing conflict or to limit the effect of a much broader conflict, and in the same frame also, individual agents may conceive of different ways to resolve the conflict. It is then possible to suggest that an aspect of the problem is the existence of contradicting information in the group process. The concept, then, presumes that sharing or pooling knowledge eliminates much of the bias in the information structure. Such a process is, perhaps, what has been described as "certainty equivalent", and, in which the group's decision process stands to gain from an improved information structure ("filter gain").⁴⁴⁷ Pooled knowledge may not directly change or resolve individual problems, but could nevertheless have two possible effects on the group. For example, Rothstein acknowledged first, that such a process has the effect of reinforcing "a body of beliefs about cause-means relationships among variables (activities, aspirations, values, demands) that is widely accepted by the relevant actors, irrespective of the absolute or final 'truth' of these beliefs."⁴⁴⁸ Secondly that "consensual knowledge" also has the effect of reinforcing the learning process. Learning here refers to the "ability and willingness" of actors to incorporate new realities into the definition of their interests.⁴⁴⁹ This argument is consistent with the notion of a decentralised system, and would be crucial to the development of a concept of collective intelligence in institutions such as the UN.

The notion of learning, adds another dimension to the concept of pooled knowledge. We can think of this aspect of the concept in terms, such that, by internalising new realities (learning), the actors' initial indifference (if that was previously the case) is adjusted to accommodate the collective

⁴⁴⁶ Nath, S.K. *A Reappraisal of Welfare Economics* (London Routledge and Kegan Paul 1969) p. 89

⁴⁴⁷ Clarke, Richard N., "Collusion and the Incentives for Information Sharing" *The Bell Journal of Economics* 1983 pp. 383 –94; DeBrock, Larry M., and James L. Smith "Joint Bidding, Information Pooling, and the Performance of Petroleum Lease Auctions", *The Bell Journal of Economics* (1983) pp. 394-404

⁴⁴⁸ Rothstein, op cit

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid

expectations. If as it is presumed, that behaviours are objectively adjusted to the new situation, the problem of pooled knowledge could be found to be simple.⁴⁵⁰ Hayek summarised the situation thus;

If we possess all the relevant information, if we can start out from a given system of preferences and if we command complete knowledge of available meanings, the problem which remains is purely one of logic.⁴⁵¹

Furthermore, an understanding of the concept of pooled knowledge also promises a greater predictability as well as a degree of consistency in a group's action. For example, Malmgren argued that, if a set of activities is observed from a given point, those that fall within a prescribed range can be identified, quicker, when it is known that there is a necessary link between them.⁴⁵² More so, less information may also be necessary to describe these set of activities. Keohane also observed that, where states have different access to information, obstacles to collective action and strategic calculations may prevent them from realising their mutual interests. Secondly, he noted that, states' conception of their interests, and how their objectives should be pursued depend not merely on national interests and the distribution of power, but also on the quantity, quality and the distribution of information.⁴⁵³ Systems containing institutions that generate high quality information and make it available on a reasonably even basis to the actors, Keohane argued, are likely to experience more cooperation than systems that do not contain such functions.⁴⁵⁴ This concept will be clearer if the notion of "social good" is reintroduced in the analysis.

7.3. Collective intelligence as a social good

If rendering intelligence as "collective" can be seen as advantageous to the international community, then, the idea of a "social good" in this context, informs us that the process of "pooling" or coordinating such a resource should exist in a consistent and organised manner.⁴⁵⁵ However, a

⁴⁵⁰ See for example, Simon, Herbert "Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology and Political Science" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 79 (June 1985) pp293-304

⁴⁵¹ Hayek, op cit

⁴⁵² Malmgren, H.B., "Information, Expectation and the Theory of the Firm" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol. 75 (1961) pp. 399-421

⁴⁵³ Keohane, Robert O., *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984) p. 12

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 245; Keohane defined regimes as including 'international organisations whose secretariats act not only as mediators but as providers of unbiased information that is made available, more or less equally to all members.' Thus, he argued, that international regimes reduce uncertainties, 'through a process of upgrading the general level of available information', see p. 94. At this point, it is important to draw the line between the essentially general functions of organisational information system as a public information resource and those that are of strategic nature.

⁴⁵⁵ From a social good point of view, collective goods have been defined as a good such that, if any person X_i in a group $X_1, \dots, X_i, \dots, X_n$ consumes it, it cannot feasibly be withheld from others in that group. As noted in an earlier chapter (see chp.4.6), the very fact that a goal or purpose is common to a group means that no one in the group is excluded from the benefits or satisfaction brought about by its

major obstacle in conceiving of collective intelligence as a social good is its apparent abstractness. This notwithstanding, the problem of selling intangible goods across national boundaries is not exclusively an intelligence problem. Several goods fall within this category, largely because it is far more difficult to put a value on them than it is with tangible goods. Russett and Sullivan observed, for example, that there are no clear market prices internationally for (*shared*) goods such as health and military security, and even less so for more abstract goods, such as international communications and information.⁴⁵⁶ This argument can be interpreted to mean that the more abstract a good or commodity, the more difficult it might be to allocate it a market value.⁴⁵⁷ In politics, it is possible to speak of abstract concepts that might have political or electoral value, in terms that such concepts or goods can be exploited for political gains. For example, in recent time concepts such as communism, Islamic fundamentalism, immigration, and those others that might have strong association with threats to state security, tend to acquire high degree of political value. In a similar vein, efforts to sell intelligence as a collective good have followed from a need to confront these issues.

But for the United Nations, its desire to acquire an intelligence capability is much broader than these short-term concepts. However, it can be argued, at this point, that the notion of “pooled knowledge” provide grounds for further development of a concept of collective intelligence, and, in some ways, also contribute towards explaining the rationale behind a viable United Nations intelligence capability. In the section that follows, a discussion of the history and development of the organisation’s intelligence problems supports this reason. In the subsequent chapters, the processes of interfacing intelligence with the existing structure are also examined.

7.4. Characteristics and the meaning of United Nations intelligence

The prospect of writing the history of a United Nations “intelligence system” is comparable to an effort to explain the nature of a non-existent phenomenon, though this must be attempted to justify the rationale for a viable intelligence system within the organisation’s structure. But first, it will be necessary to put the discussion into a specific context, by once again, clarifying the very notion of “intelligence” as it is applied in this study.

Among academics, practitioners and staff at the United Nations HQ, opinions are divided on what intelligence means and whether the term should be applicable to the United Nations. Many of the differences focus on whether intelligence can be said to mean the same thing as information. The

achievement. See for example, Olson, Mancur *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press 1965) 1965 p. 14

⁴⁵⁶ Russett, B.M. and J.D. Sullivan “Collective Goods and International Organisation” *International Organisation* 25 (1971) pp. 845-865

⁴⁵⁷ De Jouvenel, Bertrand “Efficiency and Amenity” in Arrow & Tibor Scitovsky (eds.) *Readings in Welfare Economics* (London: Allen and Unwin 1969) pp. 100-112

logic of this divergence of opinions is akin to arguing over, what kind of edible and nourishing material can be classed as food; or whether wine and whisky can all be classed as drinks, as both are similarly intoxicating beverages. For the latter, it is obvious that these are different kinds of drinks, possessing different qualities, but nonetheless, both fall under such general classification as alcoholic beverages. While it might be simple to generalise on the different types of drinks and the percentage of alcohol per unit of each type of drink, the task is not as straightforward for intelligence and information. As Professor Edward Luck of Columbia University pointed out, “the line dividing intelligence and information is rather thin or non-existent.”⁴⁵⁸ He argued, for example, that organisations such as International Monetary Fund (IMF) may collect intelligence on banking, agriculture, industrial development or market performance of countries just as the CIA do. The difference, he noted, is that each of these organisations may use the same information for different kinds of planning. For instance, while the CIA might use same knowledge for military planning, IMF may use its knowledge to regulate or monitor, purely financial and market transactions. Again, both would have acquired the same information from open and publicly available sources.

Whether knowledge is acquired secretly or openly, “intelligence” simply means information, according to John Washburn of the United Nations Association (UNA-USA), and former director in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.⁴⁵⁹ Intelligence, he argued, is openly acquired and not by people stealing. “This applies to all forms of intelligence including the United Nations. The kind of information the UN needs is openly available, and this information does not require espionage.”⁴⁶⁰ A senior UN official similarly acknowledged that although there is a problem in linking intelligence and information, there is very little distinction between intelligence and information. For example, in planning peacekeeping operations, there is the need to know as much as possible, “detailed information about the country”, including how the minds of the important decision-makers in that country work and this kind of information borders on intelligence.⁴⁶¹ Furthermore, he acknowledged that much of the information obtained by the UN may exist as classified material in their country of origin.

⁴⁵⁸ Interview with Professor Edward Luck, New York (15 Sep 03). Dr Luck is the Director of the Centre on International Organization of the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University. Also former Senior Consultant to the Department of Administration and Management of the United Nations and Staff Director of the General Assembly's Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System.

⁴⁵⁹ Interview with John Washburn, New York (19 Sep 03); Mr Washburn is Convener of the American Non-governmental Organizations Coalition on the International Criminal Court (AMICC), a program of the United Nations Association of the USA, the nation's largest grassroots foreign policy organization and leading centre of policy analysis and public outreach on the United Nations.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid

⁴⁶¹ Interview with UN staffer “A” New York (24 Sep 03)

The big difference thus, between intelligence and information, in fact as pointed out earlier (see chapter six), is not exactly empirical but subjective, i.e., the term is merely connotative. Scholars, practitioners and officials at the UNHQ are also of the opinion that the term intelligence is, in fact, vague. Ambassador John Hirsch, Senior Fellow at the International Peace Academy (IPA), observed that the term intelligence is subject to misunderstanding, making it difficult for many states to accept the concept.⁴⁶² Since intelligence tends to be thought of as something that is used in dramatic circumstances, this forces hard questioning in the United Nations. For this reason, Ambassador Hirsch suggested that it might be easier to use the term “information”.

In comparing United Nations information needs to those of states, attention is focused on issues of requirements, planning, and organisation. In these terms, it is the very logic of the organism that determines this composite of factors and the manner in which they are organised. In terms of requirements, United Nations is involved with a range of activities, including complex military operations, conflict resolution, and election monitoring, to mention but a few. All these require precise and accurate information, if they are to be successfully implemented. Much of the information that the UN acquire, are, in the conventional sense, what might be described as intelligence, and a great deal of this comes from governments via their intelligence organisations. Furthermore, apart from the “open” and “closed” sources making little or no significant difference to the nature of the information, the methodologies for processing knowledge belongs exclusively to neither “intelligence” nor “information”, if one wishes to make such a distinction. For example, it is possible to think of, what Edward Luck referred to as, “protocol intelligence” which, in his view, simply means having a reasoned judgement about what is going on. Such knowledge, he argued is obtainable from public records, and generally knowing what is out there.⁴⁶³ According to Dr Luck, many intelligence organisations acquire useful information in this way, which also includes soliciting scholarly thoughts, consulting academics and being aware of ongoing research projects. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and China made good use of such sources. “This kind of intelligence is not necessarily secret.”⁴⁶⁴

In this vein of argument, it is also possible to identify two further classes of information: *static*, and *dynamic* or *fluid* information. Static information may include physical characteristics or taxonomy of the operating environment, local customs, religion, and, where necessary, a documented history of conflicts in a region. The dynamic or fluid information is concerned with constantly changing environments. The latter may be difficult to track, but accurate observation, analysis and timely reporting of any suspicious and developing situations may provide resource for contingency

⁴⁶² Inter with Ambassador John L. Hirsch, New York (25 Sep 03)

⁴⁶³ Interview with Luck, op cit

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid

planning. Much of the information in the static category exists in databases, or can be speedily obtained by satellite or electronic technologies and analysed. Fluid or dynamic information presents a much greater challenge, as it deals with a family of unpredictable changes, such as motivations or sudden escalation of a situation. Efforts to circumvent these difficulties often lead to needs for human intelligence, or attempt to obtain such information from persons with access to the source. However, the collection of both of the static and dynamic classes of information may present extreme difficulties for the United Nations. First, from the point of view of intelligence, such activities might raise suspicion in the target state about the reasons for collecting such information. Traditionally, to avoid such difficulties, state intelligence organisations might resort to criminal methods to obtain the desired information. The United Nations cannot afford to employ such methods.

Conventions, doctrines and material practices tend to suggest that in most cases, it is not the acquisition of the information that is the subject of controversy, but the method of its acquisition, i.e., whether the information is acquired by means other than legitimate ones. Even within these limitations, there are also restrictions (or controversy) on certain types of information, both in acquisition or actual use. John Washburn identified two categories of information: that which is high in value and that which is low in value.⁴⁶⁵ Information on military dispositions, he noted, may be considered to be high in value, and this kind of information is usually classified. On the other hand, information for humanitarian intervention may fall within the low-value category. The United Nations, Mr Washburn argued, rarely needs information of high value.

Collecting information of low value is within UN mandate. However, a third scenario is where high and low value information overlap. In very specific cases, Washburn argued, acquiring high value information may fall within the United Nations mandate. An example is a situation where a ceasefire has been agreed. The parties involved in the conflict claim to be observing the ceasefire agreement, but information available suggests that one of the combatants is actually still moving forces. “That is intelligence but it was available openly and was also part of the UN mandate to obtain such information.”⁴⁶⁶ Even though the UN may not necessarily need “highly classified” information, according to Mr Washburn, there are rare cases where the organisation may find it necessary. Furthermore, he noted, “satellite images are not espionage, they are publicly available information.” He acknowledged that The UN is reluctant to accept classified information but will demand sanitation of the information.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁵ John Washburn, op cit

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid

The line dividing high and low value information depends on the situation in which the issue arises. However, Dr Walter Dorn of the Royal Military College of Canada, has identified some basic principles to establish the wide spectrum of intelligence gathering activities. This is organised along three main categories: the non-controversial (white) activities and the prohibited or those generally associated with secrecy (black).⁴⁶⁸ Even in the white area, he explained, the UNPKOs must generally have the approval of conflicting parties, or at least the host state. The process, for instance, might include setting up permanent observation posts, installing sensors and over-flying certain areas for reconnaissance purposes. The black areas are "out of bounds" for the UN, e.g., hiring of agents who misrepresent themselves to authorities, theft of documents, extortion to obtain information, etc. Thus, in deciding what the UN can do, the emphasis tends to lie on the method of collection rather than the product itself.

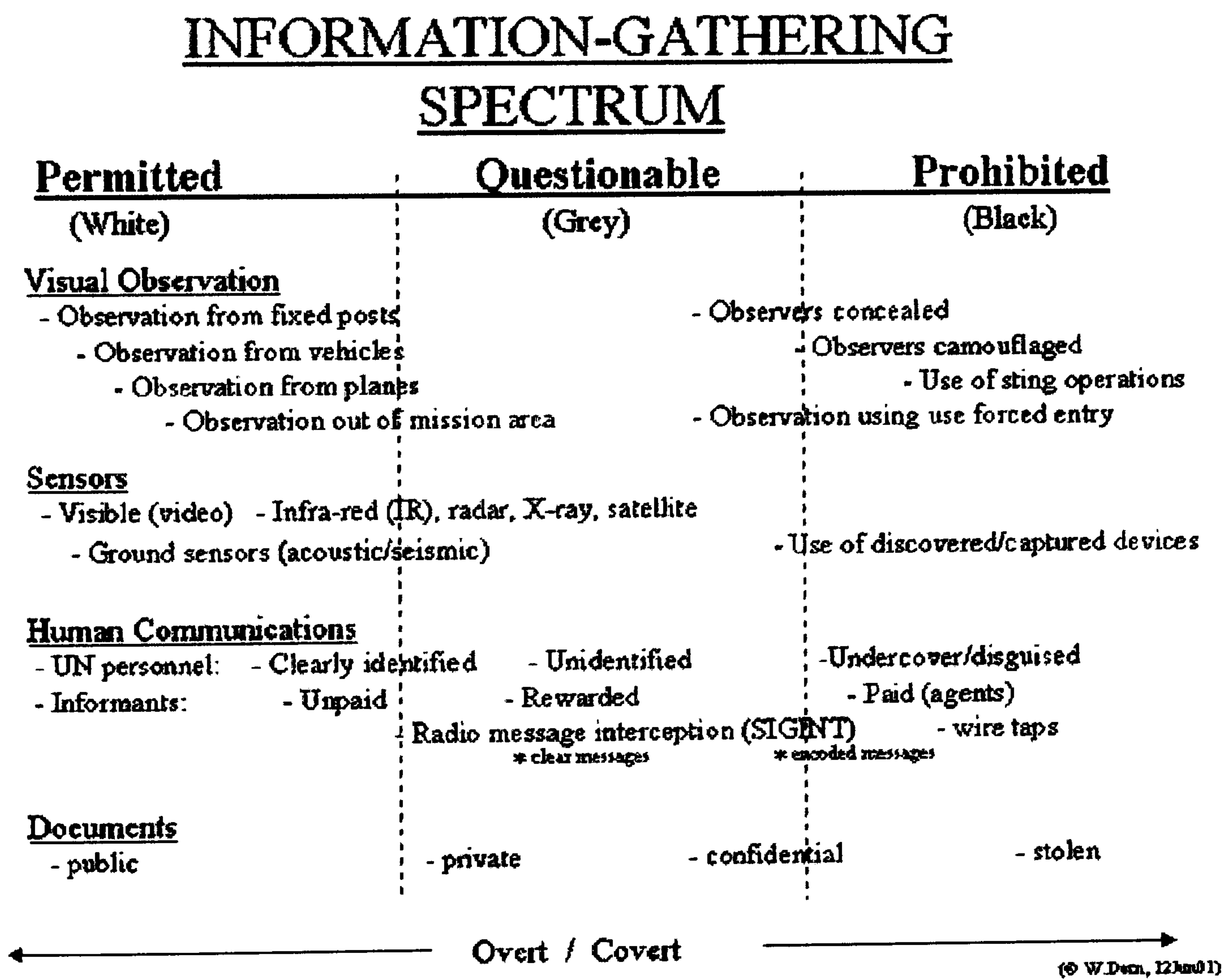


Fig.7.3. The information-gathering spectrum, as illustrated by Walter Dorn⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ Dorn, Walter, “The Cloak and the Blue Beret: The Limits of Intelligence-Gathering in UN Peacekeeping” *Pearson Papers* No. 4: *Intelligence in Peacekeeping* (Clementsport, Nova Scotia: The Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Centre, 1999), pp. 1-31.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid, reproduced with the permission of the author

An added factor to the grey and black area, it could be argued, is that their methods of collection might raise questions about their reliability. Hence, from collections point of view, the quality of the information can be illustrated as shown in the simple bar in figure 7.3b.

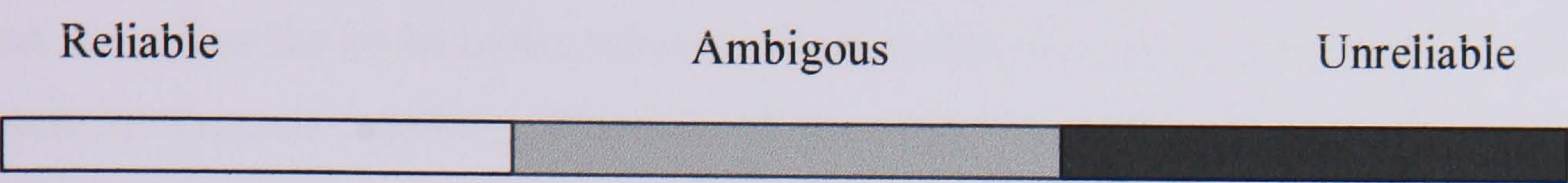


Fig.7.3b

To add to this list is also the very use of the information, in terms that its utilisation does not compromise the impartiality of the United Nations. A classic example of this kind is an incident in Lebanon, where United Nations Peacekeepers (Indian contingent) filmed the aftermath of a Hezbollah kidnapping of three Israeli soldiers in 2000. On being aware of the existence of the videotape, Israel demanded and was promised an edited version of the tape, prompting Hezbollah, Lebanese based guerrilla group to accuse United Nations of being Israeli spies.⁴⁷⁰ This case illustrates a situation where intelligence falls into a borderline area, and where the UN’s decision, either way, could have consequences. Commenting on the incident, the spokesperson for the Secretary-General, Fred Eckhart, stated; “we are in a war zone with the agreement of the two sides of war. Probably on a daily basis, our peacekeepers see things that would have intelligence value to one side or the other. In this case, the tape certainly falls into that category.”⁴⁷¹ According to the report, peacekeeping personnel on the ground were concerned that decision at the UNHQ in New York, to hand over the tape could compromise peacekeepers neutrality and could set precedence, as well as influence “thinking” among peacekeepers on the ground.

The boundary dividing high and low-level information would diminish in complex operations involving peacekeeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian operations. In such environments, all manner of information discussed earlier could easily be grouped into two main categories: *strategic* and *tactical* or operational intelligence. Strategic intelligence provides support for both political and military decision-making. Tactical or operational intelligence, provide the material to support decision-making relating to battle planning and its execution.⁴⁷² For the UN, tactical and operational intelligence also apply at the planning level if the deployment of a military component is conceived to be an aspect of a peacekeeping operation, or for the fulfilment of a UN mandate.

⁴⁷⁰ “UN sweats over intelligence video” PM, (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Thursday, 6:34: 12 July 2001)

⁴⁷¹ Ibid

⁴⁷² Valimaki, Pasi *Intelligence Support in Peace Support Operations* (Finland: National Defence College 2000) p. 79

A typical scenario in the application of intelligence assets in the planning of peacekeeping operations might unfold in this way. The normal procedure, says a senior staff at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), follows the Security Council stipulating the political goals for the Secretary-General in the form of a resolution.⁴⁷³ This will identify the tasks and mission to be carried out, as well as the limits of the mission. The Secretary-General is responsible for the execution of the Security Council mandate. The task of planning the mission is passed on to the DPKO. Other departments, such as the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Public Information and so on, may also have an input into the planning. For the purpose of planning operations, the DPKO sets about collecting information from a variety of sources, first and foremost, they need to know what is happening on the ground.

The department also needs to establish the nature of the operation; in some cases, for example, the task might require joint military and civilian operations. This means that information of both military and civilian nature is collected and analysed. In fact, even if collection and analysis is concentrated on a specific country, there is the need to examine links to neighbouring countries, as well as the regional dimension of the conflict. Political analysis would also focus on the President of the country in question, what he is saying, his closest supporters, and possibly what he is thinking. For this purpose, information is obtained from a variety of sources, both classified and unclassified. At the planning level also, there is no distinction between tactical and strategic intelligence, nor is there much distinction made between intelligence and information. However, as I shall show in the later part of this chapter, in field operations, there is a real difference in both military and civilian application of intelligence assets, and this is where tactical and strategic intelligence may have far-reaching implications. Since intelligence is such a difficult concept to make sense of, many of these activities have so far not been recognised as constituting intelligence processes within the UN at all. With this general observation in mind, it is now possible to examine the historical development of intelligence processes in the UN.

7.5. History and development of United Nations intelligence

In the present section, I examine previous and ongoing efforts to develop an intelligence capability within the UN. These initiatives have been approached in two different ways; first, conventionally, by way of establishing intelligence systems as part of reform programmes in the Secretariat, and efforts to strengthen the UN capabilities in its endeavours. Secondly, unconventional approaches to acquire intelligence have also emerged out of needs for intelligence support in field operations. An example of the latter case, which is discussed in the present chapter, below, is the case where

⁴⁷³ UN staffer A, op cit

intelligence activities have been veiled and managed within departments such as those set up for purposes of public information and education. Both of these approaches, from the point of view of establishing an intelligence system within the organisation, have lacked consistency, as well as a clear definition of their purpose, and as such, have not developed into viable intelligence capabilities. Nonetheless, the present discussion will attempt to articulate these efforts into a conceptual framework. In particular, it is argued that these efforts constitute significant historical development in the UN's efforts to develop an intelligence capability.

Two questions are necessary to further develop the concepts so far discussed in this chapter. First, is it possible to write the history of a system that supposedly does not exist? Secondly, if it is at all possible, can such a formulation constitute a theory, or, to say the least, provide the background for a theory of the observed phenomenon? The answer to the former very much depends on how one defines "history". For the purpose of the present study, I shall define history (or the developmental study of an institution) as aggregates of events occurring over time. Historical narrative need not be in any chronological order, it may consist of components of events that describe particular historical milieu. Robert Cox conceived of historical material as consisting of "a particular combination of thought patterns, material conditions, and human institutions which has certain coherence among its elements."⁴⁷⁴ For the relevance of this historical account to theory, it is supposed that the resulting analysis generates sufficient observable explanation of the phenomenon. The basic requirement of a theory is to explain observable actions. Thus, as Dessler noted, "what is tested in testing a theory is not an association but the explanation" of the phenomenon.⁴⁷⁵ The historical material derived from the analysis, it can be argued, not only tells us that a system exists, but also points us to developing patterns and new forms which may emerge. It is conceived that the new form or (emerging practices) consists of new set of rules which may lead to new patterns of social relations, and, in fact, new sets of tools (legislation, institutions or regimes) that might enhance further development of existing structures.

Furthermore, the historical development of a phenomenon would also consist of, precisely, the circumstances which directly or indirectly induce the emergence of a new form. Robert Cox, for instance, informed us that actions take place within a framework which constitutes its problems, and this opens the possibility of the transformation of existing structure or practices; hence the realisation

⁴⁷⁴ Cox, Robert "Social forces, States and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory" in Richard Little and Michael Smith ed. *Perspective on World Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge 1991) pp. 444-455

⁴⁷⁵ Dessler, David "What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate" *International Organisation* Vol.43 (summer 1989) pp. 441-70

that both action and theory are shaped by their particular problems.⁴⁷⁶ Going back to the question posed earlier, is it then, possible to account for the historical development of a UN intelligence capability?

The material evidence for this discussion is drawn from the organisation's historical experiences, with regard to what I shall describe as its intelligence problematic. Many of these experiences and institutions associated with these problems are well documented in various parts of the present work. As such, a discussion of both the conceptual and material history of United Nations intelligence has to be considered alongside the organisation's needs for intelligence.

The fact that the UN intelligence activities are not formally recognised in the same way as other functions, or that the concept exists in the abstract, gives ground to the widely held view that the study of such a system is infeasible. But as we shall see, the very lack of visibility of an intelligence function within the organisation can be said to be rooted in two main problem areas. First, the UN is caught up in a dilemma about using, or acknowledging the use or existence of intelligence assets, or even any association with the concept. This is understandable. Borne of extreme sensitivity to its members' concerns, the UN is left in a difficult position with regard to acquiring or using information that may be considered to be sensitive to its member states. It is accepted that inappropriate handling of intelligence would compromise its impartiality and the trust of members. However, the corollary to this is the apparent contradiction, in which, on the one hand, the organisation seeks, uses, and actively campaign for the recognition of its use, but on the other hand (though until recently), appears to deny any knowledge of such a concept. In fact, a significantly large number of senior staff within the UN still shy away from even a mention of the word, "intelligence."

For these reasons, it would be useful to examine the development of United Nations intelligence under two closely related dimensions. The first of these focuses on existing structures, which would include practices and circumstances of use of intelligence assets. Examples would include the use of intelligence in peacekeeping, as well as other activities within the United Nations systems, which fall within the broad definition of intelligence (as "information and analysis designed to assist action, see 6.4 above), and which are neither questioned nor denied. The second aspect would focus on efforts within the UN to establish a consistent or "purpose built" system, perhaps along the lines of what might be conceived of as a "UNIA" (United Nations Intelligence Agency). How such a body might function is not exactly clear, or known to anyone including those in the UN, aiming to create such a structure, but the intention is clear and the significance of these efforts must therefore be discussed,

⁴⁷⁶ Cox, *op cit*

against the background of events that led to renewed interest in a United Nations intelligence capability.

Significant events tend to give birth to new ideas or bring to prominence long-forgotten ones. The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th 2001 revived the debate over the importance of intelligence sharing in the United Nations. Similarly, terrorist bomb in Madrid, in March 2004 also prompted the European Union to convene an emergency meeting on combating terrorism at which intelligence sharing was at the top of the agenda. This knee-jerk response to events often melts away quietly as soon as the circumstances that prompted the reaction wane in importance. On the same note, the end of the Cold War revived interests in United Nations peacekeeping operations and security matters, with emphasis on conflict prevention. The latter led to a renewed interest in a possible UN intelligence system, as a tool to support operations. This newfound enthusiasm was to provide the official impetus for *An Agenda for Peace*.

The end of the Cold War, which promised fewer ideological differences among states, also led to anticipation of greater willingness of states to cooperate to build and maintain a more peaceful world. Thus on January 1992, the Security Council at the level of Heads of States invited the Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Gali to prepare an "analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and improving the efficiency and capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and for peace-keeping."⁴⁷⁷ The resulting document was ambitious, identifying and recommending key issues in conflict prevention and security matters. Among these were preventive measures, the idea that timely intervention in the early stages of conflict may prevent the situation from erupting. This, according to the report, would depend on an early warning based on information gathering and informal or formal fact-finding. The report stated:

Preventive steps must be based upon timely and accurate knowledge of the facts. Beyond this, an understanding of developments and global trends, based on sound analysis, is required. And the willingness to take appropriate preventive action is essential. Given the economic and social roots of many potential conflicts, the information needed by the United Nations now must encompass economic and social trends as well as political developments that may lead to dangerous tensions.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁷ *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping*, A/47/277 - S/24111, 17 June 1992, Report of the Secretary-General, pursuant to the statement, adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992

⁴⁷⁸ Report of the Secretary-General A/47/277 - S/24111

The report called on member states to provide information on issues of concern. It also anticipated that information from several sources, and those already within the organisation's network of information collection and analysis would be strengthened, and used with political indicators, to assess where there might be a threat to peace and what action might be taken.

The *Agenda for Peace* was forward-looking, identifying key problems in the organisation's structure and attempting to recommend action. But Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Gali was not under any illusion that the initial enthusiasm could be quickly translated into action. He acknowledged early in the report: "the manifest desire of the membership to work together is a new source of strength in our common endeavour... Success is far from certain." However, aspects of the proposal regarding an intelligence capability was endorsed by a number of countries, including Russia, the Nordic countries, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, but the United States stood strongly against the idea. In its response to the proposal, according to reports in the media, John Bolton, then the US Under-Secretary for International Affairs, wrote to Vladimir Petrovsky, Under Secretary-General of the UN Department of Political Affairs; "the organisation does not need independent high-technology means for gathering its own intelligence."⁴⁷⁹ Such response seems ironic and misses the point about a UN intelligence system, since the issue is not necessarily about technology but about a certain kind of process.

In August 2000, the Brahimi Report made further attempt to revive the idea of a UN intelligence capability. This report was commissioned by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in an effort to inject new energy into the idea of revitalising and strengthening the United Nations peacekeeping and security concerns. This renewed effort was focused on the "Comprehensive review of the whole question of, peacekeeping operations in all their aspects."⁴⁸⁰ A panel consisting of a team of experts in various aspects of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building, and headed by Mr Lakhdar Brahimi, was established. The focus of the review included politics, strategy, as well as operational and organisational requirements. The primary goal of the exercise was to "remedy a serious problem in strategic direction, decision-making, rapid deployment, operational planning and support, and the use of modern information technology."⁴⁸¹

An important aspect of this report focused on the need to identify the changing landscape in conflict management as well as evolving new approaches and tools to respond to these needs. For example, the report anticipated that the traditional concept of peacekeeping would have to change. This, in

⁴⁷⁹ Quoted in Doyle, Leonard "Washington Opposes Spy Role for UN", *The Independent*, (20 April 1992)

⁴⁸⁰ Comprehensive review of the whole question of, peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, identical letters dated 21 August 2000 from the Secretary-General, to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the, Security Council, United Nations A/55/305–S/2000/809

⁴⁸¹ Ibid

essence, means transforming the role of the military from passive to active engagement in peacekeeping operations. Once deployed, the report noted, “peacekeepers must be able to carry out their mandate professionally and successfully.” This further requires a “robust rule of engagement” that would enable peacekeepers to, not only defend themselves, in case of attack, but also should do so in a way that does not “cede the initiative to their attackers.” The report therefore argued that, a robust mandate for complex operations must have sufficiently large enough force and be afforded the intelligence and other capabilities needed to mount an effective defence against violent challenges.

A further aspect of this report, however, and one of immediate concern to the present study, was the panel’s recommendation for the creation of an information-gathering and analysis unit to support the “informational and analytical needs” of the Secretary-General and the members of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS).⁴⁸² This unit was to be called ECPS Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (EISAS). EISAS was to serve as information powerhouse of a kind, an in-house intelligence unit for the United Nations. Its main goals were to gather and analyse information and maintain an integrated database system on peace and security issues, and make the knowledge available to relevant bodies within the UN. The idea was to merge existing frameworks, within policy, and information and analysis role within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), such as the Situation Centre, and other scattered policy and analysis units. All but the term of reference of this unit unmistakably pointed to an intelligence function for EISAS.

7.6. The beginning of the end of EISAS

Subsequent report of the Secretary-General, especially, that on the implementation of the Brahimi report was watered-down to mask any close resemblance to intelligence in EISAS’ structure.⁴⁸³ This report (on the implementation of the panel’s recommendation), appeared to describe a role more akin to a general administrative duties and far from the professional entity initially suggested by the panel. It outlined EISAS’ main objectives as:

- a. Providing substantive secretariat services for the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, and for interdepartmental/agency work in relation to conflict prevention.

⁴⁸² ECPS is one of four “sectoral” executive committees established in the Secretary-General’s initial reform package of early 1997 (see A/51/829, sect. A). The Committees for Economic and Social Affairs, Development Operations, and Humanitarian Affairs were also established. These committees were designed to “facilitate more concerted and coordinated management” across participating departments and were given “executive decision-making as well as coordinating powers.” ECPS is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

⁴⁸³ See for example, “Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the Report of the Panel on United Nations Operations”, United Nations, A/55/502, October 2000

- b. Serving as a catalyst and focal point for the formulation, in coordination with the other executive committees, of medium to long-term strategies of a cross-cutting nature that require a multidisciplinary approach, blending the political, military, development, socio-economic, humanitarian, human rights and gender perspectives into a coherent whole. This is with particular reference to conflict prevention and peace-building strategies, and for the identification of options for United Nations presence following termination of peacekeeping operations.
- c. Serving as an in-house centre of knowledge for mission planners and desk officers in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and other parts of the system by researching and analysing issues which are fundamental to the successful implementation of mandated peace and security activities.
- d. Serving as the focal point for applying modern information systems and technology to the work of all parts of the United Nations system, engaged in peace and security activities.
- e. Rendering the dissemination and accumulation of information products to be customised according to needs of the members of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security.

These functions were, in addition to providing would-be troop contributors with an assessment of risks and a description of what the conflict and the prospect for peace might be. It was also to evaluate the capabilities and objectives of local parties in conflict, assess the independent financial resources at their disposal and how these might be used for the maintenance of peace.

To further distance EISAS' objectives from intelligence functions, this follow up report (the SG's implementation of the panel's report) emphasised that "the information and analysis functions of the secretariat should not in any way, be confused with the creation of an intelligence-gathering capacity" in the Secretariat. The idea, the report stressed, would be to enable the Secretariat to make effective use of information that already exists in the UN system or has been generated for public consumption by the media, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, and such like.

EISAS was to start work on January 2001, but the plan was abandoned and a different entity, a multidisciplinary policy and analysis unit, was put forward to undertake the information and analysis

role, to support the work of ECPS.⁴⁸⁴ The proposed new entity was to perform only a minimum set of tasks and maintain half the staff and resources originally proposed for EISAS. Its functions would be more in line with administrative roles, such as preparing agendas and taking records of ECPS meetings, providing background research and monitoring follow-up to decisions taken. Its analytical work would also be restricted to socio-economic developments, again, as opposed to the all-inclusive collection and analysis role proposed for EISAS. In fact, the degree of inconsistencies in the embryonic life of EISAS, is instructive, as will be seen in the study of its predecessor (below), an earlier attempt to establish an intelligence capability within the UN system.

No clear-cut reason was given for abandoning EISAS, but a close reading of the various texts on the issue tends to point to a degree of short sightedness of the planners as being partly responsible for EISAS still-birth. One example of such a mistake, as we shall also see in our study of similar efforts, is the attempt to disguise intelligence functions of an entity that is obviously set up to perform just such a role. However, Secretary-General Kofi Annan indicated in his reports that there were objections from member states.⁴⁸⁵ EISAS also suffered from budgetary constraints. If these reasons contributed to the failure of EISAS, then its fate could have been predictable. However, before drawing any conclusion, it would be necessary to examine an earlier attempt to create a similar entity, the Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI). In fact, both EISAS and ORCI have much in common. It is also observable that much of EISAS' agenda would have been lifted directly from ORCI, and this is perhaps exactly where the developers of EISAS should have foreseen major problems. From the little that is known of ORCI, the reasons for its failure echo those associated with the demise of EISAS, and there are indications in the Secretary-General's report, that point to the risks and pit falls in undertaking such a commitment.⁴⁸⁶ A brief examination of ORCI is thus necessary to understand the various logistical and political constraints in efforts to develop an intelligence system for the United Nations.

7.7. Genesis of the Office for Research and the Collection of Information

Structurally, there is little or no distinction between ORCI and EISAS. Perhaps, one important difference between these two programmes, is the fact that while ORCI was conceived during the Cold War years, a time when the United Nations was incapacitated by the super powers; EISAS emerged out of (rapidly failing) post-Cold War enthusiasm, which promised enhanced United Nations capability to maintain international peace and security. However, both of these ideas share a

⁴⁸⁴ Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations A/55/977, June 2001 section C of the report.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, section B, par. 293

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid, section B2, par. 298-307.

common origin and rationale; both were conceived of as part of necessary tools to strengthen the UN and both emerged out of organisation-wide reform programmes which focused on efforts to streamline the managerial effectiveness of the UN. While, for example, ORCI emerged out of a review of the administrative and financial functions, EISAS, though, still part of a reform programme, was conceived of at a time that information and analysis were identified as important aspects of the expanding role for the UN.⁴⁸⁷ Ironically, while the cost cutting aspects of the reforms contributed to the creation of ORCI, the same reason seemed to have been partly responsible for the premature demise of EISAS.⁴⁸⁸

In 1985, a General Assembly resolution (40/237 of 18 December 1985) establish a Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts (Group of 18) to Review the Efficiency of the administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations. One of the Group's recommendations for reorganisation was to consolidate various departments, whose roles may have been duplicated. As a result, several information and analysis functions within the Secretariat, including those in the Department of Political Affairs were merged, to give birth to ORCI.⁴⁸⁹

Although the creation of ORCI emerged out of a need to streamline resources, its anticipated purpose was not necessarily lost in the process. As James Sutterline wrote in his introduction to Kanninen's *Leadership and Reform*, such an entity had been a major interest of Secretary-General Pe'rez de Cue'llar.⁴⁹⁰ The idea of an enhanced information and analysis system, Sutterline noted, had long been a concern in the Secretariat. This is not surprising because, the most widely used system at the time, such as fact finding missions were found to be inadequate.⁴⁹¹ Dr Peck, for example, observed that up till the mid 1980s, the UN even lacked an up to date map of the world. She observed that on the eve of the Falklands (Malvinas) war, the UN did not have a map of the Island.⁴⁹² It seems then, that ORCI was an attempt to update the organisation's information functions. Hence, among others, ORCI tasks were to include:⁴⁹³

(a) Monitoring global trends;

⁴⁸⁷ See for example, the "Review of the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations" A/RES/41/213, 19 December 1986, 102nd plenary meeting

⁴⁸⁸ Kanninen, *Tapio Leadership and Reform: The Secretary-General and the UN Financial Crisis of the Late 1980s* (Kluwer Law Int. 1995) p. 76

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid p. 76

⁴⁹⁰ See James Sutterline's introduction to Kanninen, *ibid*, p.viii

⁴⁹¹ Peck, Connie "The Development of Preventive Diplomacy within the Secretariat"

<http://wwics.si.edu/subsites/ccpdc/pubs/role/chap05.pdf> (accessed 4 Oct. 2004)

⁴⁹² Ibid

⁴⁹³ Secretary-General's Bulletin for Research and the Collection of Information, United Nations STSGB/225, 1 March 1987

- (b) Preparing country, regional, sub-regional, and issue-related profiles in close consultation with officers dealing with negotiations and conflict resolution functions in the Secretariat;
- (c) Providing early warning of developing situations requiring the Secretary-General's attention;
- (d) Maintaining database systems, consulting with inside and outside "data banks";
- (e) Monitoring factors related to possible refugee flows and other emergencies;
- (f) Carrying out ad hoc research and assessment for the immediate needs of the Secretary-General;
- (g) Receiving, consolidating and distributing political information from the media and from the United Nations information centres on issues related to peace and security, for use by the Secretary-General and his senior staff;
- (h) Preparing and editing drafts of the Secretary-General's public statements, messages and reports.

The rationale behind ORCI, according to Dr Kanninen, was to develop a distinct analytical and research unit, which would gradually become involved in background research, early warning and generating strategic options to those actively involved in negotiations.⁴⁹⁴ For example, he argued that ORCI had two "second-line analysis and research teams", whose main role was to support mediation teams in the Iran-Iraq and Afghanistan negotiations.

ORCI survived for a brief period. Just as it emerged out of a reform programme, ORCI came to an eventual end in 1992 as a result of further reform programmes implemented during the tenure of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Its demise was not without a legacy, which is significant in two ways. In the first instance, it exposed the complex politics of initiating reform programmes in the United Nations.⁴⁹⁵ Secondly, it contributed to the development of a systematic information and analysis functions in the UN. Dr Kanninen also observed that ORCI was significant to the development of *An Agenda for Peace*.⁴⁹⁶ It is also evident that much of the progress achieved in various research and analysis departments within the United Nations, such as developing contacts with academic institutions and outside agencies, as well as the development of integrated database systems had also evolved out of ORCI.

7.8. Politics of reform and ORCI

Several reasons contributed to the demise of ORCI, and it is not, as commonly believed, that the only reason was because member states directly linked the department to intelligence activities. Although this is true to an extent, it only formed part of a wider issue. Very few studies exist that have given

⁴⁹⁴ Kanninen, op cit, p. 120

⁴⁹⁵ See Sutterline, introduction, *ibid*, p. viii

⁴⁹⁶ Kanninen, *ibid*, footnote 51, p. 104

considerable attention to ORCI. Many references to the entity had been anecdotal or superficial. At the time of writing, only two studies have given the subject some considerable attention. These are, first, the work of Dr Tapio Kanninen, *Leadership and Reform*, mentioned earlier, and, secondly, Connie Peck's, "The Development of Preventive Diplomacy within the Secretariat".⁴⁹⁷ This latter also gives a considerable attention to the development and failure of ORCI. These studies show that the failure of ORCI was due to a range of factors, which include political, financial, member states apprehensions and a lack of clarity of the concept.

Kanninen's study concluded that, the demise of ORCI could be linked to the very process of creating the entity. For example, Sutterline, argued in his introduction to the study, that an organisation-wide "streamlining" programme meant the loss of, or consolidation of a number of departments or functions. The situation, he noted, was to lead to resistance and revolts from the various departments and staff concerned, and opposition to some aspects of the reform was also reinforced by a number important member states.⁴⁹⁸ A controversial part of the reform worthy of note, and culminating in the creation of ORCI, was the co-opting of the political information and fact-finding functions of the Office for Field Operations and External Support Activities (OFOESA), the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs (PSCA) and the Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonisation (PATD) into a new office. These changes led to a drastic reduction on resources, in spite of the introduction of computerised working methods.⁴⁹⁹ For the planners of the reform, according to Kanninen, apart from the crucial money-saving objectives, a further purpose of fusing these various departments was to reduce managerial and administrative conflicts within the Secretariat. It was also believed that bringing the disparate research and analysis functions within the Secretariat would make the task more effective. The net effect of these changes, argued Kanninen, was that instead of making the new ORCI more effective, it was overburdened with excessive workload.⁵⁰⁰

A further consequence of the reform was of deterioration in the quality of research and analysis. The same unit, though starved of adequate resources was to undertake several important activities in their day-to-day work, including support for negotiations, operational activities, and writing speeches for the Secretary-General. It is no wonder Kanninen observed, that the unit had little or no time for "brainstorming and careful analysis of options."⁵⁰¹ He also observed that an added problem to the already chaotic situation was the fact that, some of the heads of the department did not enjoy the full confidence of the Secretary-General. This meant that the products of research and analysis did not

⁴⁹⁷ Peck, op cit

⁴⁹⁸ Sutterlin in, Kanninen, op cit, p. ix

⁴⁹⁹ Kanninen, ibid, p. 76-77

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 120

⁵⁰¹ Ibid

seem to be taken seriously.⁵⁰² In other cases, he observed, the head of the department was often occupied with tasks which were unrelated to ORCI functions.

A hiring freeze also meant that qualified and experienced staff could not be employed to fill the expertise required by the ORCI. Recruitment was restricted to staff members who needed reassignment following the abolition of other posts and the department was not permitted to recruit new staff from the best applicants.⁵⁰³ According to Dr Peck, “staff were assigned to these important and sensitive positions, not on the basis of their ability and knowledge, but rather on the basis of their availability.”⁵⁰⁴ A classic scenario, noted by Dr Peck, showed, for example, that even though computerised working systems were introduced with the intention to enhance information and analysis, these departments, nevertheless lacked computer programming expertise to carry out the necessary tasks. Compounding this problem was the apparent lack of direction or clearly defined objectives for ORCI. Although the idea of “preventive diplomacy” underlined the department’s functions (i.e., making predictions), Peck observed that the unit lacked the knowledge and little agreement existed about what kinds of indicators could be most useful for predictions:

Moreover, ORCI was established with the belief that preventive diplomacy could be carried out from UN Headquarters in New York. The assumption was that if only the right information about “early warning indicators” could be collected and programmed to provide prediction, then staff members sitting at their desks in midtown Manhattan would be able to predict where problems might erupt around the world.⁵⁰⁵

Importantly, Peck further observed that action at the top did not in fact correspond with early warning signals. She argued that ORCI political officers would send early warning signals about deteriorating situations to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, and there would be no corresponding action. This, she subsumed, was because the office was already overburdened and lacked the capacity for preventive action. This situation was made even worse by the existence of a gulf between analysts in ORCI and those in the Executive Office who decided whether action should be taken and if so, what type of action.⁵⁰⁶ Such discrepancies prevented ORCI from showing quick results; “a difficult challenge under the best of circumstances when the objective is to prevent conflict.”⁵⁰⁷ Some observers have also linked the sudden termination of the unit to its failure to live up to expectations. Such a connection is not totally unreasonable, considering the kind of expectation

⁵⁰² Ibid

⁵⁰³ Peck, op cit

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid

⁵⁰⁷ Sutterlin, in T.Kanninen, op cit, p. ix

placed on even states intelligence establishments. This leads to a further question, whether member states of the United Nations genuinely wanted the unit to succeed.

The lack of support and resources which are partly responsible for the failure of EISAS reinforced the view that member states do not want a strong Secretariat, especially one with an independent source of information and analysis functions.⁵⁰⁸ In their study of institutional response to early warning in complex humanitarian crisis, Schrodts and Gerner argued that, the failure of ORCI has been widely attributed to the desire by the United States to limit any ability of the UN to develop independent sources of intelligence.⁵⁰⁹ Such a system within the UN, they argued, would find itself in constant competition with states' intelligence agencies. The net effect of this "bureaucratic competition" they argued, will be to undercut the inter-governmental efforts, limit their access to information, or discredit their analysis, thereby limiting their potential impact. The incentive for states' intelligence agencies to work against a similar entity in the UN, which they contend, is empirically supported, is "a case of self-preservation." An intelligence agency, they argued, compared to inter-governmental organisations, has only a single consumer, the decision-maker, and a single product:

If the analysis provided by an IGO is identical to that of the agency, that information is redundant; if it is different, the agency may be shown to be wrong. In either situation the agency is better off without the competing analysis. In this environment, high-visibility early warning operations in IGOs are unlikely to succeed, even in the post-Cold War environment.⁵¹⁰

The fear of a strong and independent information and analysis within the secretariat is as applicable to governments as it is to the intelligence communities' desire for "self preservation." Many governments have something to hide, and there is a degree of paranoia about what, as a result, might be made public, with perhaps embarrassing consequences to the government concerned. Furthermore, an early warning system within an international organisation might internationalise an issue which a government would prefer to be left hidden. Making a local issue an international concern could galvanise wider public support and this might in turn put pressure on a government or the international community to act on the issue. An example of this kind of anxiety is an attempt by

⁵⁰⁸ Kühne, Winrich and Jochen Prantl "The Security Council and the G8 in the New Millennium, Who is in Charge of International Peace and Security?", 5th International Workshop, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) Research Institute for International Affairs, Berlin, June 30 - July 1, 2000,

⁵⁰⁹ Schrodts, Philip A. and Deborah Gerner "The Impact of Early Warning on Institutional Responses to, Complex Humanitarian Crises", Paper presented at the Third Pan-European International Relations Conference and Joint Meeting with the International Studies Association Vienna, 16 - 19 September 1998

⁵¹⁰ Ibid

the Indian authorities to block an Arria formula presentation (discussed in 8.1. below) to the Security Council on the subject of Kashmir.

Anxiety about intelligence capability within the UN is also applicable to both “great” and “small” powers. For the developing countries, however, as well as having much to hide, like every other government, their concerns about such a system within the Secretariat seems understandable in view of their colonial experience. For example, it has been opined that developing countries were concerned that EISAS could be exploited by more developed countries that already acquire sophisticated technologies for intelligence gathering. This is an important argument, says David Malone, of International Peace Academy (IPA), because there is “little generation of news and information flowing from the developing countries.”⁵¹¹ This means that information flow will be one sided and any such intelligence arrangement will only work to the advantage of the developed countries. The developing countries concerns for UN intelligence system were also made apparent in the early days of ORCI. In fact, according to Dr Luck of Columbia University, the biggest resistance to ORCI came from developing countries. It was thought that ORCI (with intelligence elements), would be used to destabilise their countries. Such concern, Dr Luck argued, was in many ways responsible for the expulsion of NGOs from the Sahel during the humanitarian crisis of the 1980s, on the ground that NGOs were spying on the countries of the region. As a result, it was later agreed that the reporting from the region be watered down and the collection process be limited to newspaper clippings.⁵¹²

Before drawing any conclusion from these cases, however, it would be useful to look briefly at one further example, an attempt to acquire intelligence through a purely conventional and legitimate body. This example is interesting because on the one hand, it throws some light on the difficulties facing the UN and its attempt to develop a purpose built intelligence system. On the other hand, it shows that it did not matter whether the institution involved in collection and analysis or in fact, their product is formally designated as “intelligence”, or described by other terms; it is in fact, the circumstances in which the activity is carried out that gives meaning to the act. In essence, the line separating hostile and non-hostile information gathering is extremely thin, and in some cases, nonexistent, and UNTAC’s experience in Cambodia is a case in point. More importantly, however, this example shows an attempt by the UN to improvise in the absence of a formal intelligence structure.

⁵¹¹ Interview with David Malone, International Peace Academy (18 Sept 03)

7.9. UNTAC's information/education process in Cambodia

On February 1992, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was created under Security Council Resolution 745 to oversee the implementation of the “Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict”, signed in Paris on 23 October 1991.⁵¹³ UNTAC's mandate was wide-ranging, consisting at least, seven different components, which included; Military, Civil Administration, Civilian Police, Human Rights, Electoral, Repatriation and Rehabilitation activities, and headed by the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Yasushi Akashi of Japan.⁵¹⁴

An aspect of UNTAC's programme, of particular interest to the present study, was the creation of the “information/education division” within the civil component. Considering the generality of the meaning of a concept such as “information/education”, the exact function of this division could not be precisely determined. Neither did the term reflect on the gamut of tasks the division was expected to perform. However, the Secretary-General's implementation plan acknowledged that there was a “special need” for “effective flow of information between UNTAC and the grass-roots.”⁵¹⁵ Broadly stated, the bulk of the Division's tasks, involved intensive public information/education campaign, covering issues such as human rights, free and fair elections, mine awareness campaigns, social and cultural issues, acquainting the local population with the Paris Agreement and promoting UNTAC's work.⁵¹⁶ The Division was also involved with determining “specific implementation of fair access of political parties to radio and television” and to “encourage the development of a free and open media through a diversity of ownership of media outlets in Cambodia.”⁵¹⁷ However, a rather controversial aspect of the Division was the existence of an Analysis Unit, whose functions involved “feeding local information systematically into policy-making channels”, though, as Mynth-U Thant and Elizabeth Sellwood asserted, this was not initially conceived as a main role for the IED.⁵¹⁸ Although UNTAC's Human Rights component included investigating human rights abuses and taking actions, it was not clear whether all or part of the investigatory tasks was to be performed by IED. However, Schear and Farris, in their study of UN operation in Cambodian, indicated that though the Human

⁵¹² Dr Luck , op cit

⁵¹³ Security Council Resolution 745, (1992) of 28 February 1992

⁵¹⁴ Report of the Secretary-General on Cambodia, United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) S/23613, February 19, 1992

⁵¹⁵ “The proposed implementation plan for UNTAC”, S/223613 of 19 February 1992

⁵¹⁶ “United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia” <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/t-po/resource-bk/mission/untac.html> (accessed, 6 10.04)

⁵¹⁷ Media Guideline for Cambodia, Drafted by the Information/Education Division of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) [Under the UNTAC Mandate, Section D “Elections,” Paragraph 3(f): “Ensuring Fair Access to the Media, including press, television and radio, for all political parties contesting in the election” UN Doc. A46/608 [Annex1]; S/23277 of 30 October 1991

⁵¹⁸ Thant, Mynth-U and Elizabeth Sellwood, *Knowledge and Multilateral Interventions: The UN Experiences in Cambodia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: the Royal Institute of International Affairs 2000) p. 14

Rights programme included “Monitoring/Investigation Unit” and an “Information/Education Unit”, both were to perform very different tasks. The former’s roles included, “visiting prisons and detention centres and investigating any allegations of human rights abuses.” The IED unit was to be “concerned primarily with establishing preventive measures by conducting training workshops in human rights for Cambodian school teachers, university students, and government officials as well as helping to develop human rights curricula for primary and secondary schools.”⁵¹⁹

This separation of roles notwithstanding, Thant and Sellwood also noted that the Analysis Unit, within EID, carried out systematic information collection and analysis functions. For example,

The Analysis Unit also provided some information about Cambodia for UNTAC personnel. The Division monitored the Cambodian media and regularly provided translated digests of party newspapers and other election materials for circulation within UNTAC. These provided examples of the main parties’ preoccupations and electoral tactics. The IED found increasing evidence in much of the newly liberalised Cambodian media of material intended to incite racial hatred and violence against the large ethnic Vietnamese presence in the country, and this was reported to UNTAC personnel.⁵²⁰

Furthermore, according to Thant and Sellwood, although IED was not part of the Military component of UNTAC, information from the unit enabled the military “to gain access to the cantonment sites.”⁵²¹ It is not surprising then, that when this extra-curricular activity of the unit was exposed; it brought the UNTAC programme into disrepute, and according to Thant and Sellwood, led to calls for the Analysis Unit to be disbanded.

Implications for the rationale of collective intelligence

What possible conclusions can we draw from these cases? Several, in fact, but for the present, a few significant ones will suffice. First, the UNTAC/ EID, example, demonstrates further attempts by the UN to circumvent some of the difficulties inherent in establishing a UN intelligence capability. In some ways, it underlines the degree of ambiguity that is inherent in other efforts, including EISAS and ORCI. “Back-door” approaches are not unusual since, even state-sponsored intelligence tends to

⁵¹⁹ Schear, James A. and Karl Farris “Policing Cambodia: The Public Security Dimensions of U.N. Peace Operations” in *Policing the New World Disorder Peace Operations and Public Security* Edited by Robert B. Oakley - Michael J. Dziedzic - Eliot M. Goldberg, <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/books/Books%20-%201998/Policing%20the%20New%20World%20Disorder%20-%20May%2098/chapter3.html> (accessed 8 Oct 2004)

⁵²⁰ Thant and Sellwood, op cit, pp. 14-15

operate in this guise, but for the UN, this is far too much of a risk. These cases demonstrate, and as I shall argue in the concluding chapter, the obvious undercurrent of vagueness in the UN's intelligence problematic that seems principally to underlie a lack of progress and confidence of member states to support the development of such an asset.

In terms of explaining the link between history and theory, it has been shown that there is a consistency of thought, actions and observable patterns which confirm the existence of concrete phenomena, in the present case, intelligence functions. This manifestation should enable us to shift the emphasis away from the burden of proof, to examining these entities. Secondly, the idea (deliberately or otherwise) of concealing intelligence in other functions, or making it a sub-text of other activities, seems to work against efforts to persuade politicians to recognise its rationale. While this approach is understandable in view of the sensitivity of the subject, the manner in which the idea is presented in the reports (noted earlier) gives the impression of hastily and ill thought-out plans on the part of the authors of the reports. Thirdly, while intelligence is not acknowledged as an established feature in the UN, we can, however see that these functions exist in various guises within the organisation's structure. While these features exist in disparate forms, in the sense that, as a collection of roles, they are not formally described as United Nations intelligence system, it is, nevertheless possible to state that these set of roles constitute an intelligence process. This generalisation is also consistent with our concept of the feasibility of collective intelligence discussed in chapter five above.

The study, in some respect challenges such views that, with respect to known barriers, forging a theory of a UN intelligence capability is infeasible. Even with this in mind, it is still possible to provide a plausible description of a system of collective intelligence that reflects the nature of such an organisation. The foundation for such a model consists in three analytical frameworks, which are worth recalling. First, is the rationale for the concept; this suggests that there is a positive relationship between the desirability and the feasibility of a process. The second argument, also closely linked with this, is the existence of a history of a particular phenomenon. This history, among others, suggests a certain consistency of events and their patterns, which could be articulated into a theory of the object under study. Lastly, with respect to the notion of collective action, the UN, for example, is a system of collective decision-making and it is assumed that there is a strong relationship between information and decision. If this association is true, then, the manners in which information assets are inputted in the system, could, by itself constitute a theory. The following chapter will examine some aspects of the UN's information and intelligence assets.

⁵²¹ Ibid, p. 20

Chapter 8

United Nations Intelligence Assets: Sources, Methods and Implications

In terms of contents and application, little, if any difference exists between United Nations “intelligence” and conventional intelligence. What makes the concept of a UN intelligence an interesting object of study is the restriction imposed on it, primarily by the need for impartiality. These constraints limit the extent to which the organisation can develop elaborate information and analysis systems. Furthermore, as noted earlier, Charter provisions, Article 2(7) on domestic jurisdiction, and the principles of state sovereignty, also forbid the UN from collecting and analysing information on member states, if such an act is tantamount to a violation of their sovereignty. The exception to this rule, Chapter 7 of the Charter, which allows for multinational intervention, if interpreted broadly, also includes collection and analysis of relevant information with respect to threat to the peace. Whether this also includes covert activities or use of criminal methods, is, in fact, a moot point. As demonstrated in the analysis of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction (see chapter 9), even a broad interpretation of Chapter 7 of the Charter is not without controversy.

These restrictions notwithstanding, the United Nations needs intelligence assets of some sort, i.e., information resources for planning and implementation of its missions. In this section, I examine these sources, their limitations, as well as other means of circumventing the constraints. It is hoped that it will be possible to draw further conclusions on what might comprise a United Nations “intelligence system” and perhaps, about its possible future development.

8.1. Sources and methods

Whether one uses the term “intelligence” or “information” to describe knowledge, there is in fact, ample evidence, that the UN has well established information and analysis systems. As Dr Luck acknowledged, in terms of access to knowledge, the regional reach of the UN is excellent.⁵²² Others have gone further to suggest that the UN has much greater access to information than intelligence organisations of many states. Ambassador John L. Hirsch, Senior Fellow at the International Peace

⁵²² Interview with Dr Edward Luck, New York (15 Sep 03)

Academy, New York, for example, argued that “the problem with UN is not the lack of information but information overload.”⁵²³ The stock of knowledge sources range from informal briefing of members to established structures for information and analysis, which on their own, may or may not pass the test for what constitutes intelligence.

The Security Council, the General Assembly and perhaps the office of the Secretary-General, in that order, are the three main organs of decision-making in the organisation, though the Security Council is primarily responsible for maintaining peace and security. These three organs are well informed about matters concerning peace and security, and, as John Washburn put it, “there is a healthy flow of information within the UN.” State’s intelligence community acquires all sorts of information on economic issues to politics and natural disasters. Many countries are willing to share this knowledge and the UN has access to this information. National representatives share and exchange information with the UN and the UN uses and asks nations for information, for different kinds of operations, provided there is a consensus on the matter.⁵²⁴ The sources and flow of this pool of knowledge, referred to here as “intelligence assets”, are examined below.

The Security Council and the General Assembly

It is possible to assume that members, of both the Security Council and the General Assembly, in their daily proceedings, come equipped with a wealth of knowledge on specific or emerging issues, perhaps provided to them by their national intelligence services or other forms of specialised information and analysis departments. Whether this knowledge is shared with other members for the purposes of action is a different issue, though it will be consistent with the view that if revelation will adversely affect the holder’s national interest, then it would be in the state’s interest to withhold the information. This notwithstanding, the main decision-making organs, in their day-to-day working are kept fully informed from a range of sources.

Both the Security Council and the General Assembly receive daily briefings from the Secretary-General. The Security Council also receives full reports on United Nations mandated actions, including briefs on development from agencies such as IAEA and special commissions, for example, UNSCOM. The Secretary-General is also obliged to “immediately bring to the attention of all representatives on the Security Council all communications from states, organs of the United Nations, or the Secretary-General concerning any matter for the consideration of the Security Council in accordance with the provisions of the Charter”⁵²⁵

⁵²³ Interview with Ambassador John L. Hirsch, New York (25 Sep 03)

⁵²⁴ Interview with John Washburn, New York (19 Sep 03)

⁵²⁵ Rule No. 6 of Provisional Rules of Procedure, of the Security Council, United Nations S/96/Rev.7

A more recent development in keeping the Security Council informed about issues of peace and security is the increasing use of the Arria Formula, named in honour of Ambassador Diego Arria, former Venezuelan Ambassador, who created it during his tenure as Council President in 1992.⁵²⁶ This allows for informal and voluntary briefing of the Council by non-members and NGOs, but they are not given formal recognition or officially documented, nor are they listed in the United Nations Journal. The formula allows for a wide range of voices, including nations not on the Council, nongovernmental organizations, policy experts, grassroots individuals and eminent persons to be heard by Council members. This formula represents an important development in the United Nations Security Council, because it breaks with long-standing tradition of Council practice, which allows only delegations, high government officials (of Council members) and United Nations officials to speak at regular Council meetings and consultations.⁵²⁷

Due to its flexibility and informality, the Arria formula had been found to provide a speedier access to the Security Council, both by states and even by the Secretary-General's Special Representatives, all hoping to engage the Council's attention on issues of importance. For example, in November 2001, the Special Rapporteur used the opportunity afforded by the Arria formula to warn the Security Council about the growing threat of escalating violence in areas of Afghanistan, and the need to take "special measures to protect civilians against the threat of ethnically motivated violence" in areas where ethnic minorities identified with the earlier regime might be exposed to reprisals.⁵²⁸ By using the Arria formula, the Special Rapporteur was able to report on-the-ground intelligence directly to the Security Council, that as territories changed hands, scattered Pashtun communities in northern and central Afghanistan were especially vulnerable to attack.

The success and merits of the Arria formula notwithstanding, in more recent times, there has been criticism of the system from members of the UN and NGOs alike. In 1997, for example, Ambassador Antonio Monteiro, Permanent Representative of Portugal, in a statement to the General Assembly on the transparency of the Security Council, argued that despite the fact that the Arria formula was designed to allow non-state actors direct access to the Council, a greater percentage of those using the formula are in fact state actors.⁵²⁹ He observed that between 1993 when the Arria formula was

⁵²⁶ I am grateful to Dr Simon Chesterman of the International Peace Academy, New York, for bringing this to my attention. Dr Chesterman directs IPA's program on Transitional Administrations, which examines the role of the United Nations in state-building activities in, among other places, Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan.

⁵²⁷ Paul, James "The Arria Formula" October, 2003, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/mtgsetc/arria.htm> (last updated Oct 2003)

⁵²⁸ Human rights questions: human rights situation and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, United Nations, General Assembly A/57/309 13

⁵²⁹ "General Comments on Council Transparency", Statement by Ambassador Antonio Monteiro, Permanent Representative of Portugal 52nd Session of the General Assembly October 28, 1997, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/informal/monteiro.htm> (accessed Jan 2004)

initiated, and 1997, sixty percent of all guests had been state actors. This includes at least ten Heads of States and Government and over fifteen Ministers. Ambassador Antonio Monteiro suggested that state actors tend to prefer the informality of the Arria formula to the formal meetings provided by Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter and Rules 37 and 38 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure, with the knowledge that Arria briefings are not kept as written records.⁵³⁰

Criticisms have also been directed at attempts to regulate the informality of the system and efforts by some member countries to restrict its use or make it difficult for particular groups to inform the Council, especially, if the issue was perceived to be sensitive to the member state concerned. Barbara Crossette noted in an article in the *UN Wire*, that “because these meetings frequently air information and opinions that nations have managed to keep out of the Security Council's purview, countries are now using diplomatic pressure to block or undermine Arria formula sessions.”⁵³¹ A case in point, Crossette noted, was India using its diplomatic position to stop an Arria meeting planned to discuss the issue of Kashmir; a disputed territory recognised neither as belonging to India nor Pakistan. According to the author, diplomats planning to attend the meeting commented that the Indian foreign ministry had put pressure on member governments directly, “capital to capital, and often in very strong terms” to abandon the meeting. However, although these sources broaden the range of available information they are by no means comprehensive.

The Secretary General

The Secretary-General of the UN is also kept informed about issues. As the main administrator of the United Nations mandates, it is perhaps natural to expect that the Secretary-General would be the first point of contact. The post holder receives a daily summary digest from their staff. How much of these briefs they read at any time is a different issue.⁵³² According to Mr Washburn, the relationship between a given country and the Secretary-General encourages intelligence sharing with the UN if the country is confident in the Secretary-General's regime.⁵³³ The problem, however, is that Secretary-Generals are limited in their action. A documented example of such limitations can be found in the case of Secretary-General U-Thant who, it is noted was regularly kept informed about events, especially those leading to outbreak of the 1967 Six-Day War.⁵³⁴ According to Walter Dorn, a report sent by the Commander of the UN Emergency Force (UNEF), via Under-Secretary General, Ralph Bunche, possibly informed U-Thant's decision to pull the United Nations' forces out of the

⁵³⁰ Ibid,

⁵³¹ Crossette, “Keeping the Security Council Door Ajar” *UN Wire* Feb 03, or see <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/mtgsetc/arriafuture.htm> (accessed Dec 2003)

⁵³² Hirsch, op cit

⁵³³ Washburn op cit

⁵³⁴ Dorn, Walter A. “United Nations Information Gathering for Peace and Security” Research at the Royal Military College of Canada http://www.rmc.ca/academic/gradrech/dorn2_e.html (accessed Oct 2003)

region.⁵³⁵ The speed with which the troops were withdrawn, argued Geller, was perhaps, an indication of U-Thant's awareness of how rapidly the situation was deteriorating, to the point that the action took many by surprise.⁵³⁶ Similarly, Dorn also noted that, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was told of the launch of Operation Desert Storm in a call from US President George Bush, only an hour before the operation began on 16 January 1991.⁵³⁷

Furthermore, as part of his reform programme in 1998, Secretary-General Kofi Annan established a Strategic Planning Unit within the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The Unit consists of a small team of information and research analysts who report directly to him, and, whose task is to "identify and analyse emerging global issues and trends."⁵³⁸ In other respects, the Secretary-Generals are kept informed about events, as far as possible. This is reasonable, since in most cases, they are often expected to play important roles in matters of peace and security. The position of the Secretary-General affords the office holder ample opportunities to develop extensive personal contacts with member states, on which he or she could rely for informal briefings. Information is also fed through to the Secretary-General, where necessary, from several of the organisation's research and analysis structures. These include, especially those located within the Secretariat, and from established institutions, such as special missions and programmes with designated research and analysis units. Some of these sources are examined presently.

Fact-finding missions:

The principal function of an intelligence establishment, it is assumed, is to provide precise information to policy makers, as to reduce discrepancies between objective environments and, perhaps, the subjective ones which policy makers may hold. Fact-finding missions, depending on their goals, may provide information that transcends the traditional intelligence boundaries. Missions may provide information on potential military escalation in a country, on the nature of a conflict, as well as on economic and humanitarian aspects of the situation, all of which could add to the assessment of trends, and enable decision-makers to anticipate action. Although fact-finding missions have been a long-standing practice within the UN, this exercise was formally recognised by

⁵³⁵ See for example Excerpts of report by Secretary-General U Thant to the Security Council: "Withdrawal of the UNEF from the United Arab Republic May 20, 1967"

<http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/unefwith.html> (accessed Oct 2004)

⁵³⁶ Geller, Doron, "Israeli Intelligence in the 1967 War"

<http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/intel67.html> (accessed Oct 2003)

⁵³⁷ Dorn, op cit

⁵³⁸ "Reform of the United Nations by Secretary-General Kofi Annan" *Chronology*

<http://www.un.org/reform/chron.htm> (accessed Jan 2004); and "U.N. Reforms: Statement of the U.N. Secretary-General to the Special Meeting of the General Assembly on Reform" Human Rights Commission, <http://www.ahrchk.net/hrsolid/mainfile.php/1997vol07no04/302/> (accessed Nov 03)

the Security Council in a 1991 resolution.⁵³⁹ The Council acknowledged that, in “performing their functions in relation to the maintenance of international peace and security, the competent organs of the United Nations should endeavour to have full knowledge of all relevant facts.” To this end, fact-finding missions became a formal tool in the organisation’s efforts to maintain peace and security. Fact-finding involves; activities designed to obtain “detailed knowledge” of disputes or situations, for which competent UN organs could act effectively, with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security.⁵⁴⁰ The information thus obtained should be, at least, objective, impartial and timely.

The success of fact-finding missions depends upon the host state’s consent and cooperation. Fact-finding missions afford the UN the ability to have an on-the-ground and objective verification of a situation. But there have been setbacks. A more recent example of fact-finding, though not without controversy, was that headed by Mary Robinson of Ireland (29 March 2002), sent to investigate alleged violations committed during Israeli military operations in the Palestinian territories.⁵⁴¹ Back in the 1980s, the apartheid South African government refused United Nations fact-finding bodies entry into its territories to investigate conditions of the black populations. Similarly, the United Kingdom refused UN fact-finding missions access into its territory, to investigate the troubles in Northern Ireland. When successful, however, the presence of a fact-finding mission in a country can also serve as a catalyst for conflicting parties to look for peaceful solutions.⁵⁴² This aspect of fact-finding was also emphasised in *An Agenda for Peace*. In sum, the tasks of fact-finding mission, it can be argued, are not significantly different from what an intelligence agent would aim to achieve, if the policy goal was to be the same. The most obvious difference is that fact-finding mission is conducted in the open, with the cooperation of the target state.

⁵³⁹ Declaration on Fact-finding by the United Nations in the Field of the Maintenance of International Peace and Security” United Nations, General Assembly, A/RES/46/59, 9 December 1991

⁵⁴⁰ General Assembly, A/RES/46/59, 9 December 1991, Annex

⁵⁴¹ Security Council, The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question United Nations, S/PV.4515, 18 April 2002

⁵⁴² Commission on Global Governance Our Global Neighbourhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance (Oxford University Press 1995) p. 99

From fact to act: a conceptual view of the procedures and uses of fact-finding by the UN Secretary-General.

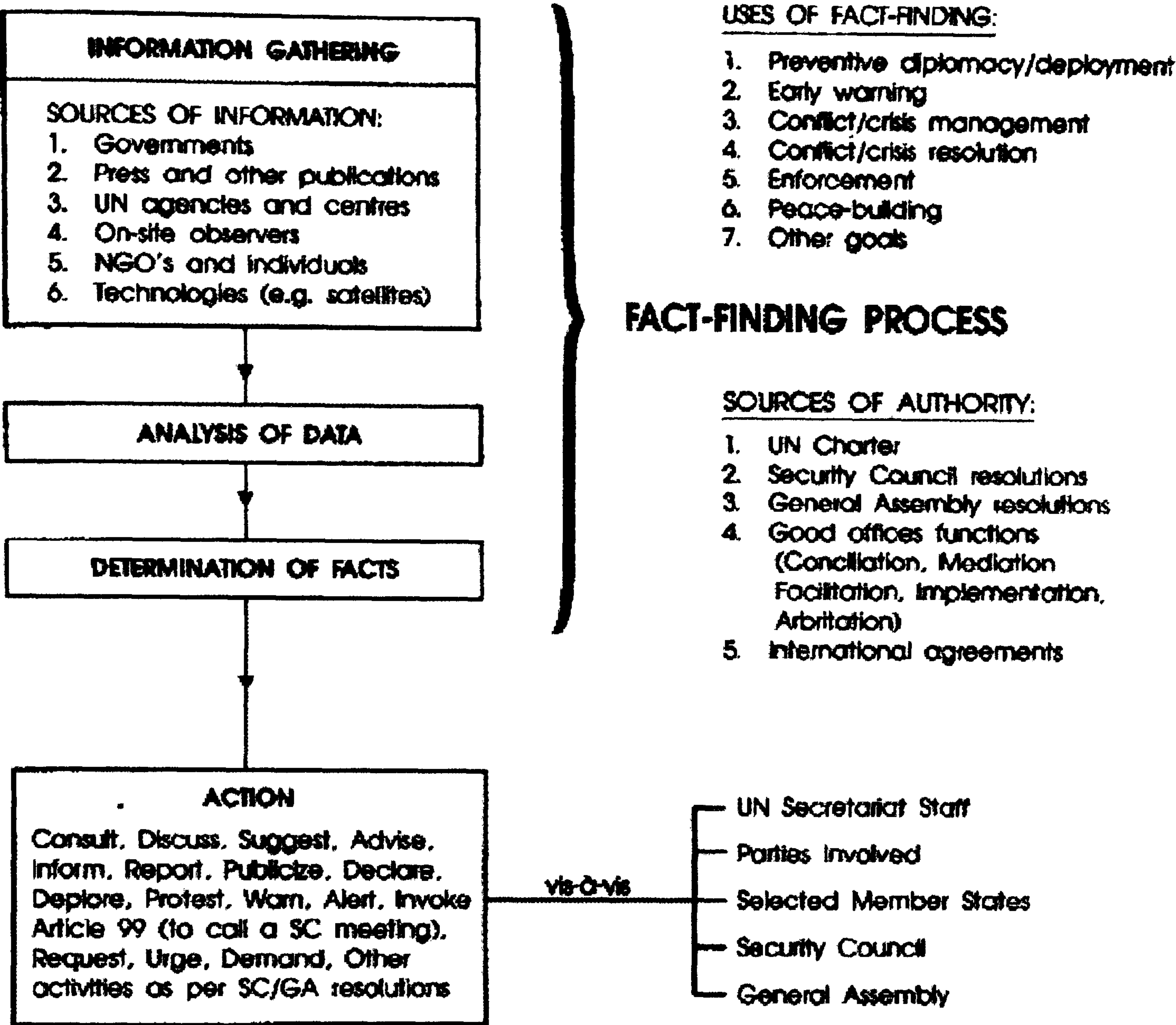


Fig. 8.1 A representation of fact-finding mission as illustrated by Walter Dorn⁵⁴³

8.2. Information functions of special programmes

The five main organs of the United Nations share between them about 70 to 80 main divisions or departments. Most of these have dedicated research and analysis units, or perform some collection and analysis activities to support departmental policies, or to be fed into other UN functions. An exhaustive examination of these departments and their information activities would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, a few examples are worthy of mention here:

Example 1: United Nations Institute of Disarmament Research

The United Nations Institute of Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is an inter-governmental organisation within the UN, which reports directly to the General Assembly. Based in Geneva, UNIDIR conducts research on disarmament and security issues, to support relevant authorities in

⁵⁴³ Dorn, op cit, (reproduced here with permission of the author).

devising effective policies with regards to disarmament and world security issues. Its activities include, among others, campaigns, research and publications covering a broad range of topics in international affairs. These also cover issues such as global diplomacy, violent conflicts, current and emerging issues in nuclear weapons, refugee security, computer warfare, and small arms proliferation etc.⁵⁴⁴ UNIDIR maintains an extensive network of researchers, diplomats, government officials, NGOs and other institutions. According to its publicity website, the institute's main aims are to build bridges between research communities and UN member states, and use these platforms to facilitate new thinking and dialogue on contemporary security challenges.⁵⁴⁵

Example 2: The Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), located within the Secretariat, defines its remit as, “to promote a broad-based and sustainable development through multidimensional and integrated approach to economic, social, environmental, population and gender related aspects of development.” It also claims “to provide a coordinated framework and an institutional structure for promoting agreed goals and objectives as well as monitoring the implementation of the programmes.”⁵⁴⁶ In order to meet these objectives, DESA depends on a research and analysis unit, the Development and Policy Planning Office (DPPO). The tasks of this department are twofold: (i) providing information support for policy, and preparing cross-sector departmental reports; and (ii) promoting intra-departmental policy coordination and liaison with external bodies. These activities also cover duties such as preparing policy statements on the economic sector and assisting the Under-Secretary-General and other intergovernmental bodies in reaching policy positions on development issues, as well as examining long-term global development perspectives.⁵⁴⁷ This latter culminates to an in-depth report on the world situation relating to economic developments, which are published annually. Examples of these include, the “World Economic and Social Survey” (2003), and the “World Economic Situation and Prospects” (2004). These reports examine the state of the world economy and emerging policy issues, and attempt to analyse and forecast global economic, trade and financial trends.

⁵⁴⁴ United Nations Institute for Disarmament home page <http://www.unidir.org/html/en/home.html> (accessed Oct 2003)

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid

⁵⁴⁶ The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is the result of the merger of a number of departments within the Secretariat: the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services. <http://www.un.org/esa/desaov.htm> (accessed Jan 2004)

Example 3: Research and Analysis Unit in the United Nations High Commission for Refugees

The more than 5000 staff employed within the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), includes a team of research and policy analysts in the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU). UNHCR was initially set up (in 1950) for the resettlement of about 1.5 million refugees made homeless by the Second World War. Today, the Commission's key mandate includes co-ordinating international action to protect refugees and to deal with refugee problems worldwide.⁵⁴⁸

EPAU is a dedicated research and analysis unit within UNHCR whose tasks include evaluating and initiating programmes, with respect to refugee issues and evolving policy perspectives in this area. The range of activities covers promoting research on issues relating to the welfare of displaced people, as well as encouraging the active exchange of ideas and information between humanitarian NGO's, policy-makers and the academic community.⁵⁴⁹ The unit also collates statistical data, detailing current trends in the world with regards to refugee issues. Information generated by EPAU, enables the Commission to track the implementation of international refugee conventions and progress toward achieving lasting solutions for refugees, new refugee outflows, refugee populations and movements, as well as demographic characteristics.⁵⁵⁰

8.3. Research and analysis in the Secretariat

Three further departments in this vein deserve special mention. These are: Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). These departments are of particular interest, partly because they are at the forefront of major United Nations operations, and because, as a result of their main preoccupations, they are relatively close to politically sensitive issues. Or, to put it differently, they operate on political sensitive territories, compared to the examples discussed earlier. It can also be said that these departments are responsible, to varying degrees, for carrying out some of the most complex tasks for which the Secretary-General is mandated to deal with. Their information activities are geared towards strategic decision, and as we shall see presently, also include military planning for peacekeeping operations.

Each of these departments has divisions and desk officers, and there are about 100 desk officers covering all the member countries of the UN. Their main task is to monitor developments in world

⁵⁴⁷ "Strengthening of the United Nations: An Agenda for Further Change" Report of the Secretary-General, General Assembly, A/57/387, United Nations, September 2002; see also Development and Policy Planning Office, Home page: <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/index.html> (accessed July 2004)

⁵⁴⁸ "Basic facts" about UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/home> (accessed Oct 2003)

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid

affairs. The desk officers have their own sources (human contacts), for collecting information. They do their own analysis and send their reports to their directors, then to the General-Secretary. Generally, information is obtained from public sources, worldwide web, newspapers etc., but staff may also develop their own contact, for their information collection activities. There is no formal restriction on staff, and individuals may develop their own system of work, as long as it is consistent with the UN system and the need for impartiality.⁵⁵¹ This notwithstanding, departmental requirements vary, depending on their specific functions. Below, I examine their purpose and their information gathering work.

The Department of Political Affairs

The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is the main contact point between the Secretary-General and the outside world. DPA is also the main focal point for the United Nations political activities, especially its commitment to the maintenance of world peace and security. The DPA is responsible for advising the Secretary-General on these matters and supporting him in his duties. It provides the Secretary-General with political guidance, and advises him “on emerging trends bearing on peace and security” and, where necessary, recommends possible action by the organisation.⁵⁵² The Department consists of four main regional divisions: two for Africa, one for Asia and one for the Americas and Europe. Each regional division is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Under-Secretary General, through one of the Assistant Secretary-Generals. There are also four further divisions within the framework of sub-programmes: Security Council Affairs, Electoral Assistant Division, Decolonisation Unit and Division for Palestinian Rights (Question of Palestine).

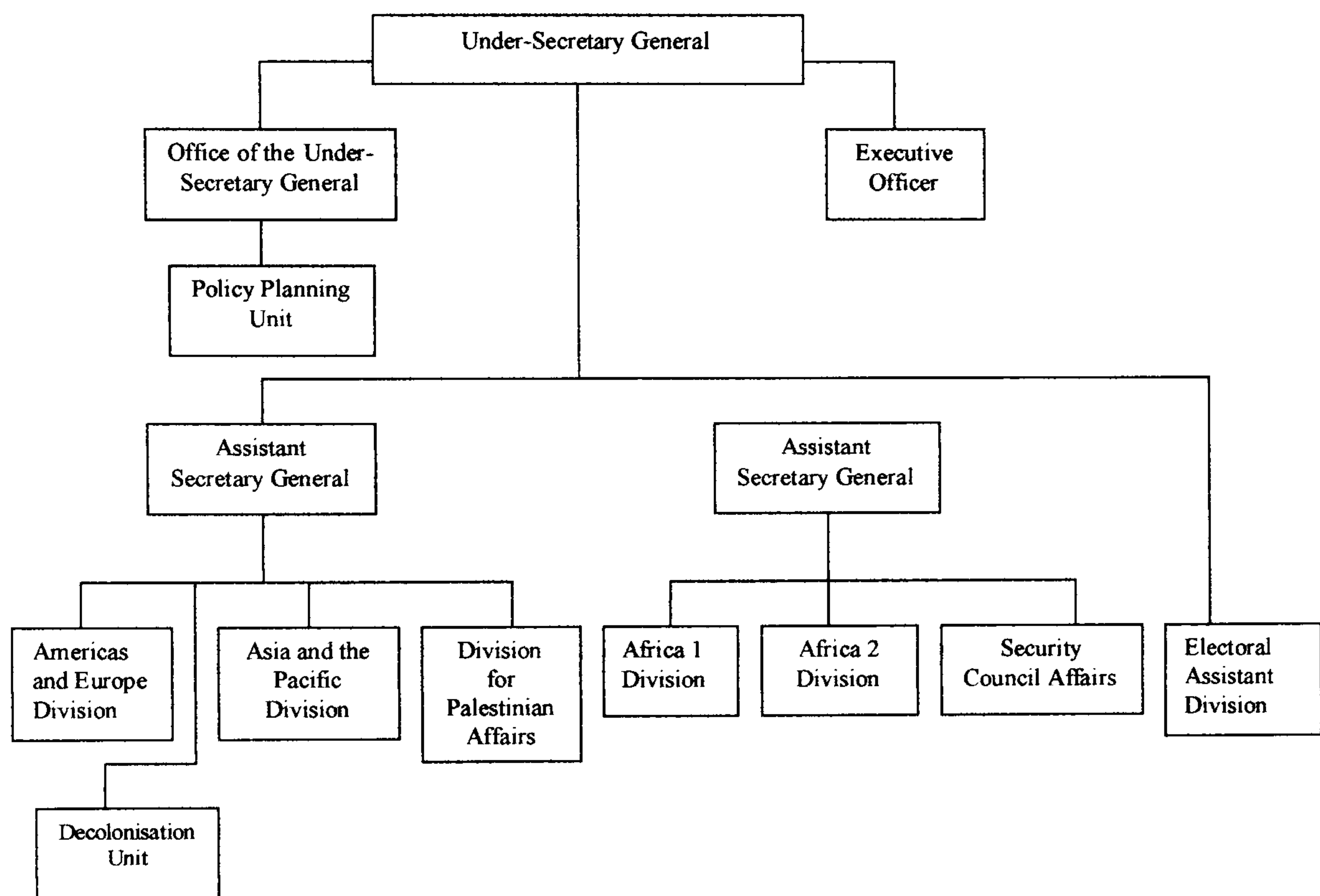
The focus of activities in the DPA changes from issue to issue, depending on the most pressing issues of the time. For example, from 1945 to 1991, the department was preoccupied firstly, by Cold War concerns and minimally by issues such as decolonisation. Since 1991, however, its central focus has shifted to two main doctrinal goals: “preventive diplomacy” and issues of terrorism. These issues have directed the core concerns of the department to, firstly, identifying potential crisis areas and providing early warning to the Secretary-General on developments and situations affecting international peace and security. And secondly, planning and participating in fact-finding, peacemaking and other missions to areas of actual or potential conflicts where the Secretary-General’s preventive and peacemaking efforts may be needed, or are already engaged.⁵⁵³ In a proposed revision of the role of DPA, it was acknowledged that the department will also be engaged in efforts to “reinforce the organization’s capacity for early warning, good offices and non-military

⁵⁵¹ Interview with UN staffer [B]

⁵⁵² “Organization of the Department of Political Affairs” Secretary-General’s bulletin United Nations ST/SGB/2000/10, 15 May 2000

⁵⁵³ United Nations ST/SGB/2000/10, 15 May 2000

measures to prevent disputes from escalating into conflicts, as well as to resolve conflicts that have erupted.”⁵⁵⁴ As the lead department on the issue of terrorism, it also liaises with the Office of Legal Affairs, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and members of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, to review measures and policies, as well as advising the Secretary-General on these subjects.⁵⁵⁵



Department of Political Affairs Organizational Chart

Fig. 8.3 Based on DPA public information⁵⁵⁶

In a proposed revision of the DPA’s structure, in 2002, a sub-programme, “Prevention, Control and Resolution of Conflicts” (PCRC), was added, to operate under the regional divisions. The remit for this programme, includes: monitoring and assessing political developments, “for the purpose of identifying options and formulating recommendations on the role that the United Nations may be called upon to play in the prevention, control and resolution of conflicts as well as in the area of post-conflict peace-building activities.”⁵⁵⁷ Accordingly, “information collection and analysis and early warning activities with respect to potential and actual conflicts that threaten international peace

⁵⁵⁴ “Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan, for the period 2002-2005” United Nations A/57/6 (Prog.1) par 1.3, General Assembly, 8 April 2002
⁵⁵⁵ Ibid
⁵⁵⁶ Department of Political Affairs home page: http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/about_dpa/fst_about_dpa.htm (accessed Oct 2003)
⁵⁵⁷ Ibid, par 1.7

and security will be undertaken and utilized to enhance the capacity of the Secretariat.⁵⁵⁸ The main resource for this enterprise is to be derived from the Policy Planning Unit (PPU).

The Policy Planning Unit in DPA

The Policy Planning Unit (PPU) is located within the Office of the Under-Secretary General in the DPA and headed by a Chief who reports to the Under-Secretary General. The PPU's main purpose is to develop the department's capacity, with regard to "information collection, analysis, and early warning, preventive actions, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building."⁵⁵⁹ The department's working methods include developing links with academic institutions, relevant research centres, NGOs, think-tanks, foreign policy forums, and collaborating with regional divisions. The PPU works in close cooperation with other policy units within the Secretariat. These include the Strategic Planning Unit in the Office of the Secretary-General and the Policy Analysis Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as well as similar entities in other departments of the United Nations.

The Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The end of the Cold War elevated issues that were ignored or marginalised in the UN's peace and security agenda. But since 1991, the impacts of natural disasters and the suffering of the victims have been recognised as one of the many issues to attract the attention of the international community. As a result, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) was established to respond to these concerns. Created under General Assembly Resolution 46/182, its principal mandate includes, developing and encouraging collective efforts of the international community in providing humanitarian assistance to disaster stricken areas and coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance within the United Nations.⁵⁶⁰ The principal administrator of this mandate is the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Located in both New York and Geneva, and within the framework of the Secretariat, its key tasks consist of: a) developing and coordinating policies with regard to humanitarian issues; b) promoting humanitarian concerns with various organs, including states, and the Security Council; and (c) establishing and coordinating emergency relief operations. OCHA carries out its functions primarily through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator), whose role is to oversee the inter-agency decision-making with regard to complex emergencies, including needs assessments,

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁵⁹ ST/SGB/2000/10, op cit, par. 7.2

⁵⁶⁰ General Assembly Resolution 46/182, which led to the creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), A/RES/46/182, 78th Plenary Meeting, 19 Dec 1991, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nation"

consolidated appeals, field coordination arrangements and the development of humanitarian policies.⁵⁶¹

The humanitarian early warning system

The main apparatus for responding to, if not prevention of complex emergencies is the so-called Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS). By definition, HEWS attempts to identify crises with humanitarian implications. The idea is to apply “multi-sector analysis of indicators, both long-term and short-term”, and combine this with the evaluation of trends and in-depth field-based information, supported by an extensive database of “base-line information”.⁵⁶² It is also hoped that this process will produce accurate and timely information on the likelihood of humanitarian crisis, which could be speedily communicated to decision-makers at the HQ.

In view of the complexities inherent in humanitarian disasters, especially their unpredictability, Resolution 46/182 envisaged that an early warning system, based on the idea of “prevention” and “preparedness” would be a good starting point. Both of these devices would depend on integrated and systematic information collection and analysis programme. The thinking was that in order to reduce the impact of disasters, there should be increased awareness of the need for disaster mitigation strategies, particularly, in disaster-prone countries. It followed that the need for greater exchange and dissemination of existing and new technical information related to the assessment, prediction and mitigation of disasters, would occupy the heart of OCHA’S mandate.⁵⁶³ The process would therefore depend upon existing capacities of relevant organizations, entities of the United Nations and states, for the systematic pooling, analysis and dissemination of early-warning information on natural disasters and other emergencies, as well as “providing consolidated information to all interested Governments and concerned authorities.”⁵⁶⁴ For this purpose, OCHA has offices in about 100 countries around the world.

The OCHA’s work revolves around its information, analysis and communication activities, with a focus on forewarning of impending humanitarian disasters, as well as developing effective tools for early warning systems. To perform these roles successfully, OCHA also depends on a number of support systems and teams whose operations are largely dictated by OCHA’s early warning requirements. One of these is the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), responsible for the

⁵⁶¹ “Basic facts about OCHA” *OCHA-Online* http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/about/facts.html (accessed Nov 03)

⁵⁶² Basic facts about OCHA *OCHA-Online* http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/about/facts.html (accessed Nov 2003)

⁵⁶³ “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian, emergency assistance of the United Nations” A/RES/46/182, 78th Plenary Meeting, 19 December 1991

⁵⁶⁴ Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the In-depth Evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (E/AC.51/1997/3); United Nations” A/RES/46/182 (above)

systematic pooling and analysis of early-warning information, and providing it to governments, concerned authorities and related agencies. ERC is supported by the resident coordinator and disaster management team, whose responsibility is to alert ERC about possible occurrence of complex emergencies, such as natural disasters, and recommending preventive measures.

The rationale of this information structure is its focus on “forward looking” activities, to the point of identifying or predicting a potential humanitarian crisis, wherever it may occur. Hence, a team of analysts are assigned to identify areas of potential crisis and their humanitarian implications. The team, set around the Early Warning and Contingency Planning Unit (EWCP), collects and analyses information from a variety of sources and makes it available to desk officers in both ERC and the resident coordinator and disaster management teams.⁵⁶⁵ EWCP teams work with offices located in individual states as well as with regional organisations.

OCHA’s early warning system also employs the services of Field Information Support staff (FIS), with a geographic information system (GIS) support unit.⁵⁶⁶ These units form part of an initial response, on site, to emergencies and natural disasters. Consisting of a team of information specialists, they exploit advances in new technologies to develop and promote the use of information systems in humanitarian emergencies. This includes, negotiating access to satellite remote sensing facilities for humanitarian agencies, as well as collaborating with both the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the UN Geographic Information Working Group. Their information assets are shared with relevant UN departments, such as the DPKO.

The FIS is also encouraged to develop new and innovative systems, to manage the collection, analysis and dissemination of information in the field, and to establish common methods and standards for inter-agency information exchange. For example, in 2002, FIS developed the Humanitarian Information Capability (HIC), a rapid deployment concept (“HIC in-a-box”), with the aim of providing an integrated array of deployable kits, teams of information management experts and training packages that include standard operating procedures.⁵⁶⁷ These efforts are directed at enhancing regional capacity, as well as effective data integration and exchange. These facilities, according to OCHA report, have been deployed in many humanitarian situations.⁵⁶⁸ For example, the report noted that field information support was provided for operations in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the occupied Palestinian territories and Sierra Leone, while preparations were completed for missions to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Nepal,

⁵⁶⁵ E/AC.51/1997/3, *ibid*

⁵⁶⁶ “Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in 2003: Activities and Extra-budgetary Requirements” (United Nations 2003)

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid* p. 48

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid*

Thailand, Latin America, Liberia and the Côte d'Ivoire. In some cases, the main task had been to manage information flow among various international aid agencies, operating in humanitarian emergency locations.

Drawbacks in the early warning systems

Despite these developments and advances in dealing with humanitarian emergencies, a number of issues remain to be resolved. A report by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight, on the "In-depth Evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs", revealed problems which are both structural and political in nature. According to the report, several difficulties limited the use of OCHA's field information at the Headquarters, especially by the Emergency Relief Coordinator.⁵⁶⁹ These include:

1. Lack of understanding in the field by the disaster management teams and the resident coordinator of what they should report.
2. Inter-agency reluctance and mistrust about sharing information rapidly, in certain cases.
3. Even after reports on situations requiring attention were issued, access to the executive level "remained a serious concern to the Working Group."
4. The participants worked on a number of methodological issues, including the identification and adoption of common indicators, but did not arrive at a consolidated list of indicators
5. Efforts to develop new schemes suffered from limited resources. For example, the need to develop "thematic databases, cutting across sectoral agency domains, on issues such as internally displaced persons, vulnerability analyses, child soldiers," was constrained by lack of resources.
6. "Perhaps even more critically", the report noted, no person or unit within the Secretariat (is) assigned responsibility for leadership of the overall development of early warning activities.
7. And in the context of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, consultations on early warning did not evolve as a tool for policy-making, linking early warning to contingency planning and preparedness.
8. Furthermore, within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee context, a lack of agreement on a minimum common methodology for gathering, analysing and sharing information pertinent to early signals of humanitarian crises, further undermined abilities for effective use of information.

⁵⁶⁹ Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the In-depth Evaluation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (E/AC.51/1997/3), see especially par 51 of the report.

These problems are, in fact, not particularly unique to OCHA, but as I shall show elsewhere in the present study, are symptomatic of problems that underlie multi-agency information pooling. Even in the North Atlantic Alliance, widely praised for its coherence, some of these problems persist (see below).

8.4. Planning peacekeeping operations in the DPKO

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) deserves a special mention. If anything, apart from the difficulties involved in planning and deploying contingents for a variety of operations, including peacekeeping, the department's activities straddle a gamut of issues, such as political, military, security, humanitarian, economic, educational, and social issues. On this account, its information collection and analysis functions, or simply put, its intelligence requirements, likewise touch on some or all of these issues. Naturally, each of these problems will have specific information requirements, because each operation has its own set of mandates and tasks. This notwithstanding, it is not uncommon for an operation to have several components, covering both military and civilian components, and encompassing a broad range of issues. Whatever the combination, two major consequences are always present: The first is that a UN presence in a conflict as a third party would directly impact on the existing and developing political process in the country or region. The second is the unavoidable risk to peacekeepers in the field. With these in mind, it is expected that operations will, not only require adequate and timely information, but, specific and relevant information is required for the planning and implementation of a mandate. Presently, then, I shall examine the nature of this process in the DPKO, and provide an analysis of possible implications for the UN intelligence problems.

Situation Centre

The Situation Centre (SITCEN) lies at the heart of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The department was created in 1993 as a response to the expanding and increasingly complex nature of peacekeeping operations. Since then, its activities have evolved from that of supplementing the information management systems at the HQ, to a full-fledged structure. Its principal aims now include collating civilian and military information at the strategic level for decision-making. The Centre acts as a point of contact at UNHQ for all DPKO field missions, and providing a 24-hour communication link between senior staff members at the headquarters, field missions, humanitarian organisations, and member states, through their diplomatic missions. The Centre monitors peacekeeping field missions, with particular attention to potentially threatening situations for UN personnel. Its Crisis Centre provides a "crisis management" support in the event that a peacekeeping mission has to be implemented at short notice.

Information gathering and analysis is at the heart of SITCEN operations. As well as providing reference materials, including “maps, statistics and basic political, military and economic analytical information,” its efforts also provide resource for a range of early warning programmes.⁵⁷⁰ Information is fed to the centre from a variety of sources, including field operations and peacekeeping missions, news agencies, specialized periodicals and the Internet. When necessary, it can solicit information from governments and outside institutions.

The Centre’s staff are drawn from a number of countries. In 2003, they included personnel from about sixteen nations, including, Afghanistan, Denmark, France, Germany, Guyana, India, Italy, Mongolia, Poland, Russia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, the USA and Zimbabwe.⁵⁷¹ The majority of the staff, normally military personnel at the ranks of major or lieutenant-cornels, are employed for their experience and links with their national intelligence organisations.⁵⁷² According to Valimaki, no specific collection and analysis benchmark is laid down for the team; “each officer employs his own national classification.”⁵⁷³ Valimaki argued that the efficiency of this team is hindered by frequent turnover of staff. On the whole, however, SITCEN fulfils only a fraction of the intelligence requirement in peacekeeping operations, focusing mainly on monitoring and coordinating information from field operations, and communicating this to appropriate authorities and related departments. More complex and specialised operations, such as military operations, tend to have their own dedicated planning and information processing system.

Military planning in peacekeeping operations

The Military Planning Service (MPS) is one of several sub-programmes in the Office of the Military Adviser, dedicated to implementing military aspects of peacekeeping operations, as mandated by the Security Council. MPS consists of several (about four) geographical or regional planning teams. The task of developing actual and potential models of the military component of an operation falls under the charge of the MPS. Based on this narrow definition, MPS’s duties include generating intelligence that can be integrated into multi-dimensional planning in the Office of Operations. As a result, among its various tasks are collection and analysis of information and maintaining “situation awareness on conflicts with the potential for UN peacekeeping operations.”⁵⁷⁴ This task covers, preparing “strategic estimates, operational estimates, and concepts of operation as well as operational plans for military components of field missions, including contingency plans, for potential, ongoing

⁵⁷⁰ “Specific Tasks of the Situation Centre” United Nations, Department of Peace Keeping Operations, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/sitcen/team.html> (accessed Oct 2003); see also Valimaki, Pasi *Intelligence Support in Peace Support Operations* (Finland: National Defence College 2000) p. 69

⁵⁷¹ “Situation Centre team” <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/sitcen/team.html> (accessed Nov 2003)

⁵⁷² Valimaki, op cit p. 69

⁵⁷³ Valimaki, ibid, p. 70

⁵⁷⁴ “Military Planning Service Tasks” http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/milad/mps/mps_tasks.htm (accessed Nov 2003)

or closing peacekeeping missions”.⁵⁷⁵ For military planning purposes, MPS also works in close cooperation with a range of institutions such as governments, NGOs and private organisations. Furthermore, there is a healthy flow of information between the SITCEN and the MPS and, as Dorn observed, also between the field operations and MPS.⁵⁷⁶

8.5. Military intelligence in field operations

Away from the comfort of the UNHQ, and into the field of peacekeeping operations, information collection and analysis in military as well as civilian operations take on a totally different form. This means that an intelligence process cycle; requirements, tasking, collection, analysis and application are determined by a particular mission environment. At the top of a list of concerns are the degree of the danger and the stress to which the personnel may be exposed, and, intelligence planning would aim to address these concerns.

Peacekeeping encompasses many different activities, which may neatly fall within broad definitions of “military” or “civilian” operations. However, more often than not, peacekeeping operations tend to have a military component, if only to protect the civilian personnel. An example of such a combined operation is the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), in former Yugoslavia, which included both civilian and military elements. For instance, while the military part of a mission might be concerned with keeping the warring factions apart, the civilian aspect could be engaged with coordinating humanitarian aid.

This notwithstanding, until recently, the UN has been reluctant to admit the extent to which intelligence contributes to peacekeeping operations. Nonetheless, it is now evident that intelligence has always been a part and parcel of every peacekeeping mission. This is in spite of the fact that, the deployment or references to its use are still met with reluctance. In the United Nations Operations in the Congo, 1960-64, according to Dorn and Bell, Secretary-General U Thant, reportedly responded to a request from the Commander of the operation, for an intelligence component in these terms:

We are fully aware of your long-standing limitations in gathering information. The limitations are inherent in the very nature of the United Nations and therefore of any operations conducted by it.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid

⁵⁷⁶ Dorn, Walter, “The Cloak and the Blue Beret: The Limits of Intelligence-Gathering in UN Peacekeeping” *Pearson Papers Number 4: Intelligence in Peacekeeping* (Clementsport, Nova Scotia: The Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Centre, 1999), pp. 1-31

⁵⁷⁷ Dorn, Walter, A. and David J.H.Bell, *Intelligence and Peacekeeping: The UN Operation in the Congo 1960-1964*” *International Peace-Keeping* Vol.2 No.1 (spring 1995), pp. 11-33

These limitations have often been circumvented, first by units or divisions taking the initiative, to acquire at least some intelligence for operational guidance, or as a matter of self-protection.⁵⁷⁸ On the other hand, in order to save the United Nations the embarrassment, the term “information” had often been substituted for “intelligence”; thus, “military intelligence”, for example, becomes “military information.” This development is examined in greater detail below.

Until recently also, intelligence processes in peacekeeping operations have remained mostly concealed from the public. Thanks to scholarly works championed by Walter Dorn of the Canadian Military College, and eyewitness accounts by former participants in peacekeeping operations published in *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*.⁵⁷⁹ With these scholarly efforts, and most importantly, reports of the DPKO, on “Lessons Learnt”, it is now possible to develop a concept, or at least understand the extent, limits, and implications of military (field) intelligence in the UN peacekeeping missions. These studies also show that, since the Congo episode, military intelligence is now an accepted feature in the UN peacekeeping operations, and all such operations with a military component now have what is referred to as “military information branch”, a slight modification of the term “Military Intelligence Branch” (MIB).

It is useful to keep the term “military intelligence”, as the substituted “information” makes no difference to the quality or techniques applied to conventional military intelligence. As Dorn and Bell observed on the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC), even though the term “intelligence” was officially banned from the UN lexicon, it persisted throughout the operation. This was to the extent that the Chiefs of “military information” (Lts-Col Bjorn Egge and N Borchgrevink) addressed themselves with the title, “Chief of Military Intelligence”. Similarly, intelligence reports were occasionally labelled as “produced by Military Intelligence Branch.”⁵⁸⁰ Other cosmetic changes implemented to disguise intelligence functions and to shield the UN from embarrassment, included replacing terms, such as “enemies” with “warring factions” or “belligerents”. These changes notwithstanding, as Villeneuve and Lefebvre observed, intelligence processes remained the same and were conducted in accordance with military standards and requirements.⁵⁸¹

The slowness to establish MIB in the formative years of peacekeeping operations arose out of confusion over the exact mandate for such missions. In the case of ONUC, according to Dorn and Bell, the civilian and military leadership were divided along ideological line on almost every issue,

⁵⁷⁸ In conversation with Jussi Saressalo, Military Adviser IPA, New York, Sept 2003

⁵⁷⁹ For example, Dorn and Bell, op cit; and Villeneuve, Captain Daniel and Sergeant Marc-Andr Lefebvre, “Intelligence and the UN: Lessons from Bosnia: A Canadian Experience” *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* (Oct-Dec 1996)

⁵⁸⁰ Dorn and Bell, op cit

⁵⁸¹ Villeneuve and Lefebvre, op cit

including the role and extent of intelligence operations.⁵⁸² The civilian leadership believed that ONUC military forces were mandated to perform a strictly peacekeeping and training role. More importantly a component as controversial and complex as intelligence, it was believed, would bring the ONUC into disrepute. Hammarksjold, for example, is said to have stated at a meeting of the Congo Advisory Committee that, ONUC could not afford to engage in secretive practices habitually associated with intelligence services, even though he admitted that the lack of an intelligence network was a serious handicap for the operation.⁵⁸³ The military, on the other hand, were critical of the lack of an intelligence component in ONUC. According to Dorn and Bell, the military leadership were concerned that the civilian elements were deliberately ignoring the principles of war and basic tactical conceptions in the control and deployment of forces. As the conflict in the Congo became more complicated and risky, and both Congolese civilians and ONUC personnel were exposed to danger, Dorn and Bell noted, an intelligence branch was given the go-ahead, but with some modification to its terms of reference.

Extreme situations, it is said, demand extreme measures. Although the United Nations requires some discretion in collection and analysis in its field missions, it is evident from existing studies that, in these extreme situations, the full complement of military intelligence tends to apply, perhaps with a few exceptions.⁵⁸⁴ This means that both the methods and structures of the MIB are strictly consistent with conventional military intelligence operations, and dictated by existing “combat” or operational conditions.

Structurally, for example, based on the ONUC operation, a typical field intelligence unit consist of teams performing discrete and specialised tasks, ranging from understanding combatants’ order of battle, to assessing their economic, political and demographic characteristics.⁵⁸⁵ An information cell, typically, consists of field liaison officer (or field intelligence officer), air intelligence desk, political and economic desk, maps and logs desk, local intelligence desk, interrogation team, field monitoring teams, and clerical support. This structure changes with battle conditions as well as with available technology. In the Balkan conflict of the 1990s, for example, where combined operations between the United Nations and NATO paved the way for extensive deployment of advanced NATO technology, many local situations were matched by these new technologies and techniques.

A combination of battlefield conditions and available technology often reflects the quality and techniques of intelligence processes, which, as Dorn and Bell argued, are not different from those

⁵⁸² Dorn and Bell, *op cit*

⁵⁸³ *Ibid*

⁵⁸⁴ Villeneuve and Lefebvre, *op cit*

⁵⁸⁵ Dorn and Bell, “*op cit*”

deployed in conventional battlefield operations. These include communication interception and interrogations. In the Congo, for example, aerial intelligence, ciphers and codes, as well as human intelligence were standard deployments.

For the UN, dissemination of information in the field would aim to reflect the organisation's impartiality and make the information accessible to appropriate bodies. However, as a rule, sensitive information is not subjected to a wide-scale distribution. Villeneuve, and Lefebvre observed that, "numerous leaks exist in the U.N system".⁵⁸⁶ There is the possibility that the information could end up in the hands of the warring factions. Such information, therefore, is disseminated strictly on a need-to-know bases, and there is also the need to "protect the source" as much as possible."⁵⁸⁷

There is no set or clearly defined role for the MIB. This is understandable for a number of reasons. Firstly, in a broader context, each and every peacekeeping operation has individually tailored mandates, depending on the specific conflict environment. Secondly, in a multinational peacekeeping operation, intelligence processes and requirements operate in a more or less decentralised fashion. That is, each battalion or unit manages or operates an intelligence cell in own area of responsibility (AOR), even where a coordinating intelligence cell exists.⁵⁸⁸ Military experts suggest that decentralised planning facilitates command, control and communications (C3), and allows timely responses to prioritise intelligence requirements.⁵⁸⁹ More importantly, an intelligence process must be synchronised with a particular operation. Furthermore, a multinational military operation generally consists of units with different structures, as well as different intelligence doctrines. These and other factors make it difficult to speak of a clearly defined role for MIB. This, however, does not obviate the fact that, a lack of general guidelines or established procedures, as is the case with the UN, could in many ways create problems in this decentralised environment.

However, based on the experience of ONUC operations, Dorn and Bell have listed four primary functions performed by MIB.⁵⁹⁰ These are:

1. Providing enhanced security for UN personnel, such as recognising the prevailing attitudes of combatant factions, so as to forewarn the force commander of security threats.

⁵⁸⁶ Villeneuve, and Lefebvre, op cit

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid

⁵⁸⁹ Agee, Collin A, (Lieutenant Colonel). "Joint STARS in Bosnia, Too Much Data: Too Little Intel?" *Military Intelligence professional Bulletin*, Oct-Dec 1996

⁵⁹⁰ Dorn and Bell, op cit

2. Supporting specific operations and providing the force commanders with intelligence prior to undertaking military action.
3. Warning of possible outbreaks of conflict or escalation of existing situations.
4. Estimating the military capabilities of combatants, monitoring arms trafficking, outside interference and possible mercenary activities.

Villeneuve and Lefebvre also identified similar roles for MIB in the Bosnian conflict as;

- A. Producing indications and warning to predict potential crisis situations inside the AOR before they occurred. “We sought to give as much time as possible to the battle-group to diffuse situations before they led to incidents. It is always easier to prevent incidents than to patch them up afterward.”
- B. Monitoring developments inside and around the AOR, strategically and politically throughout the Balkans, with the aim of keeping the unit informed of the evolution of events.
- C. Assessing and monitoring situations throughout the AOR to determine the level of threat against the United Nations and to immediately inform the unit of any changes. The threat came mainly from modifications in the warring factions' attitudes, the presence of mines, and the effects of weather on road conditions.⁵⁹¹

An example of how these basic tasks are translated or adopted to suit specific field operations, was demonstrated in multinational operations, at the height of the conflict in former Republic of Yugoslavia. Villeneuve and Lefebvre, both of whom served as intelligence officers in the Canadian 3rd Battalion, Royal 22d Regiment (a French-language-speaking Canadian infantry battalion), in Bosnia, in 1995, noted how the process of establishing an intelligence branch for a military operation starts with a need to synchronise intelligence with (battlefield) requirements.⁵⁹² By the account of these authors, it is evident that operations mandated or supported by the UN would not necessarily mean a drastic deviation from conventional military planning. All intelligence preparations for battlefield (IPB) start with a basic baseline on which intelligence requirements could be planned.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹¹ Villeneuve and Lefebvre, op cit

⁵⁹² Ibid

⁵⁹³ Marshall, Major Roger D. BEM1, “Operation GRAPPLE: British Armed Forces in UN Protection Force” (Intelligence Corps), United Kingdom, *Military intelligence Bulletin*, October-December 1996

These would include an assessment of the warring factions' deployments, movements, firing incidents, and so on:

Once established, all events could then be compared to this baseline to determine if they were a threat to the cease-fire. The rationale behind this was to have as much warning as possible of impending events in order to be proactive instead of reactive. This concept was based on the static nature of the operations both in terms of the non-changing AOR and the reduced level of military action expected when the planners developed the concept.⁵⁹⁴

This suggests that it would be difficult to think of a UN peacekeeping operation without an adequate intelligence support. Major Marshall recalled how knowledge of the “population terrain” became a vital tool when separating the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims in Central Bosnia. Local issues, he noted, “could often be resolved with prior knowledge of historical perspectives and emotive locations such as former battle sites, burial sites, religious sites, homes of local leaders, key locations for economic and other reasons, and the list goes on.”⁵⁹⁵ This subtle knowledge lies side by side with more tactical knowledge, such as that concerning combatant deployment, geographic terrain and weather intelligence, as well as evidence hinting at unforeseen difficulties that might lie ahead. Furthermore, the existence of advanced technology for terrain analysis, provided by NATO, enabled the mission to learn more about the main communications routes of the combatants and areas of potential crisis. Villeneuve and Lefebvre noted:

The presence of a terrain analysis (TERA) team with the unit was a significant help, and went a good way toward making up reconnaissance shortfalls. The team produced TERA products to provide answers to many specific questions, and to respond to intelligence requirements with respect to the terrain and the combined effects of terrain and weather on military operations.⁵⁹⁶

As discussed earlier (see 6.5), this example also reveals that intelligence processes and cycles must be flexible and adaptable to specific situations.⁵⁹⁷ This is more so in the field, when the conflict levels tend to fluctuate unpredictably, for instance, “from low- to almost mid-intensity overnight.”⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁴ Villeneuve and Lefebvre, op cit

⁵⁹⁵ Marshall, op cit

⁵⁹⁶ Op cit

⁵⁹⁷ See also, Villeneuve and Lefebvre, op cit

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid

The point here is to reinforce the importance of intelligence in UN missions. Hence, as I shall argue in the concluding chapter, the culture of attempting to conceal intelligence functions, instead of capitalising on their benefits, when the case is so obvious, is, in fact, an obstacle to selling the concept to politicians.

It must also be acknowledged that the development of a military intelligence branch within the United Nations system is a significant and appropriate departure from conventional understanding of the roles and limits of the United Nations collective security functions. However, the MIB, as also observed in the OCHA's early warning systems, is not without limitations. These drawbacks are not unusual or specific to UN bodies. Neither are organisations such as NATO, recognised for its apparent coherence, immune from problems, which may be found to be common features in multinational as well as multi-agency information structures.

Some such problems, as observed in the case of ONUC, for example, include an *ad hoc* and haphazard approach to intelligence procurements and dissemination, lack of resources and frequent turnover of staff.⁵⁹⁹ Differences in the priorities of participating states form another level of problems in multi-agency information sharing, and hence are symptomatic of coordination problems. Examples of some of these problems are also highlighted in the accounts of personnel who participated in intelligence cells in multinational operations during the conflict in the former Republic of Yugoslavia (see appendix II). It is also worth noting that in the Yugoslav case, several multinational organisations, including the UN, NATO, and the European Union, to mention but a few were involved in efforts to bring peace to the region. This situation contributed to some of the problems mentioned in the accounts of the officers, included competing technologies and differences in intelligence culture, differences in personnel and resources, inconsistencies in dissemination, impact of national agenda, and mini intelligence fiefdoms.

8.6. Analysis of underlying problems in coordinating field intelligence

These problems are not, however, exactly the main obstacles in conceptualising or forging a viable intelligence capability within the UN. As secondary problems, they can be found to be natural occurrences in multinational operations. Valimaki observed that the need to preserve national command structure during operations, may lead to indeterminacy in the command structure, even when upper level command relations are clearly defined.⁶⁰⁰ With regard to defining intelligence processes, this may also lead contingents to interpret the mandate in different ways, sometimes favouring one party or another in a conflict, or, to a situation where some contingents may not allow their actions to be scrutinised by other states. As a secondary issue, it is also possible that they could.

⁵⁹⁹ "Dorn and Bell, op cit

in some cases, be easy to avoid. With careful planning, as well as agreements among member states and parties to the conflict, some of these problems could be negotiated. For example, agreements on goals, lines of command, and rules of procedure could be agreed upon before an operation commences.

As some of the cases studied in subsequent chapters will show, these problems are, in specific situations, avoidable. However, the lack of appropriate or established mechanisms to deal with these issues, suggests that success may only be incidental. Thus, for the United Nations, the issue is more profound and located deep within the structure of the institution. Furthermore, the attitudes and behaviour of the member states, as well as their perception of intelligence processes, are also part of the complex of issues. These, in fact, are the first level problems for the organisation to overcome if it is to achieve a degree of consistency in the utilisation of its intelligence assets.

Evidence emerging from the study so far, and from the experience of UN involvement in conflicts requiring essentially the exploitation of intelligence assets suggests that there is a direct relationship between the UN headquarters and intelligence utilisation in the field as well as in the Secretariat. Discrepancies tend to have a domino effect on almost every aspect of UN operations. These inconsistencies manifest themselves more clearly in three important aspects of an operation; the *mandate*, *coordination* and *planning*, all of which are intricately related. The impacts of these factors are summarised here, but are examined in greater depth in the chapter below.

Starting with the machinery of decision-making in the United Nations, we see that the confusion first and foremost, lies at the heart of the decision-making structure of the organisation and the process of authorising an operation. In the first instance, a resolution sanctioning an operation is often hurriedly written, and this in itself may follow several weeks or months after an emergency situation requiring intervention has arisen. A resolution is often sponsored by a member state or coalition of states with an interest in the situation, and the details of the draft resolution may generate a divergence of views among Council or Assembly members. Since a resolution generally reflects the political interests of the sponsoring state or coalition of states, it mirrors few of the realities on the ground and has the tendency to ignore the wider political implications and risks to peacekeeping personnel. Furthermore, the rush to take action at the height of a situation suggests that little attention is paid to the content of the resolution, or the clarity of the mandate. The impact of these structural and bureaucratic defects is felt in the planning and deployment of a mission, with recurring effects well into the operation. For example, Brian Urquart, reflecting on Hammarskjöld's tenure as Secretary-General, noted that the nature and demands of the Congo situation were largely unknown, when the

⁶⁰⁰ Valimaki, op cit, pp. 62-3

decision was taken to launch the operation. Even when it was obvious that aspects of the mission would have delicate political implications.⁶⁰¹ He wrote;

The decision of the Council to authorise the Secretary-General to go ahead – taken overnight in the face of a desperate situation – had to some extent blurred the reservations and anxieties of many governments about a quite unprecedented UN action.⁶⁰²

Urquart concluded that the launch of the Congo expedition, without preparation or adequate planning imposed a “tremendous challenge” to the ingenuity of Hammarskjöld and the Secretariat.”⁶⁰³

The ONUC operation might have been the first such experience for the United Nations, but as shown so far, these problems still persist. Why? There is no direct or single answer to dealing with the complex nature of decision-making in the organisation. The problem is multi-layered, and a detailed study of the decision process is not within the present objective. Nevertheless, an understanding of the role of “intelligence” as a decisional tool, in the crucial stages of commissioning an operation, could provide an important insight into the process.

Thus it is possible to ask, how much of an intelligence input goes into the drafting of a resolution? Going by the vagueness, inconsistencies and often, the political orientation of sponsoring states, there is little to suggest that a decision had been based on a systematic intelligence, focused on the situation at hand. The more obvious scenario is that intelligence, where there might be any, comes after a mandate has been agreed upon. This is a case of putting the cart before the horse.⁶⁰⁴

It is not surprising that decisions of the Security Council tend to impose a crushing burden on the UN Secretariat and upon the Secretary-General.⁶⁰⁵ As noted earlier, major planning starts here in the various departments located within the Secretariat. Again, with poor resources and somewhat limited political support, mistakes made at the top of the decision hierarchy may not be easily reversed.

What the preceding analysis suggests is that, from the point of view of planning a field operation, the Secretariat lacks a reasonable head start to give it the advantage it requires, and the consequences are felt on almost every aspect of the operation. This means that the organisation often finds itself

⁶⁰¹ Urquart, Brian *Hammarskjöld* (Boldly Head, 1972) p. 400

⁶⁰² Ibid p. 401

⁶⁰³ Ibid, p. 400

⁶⁰⁴ Perhaps, as Dr Derek Lynch noted, it might be the case that “getting the necessary votes for a resolution may be the first thing on the policy-makers minds.”

⁶⁰⁵ Urquart, op cit, p. 400

reacting to situations rather than being prepared or proactive. Starting with a complete intelligence assessment after the commencement of an operation had been deployed with limited knowledge of the situation, could spell a recipe for disaster. An example of this scenario is demonstrated in the DPKO report on Lessons learnt in Sierra Leone. The report noted that a lack of adequate preparation, such as “enemy assessment” before peacekeeping contingents were deployed, contributed to deterioration of the situation in the war-ridden country in May 2000. “New contingents were hurriedly dispatched to trouble spots without any information explaining what kind of enemy they may have to face. With no knowledge of the terrain and unfamiliar with the rebels’ military tactics, type of equipment or intentions, these troops were taken by surprise.”⁶⁰⁶ After this disastrous start, it was only later that a military information cell was created to attempt to reverse the situation, utilising an already existing British deployment in the country.

Thus, in addition to structural and political constraints on the Security Council, which have been shown to be a factor in the utilisation of intelligence, a further constraint imposed on the Secretariat is the obvious lack of a clear definition of an appropriate intelligence function. This lack of criteria or guidelines for intelligence collection and analysis is reflected in various attempts to forge an intelligence component in peacekeeping missions. An example of this was cited in the “Lessons Learned” report, on the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).⁶⁰⁷ The report acknowledged that important intelligence processes, such as standardised procedures for collection and analysis were lacking in the UNOSOM operation. There were no criteria for “collection efforts, analysis and fusion of information, dissemination and sharing procedures, counter-intelligence, operational security, detainee processing and interrogation and the acquisition/maintenance of intelligence products, including maps.” It concluded:

... United Nations guidelines for detainees were confused, and proper processing and interrogation was for the most part non-existent due to a lack of clear procedures as well as trained personnel to carry them out. The absence of United Nations guidance was a recipe for potential criticism, and the failure of processing and interrogation negated what might have been a valuable source of human intelligence.⁶⁰⁸

Even though aspects of the situation improved over time, there was never an overarching concept of intelligence management or an exact plan that adequately addressed these important issues. This, according to the report, led to deterioration in the unity of command. This analysis stands uneasily

⁶⁰⁶ “Lessons Learned from United Nations Peacekeeping Experience in Sierra”, Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, September 2003

⁶⁰⁷ “The Comprehensive Report on Lessons Learned from United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM)” April 1992 - March 1995

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid

with the view expressed earlier, and empirically supported, that the United Nations is, in fact well resourced, with significant information resources of its own and access to member states' resources. It brings us back to the question of why the UN needs an intelligence system, and more importantly, what exactly should be the defining features of such a system. Some of the answers to these questions lie in the simple notion of a lack of criteria and clear definitions of appropriate intelligence system for the organisation. This fact, though highlighted in many of the "Lessons Learned" reports, tends to elude every attempt to forge intelligence system for the organisation. The consequences of this lack of guideline also form part of the study in the following chapter.

Chapter 9

Balance and Consensus as Primary Variables in Multi-agency Decision-Making: Case Studies in the Feasibility of United Nations Intelligence Capability

Introduction

The aim here is to consolidate the theoretical and the normative aspects of the thesis, with regards to the issues so far discussed. The chapter seeks to examine other means, focusing on the decision-making processes, by which the UN deals with the constraints imposed both by the system and by intelligence doctrine. The study will cover issues which reflect on the requirements, sources, methods of acquisition, as well as application of intelligence assets. For this purpose, two recent disarmament-related inspection missions in Iraq, UNSCOM and UNMOVIC inspection and verification processes are examined. It will be argued that a comparative study of these mechanisms, reveal, first that, consensus and balance are necessary variables in multi-agency political decision-making and secondly, that when an optimum solution evades the participants, a third party intervention provides further options available to the decision-makers. In a later part of this chapter, I also show how some of these factors can contribute to the success of intelligence operations in some UN missions. It is hoped that what is learnt in this study will provide useful insights into the notion of a UN intelligence system.

9.1. Assumptions of coordination in decentralised decision-making processes

The idea of intervention generally suggests that the members were willing, at least, at the group level, to find an optimal solution to a problem, with respect to the constraints and individual preferences. “Third party intervention” here, refers to the means of coordination. Stringer defined intervention as “the type of deliberate adjustment and preparation of the decision environment which necessarily precedes joint decision making.”⁶⁰⁹ This, as Stringer noted, might include a range of devices, such as revision of goals or existing reward and penalty systems, publication of rules or any

⁶⁰⁹ Stringer, J., “Operational Research for Multi-organisations” *Operational Research Quarterly*, Vol. 18 (June 1967) pp. 105-20

such mechanisms that may enable behavioural adjustment. “Third party intervention”, as conceived here, narrows the definition and suggests that, in view of the nature of the conflict, the actors are unable to achieve a satisfactory solution through existing devices, and hence, appoint an outside body or “impartial” agent to coordinate their action.

In sum, the study of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) processes, highlight the importance of consensus and balance, as well as the role of a third party intervention, in efforts to resolve certain issues in complex political environments. It is possible to state that the choice of a third party intervention assumes a number of benefits which can be summarised, according to Tuite; as, a) having the potential to change the context within which the joint decision problem must be resolved, b) reorienting actors’ motivations toward “problem-solving rather than bargaining behaviour” and c) adjusting the “information and decision technology supporting the decision-making effort.”⁶¹⁰ For Tuite, the idea of changing the decision environment by way of “intervention” is to encourage the members, “to act in the best interests of the organisation”, though this does not necessarily mean that they would act against their own interests. He argued, “by coordinating the choice of values for the decision variables they are able to ensure the feasibility as well as the optimality of their joint decisions.”⁶¹¹

9.2. United Nations Special Commission and intelligence process in Iraq

The United Nations Special Commission was set up after Iraq’s defeat in the Gulf War of 1991, to independently monitor Iraq’s biological, chemical and weapons production and capability, following the latter’s invasion and brief occupation of neighbouring Kuwait. The existence of these weapons systems was seen to present a threat to the allied forces who had battled to evict Iraq from Kuwait, and to the international community at large. This threat was made even more apparent, as Iraq was known to have used such banned weapons in an earlier war against Iran (1980—1988), and was continuing to use them against the Kurds in northern Iraq, and to an extent, the Shi’ite Muslims in the south.⁶¹²

⁶¹⁰ Tuite, Mathew F., “The Concept of Interorganisational Decision Making”, Tuite, M., Chisolm, and M Radner eds., *Interorganisational Decision Making* (Chicago, Aldine Press 1972) p. 1-8; see also, Tuite, Mathew F., “Towards a Theory of Joint Decision Making” in Tuite, M., R. Chisolm, and M Radner eds., *Interorganisational Decision Making* (Chicago, Aldine Press 1972) pp. 9-19

⁶¹¹ Ibid

⁶¹² See for example, Robinson, Julian Perry and Jozef Goldblat, “Chemical Warfare in the Iraq-Iran War 1” SIPRI Fact Sheet, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, May 1984.

As part of the ceasefire agreement, a Security Council (SC) Resolution 687, (1991), Section C, demanded that Iraq, submit “unconditionally” to international supervision, the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of its weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles and all such banned systems under the Geneva Protocol.⁶¹³ The resolution provided for the establishment of a system of continuous monitoring and verification of Iraq’s compliance, as well as requiring Iraq to make a declaration of the location and amounts and types of all such items. Thus, on 19th April 1991, UNSCOM was created to perform this task.

UNSCOM’s basic mandate was twofold: to inspect and oversee the destruction and elimination of prescribed weapons systems; and to monitor Iraq over the longer term to ensure continued compliance. This task was to be carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), together with UNSCOM.

Following the Iraq’s intransigence and refusal to cooperate, a second SC Resolution 707, was to provide UNSCOM with wide-ranging power to facilitate the monitoring process. These included, unannounced on-site inspections, use of aerial surveillance and camera monitoring.⁶¹⁴ But the process, in the first instance, was also partly dependent on Iraq’s declaration of concealed sites and programmes, including all facilities, components, and other information necessary to account for these programmes. UNSCOM was to be allowed “unconditional and unrestricted access to all areas, facilities, equipment and records”, that is, not only to the facilities and locations declared by the Iraqi Government, but also to facilities and locations designated by UNSCOM itself. The demand for Iraq’s compliance was also backed up by economic sanctions to force its cooperation.

The relationship between Iraq and UNSCOM was never to be a happy one. Iraq’s cooperation with the inspectors deteriorated rapidly in 1997, as Iraqi officials refused access to areas of Iraq, which they argued, should remain off-limit to the inspectors. At issue were Iraq’s presidential palaces, which the authorities were reluctant to allow the inspectors access. In October 1997, Iraq decided to expel all seven US members of the inspection team, accusing them of being spies working under false pretexts. By August 1998, Iraq’s relations with UNSCOM were at their lowest. Negotiations between Richard Butler, the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM, and Iraqi officials collapsed following allegations that the inspections were a cover for United States plan to depose the Iraqi regime. In due course, Iraq demanded an immediate end to the inspections and the lifting of sanctions, stating that it had fulfilled its obligations and had nothing further to reveal to UNSCOM.

⁶¹³ Resolution 687 (1991) Adopted by the Security Council at its 2981st meeting, on 3 April 1991S/RES/687 (United Nations, 8 April 1991)

⁶¹⁴ Resolution 707 (1991), Adopted by the Security Council at its 3004th meeting, on 15 August 1991, S/RES/707 (United Nations 1991)

Iraq also demanded a restructuring of UNSCOM and requested that its headquarters be relocated to Geneva, from New York. For its part, on 10th September 1998, the Security Council suspended its regular review of sanctions against Iraq, citing Iraq's failure to meet its international obligations, by not cooperating with UNSCOM. This led the Iraqi Parliament, to vote five days later, in an emergency session, to end all cooperation with the inspectors unless the UN renewed its regular reviews of sanctions. From here on, UNSCOM's future remained uncertain. Frantic efforts by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to resolve the conflict and resume the inspections failed.

On 16th December 1998, following a threat of military action from the United States and Britain, and persistent bombing sorties against Iraq by the two countries, UNSCOM finally withdrew its staff from Iraq. It was subsequently replaced by UNMOVIC, under SC Resolution 1284, of 17th December 1999. The consequences of UNMOVIC for UN intelligence capability will be the focus of my second case study, discussed below. Presently, however, I will examine two important impressions created by the UNSCOM process. First, is the commission's achievement in Iraq and the second, is how the monitoring and verification process was enhanced by the degree of information available to it. In other words, it may be convenient to talk of UNSCOM intelligence assets and utilisation.

9.3. UNSCOM'S intelligence structure and assets

UNSCOM's work and achievements benefited from an array of sources of information, which can be discussed under two general headings; *voluntary disclosure* and *supplier information*. In fact, these combined sources gave the Commission a reach and depth of knowledge with regard to its mandate, unprecedented in any UN mission and may never be matched by any single intelligence organisation or other forms of limited collaborations. As a fact sheet for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) observed, UNSCOM operated the most intrusive verification regime ever devised.⁶¹⁵ According to SIPRI, UNSCOM combined many of the verification elements of existing arms control regimes with aspects of verification in an adversarial situation. "Most arms control verification regimes begin with a basic assumption of compliance: UNSCOM has broken new ground."⁶¹⁶ UNSCOM's sophistication and rigour also prompted some scholars at the time, to hastily declare it as a "United Nations intelligence organisation", a rather premature declaration.⁶¹⁷ And as I shall argue shortly, UNSCOM's success, which was in part due to its extensive assets and techniques, also led to its demise.

⁶¹⁵ "UNSCOM: The Iraq Experience", SIPRI Fact Sheet, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute October 1998 <http://editors.sipri.se/pubs/Factsheet/unscom.html> (accessed Nov 03)

⁶¹⁶ Ibid

⁶¹⁷ See for example, article by Dr Ira Jacobs, "UNSCOM: A United Nations Intelligence Organisation", (355.005 N2 1999 no.19 / IRC-CIS) <http://www.cfcsc.dnd.ca/papers/nssc1/jacobs1.html> (accessed Nov 03)

Voluntary disclosure

A combination of factors created the unique situation for UNSCOM's intelligence assets; these included, in the first instance, the requirements imposed on Iraq, to voluntarily provide the inspectors with all necessary information that would enhance the inspection process. This demand was, first and foremost, a condition for cessation of aggression, if the weakened Baghdad regime was to survive. Furthermore, any review of sanctions depended on Iraq's cooperation with the Commission. In fact, it can be argued that the crushing defeat imposed on Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War, combined with a highly demoralised army trying to recover from a ten year war with Iran, left Iraq with no option but to agree to every letter of the ceasefire agreement. At the same time, Iraq was already isolated by its Arab neighbours following its invasion of Kuwait.

In spite of the fact that information was made available to the Commission from a variety of sources, we now know, from the Commission's reports, that Iraq's disclosures enabled the Commission and the IAEA to uncover some elements of Iraq's weapons programmes.⁶¹⁸ The reports also acknowledged, for example, that "without Iraq's admissions, elucidation of the Commission's concerns would have taken up considerable periods of time in conducting inspection missions and in investigation of Iraq's procurement abroad and of information from other sources."⁶¹⁹ Furthermore, the voluntary disclosure of information strengthened the Commission's ability to authenticate information provided by various aspects of Iraqi authority. For example, the Commission found that its experts encountered instances where particular Iraqi counterparts would deny knowledge until confronted with evidence that the Commission already had data to the contrary. Nevertheless, the commission was satisfied that "the steps Iraq has taken in this direction were positive."⁶²⁰

Supplier information

Supplier information could be said to include those obtained from various other sources. Two such classifications are discussed here: firstly, trade information provided by suppliers of materials and equipments in relation to Iraq's weapons programmes, and secondly, intelligence information provided by member states. These sources also enabled the Commission to authenticate the reliability of volunteered information, by cross-checking it with that obtained from other sources. As noted in many of its reports to the Security Council, the Commission did seek the assistance of many governments with respect to obtaining data on Iraq's weapons programmes. The fact that UNSCOM sought and obtained information from member states was not in itself unique or exceptional to the process. What was truly unique in this very situation was perhaps, the material resources and the

⁶¹⁸ UNSCOM report to the Security Council, S/1995/1038, United Nations, 17 December 1995

⁶¹⁹ Ibid

⁶²⁰ Ibid

state-of-the-art equipment available to the inspectors. Some known examples of such provision were, in the first instance, the Commission's capability to conduct aerial inspections of sites, as well as the use of aerial inspection teams to support the ground teams for monitoring purposes. The inspectors also had available to them, the use of high-altitude surveillance aircrafts, such as the United States U-2 reconnaissance aircraft, which carries a variety of sensors and cameras; Mirage-IV surveillance aircraft, provided by France, and AN-30 surveillance aircraft, provided by Russia; as well as L-100 transport aircraft, and UH-1H helicopters used by the aerial inspection teams.⁶²¹

A network of sophisticated ground based monitoring devices also complemented the Commission's aerial infrastructure. For example, the Commission had the use of remote monitoring systems (RMS) employed at several strategic locations in Iraq. This system provided electronic on-site surveillance conducted in "real-time" viewing, and collection of recorded video images with supporting communication equipment. Air samples and data collected through special sensors enabled the inspectors to detect unusual activities and allowed for a quick response to inspect suspected sites. The availability of ground based video review stations, equipped with multi optical review equipment (MORE) also enabled the inspectors to enhance their analysis processes.

It is also worth mentioning that the cost of operating these ground based surveillance systems alone, is worthy of being considered to be uniquely significant in a single operation such as this. For example, apart from costs borne by supplying states, such as the US, France and Russia, to mention a few, in operating their aerial surveillance equipments, the cost of maintaining and improving ground based systems alone was conservatively put at about \$900,000 per year. This figure, concerns "equipment upgrades, commercial communications costs, manpower and logistic support resources."⁶²² The anticipated addition of new equipment and increases in the number of support staff was also bound to push the cost even higher.

Equally significant, if only from the point of view of a collective security process, is the range and expertise of personnel that worked for the Commission. UNSCOM's staff consisted of personnel from different member-countries to support UN staff already stationed in New York, Baghdad and Bahrain. In some cases, the Commission depended exclusively on expertise provided by governments. This international composition of expertise and resources was also to become an Achilles heel in the continuity of the disarmament and verification process.

⁶²¹ UNSCOM Report of October 8, 1998 2/3/99, p.17; See also the "Infrastructure and Operational Support" Annex D, UNSCOM Report to the Security Council, January 1999

⁶²² The system is supported by one operator and five field technicians, which are managed and coordinated from the headquarters in New York. See "Infrastructure and Operational Support", Annex D, *ibid*

9.4. The Legacy of UNSCOM and implications for the inspection and verification process

Many of the enhanced intelligence assets discussed under supplier information were achieved, and in many respects, made known to the public in the second half of the disarmament and verification process, through UNMOVIC. This notwithstanding, until then, UNSCOM was able to perform its tasks effectively with significant success. It was also able to conclude, from information it had that Iraq's declaration and disclosure were incomplete and, in some cases, did not address all the issues concerning its missile projects.⁶²³ This conclusion provided the impetus for the Security Council to press for a more robust verification regime. At the same time, questions were being raised outside the immediate confines of UNSCOM's headquarters in New York. Was UNSCOM receiving information from "secret" sources, and for the Iraqi authorities, were some of the methods employed in the inspection process legitimate?

Though it was generally acknowledged that many of UNSCOM's technical experts and staff were drawn from different governments, their composition and the governments they represented were not clearly acknowledged. Also, whether some of these experts were secret agents (planted to pass sensitive information to their home governments), employed with the full knowledge of the United Nations also remained unclear. These questions remained at the heart of the controversy which surrounded the UNSCOM process, and were among the reasons given by Iraq for its suspension of the Commission. Many of the answers to these questions remained matters of speculation throughout the first half of the inspection process, as did Krasno and Sutterlin, it was possible to accept the rationale and legitimacy of employing "intelligence" sources in the Commission's work. For instance, they argued that the Commission needed trained technicians in relatively exotic fields and these experts were only available from countries such as the United States, Russia, France, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.⁶²⁴ They also argued that UNSCOM, in fact, its executive chairman, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, to the extent possible,

... Chose persons with whom he was personally acquainted, of which there were many because of his background in disarmament. But as the operation became larger and the technical requirements more complex, this became less and less possible. He accepted persons of proven technical capacity and expected they would be loyal to UNSCOM,

⁶²³ UNSCOM report, S/1995/1038. See also the Security Council, S/1995/864, United Nations, 11 October 1995, para.37, in which it informed the Security Council that it had obtained information that Iraq had resumed its acquisition efforts from foreign sources in support of its missile activities.

⁶²⁴ Krasno, Jean and Suttelin, James "The United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) Experience" in Deepa M.Ollapally ed., *Controlling Weapons of Mass Destruction: Findings from USIP- Sponsored Project* (United States Institute of Peace, Washington 2001) pp. 25-31

regardless of previous associations, in accordance with the undertaking they made on reporting for duty⁶²⁵.

Regarding access to Saddam Hussien's Presidential Palaces and the mapping of Iraq's military movements and positions, which were also at the heart of the inspection controversy, again, Krasno and Suttelin are of the opinion that, if it was suspected that the Iraqi military or the Republican Guards were at the heart of concealing Iraq's weapons programme, then; "it was clearly desirable to know where the Guard was at any given time, who was in charge of specific missions, and where its head quarters were located."⁶²⁶ However, they also acknowledged that such information could be valuable for purposes other than the discovery of weapons of mass destruction and so could the content and lay out of the so-called presidential palaces. On the other hand, with the United States and Britain aggressively pursuing a doctrine of "regime change" in Iraq and elsewhere, as well as relentless bombing of Iraq's military infrastructure since the end of the war in 1991, there was room for an alternative explanation. That the extended intelligence gathering was beyond UNSCOM's mandates. Leaks from American and British sources, media revelations, and subsequent outbreak of war in 2003 tended to support the view that intelligence was gathered for reasons other than or in addition to the UN mandated inspection.

Another question that needs to be asked is; did it matter that UNSCOM expanded its intelligence gathering regardless of whether such activity exceeded its UN mandate? And, considering the dual use of information, did the intelligence it obtained fall into the wrong hands for the wrong reasons? We may also ask whether the Iraqi state had a legitimate right to protest against such a scheme.

9.5. UNSCOM's legal authority versus Iraq's sovereignty

To answer these questions, it is perhaps necessary to start with the obvious, though often ignored understanding, that UNSCOM was to operate as a neutral international agency, commissioned by an impartial international organisation. This meant that compromising that position would have, as it later manifested, serious consequences, not only on UNSCOM, but also for the sponsoring international body. The difficulty for UNSCOM and its successor, UNMOVIC, can be accounted for, first, by the political motives of some or all of the principal actors, in particular, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Iraq. Secondly, the inconsistency in both the drafting and implementation of the legal framework of the inspection processes. As events unfolded, it also seemed necessary to ask whether the conflict was between the Commission and Iraq, or between Iraq and United States and Britain. I shall also examine the political implications of this development.

⁶²⁵ Ibid

⁶²⁶ Ibid

From the onset of the inspection, up until 2003, much of what the public knew about events surrounding UNSCOM was based on speculations fuelled by intense propaganda from the main players, United States and Britain, on the one hand, and Iraq on the other. Until then, also, many writings on the subject, even some high profile assessments of events, tended to draw blindly on such propaganda. Meanwhile, between these protagonists, there were charges and counter charges of espionage. As early as 1992, the United States and Britain had charged that Iraq had infiltrated UNSCOM to aid the latter's deception and concealment efforts, and thus contravened key requirements under Resolution 687.⁶²⁷ This and other such supposed infringements on the part of Iraq were also given as reasons by United States and Britain, for the continuous bombing of the country, as well as refusing to support a partial lifting of sanctions.

Nevertheless, from the beginning, Iraq's cooperation with UNSCOM was intermittent and, on several occasions, it threatened to and sometimes withdrew cooperation. By October 1994, Iraq threatened a complete suspension of cooperation and deployed forces in the direction of Kuwait. The Security Council censured these actions in SC Resolution 949 of 15 October, and Iraq subsequently withdrew its troops and resumed cooperation. The conflict between Iraq and UNSCOM, which had been sporadic and building up to a major crisis, climaxed in October through December 1997. At issue, were sites, to which Iraq denied the inspectors access for verification purposes. These principally included eight presidential palaces claimed to be protected as sovereign territory, and beyond the reach of the inspectors.

This is where the debates about the legality of the UNSCOM process and Iraq's sovereignty met. The question is, did Iraq have the right to protest against a violation of its sovereignty, and did UNSCOM have the legal authority to unlimited reach and intrusion? These are perhaps, questions best left to international jurists; nonetheless, in a rather limited fashion we can examine some of these issues. From a legal point of view, it is argued primarily that when Iraq signed the Gulf War cease-fire agreement in 1991, it categorically accepted the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 687. Section C of that resolution specified Iraq's disarmament obligations and established UN mechanisms for the implementation of this mandate. As David Cartright argued, "by agreeing to Resolution 687, Iraq accepted unconditionally 'the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless, under international supervision' of all its weapons of mass destruction (WMD)."⁶²⁸ Under the conditions, UNSCOM was to be allowed "unconditional and unrestricted access to all areas,

⁶²⁷ See for example, Boyne, "Iraqis Perfect the Art of Evading UNSCOM," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 February 1998, p. 27; and Tucker, Jonathan B. "Monitoring and Verification in a Noncooperative Environment: Lessons From the U.N. Experience in Iraq" *The Nonproliferation Review* (Spring/Summer 1996) pp. 1-14

facilities, equipments and records”, and these included locations designated by UNSCOM. At a glance then, it can be argued that UNSCOM did not work outside of its legal limits.

But the situation is not as clear-cut and the case cannot be sealed so easily. Analysis of the Resolution reveals a number of inconsistencies, which challenge UNSCOM’s open-ended authority. In the first instance, although Resolution 687 reaffirmed Iraq’s sovereignty and political independence, this seemed to get little attention, and compared to the detailed power afforded UNSCOM, the meaning of Iraq’s sovereignty is actually reduced to insignificance. In fact, if UNSCOM passed its own legal test, for this very reason, Resolution 687 itself failed woefully to reflect the key objectives and main pillars of the United Nations.⁶²⁹ With respect to enforcement action, it is also evident that, nowhere does it suggest that action against an offending state would include the revocation of its sovereignty. Krasno and Sutterline, for example, noted that, “the permitted retention by Iraq of a strong conventional military force reflected the intent to allow Iraq to maintain its independence, but hardly its sovereignty as promised in the preamble to Resolution 687.” The fact that Iraq’s sovereignty is not reflected in any respectable manner, points to the view that the disarmament programme was already sitting on a powder keg waiting to explode. In fact, Krasno and Sutterlin argued that, some of the contradictions in the Resolution were “necessary for both its adoption and effectiveness”, if the inspection process were to be speedily accomplished.⁶³⁰ This state of affairs, in fact, afforded Iraq, on the one hand, the opportunity to challenge UNSCOM’s mandate, and on the other, for United States and Britain the opportunity to use military force.

Furthermore, in spite of the open ended access afforded the inspectors, nowhere in the SC resolution did it suggest that the Commission might acquire intelligence assets, or collaborate exclusively with certain member states, to the point of Iraq perceiving such extension as a threat to its sovereignty and national security. It is now public knowledge that, as early as 1991, UNSCOM collaborated and received intelligence support from a number of countries, including the United States, Britain, and Israel, countries which, in particular are known to be unfriendly to Iraq.⁶³¹ Whether, also, the information obtained by other countries were intended for other purposes with the full knowledge of UNSCOM, is just another moot question, but two main views persisted until much information on the extent of UNSCOM’s duplicity were known to the public. One view is that, since the United States and other UN member state, were asked to assist UNSCOM in locating Iraq’s weapons

⁶²⁸ Cartright, David “Legal Basis for UN Weapons Inspection” in, *Iraq: A New Approach*, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 2002) pp. 55-61

⁶²⁹ Article 2(7) of the Charter states: “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.”

⁶³⁰ Krasno and Sutterlin, op cit

programme, the US was uniquely placed to provide this assistance. Consequently, if technical means are used to intercept, translate, and read messages relating to the hiding of weapons, that information may also be available to the supplier of the equipment for other purposes.⁶³²

Barton Gellman, however, argued in the *Washington Post*, that the United States rigged UNSCOM equipment and office space, without permission to intercept a high volume of ordinary Iraqi military communications. “Those communications carried between microwave towers and linking Iraqi commanders to infantry and armoured forces in the field, were of considerable value to US military planners but generally unrelated to UNSCOM’s special weapon mandate.”⁶³³ The fact that Iraqi security forces were some of the major targets of four days of American and British air strikes in December 1998, tends to give credence to this argument.

A second viewpoint draws on British and American conduct throughout the verification period, to suggest that the United States and Britain were not particularly interested in the disarmament exercise, but in getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Coverage in the media suggested that the intercepts and data obtained were used to identify and target Saddam Hussein's suspected hideouts when the U.S. and British bombers launched the Desert Fox air strikes in December 1998, after the inspectors were withdrawn.⁶³⁴ Moreover, when war broke out in spring 2003, both Saddam Hussein’s hideouts and the Republican Guard positions in Iraq, were major targets of coalition bombing. What seems apparent here is that, there were differences in what UNSCOM expected from the disarmament programme and what United States and Britain anticipated.

It seemed also that there was an overlap between the idea of “disarming Iraq” (UNSCOM’s primary goal), and the notion of “regime change” (British and American preferred objectives). For the latter, the question of disarmament and regime change was closely linked. This confusion in goals led to a divergence of views between Britain, United States, and their allies, on the one hand, and the rest of the member states of the United Nations on the other. This misunderstanding was overshadowed by the euphoria that followed the defeat of Saddam, and it seemed, only slowly unfolded midway through the UNSCOM process. As David Kay, the Chief Nuclear Weapons inspector for UNSCOM, 1991-92 remarked:

⁶³¹ Tucker, op cit; See also *Los Angeles Times* 23 October 2002

⁶³² Newsom, David “Spies in UNSCOM” *Christian Science Monitor* 13 January 2003

⁶³³ Gellman, “US Spied on Iraq Via UN” *Washington Post* 2 March, 1999

⁶³⁴ See for example, *Los Angeles Times* October 23, 2002

... The real change occurred in '94. I really think that was the period in which, in many governments, the dawning realisation, which now the president speaks out - the necessity of getting rid of Saddam. Once that dawned on national policymakers, that maybe the only way out of this dilemma of Iraq with weapons of mass destruction is the replacement of Saddam. That meant that, for the United States, for example, American men and women were likely to be asked to fight and die again in Iraq. Well, if you're asking American men and women to fight and die, it's incumbent that they have the best available of intelligence. So at that point, the intelligence agencies became under increasing pressure to collect all the possible information. Now, what did they do? They immediately realised that the only access they had to Iraq in those days was through UN inspection teams. And my view is, that's the point where the relationship started to tilt.⁶³⁵

Information now available in the public domain suggests that both the making and the make-up of the Commission facilitated American and British objectives. It would be difficult to argue whether such orientation was deliberate or by accident. After the 1991 Gulf War, to expel Iraq from Kuwait, there was a genuine reason to disarm Iraq or at least to discourage it from unprovoked aggression against neighbouring states. As Krasno and Sutterlin argued, the UN was not sure of how to undertake this task.⁶³⁶ As a result, the drafting of the ceasefire agreement and the disarmament provisions that led to SC Resolution 687 fell primarily to the United States and Britain. Those who took the lead, in setting the terms for a cease fire, with Iraq, they argued were “determined to accomplish the permanent elimination of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and, in the process, to weaken Saddam Hussein’s position to the greatest extent possible.”⁶³⁷ The picture that was beginning to emerge was a blurring of the line between United States and British-led unilateral agenda of forcible change, and a UN objective of disarmament and peaceful change. In fact, in the confusion that engulfed the process, UNSCOM’s main objectives and mandate were perhaps lost. Gellman summarised it thus:

And so you had quite different ideas about what was this UNSCOM and what was it going to do. Inside the Commission you had experts from numerous countries. You had from the beginning an effort to make, in effect, an inner circle in UNSCOM that would be American, British, Australian, Canadian. The Executive Chairman never was, but

⁶³⁵ Quoted in “Spying on Saddam: UNSCOM Relationship with Western Intelligence” Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Online and WGBH/FRONTLINE 1999
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/unscom/interviews/butler.html> (accessed 08 Nov 03)

⁶³⁶ Krasno and Sutterlin op cit

there was always an American deputy. There was always an American Director of Operations. And there were always Americans in important roles... That's right. If you look at it from their point of view, they have a very high priority mission to collect information about Iraq, both conventional and special weapons, and the command structure, and how Saddam Hussein works, and who the inner circle is, and all the stuff that a military intelligence operation would want to know about a hostile power... They have all kinds of equipment overhead. They have readily available cover for human agents. There's an international trade embargo on Iraq, so there's no businessmen coming in and out and no flights in and out. They don't have academic exchanges and so on. They don't have all the usual covers that they use. Here they're given the opportunity, on a periodic basis, to include Americans on UNSCOM inspection teams, and to carry large amounts of equipment and to build things and leave them in Iraq. The temptation was simply too great...⁶³⁸

9.6. The beginning of the end of UNSCOM

With these complications in mind, helped by Iraq's intransigence and increasing challenge to UNSCOM, as well as what many were beginning to see as British and American excesses, UNSCOM, rather than Iraq, became the focus of international attention. UNSCOM's apparent departure from its UN mandate was to lead to a breakdown of consensus within the 15 member Security Council, with France, Russia and China pressing for a new entity, less tied to the US and Britain and more acceptable to Iraq, with greater prospects for lifting of sanctions. Russian proposals included an end to the oil embargo on Baghdad and the establishment of a new, less intrusive weapons monitoring system as the basis of building a new relationship with Iraq. The plan also called for a special commission with an "assessment team" of experts, drawn from many countries that would work out with Iraqi authorities, the rules for a new inspection system. The new body would be less intrusive, with on-the-ground inspections and long-term monitoring conducted through such means as aerial surveillance, television cameras and sensors.⁶³⁹ The Russian proposal did not come as a surprise in view of American and British tough line on Iraq's compliance. In fact, as David Malone noted, many observers were beginning to see such insistence as "moving the goalposts", especially when they cited among other reasons for maintaining the embargo including human rights violations and ultimately, Saddam's hold on power.⁶⁴⁰ He argued that, many "member

⁶³⁷ Ibid

⁶³⁸ Gellman, quoted in "Spying on Saddam: UNSCOM Relationship with Western Intelligence" Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Online and WGBH/FRONTLINE 1999

⁶³⁹ Goshko, John M., "Russia Presents Plan to End Iraqi Oil Embargo, Replace UNSCOM", *The Washington Post* 16 January 1999

⁶⁴⁰ Malone, David M. "Goodbye UNSCOM: A Sorry Tale in UN-US Relations" International Peace Academy, http://www.ipacademy.org/Publications/Articles/Malone/PublArtiMaloUNNS_Print.htm (accessed Dec 03)

states thought that if the US and UK had not stuck so single-mindedly with their hard-line conditions for lifting the sanctions regime, Iraq might have cooperated more extensively with UNSCOM.”⁶⁴¹ Dr Malone concluded, “Indeed, Iraq's declining cooperation with UNSCOM may have been due, in part, to the realisation that no degree of compliance would deter the US from its chief objective: the removal of Saddam Hussein from power.”⁶⁴²

In retrospect, it can be concluded that the death of UNSCOM was inevitable, and have been written into the SC Resolution 687. However, the argument is made that if UNSCOM's disarmament programme was to succeed, then such intelligence support was actually necessary, regardless of how it was obtained and who supplied it.⁶⁴³ That much is true. But if that were the case, then such a function could have been written into the Resolution, in the first place. If the opportunity to include intelligence assets was missed, during the drafting of the Resolution, then UNSCOM would have notified the UN, and perhaps, as well as Iraq that it was using unconventional methods that would enable it to function effectively. It would not have been necessary to reveal the sources, nor the content of the intelligence. The fact that the Commission's intelligence assets were being acquired through the back door, was a cause for concern, not only to the Iraqi authorities but also to the United Nations. If UNSCOM had requested such assistance from member states, such a request was never explicitly acknowledged, to avoid a damaging scandal. As I shall argue shortly, a realisation of these failures became the focal point of calls for an enhanced disarmament and verification process, in the shape of UNMOVIC.

These charges, it could be argued, also matter, since it had been acknowledged that UNSCOM worked beyond its mandates. This is despite the fact that its staff members were expected to operate within a code of conducts governing international civil servants, working for the UN, and subject to Article 100 of United Nations Charter.⁶⁴⁴ Even more damaging for the international body was the revelation that UNSCOM was directly involved in espionage activities, which were not directly related to its mandates, actions described by its first Chairman, Rolf Ekeus, as "special collection missions.”⁶⁴⁵ Furthermore, it has been noted that much of the information obtained, supposedly for the Commission's work, never reached its intended destination. It has also been argued that intelligence circulated among American officials before reaching the Security Council or the

⁶⁴¹ Ibid

⁶⁴² Ibid

⁶⁴³ See also Butler, quoted in “Spying on Saddam: UNSCOM Relationship with Western Intelligence”

⁶⁴⁴ The Charter states: 1) In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization. 2) Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Secretary General.⁶⁴⁶ In other cases, such intelligence facilitated unilateral bombing campaign by the United States and Britain.⁶⁴⁷ Similarly, as Gellman reported in the *Washington Post*, Ralf Ekeus, in autumn of 1999, delivered a memo to the Director of Central Intelligence, John M. Deutch, complaining that U.S. intelligence agencies had declined to share the full fruits of their joint work with UNSCOM. According to the report, Ekeus wrote in his memo, "since January of this year the commission has undertaken three special collection missions... To date the commission has been denied access to the data collected by these missions."⁶⁴⁸ Waves of revelations, some coming from highly placed UNSCOM officials, such as Scott Ritter, was to inflict even more irreparable damage on UNSCOM. To this extent, it was only a matter of time before some of the permanent members of the Security Council; Russia, China, and France demanded the resignation of Richard Butler, the then Executive Chairman of UNSCOM, as well as the restructuring of the Commission.

9.7. Assessing the functions of third party intervention

From the analysis so far, it is possible to argue that in spite of Iraq's stubbornness and obstructive behaviour, UNSCOM, to an extent, did not have the legitimacy to exploit its intelligence assets in the manner in which it did. This is not to suggest that UNSCOM's clandestine operations were the primary reason for Iraq's disagreement with the Commission. The reasons would be multifaceted and such a study is well beyond the objectives of this chapter. Nevertheless, the situation provided Iraq with the opportunity to challenge some of UNSCOM's activities. Furthermore, the argument about the "dual use" function of information, in support of UNSCOM's indiscretions seems hollow. This is not only in the light of what is now known about its conduct, but importantly, the duplicity rendered the Commission's function as an impartial body untenable. This also led to a desperate search for attempts to repair the damage. The first of these was the involvement of the Secretary-General, the second and final effort, was an attempt to create an inspection and verification regime which would be acceptable to every member state.

On 29th October 1997, the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Tariq Aziz, sent a letter to the President of the Security Council, informing him of Iraq's decision to cease all dealings with personnel of United States nationality working for UNSCOM. He also requested that UNSCOM withdrew its "cover" for the U-2 "spy plane" provided by the United States.⁶⁴⁹ As a result, on 13th November 1997, the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM, Ralf Ekeus, decided to temporally withdraw

⁶⁴⁵ Gellman, Barton "Annan Suspicious Of UNSCOM Role", *Washington Post* 6 Jan 1999

⁶⁴⁶ Malone, op cit

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid

⁶⁴⁸ Gellman, 6 Jan, op cit

⁶⁴⁹ UNSCOM: Chronology of Events, Dec 1999

<http://www.un.org/Depts/unscom/Chronology/chronologyframe.htm> (accessed Feb 2004)

the majority of the personnel, leaving a skeleton staff in Baghdad to maintain UNSCOM's premises and equipment. Several diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the crisis as well as preventing military confrontation followed. These included a 20th November agreement between Russia and Iraq, which led to the return of the Commission with its full complement of staff to resume inspections.

No sooner had the inspectors returned than a new crisis developed. On 13 January 1998, Iraq withdrew its cooperation from several inspection teams on the grounds that they included too many individuals of US or UK nationality.⁶⁵⁰ As a final effort to break the deadlock, on 20th–23rd February 1998, the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan visited Iraq and agreed on a new term of inspection and secured a Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and Iraq (MOU).⁶⁵¹ High on the Secretary-General's agenda were the controversial Presidential Palaces, to which Iraqi authorities denied the inspectors access.

In the MOU, the Secretary-General secured a renewed Iraqi commitment to abide by the relevant resolutions and its undertaking to cooperate fully with the Commission and the IAEA. Iraq also agreed to allow inspectors "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access in conformity with the resolutions of the Council." For its part, the United Nations reiterated the commitment of all member states to respect the "sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq". The memorandum also included an undertaking by the Commission to "respect the legitimate concerns of Iraq relating to national security, sovereignty and dignity" in the performance of its tasks. The MOU also provided for the establishment of special procedures, which would apply to the inspectors' conduct at the eight presidential sites.⁶⁵² The memorandum also paved the way for a Special Group, consisting of experts from UNSCOM, the IAEA and senior diplomats appointed by the Secretary-General to be set up. It was to operate under established UNSCOM and IAEA procedures, but additional plans outlined under the MOU, were to be observed.

The MOU did not represent a significant concession to Iraq; on the contrary, it reiterated Iraq's obligations to SC resolutions. The MOU was in fact, symbolic, aiming to underline the significance of Iraq's territorial integrity, sovereignty and dignity; and to reassure Iraq of United Nations commitments with respect to issues concerning state security. It can also be argued that the MOU was an attempt to address important discrepancies that undermined Resolution 687. As I shall argue

⁶⁵⁰ Report of the Executive Chairman to the Council, S/1998/27 of 13 January 1998 (United Nations 13 Jan 1998)

⁶⁵¹ Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and Republic of Iraq, United Nations S/1998/166, 27 March 1998

⁶⁵² The sites included; the Republican Palace site, the Radwaniyah and Sijood presidential sites (all in Baghdad), and the Tikrit, Thartar, Jabal Mahhul, Mosul and Basrah presidential sites. See United Nations, S/1998/166, 27 March 1998

shortly, these issues were also the main concerns of some members of the Security Council, during the formulation of Resolution 1284. Nevertheless, in August 1998, Iraqi authorities decided to suspend cooperation with UNSCOM and the IAEA pending a Security Council agreement to lift the oil embargo, as well as changes to the Commission and moving its HQ to either Geneva or Vienna. Iraq, however, continued to permit monitoring under resolution 715 (1991), on its own terms. On 16th Dec 1998, the Commission withdrew from Iraq and on 17 December 1999, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1284 replacing UNSCOM with UNMOVIC.

9.8. A credible and neutral regime: a framework for collective action

The creation of UNMOVIC represented a new beginning, which, though maintaining all existing mandates of earlier resolutions, had the purpose of attempting to inject credibility into a supposedly impartial system of collective action. As argued earlier, UNSCOM was born of post war (Gulf War 1991) euphoria, which could have blinded it to any form of responsibility. In the same vein, resolution 687 confronted little or no opposition to its introduction. UNMOVIC emerged out of experience, which provided much needed substance for negotiation, compromise and tradeoffs. This much is reflected in debates and various diplomatic efforts that led to the adoption of Resolution 1284.⁶⁵³ UNMOVIC then, represented an attempt to create a system that stood on two main pillars of universal and impartial action: compromise and balance. These features also provide the case for a viable intelligence capability. How were these characteristics achieved and how do they impact on the UNMOVIC process? The answers to these questions are critical and are reflected in the search for an enhanced monitoring and verification regime.

Slight controversy may exist regarding the use of the term “enhanced or “reinforced” monitoring and verification system, which characterised the new phase of UN operations.⁶⁵⁴ Understanding this phraseology is important because, it has been wrongly interpreted as a course to weaken UNSCOM. Conventional wisdom suggests that, in view of Iraq’s intransigence, a reinforced regime would be an authoritarian body, with unlimited powers backed up with severe economic sanctions, and where necessary, military force. The checks and balances introduced to the new system appear to contradict such expectations. However, some clarifications will suffice. First, it is evident that UNSCOM had been weakened by the very fact that both its make-up and its *modus oparandi* were sources of controversy within the Council. Secondly, the lack of consensus within the Council was indicative of the Commission’s failings and distance from universally accepted standards for impartiality. Analysis of the background factors that led to the creation of UNMOVIC (discussed below) lead to

⁶⁵³ See for example, “Security Council *Provisional Verbatim*”, 4084th Meeting, United Nations S/PV.4084, 17 December 1999

⁶⁵⁴ See especially Section A, par.2 of the the Security Council resolution, S/RES/1284, United Nations (1999)

the conclusion that the terminology refers to efforts to achieve principles and standards acceptable by all concerned, i.e., consensus within the Security Council, and balance in confidence between Iraq and the inspection regime.

The fact that Iraq was subject to Chapter VII of the Charter did not obviate the fact that such action had to be carried out under criteria agreed upon collectively and not by unilateral interpretation of the rule by individual members. The expression also has the usefulness of focusing the inspection regime's attention on a clearly defined objective. These criteria were critically necessary if the new inspection regime were to operate effectively. These standards were also the starting point of the Disarmament and Ongoing Monitoring and Verification (OMV), one of three panels, established by the Security Council to advise it on Iraq. The panels, created on 30 January 1999, and chaired by Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil, covered three main issue areas; a) "disarmament and current and future ongoing monitoring and verification issues"; b) "humanitarian issues" and; c) "prisoners of war and Kuwaiti property" (all of which made up the Amorim Report).⁶⁵⁵ In its introductory question, on the issue of the disarmament programme in Iraq, which is the focus of the present discussion, the panel noted;

The phrasing of the mandate ("how... to re-establish", etc.) carries with it an implicit recognition that the task of getting inspectors back to Iraq is not self-evident. In effect, the panel has been asked to contribute to such an objective by devising technically feasible options which the Security Council may choose to implement...⁶⁵⁶

How the panel interpreted these tasks and how it impacted on the recommendations to the Security Council are worthy of note.

From the start of their deliberation, the panel recognised, or at least, interpreted its mandate as one of devising a new approach to the verification process. Central to this was the acknowledgement that the new body should clearly reflect a United Nations identity and be guided by the "principles of full independence, rigour and transparency", to guarantee the effectiveness of its work and credibility of its results. This question, the panel argued, "helped to focus the discussions on ways to move forward in the short-term and may be viewed as being at the origin of the establishment of the panel on disarmament/ongoing monitoring and verification."⁶⁵⁷ With respect of UNSCOM's failure and the impasse within the Security Council, the panel identified a number of key factors that could be

⁶⁵⁵ See paragraphs 5 and 6 of the "Note by the President of the Security Council" United Nations, S/1999/100, 30 January 1999

⁶⁵⁶ "Report of the First Panel Concerning Disarmament and Current and Future Ongoing Monitoring and Verification Issues", S/1999/356, 27 March 1999

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid

significant in effecting a reinforced inspection and verification system. These included, among others:

- a) The recruitment of staff to be based on their technical competence, in strict adherence to Article 100 of the Charter, committed to the objectives of the Security Council resolutions, and impartiality.
- b) The system to be seen to be effective, and to be deployed on the ground, with Iraqi approval. “How this acceptance will be obtained is the fundamental question before the Security Council.”
- c) Its effectiveness should depend on it being comprehensive, intrusive and based on full implementation of the plans for OMV. This also had to be approved by Security Council under existing resolutions (687, 707, 715, 1051), and as integral whole that can be meaningfully implemented in its entirety.
- d) The mandates should be carried out objectively in a technically competent and thorough manner with due regard to Iraqi sovereignty, dignity and sensitivities, including religious and cultural ones, as well as those related to commercial confidentiality.
- e) The role of the Secretary-General and the inclusion of some members of the Secretariat, in this regard, should be recognised.

With emphasis placed on impartiality and transparency, the panel recognised that the difference between what is *political* and what is *technical* had to be established. Equally important to the Panel, also, was the fact that the political and legal contexts, to which deliberations on the issue were taking place in the Council, could not be ignored. This rationale reflected on the panel’s philosophy and its recommendation to the Council. What was technical was to be recognised as critical to the panel’s work, and what was political in content, was to be the exclusive province of the Security Council. The panel was also aware of the fact that even some of the technical issues could have political consequences if the Security Council thought that was the case.⁶⁵⁸ Similarly, the panel also stressed the importance of separating these issues in the inspection processes, and advised that personnel would limit public comments, to the media, to strictly technical matters and such comments that could have political implications, be left to the Security Council.

To reflect the balance to which it strived, the panel’s constitution and work ethic were also broad based, involving participation and input from a collection of institutions, including UNSCOM, the IAEA, the United Nations Secretariat, as well as a range of related expertise. Such broad composition, the panel anticipated, would enable it to acquire a comprehensive knowledge on the

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid

range of issues it wished to cover. In sum, the panel provided the Security Council with a range of options on which to act, and its recommendations were also to provide the legal framework that would guarantee the implementation of a rigorous and effective inspection process.

9.9. Negotiating balance and consensus

Although the Security Council disagreed on many of the panel's recommendations, it is nevertheless evident that its philosophy and ethos provided the rationale for resolution 1284, as well as for the structure and working of UNMOVIC. Meanwhile, reaching agreement on the issues prompted fits of diplomatic activities, first among the P-5, and among the fifteen-member council. This was despite the fact that some form of agreement had been reached at ministerial level, underlining the "need for the adoption of a new, comprehensive resolution, based upon the disarmament and humanitarian objectives of the Charter."⁶⁵⁹ How to translate this understanding into a resolution became a sticking point. As the US Secretary of State, Madeline Albright noted, "you can't try to accomplish in a statement what you can't [agree] in a resolution..."⁶⁶⁰

In an effort to find a way forward, members of the Council presented contending draft resolutions. France, Russia, and China presented a draft resolution (22 June 1999), which drew extensively from the recommendations of the panel on OMV issues. This was rejected by the United Kingdom and United States, for no apparent reason. But at the same time, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands also presented an alternative proposal, co-sponsored by Argentina and Slovenia (then Security Council member states), and unofficially supported by the United States.⁶⁶¹ The British sponsored resolution was welcomed by some of the 15 member Council representatives. But others, principally Russia, China, France and Malaysia, found it to be inconsistent, lacking in balance and essentially ambiguous on crucial issues.⁶⁶² Much of the disagreement centred, among others, on criteria for lifting sanctions, financial modalities, the language of the draft resolution and acknowledgement of Iraq's sovereignty.

For example, in his presentation to the Council, the Russian delegate, Mr Lavrov, observed on the criteria for lifting of sanctions, that the British and Dutch proposal was essentially vague in its wording to the extent that the draft could be interpreted variously. He argued, for example that the draft could be interpreted in such a way as to require a full completion of the key disarmament tasks

⁶⁵⁹ "Intensified Discussions: No Breakthrough over UN Iraq Policy" *Disarmament Diplomacy*, Issue No. 40 September - October 1999 (The Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy), <http://www.acronym.org.uk/dd/dd40/40iraq.htm> (accessed Jan 04)

⁶⁶⁰ Quoted in, *ibid*

⁶⁶¹ "Draft Proposals for New UN Iraq Monitoring Body" Monterey Institute of International Affairs, Center for Nonproliferation Studies: <http://cns.miis.edu/research/iraq/uncim/index.htm> (accessed Dec 2003)

⁶⁶² Security Council *Provisional Verbatim*, 4084th Meeting, S/PV.4084, 17 December 1999

by Iraq, before sanctions were lifted. He noted, “to suspend sanctions, it is sufficient simply to note progress being made in the remaining disarmament areas.”⁶⁶³ The British sponsored proposal had insisted on “full cooperation”, as a condition for “suspending” of sanctions. This was also an issue on which the French and the Malaysian representatives required adequate clarification. For example, Mr. Dejammet, the French representative stated:

But above all, and herein lies the ambiguity, the criteria for the suspension and then the lifting of sanctions gives rise to difficulties of interpretation. The analyses of members of the Council diverge. Paragraph 7 of the draft resolution means to us that once the work programme is completed, then it will be possible not to suspend the sanctions, but to lift them outright. Suspension, a partial and interim measure, is in accordance with the spirit of paragraph 21 of resolution 687 (1991) and must, as we see it, come into play once progress is reported in the implementation of the programme and not be held up until the work programme is completed. Such progress, in keeping with paragraph 34 of the draft resolution, must be the criterion for cooperation; and cooperation, in keeping with paragraph 33, is itself the criterion for suspension. A different interpretation of the text makes any suspension of the sanctions very uncertain. It is self-evident that one cannot make the suspension - a partial and interim measure - contingent on conditions imposed for the lifting of sanctions. The very essence of the Council’s proposal is here at issue.

Mr Hasny of Malaysia anticipated that the vagueness of the draft, and the fact that, in his view, it was full of inconsistencies, meant that it would be a recipe for controversy. He further observed that the draft proposal lacked definite benchmark or a time-frame for the final lifting of the sanctions, “which ought to be as much the objective of the entire exercise as are the accounting for and disposing of Iraq’s alleged remaining weapons of mass destruction.”⁶⁶⁴ In a nutshell, the argument here points to a need to avoid the lack of predictability and open-ended mandate that was inherent in the UNSCOM process.

In spite of the impasse, agreement on key issues of how to resume inspections in Iraq, and halt sanctions for humanitarian reasons was reached, at least, at ministerial level. There was, in the first instance, broad agreement within the Council to continue monitoring and the need to resolve the remaining disarmament issues in Iraq. As a result, members also agreed upon a new inspection commission that would replace UNSCOM, and the need for the new body to be objective, impartial,

⁶⁶³ See also speech by Mr Hasny of Malaysia, *Provisional Verbatim*, S/PV.4084,

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid

transparent and accountable to the Security Council.⁶⁶⁵ The Council also broadly agreed on a number of issues, which included:

1. The new monitoring body being based on the norms contained in the Charter of the United Nations and on collegial methods of work and being truly answerable to the Security Council.
2. The need to improve the humanitarian situation in Iraq, through the suspension of sanctions, and,
3. The acknowledgement that, a Security Council resolution on the new monitoring system should be acceptable to Iraq.

With this much progress made, the ground was set for the adoption of resolution 1284.⁶⁶⁶ Even though the panel's recommendations initially received partial recognition by the Council, significant mileage was gained in diplomacy by basing much of that resolution on the panel's work. The resolution stated that, "UNMOVIC will establish and operate, as was recommended by the panel on disarmament, current and future ongoing monitoring and verification issues, a reinforced system of ...verification."⁶⁶⁷ The recognition of the role of Secretary General, who was to oversee the new inspection process, is also worthy of note. It shows, at least, a departure on the part of some members of the Security Council, from attempting to directly control the process themselves.⁶⁶⁸ The consensus achieved in the Council, and facilitated by a third party intervention, paved the way for an enhanced inspection and verification system. Presently, I will examine how this impacted on the second round of the inspection process.

9.10. UNMOVIC's structure and processes

It was argued earlier that many of the inspectors' intelligence assets were properly developed in the UNMOVIC process. Such advances would not have been possible with continuing disagreement and divergent objectives in the Security Council. As I show here, UNMOVIC's intelligence capability and resources became pertinent, largely due to its acknowledged credibility and the fact that it was underwritten by a Council-wide approval. As a result, intelligence, in fact, became integral to the

⁶⁶⁵ Whether this formula was expected of UNSCOM and whether it would have made any difference in the circumstances, the answers can only be speculative and appeal to individual subjective reasoning. What seems apparent is that the present formula, if at all existed, was not explicit in UNSCOM's mandate, and if it did, the inspectors could be judged to be irresponsible in their conducts.

⁶⁶⁶ Albright, David and Corey Hinderstein "Comparison of Drafts of Comprehensive, Security Council Resolution on Iraq" Institute for Science and International Security (December 14, 1999) <http://www.isis-online.org/publications/iraq/dec9ResIndex.html> (accessed Jan 03)

⁶⁶⁷ Security Council, S/RES/1284, 17 December 1999, see Paragraph 2, Section A,

⁶⁶⁸ See for example, the presentation of the Malaysian delegate, Mr Hasny of *Provisional Verbatim*, S/PV.4084

process of enhancing and reinforcing the inspection regime, and this is reflected in the organisational framework of UNMOVIC.

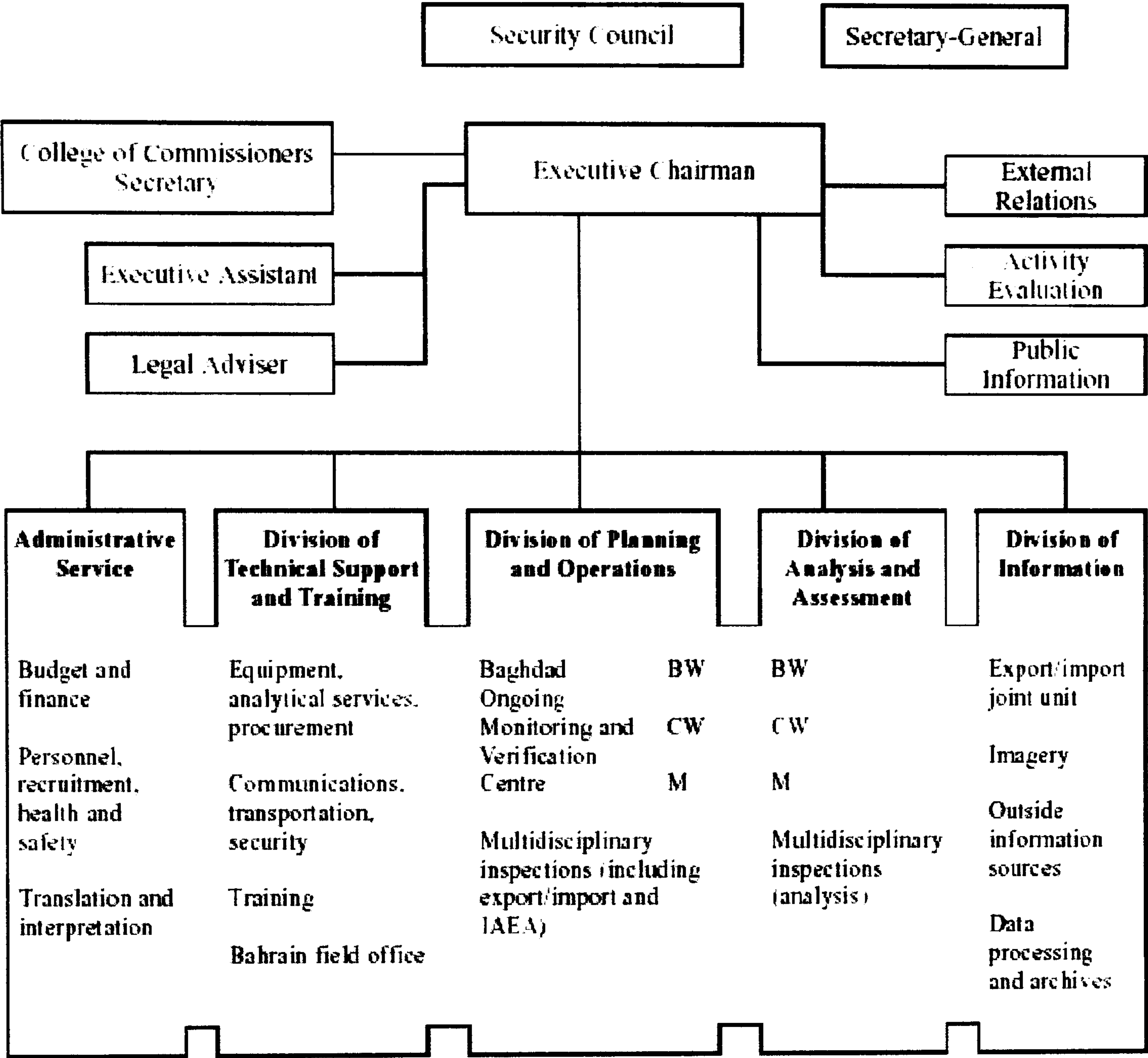
With consensus and balance achieved, UNMOVIC succeeded where UNSCOM failed. UNMOVIC also benefited from advances made through lessons learned from UNSCOM's characteristic trial-and-error approach. These advantages, including inheriting all of its predecessor's assets, embracing extensive archives as well as agreements existing between the Special Commission and Iraq, were built into the UNMOVIC's structure and methods. In fact, the argument can be made that the key to an enhanced monitoring regime depended on the independence and the credibility of the monitoring body. To this end, the new body was constituted as a collegial system. In both its organisational structure and inspection responsibilities, the new entity strived to reflect the full complexion of the UN, and to strongly emphasise its neutrality. Its structure and working programme, including, staffing requirements, management guidelines, and recruitment and training procedures, were developed in consultation with the Secretary-General, with the approval of the Security Council.⁶⁶⁹

UNMOVIC consisted of a College of Commissioners, the Executive Chairman and his support office, and four main divisions, each headed by a senior staff. These were; a) The Division of Technical Support and Training, b) the Division of Planning and Operations, c) the Division of Analysis and Assessment, and d) the Division of Information (see fig.9.9 below), these were also supported by an Administrative Service department.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁹ The Security Council, S/RES/1284

⁶⁷⁰ Source: "Organizational plan for the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission prepared by the Executive Chairman" United Nations S/2000/292, 6 April 2000

Organization chart of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission



BW, biological weapons; CW, chemical weapons; M, missiles.

Fig.9.10 UNMOVIC structure and organisation

College of Commissioners

The College of Commissioners, chaired by an Executive Chairman, met regularly to review the implementation of relevant UN resolutions. They provided the Executive Chairman with professional advice and guidance, on significant policy decisions and on written reports, submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

Executive Chairman

As well as chairing the College of Commissioners, the Chairman accounted to the Security Council on all of the inspections activities. He exercised authority and overall control of the operational and administrative activities and appointed the staff. The office of the Executive Chairman consisted of

five support departments; the Executive Assistant, Legal Adviser, External Relations, Activity Evaluation, and Public Information.

Division of Planning and Operations

The Division of Planning and Operations was responsible for directing and performing all monitoring, verification and inspection activities. It consisted of four specialized functional units, namely, biological weapons, chemical weapons, ballistic missiles and multidisciplinary inspections and operations. The multidisciplinary inspections and operations was responsible for verifying information related to identified supplies of proscribed items to Iraq, monitoring the end-use of dual-use items and identifying possible undeclared imported and relevant items. Planning and operations were responsible for coordinating inspections and monitoring operations with IAEA, as well as maintaining cooperation with other divisions.

Technical Support and Training

The Division of Technical Support and Training was responsible for providing training and logistical support for inspections, monitoring operations and other missions. It worked in cooperation with United Nations procurement units and governments, to obtain equipments and supplies for inspection purposes, on the basis of requests and specifications originating from UNMOVIC. It was also responsible for the installation and maintenance of all such equipment. The Technical Support and Training division also provided international and field communications, and arranged for the ground and air transport facilities necessary for field missions. It was also responsible for developing and reviewing ways and methods of ensuring security. As well as providing a range of weapons related training programmes, its cultural programme also emphasized the importance of understanding national sensitivities and the proper handling of adversarial situations.

9.11 Intelligence infrastructure and assets

One big difference between UNSCOM and UNMOVIC, was the existence of a degree of coherence, a sense of purpose and direction in the latter's mandate, as well as in its organisation and work ethic. These features, at least, made room for the kind of accountability that ran through the entire chain of command, from field officer up to the Security Council. Equally important in this context, was the notion of certainty and clarity about the exact tasks that the body was created to perform. UNMOVIC's mandate, in keeping with resolution 1284, required it to draw up a work programme in pursuant of its inspection and disarmament requirements. It stated, "...what is required of Iraq for the implementation of each task shall be clearly defined and precise."⁶⁷¹ This clarification was to be

⁶⁷¹ The Security Council, S/RES/1284

crucial among other things, from an intelligence point of view, in the design of intelligence infrastructure, and requirements for collection and analysis.

The previous inspectorate's intelligence assets, their uses and implications had already been discussed at some length. It would be useful here, to outline the current body's intelligence structure. I will use the term "institutionalised", here, rather loosely to emphasise the legitimacy of UNMOVIC's intelligence functionality. For example, its intelligence reach had, as a matter of fact, been agreed by the Security Council. UNMOVIC had the authority to designate sites for inspections and to undertake on-site inspections, including "no-notice inspections" throughout Iraq. It could also conduct interviews with officials and persons under the authority of the Government of Iraq and analyse documentation provided by or found in Iraq. It could take samples to be analysed inside or outside Iraq. It could acquire the capability to take photographs, both from the ground and in the air, and could conduct fixed-wing and helicopter flights throughout Iraq in its own aircraft, for all relevant purposes, including aerial surveillance.⁶⁷² As argued earlier, UNSCOM's intelligence was often rampant, problematic, and at best, lacking a recognisable profile. The case for UNMOVIC's intelligence is self-evident, and the structure and directives described here give further support to the argument.

A dedicated intelligence collection and analysis function occupied the best half of UNMOVIC's operational structure and the entire system was, in fact, intelligence led, with all four main divisions performing at least a minimum of intelligence-related tasks or benefiting from intelligence product (See fig.9.10 below). Moreover, two divisions were especially devoted to these tasks; these are the Division of Analysis and Assessment, and the Division of Information. The latter served as the hub of UNMOVIC's intelligence system. It was also the main information warehouse for the inspection and verification work. Its broad role included collection, processing and archiving information relevant to the OMV's mandate, as well as general housekeeping with regards to information management. The division, which was headed by a senior officer, comprised three "functional" units, (Export/Import Joint Unit, Imagery, Data Processing and Archiving, and Office for Outside Information). The Export/Import Joint Unit collected relevant information for use in the Division of Analysis and Assessment and the Division of Planning and Operations. The Imagery unit gathered and processed overhead imagery, as necessary, for the Division of Planning and Operations and the Division of Analysis and Assessment. It also processed and evaluated imagery data obtained from inspections, as well as those provided by governments and other sources. The Data Processing and Archives Unit maintained a central database and an archiving system. The database and archived

⁶⁷² See for example, "Unresolved Disarmament Issues: Iraq's Proscribed Weapons Programmes" UNMOVIC Working Document 6, March 2003

material was maintained under strict confidentiality, and were to be accessible only on a “need-to-know” basis.

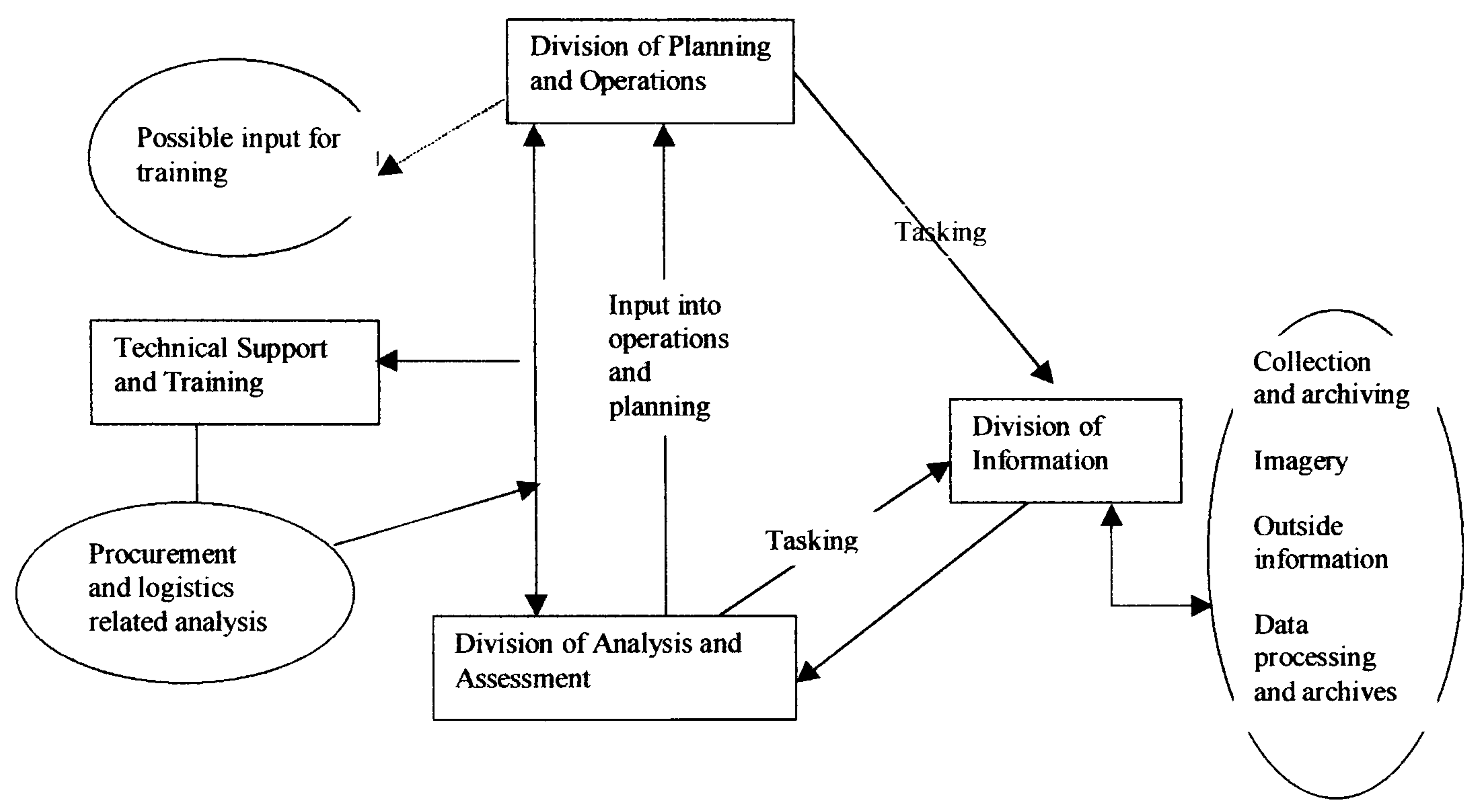


Fig. 9.11 UNMOVIC intelligence process and Cycle

The Office of Outside Information, the main source of the collection activities, obtained its information from a variety of sources, including: inspectors’ field log and observations, open sources, intelligence provided by governments, and that volunteered by the Iraq authorities. Although this Office was not a dedicated analysis unit, an official of the unit was responsible for evaluating all incoming data to establish its usefulness for inspection and monitoring purposes. Though this officer answered “administratively” to the head of the Division, the product of his or her estimate and all sensitive information, was shared only with the Executive Chairman and persons especially named by the Executive Chairman.

The main task of analysis and estimates fell to the Division of Analysis and Assessment. Headed by a senior official who reported to the Executive Chairman, the division consisted of four functional units dedicated to four main case areas. These were biological weapons (BW), chemical weapons (CW), Missiles (M) and multidisciplinary inspections (MI). These units worked in close collaboration with others within the Division of Planning and Operations, on all issues relating to OMV mandates. Information provided by the Division of information, technical Support and Training, and feedback from Planning and Operations formed the raw data for analysis and estimates.

Operational guidelines

However, recognising that intelligence was an important component of the inspections process, it seemed manifestly clear that the inspectors aimed to obtain information from a variety of sources, including those better placed to provide it with the most sensitive of critical information it required. In view of the fact that the inspectors could not go about this course of action through the back door (the traditional *modus operandi* for conventional intelligence), it was also necessary to allay the fears of member states and other providers to persuade them to offer information. In view of UNSCOM's experience, these issues were especially important to the panel on OMV. Thus, their recommendations also suggested a number of guidelines that were to be adopted by UNMOVIC. These included:

- a) Internal handling of information, to reflect the absolute need to protect the confidentiality of operations planning and to give assurances to providers that the sources and methods were being properly protected. This required clear procedures for receipt, handling, storage and access to sensitive information.
- b) Evaluation and assessment of information collected to be rigorous and impartial. This required adopting clear analysis concepts and methodologies, and by using a modern database and computer-based analysis tools.
- c) Any information was to be assessed strictly on the basis of its credibility and relevance to the mandate.
- d) The substantive relationship with intelligence providers was to be one-way only, even if it was recognised that dialogue with providers may be necessary for clarifications and refinement of assessments.
- e) The OMV mechanism was not to be used for purposes other than the ones set forth in Security Council resolutions.

It was also emphasised that confidentiality was to be maintained during all stages of the planning and execution phases. The recommendation noted, "within the limits dictated by that requirement, inspectors should be appropriately briefed on the broader objectives of the project in which their activities are inserted and should be given access to the reports of the missions to which they have contributed."⁶⁷³ With these guidelines, the panel believed that the greater the confidence in the security culture of the organization, the more information member states are likely to provide.

⁶⁷³ See Report Panel on OMV, S/1999/356, 1999. See also "Organizational plan for the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission" United Nations S/2000/292, 2000

What is at issue here is, whether the elaborate arrangement associated with UNMOVIC corresponds with a reinforced inspection and verification process. My analysis of the situation demonstrates that both the rigour and the systematisation of the process provided UNMOVIC with independence, as well as the leverage that comes with such autonomy. The consequences can be summarised as threefold. First the combination of the commission's freedom to act and its clarity of objectives enabled it to approach intelligence information from an objective point of view, and it became a common feature in subsequent reports, to mention whether a piece of intelligence or its sources were authentic or not.⁶⁷⁴ Secondly, the process (arguably), encouraged states to share information with the inspection regime. A third consequence, which may be considered as a corollary to the latter was to open up (though failed) opportunity for states who preferred unilateral action to submit false intelligence to the commission in an attempt to manipulate the outcome of the inspection.

What is of crucial significance to the present study, and, with much relevance to collective intelligence within the context of UN system, is the extent to which the consensus among the Council members led to the development and deployment of intelligence for collective security. While the idea of a consensus in the Council does not, by itself, provide a basis for conceptualising an intelligence system within the UN, as I shall argue in the following chapter, it however, affords those employing such assets in the field greater support and confidence in pursuit of their goals. Before drawing further conclusions, it might be useful to examine one further case, which could be considered as a success story with regards to collective intelligence. This example looks at aspects of intelligence sharing in the Balkan conflict. As well as reinforcing the importance of "consensus" and "balance", this case also aims to identify some general features that might have consequences for the success of a collective intelligence process in other complex political environment.

9.12 Intelligence in the Balkans: a case study

Though set in a totally different context, the reasons for the success of utilization of intelligence assets in the Balkan conflict, tend to have some of the general features described in the UNMOVIC process. Principally, we can identify such characteristics as consensus within the Security Council and coherence of objectives based on viable mandates, all of which are common features in the previous section.

The Yugoslav conflict of the 1990s that followed the end of the Cold War was the bloodiest in Europe since the Second World War. It led to the break up of the Yugoslav republic and was to attract intervention from several international institutions, including the United Nations, NATO, and the European Union. Similarly, efforts to bring peace also led to the establishment of several

⁶⁷⁴ "Unresolved Disarmament Issues, op cit

missions in the region. These included the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation (UNCRO), the Dayton Accord Implementation Force (IFOR), the Stabilization Force (SFOR), the United Nations Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP), the United Nations Observer Mission Prevlaka (UNMOP), and the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES). Many of these missions had both military and civilian components, and their tasks ranged from supervising and facilitating demilitarisation, monitoring the return of refugees, contributing to the maintenance of peace and security; establishing temporary police force, undertaking tasks relating to civil administration and public services, and organising elections, among others.

One of these missions worth a brief study is UNTAES, not so much for its success but because it is one of a few operations for which the United Nations has carried out a comprehensive study and which, in its reports the organisation gave an extensive description of the role played by intelligence in the success of the mission. The case of UNTAES also provides a snapshot of the Balkan-wide conflict which led to the disintegration of former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. The report in question reflects growing practice within the DPKO to reassess past operations, with the hope that lessons learned from those missions will inform and enhance future operations.⁶⁷⁵

The UNTAES region comprised of the Baranja, Eastern Slavonian, and Western Sirmium regions of eastern Croatia. All were parts of the former Republic of Yugoslavia. Historically, a mixed population of Croats, Serbs, Hungarians and Moslems had inhabited the region. In June 1991, Croatia declared independence from the Republic of Yugoslavia. The state of Croatia was recognised as an independent state, first and foremost by Germany, and then by the European Union and its member states. The Serbian-dominated areas of Croatia would not accept the new state of Croatia, and especially their minority status within it. This prompted Serbs who lived within Croatia to step up armed insurrection against the Croatian government. With a force led by Serbian-majority officer corps and supported by Serbian paramilitaries, the Yugoslav Peoples Army (JNA) overran a large area of Croatian territory, which later made up the UNTAES mission area.⁶⁷⁶ Later in 1991, these regions (Krajina, Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and West Sirmium) declared their autonomy and called

⁶⁷⁵ The United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slovania, Baranja, and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) January 1996 - January 1998, Lessons Learned, July 1998; see also, The Comprehensive Report on Lessons Learned from United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) April 1992 - March 1995, Comprehensive Report on Lesson Learned from United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) October 1993-April 1996; and Multidisciplinary Peacekeeping: Lessons from Recent Experience, Dec 1996

⁶⁷⁶ See for example, Ramsbothan, Oliver and Woohouse, Tom "Croatia: UNTAES" in, *Encyclopaedia of International Peacekeeping Operations* (ABC-CLIO 1999) pp. 58-63; Jones, Captain David Sterling "UNTAES: A Success Story in the Former Yugoslavia" *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/tradoc/usaic/mipb/1998-1/JONESfml.htm> (accessed Jan 2004); and Tanner, Marcus *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1997) esp. chp. 16

themselves, the Serbian Republic of Krjina (Republika Srpska Krajina' or RSK). In June 1992, the RSK held a referendum on the issue of unification with the Serbs in Bosnia, who described themselves as the "Serbian Republic of Bosnia Hezegovina", with the ultimate aim of establishing a unitary and sovereign Serbian state.⁶⁷⁷

The conflicts led to the type of large-scale humanitarian crisis unheard of in Europe since the Second World War. For example, Serbs' declaration of autonomy in eastern and western Slavonia and in the southeastern Knin region forced about 220,000 ethnic Croats to flee for safety, and elsewhere in the country, Croatia was facing the flood of about 350,000 ethnic Croat refugees, fleeing ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Croats' offensive to recapture most of the lost territories in the "Flash" and "Storm" military operations in 1995 also forced the flight of more than 200,000 ethnic Serbs from these areas.⁶⁷⁸ Left unabated, the crisis would continue to a cataclysmic end. As one commentator noted, by the end of 1995, three possible scenarios were in the offing. In a descending order of optimism, he argued, it was expected that "(a) the vast majority of Serbs would leave peacefully; (b) the Serbs would leave after having destroyed everything, as was the case in Serb Sarajevo; or (c) there would be a Croatian military offensive with severe loss of life and material damage. Serbs would leave as refugees as they did in Krajina, and there would be a 'hot border' between Croatia and the FRY over the Danube."⁶⁷⁹ The continuing realisation of the impending catastrophe led to the signing of an accord between the president of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman and local Serb leaders in Eastern Slavonia, with the aim of reintegrating the East Slovenian territories into Croatia.⁶⁸⁰

UNTAES profile and mandates

In January 1996, the Security Council, invoked Chapter 7 of the Charter to create UNTAES (United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium), under SC resolution 1037 (1996), to oversee the full implementation of a "basic agreement."⁶⁸¹

The mission's mandate, initially for a period of 12 months, consisted of military and civilian components. The task for the military wing, with deployment of a force of 5000, included facilitating the demilitarisation of the region, monitoring voluntary and safe return of refugees and displaced

⁶⁷⁷ Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, op cit

⁶⁷⁸ "Croatia: Remaining 11,500 IDPs put off from returning by poor economic conditions"
www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wViewSingleEnv/CroatiaProfile+Summary (accessed June 2004)

⁶⁷⁹ "Transformation of UN, Peacekeeping: Role of the International Community in Peace-building"
Statement by Mr. Julian Harston, Director, Asia and Middle East Division Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations Secretariat, New York JIIA-UNU Symposium, 18 September 2002

⁶⁸⁰ Jones, op cit

⁶⁸¹ Security Council, Resolution 1037 (1996) S/RES/1037 (1996) 15 January 1996

persons, and generally contributing to the maintenance of peace and security in the region. Similarly, the civilian component of the mandate was to perform the crucial task of facilitating a return to civil society, such as establishing and training a suitable police force, and organising elections. The UNTAES mandate officially ended in January 1998, with much of its mission successfully accomplished, especially, bringing all Croatian territories under government control. On the whole, the mission was hailed as a success, having “successfully achieved its basic objectives and completed the tasks within its power.”⁶⁸² Though a few milestones remained to be reached, according to a DPKO’s report, “UNTAES provided the necessary stability to enable Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to normalize their relations, enter into increasingly cooperative bilateral agreements and re-establish normal commercial and traffic links between them.”⁶⁸³ Local elections, under Croatian law were also held across the country.

The UNTAES mission is applauded as a United Nations success story, and the Secretary-General described it as “a positive precedent for peace throughout of the former Yugoslavia.”⁶⁸⁴ But what were the factors behind this success? What did UNTAES have that might be lacking in other United Nations missions? Without looking critically into this claim, it is nonetheless encouraging to examine some of the elements within the structure of the mission that made such an achievement possible. A number of factors can be identified as key to the mission’s success, these are; a viable and clearly defined mandate, consensus within the Security Council, existence of adequate resources, unity of command and control, and coordination of civilian and military components of the operation.

Julian Harston, Director of Asia and Middle East Division of DPKO noted, of UNTAES’ success, that, unlike other UN peacekeeping operations with complex and often disparate goals, “the UNTAES mandate was specific and finite.”⁶⁸⁵ This is, partly because the mandate was based on realities that existed on the ground, and also because, the mandate had its foundation on the “Basic Agreement” initially arrived at by the parties concerned. Although the clarity of the Agreement itself did not define or provide guidance to how a UN peacekeeping mandate might be structured, it can be inferred that its “brief-to-the-point approach” provided a template on which the mission was planned and deployed. It can be argued that this basic understanding by the parties concerned also had a direct knock-on effect on every aspect of the operation.

⁶⁸² “UNTAES Brief Chronology” United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/untaes_e.htm (accessed Jan 04)

It seems imperative that the parties cooperate fully with the mission, and a number of factors made this possible. First is the fact that there was Security Council-wide support for the mission's mandate. The UNTAES Lessons Learned report acknowledged that an important feature of the Mission was the political commitment and support it enjoyed from the Security Council, collectively and individually. This meant the invocation of Chapter Seven of the Charter, in support of the mission's mandate went relatively unopposed. As a result, in cases of non-compliance by any of the parties, it was possible for the international community to apply effective sanctions. For example, the threat of refusal of loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was to serve as an incentive for full cooperation from the parties to the agreement. Further incentives for cooperation also included respectability in Europe, as well as Croatia's desire to be part of the European Union.⁶⁸⁶

By the time UNTAES mission commenced in Croatia, there were already in operation, a number of other missions, in and around the region, including those deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among these are, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), and NATO led multinational implementation force (IFOR), and its successor, the multinational Stabilisation Force (SFOR). For example, SFOR had at least, about 35,000 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their tasks also included conducting reconnaissance and surveillance by means of ground and air patrols, making random inspections of weapons cantonment sites in the region, and being on standby to provide air support to the UNTAES mission where necessary.⁶⁸⁷ Added to this were a number of humanitarian and specialised agencies already operating in Eastern Slavonia, which included, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international non-governmental organizations. In addition to getting both military and civilian support from these established missions, the UNTAES was also to take over from the United Nations Peace Force (UNPF), acquiring all of its assets in the process. All these provided UNTAES with adequate resources and consequently, a good start. As a result, the UNTAES' began its mission with authorised strength of 5,000 troops, 100 military observers and 600 civilian police, a provision for 317 international civilian staff and 686 locally recruited staff with political, civil affairs, legal and public information experience.⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸³ Ibid

⁶⁸⁴ "Croatia – UNTAES" http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/untaes_e.htm (accessed June 2004)

⁶⁸⁵ Harston, Julian, "Transformation of UN, Peacekeeping: Role of the International Community in Peace-building" United Nations Secretariat, New York JIIA-UNU Symposium, 18 September 2002, http://www.jiia.or.jp/pdf/conference/020918_harston.pdf (accessed April 04)

⁶⁸⁶ The United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) January 1996 - January 1998, Lessons Learned, (July 1998)

⁶⁸⁷ Sixth Monthly Report, by the Secretary General of NATO to the United Nations Security Council on SFOR Operations, UN, Secretary, General, S/1997/602, 31 July 1997

⁶⁸⁸ The United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) January 1996 - January 1998, Lessons Learned, (July 1998)

To this wealth of resources we can also add the mission-wide intelligence assets. The proximity of various missions, as well as international organisations operating in the region, such as NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Eastern Slavonia, provided the UNTAES mission with exceptional intelligence. The Lessons Learned report pointed out, that, close cooperation with regional organizations enabled the mission to “receive intelligence and information analysis beyond its own capacity.”⁶⁸⁹ It noted that regional organizations are more familiar with the country in conflict, the root causes of the conflict and the parties and personalities to the conflict, than the United Nations. The report concluded:

UNTAES leaders were aware of the importance of information analysis and intelligence to the success of the Mission. United Nations military observers played a crucial role by gathering accurate and timely information on all aspects of military and civilian affairs. Through their liaison activities, they made contacts with all levels of the local military and civilian authorities, including paramilitary forces. This was of critical importance especially during the period preceding demilitarisation. All the local parties in the region accepted the reporting and investigative functions of the military observers, and arrangements were made with the Croatian Army to allow observers to patrol on both sides of the zone of separation.

Further assistance in information analysis was provided by an intelligence cell, the G2 Cell of the Mission headquarters, which operated under the Force Commander’s Office. The Cell was run by Belgian and Dutch officers whose responsibility it was to process and analyse information gathered from the region. Its sources of information included military observers, CIVPOL (civilian police) monitors, TPF officers and NATO. UNTAES senior military officials commended the critical role played by the G2 Cell. Its intelligence capability enabled the Mission to be proactive and kept it informed of developments.⁶⁹⁰

Further aspect of these wealth of resources is the extent to which they were effectively coordinated. A main feature of a multinational operation is essentially, its decentralised structure. This means that operational decisions are made by the leadership of individual units of a mission. This notwithstanding, UNTAES was headed by a Transitional Administrator (TA) with executive powers in the region. His main task, however, was to coordinate all United Nations activities for a successful implementation of the organisation’s mandates. He was also firmly in control and had the powers to

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid

impose his decision to resolve issues. More importantly, the TA also had authority over the civilian and military components of the mission, and both these components cooperated with the TA.

The significance of this command and control structure, as far as the present study is concerned, is the obvious impact it had on the C3 processes. As a matter of fact, it was possible for both the civilian and military components to pool resources to meet the logistical and administrative needs of the Mission. Harmonious cooperation between the various components of the mission was made possible by the development of UNTAES integrated support service (ISS), with a Joint Logistics Operation and the Movement Control Centre. According to the Lessons Learned report, “the arrangement proved to be effective and improved rapport and cooperation among all sections.”⁶⁹¹ The ISS was jointly staffed by both military and civilian personnel, which in turn facilitated a coherent tasking and sourcing of operational assets. This is not to say that the coordination of different intelligence infrastructure and assets in Bosnia were without issues. Multinational operations are naturally plagued with problems of coordination, among others, and these have been discussed in some detail in the previous chapter (see 8.6).

What then, do these case studies mean for the feasibility of a UN intelligence capability and do these, in some ways, hint at a possible characteristic for such a system? It is possible to draw a number of inferences from the preceding examples. First, with respect to the constraints imposed by both the UN system and by intelligence doctrine, these examples demonstrate, at a minimum, the means, through which the organisation could overcome obstacles to the utilisation of intelligence assets. They also hint at some key elements by which concepts of collective intelligence could be developed. However, the wider implications of these case studies are examined in the concluding chapter. It will draw inferences from these case studies and examine the importance of “consensus” in the context of a UN intelligence system. While the chapter attempts to provide an outline model of what could be expected of a viable United Nations system, it also argues that such a structure would also be subject to unavoidable evolutionary forces emanating from a number of factors including advances in the intelligence studies and information technology.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid, see Section 1.37, par. 83-84

⁶⁹¹ Ibid

Chapter 10

10.1 Criteria for a viable intelligence capability in a collective security system

In the last two chapters, efforts to develop entities such as EISAS and the ORCI, as well as case studies on UNSCOM, UNMOVIC and UNTAES were discussed. These examples demonstrate obvious patterns, which have far reaching implications for a viable intelligence system within the UN. In order to undertake an analysis of the relevance of these cases to the study, the UNMOVIC and UNTAES examples will be described as “successful” cases, while the UNSCOM, UNTAC information/education in Cambodia, EISAS and the ORCI case studies will be referred to as “failed” efforts.

All the cases cover a range of issues on the intelligence process, including, the contexts of requirements, sources, methods of acquisition, and how they are interfaced with the UN system in specific environments. A comparison of the two inspections and verification processes (UNSCOM and UNMOVIC) revealed that a “consensus” among the Council members, and a “balance” of expectations among those concerned, were necessary prerequisites for achieving a collective goal. With this in mind, the examples also showed that when an optimum solution evades the protagonists in a group, such as among the Council members, a third party intervention provides further options for pursuing a collective goal. This includes a revision of goals, as well as a possible restructuring of the existing mechanism and these were reflected in the inspections and verification processes. UNMOVIC, for example, was developed to embody principles and standards acceptable to all concerned and with regard to intelligence assets, included feasible means for its successful application. For the architects of the UNMOVIC, a reasonable inspection and verification system, meant, building confidence based on the “security culture of the organization”. This, among other things, depended on a clear and precise identification of the goals and objectives of the inspectors and it was thought that this approach would encourage member states to cooperate.

Furthermore, the notion of a consensus within the Security Council, with regard to the deployment of intelligence assets, which resonates in many of these case studies, also prompts the question, what would have happened, if there were no consensus among the Council members, in facilitating intelligence processes in the “successful” cases?

To begin with, it can be argued that an excessive emphasis on achieving a consensus is an open-ended question that can distract attention from more critical issues. While it is acknowledged that consensus in the Council played a crucial role in the “successful” case studies, it is, nevertheless, obvious that other factors, such as broad-based agreements among those involved, and the

cooperation of the target state or belligerent groups, were responsible for preparing the ground for these successes. Although the notion of consensus in the Council is an important and powerful argument in terms of the decision-making process of the organisation, it has been shown that the process of negotiating and consolidating this aspect of a mission seems to be even more pertinent. On this account, it is useful to recall that the Security Council is a coalition of decision-makers in a system of independent states. Its decisions, nonetheless, are authoritative and the preferences of the veto-wielding members are important. But the Council does not constitute a government to the extent that the rest of the members may be conceived as its subject states. This means that the manner in which intelligence should be deployed within the organisation's framework is as important an issue, for at least a majority of the member states.

However, the fact that the UNTAES case study shares some characteristics with the previous cases is also instructive. Among these similarities are coherence of objectives, consensus within the Security Council, a viable mandate and the existence of adequate resources. All of these, combined with the full cooperation of the combatants, made its intelligence infrastructure, or this aspect of the operation, viable and contributed to the success of the mission.

In making comparisons between the “failed efforts” cases and the “successful” cases, it is clear that the former have characteristics which contrast with features that are familiar in the “successful” cases. One such attribute found to be common in the “failed” efforts (apart from, on occasions where they lacked clearly defined goals), is an obvious lack of criteria for information, collection and analysis. This is crucial even where there might be a broad-based agreement on the nature of the goals or expectations of a specific action. The lack of criteria for the deployment of intelligence assets, as was evident in the UNSCOM process, it can be argued, not only led to controversy but it also allowed for haphazard collection and analysis, which contributed to the quagmire between the Iraqi authorities and the UN inspectors, and efforts to rectify this problem culminated in the creation of UNMOVIC.⁶⁹² The UNTAC information/education campaign in Cambodia, can also be cited as an example where intelligence was introduced into a UN mission, and where the lack of criteria also led to controversy, though of a less serious kind, compared with the UNSCOM case. The inclusion of an “analysis unit” in the division was to give the impression that IED could be a cover for an intelligence cell. Furthermore, although no clear reason was given for the demise of EISAS, the failure in the Brahimi report, to specify under what criteria the system might work also suggests a measure of short-sightedness with respect to the sensitivity and political fragility of intelligence functions.

But how are these case studies and examples, relevant to forging a theory of a viable intelligence capability within the UN? First, these examples show that, in spite of the obstacles, a collective intelligence system is, in fact, feasible within the UN structure. And on these terms, the case studies have shown that UN already has an embryonic “intelligence system”, though one that is relatively unpredictable, generally haphazard and prone to controversy. Therefore, the idea of a viable intelligence capability implies a shift from the present primordial state to a more reliable system. This conclusion correlates with the findings of the various parts of the study outlined earlier. It is also consistent with the view that the feasibility of a system can be empirically studied, as Marschak asserted, by making “good inferences about expected net performance of a process” and by “observing short sequence of environments and the accompanying sequence of payoffs, which the process generates.”⁶⁹³ With this in mind, it is possible to argue that a concept of a viable intelligence capability within the UN can be constructed along the basis of many of the principles set out by the panel on the OMV in Iraq.

The OMV criteria could complement existing information and analysis structures, especially those that overlap with what might be defined, as strictly “intelligence” activities. This does not necessarily mean establishing an entity comparable to organisations, such as CIA or similar intelligence agencies. A “system” need not necessarily exist in a building with headquarters and bureaucratic lines of management. It may generally be a statement, prescribing conduct as well as standards of procedure, aspects of which could be invoked; either to reinforce existing arrangements or to support actions within certain contexts.

Such a framework, let it for the moment be described as “basic criteria for information collection and analysis”, could form the basis on which a collective intelligence system could be constituted. In addition to this, a college of international commissioners, perhaps, headed by the Secretary-General or their special representative, could be elected to oversee the process. Aspects of their role might also include, among others, the employment and review of the suitability of staff involved in any collection and analysis mission. The eventual make up of such a structure and the broad implications for the UN system are beyond the scope of this thesis, and perhaps open to further study. However, further implications of these case studies should also be considered in relation to the key concepts developed in this dissertation, some of which are briefly outlined below.

⁶⁹² Report of the Panel, concerning disarmament and current and future ongoing monitoring and verification issues, United Nations S/1999/356 27 March 1999

10.2 Application of the concept of solution and its relevance to the feasibility of a United Nations intelligence capability

The main goal of the thesis has been concerned with exploring, both the desirability and the feasibility of a collective intelligence system within the UN structure. This issue has been dealt with from two interconnected analytical dimensions, i.e., normatively and conceptually. However, the finding that the UN already possesses an intelligence capability, which meets the criteria defined in this thesis, and the manner in which it is manifested in the UN has not been fully recognised, both within the organisation itself and among scholars. For the latter, the lack of a consistent effort to ground this practice on a reasonable framework has left a vacuum in the study of international organisations and in particular, the United Nations system.

The existence of this vacuum implies that, even when the notion of an intelligence system is found to be consistent with the UN, and supported at various levels of analysis, scholars could still be at a loss on the vital question of how to make sense of such an occurrence. As a result, explanation of this situation has required a different level of analysis, in which the question ceases to be strictly about identifying the existence of such an entity, but also about providing a conceptual description of its feasibility. This is what has been described in the study as a "conceptualised solution". To be sure, this has not implied that the problem of a UN intelligence capability is solved at this level of analysis; it provides, at the minimum, the context in which the observed practices and patterns of behaviour, concerning the utilisation of intelligence could be located or understood. This, as discussed in chapter one, involved, drawing inferences from a range of variables which could not have been possible if the analysis was restricted to a single model or discipline, such as basing the study on classical and dominant theories of the IR discipline.

The application of concepts from other disciplines, as well as those developed in this dissertation, leads to refinements of the underlying notions of "collective action" and "strategic intelligence", to conclude that the idea of "collective intelligence" need not be incompatible with the UN system. The theoretical framework conceived to explain the concept of a viable intelligence system within the UN structure has been developed along the lines of decentralised systems, in relation to the notions of collective action. Many of these concepts have been explored and the key features have included:

First, there is the view that intelligence, in its many manifestations and in the context in which it is widely understood, including aspects of criminality or secrecy, cannot be compatible with the United

⁶⁹³ Marschak, Thomas "On the Comparison of Centralised and Decentralised Economies" *The American*

Nations system. This had meant acknowledging the many functions of intelligence and choosing from among these features that are compatible with and strictly relevant to the UN system. Furthermore, the combination of elements for a particular intelligence process is not fixed, neither is it possible to predict specific aspects of future intelligence processes. For the UN, this would mean developing a system that is flexible and which could be adjusted to fit any environment and context in which it is to be deployed. As argued earlier, intelligence works best if it is uniquely designed to fit a particular political culture and environment. This argument correlates with the course of action leading to the creation of UNMOVIC.

Secondly, the processes of goal attainment, which the UNSCOM and UNMOVIC case studies reflect, challenge the views that “anarchy” is a barrier to collective action. It further demonstrates that both the constitutions and the goals which the organisation sets itself, have the effect of changing actors’ preferences. And from the point of “collective action”, it is argued that the very nature of the “good” could also be adjusted to meet, at least, some criteria of goal attainment. The inspection and verification processes, it could be argued, changed the nature of the intelligence, from a strictly private to a collective good. The reassignment of rights suggests that neither the donor states nor the target state have exclusive control of how the intelligence asset might be used, though, it is anticipated that the utilisation of such an asset will be consistent with the rules governing the conditions under which reassignments were negotiated. But these rules are also not static and could be conditioned by a particular environment.

How, then, do these propositions meet the basic feasibility criteria? First, with respect to the theory of action developed in this dissertation, it is argued that, a given process and its outcome, is said to be feasible, if it is, in principle, accepted by the group. Using the inspection and verification processes as a point of reference, UNMOVIC, for example, provided a set of values for an intelligence process in Iraq, which presented sufficient and legitimate grounds for an intelligence infrastructure to be set up with respect to Iraq’s WMD. If this episode led to a fulfilment of at least some of the collective goals, for example, then critical elements of the feasibility conditions are assumed to be satisfied. In contrast with centralised systems of states, this is especially so, considering the environment and constraints imposed on the actors. Furthermore, the UNMOVIC process meets the optimality criteria, since it also provided a way out of the impasse, for as far as the United Nations system was concerned.

Finally, it is also argued that the manner in which intelligence assets have been successfully and legitimately deployed within the organisation, are not incompatible with the UN's basic principles. Where the rules have been violated, or tended towards a violation, at least, in some cases, the organisation has been successful in encouraging members to realign their interests in the direction of a collective goal.

10.3. Conclusion

The patterns and practices of the present system still hold some potential for the future modification and development of the intelligence requirements within the UN. However, these changes, as well as the pace and the degree of their progress, will depend on a number of factors. First of these would be the extent to which, and whether the UN internalise its previous experiences, for example, by way of lessons learned and apply these to both immediate and contingent events. A second set of factors would be those influences that are forcing or enabling the UN to adapt to new realities and this latter would include, at a minimum, changes in the political environments, as well as developments in information and communications technologies (ICT).

Though it is apparent that organisations are slow to adapt to new realities, certain changes may be inevitable. For the UN, these would include, among others, its maturity, experience, and its evolving role in the search for a peaceful and a more secure world. These transformations and transforming influences, including anticipated changes in the contemporary political environment, have already instigated many studies, both within and outside the UN, focusing on efforts to respond to these challenges. These influences have led to reform programmes within the organisation. Events such as the end of the Cold War, the genocide in Rwanda, civil war in Somalia, the Balkan conflicts and more recently, the war in Iraq, have all combined to instigate changes and new thinking in the UN. This has also impacted on the academic as well as other political institutions. During the Cold War, primacy of doctrines, such as "power politics" meant that institutions such as the UN fell out of favour, with politicians and scholars in the IR discipline alike. Michael Barnett, for example, observed that the role of the UN made little impression on the subject, because scholars in the dominant IR theories broadly agreed that the UN offered "false promises" and thought of it as "permissive and subservient to power politics".⁶⁹⁴

However, as events leading up to the invasion of Iraq and eventual occupation of the country in 2003 might indicate, a softening of the Cold War alliance seems to have the effect of denying the "powerful" states the support they enjoyed for unilateral action from their traditional allies. The fact that France, Belgium and Germany broke ranks with long standing "western allies" to challenge

⁶⁹⁴ Barnett, Michael N. "Bringing in the New World Order: Liberalism, Legitimacy and the United Nations" *World Politics* Vol.49 No.4 (1997) pp.526-551

Britain and the US in the Security Council might also suggest the evolving attitudes and perceptions to the notion of international order.

Developments in the study of intelligence

Further development can be found in the advances being made in intelligence studies as an aspect of political science and the acknowledgement of its role in governmental institutions. Such developments are a recent occurrence. Governments, including long established democracies, have kept their intelligence agencies a closely guarded but known secret. Such an attitude had a far-reaching impact on the meaning and functions of intelligence in scholarly endeavour. For example, in the United Kingdom, until mid 1990s, it was a punishable offence under the Official Secrets Act to reveal the names of the heads of the secret intelligence services. The government would not officially acknowledge or deny the existence of these services.⁶⁹⁵ One observer described this situation as follows:

In Britain the activities of the intelligence security services have always been regarded in much the same way as intra-marital sex. Everyone knows that it goes on and is quite content that it should, but to speak, write, or ask questions about it is regarded as exceedingly bad form. So far as official government policy is concerned, the British Security and Intelligence Services, MI5 and MI6 do not exist. Enemy agents are found under gooseberry bushes, and our own intelligence is brought by the stocks. Government records bearing on intelligence activities are either industriously “weeded” or kept indefinitely closed.⁶⁹⁶

However, events in mid 1990s to changed this situation in Britain. First of these was media revelations, implicating the intelligence services in the miners’ strikes of the early 1980s, and a widespread speculation that the intelligence agencies, principally, the MI5 were politicised, and exposed to manipulation by the Thatcher government during the strikes. Secondly, with the Cold War over, questions were being raised about the role of the intelligence services in democratic societies *per se*, as much of their efforts and propaganda, prior to this focused on Soviet and communist threats. These events, among others, partly accounted for a shift, at least, in the United Kingdom, towards a more liberal and limited openness to intelligence policies.

⁶⁹⁵ A case in point is that of Compton Mackenzie, who was tried for a number of breaches of the Official Secret Acts which included revealing the name of the first Chief of MI6, Sir Mansfield Cumming. Even though the Judge seemed to have agreed that Cumming had died nine years before the revelation, Mackenzie was convicted and fined £100 with cost. Andrew, Christopher “Historical Research on the British Intelligence Community,” in Godson, Roy ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence*, (New York: Pergamon-Brassey’s 1988) p43 - 64

In the United States, the acknowledgement of the role of the intelligence services and other limited changes in the culture of secrecy started much earlier. Scholars identify the beginning of these developments as a consequence of the Watergate scandals of the early 1970s, and subsequent abuses of the system, which generated debates about the role of intelligence in democratic societies.⁶⁹⁷ For example, the failures to predict the Iranian revolution and the Cuban Missile Crisis also highlighted the significance of the intelligence community, but in equal measure, raising questions about its effectiveness. However, an important development which increased scholarly enthusiasm was the subsequent release of official histories.⁶⁹⁸ Godson, for example, argued that the growing “recognition” and “appreciation” of the role of intelligence in history and policy-making led to a major increase on the research and publications in the subject.⁶⁹⁹ It is possible to apply similar arguments to the United Nations, with respect to its reluctance to engage explicitly and confidently with its intelligence problematic. This notwithstanding, advances in intelligence studies have been slow but nevertheless, have opened up a whole new field of inquiry in the IR discipline.

Even at this stage, significant obstacles still await scholars attempting to carry out research in the context of the UN. The most significant obstacles encountered in the course of the present study, can be stated simply as emerging from ignorance, paranoia, and perhaps, intellectual laziness. On this account, first, there are those who believe that the subject matter is too farfetched and academic study of this kind would be pointless. As one commentator noted in a reply to my query, about the study of a UN intelligence system, "there is nothing to study" and "at least, not in this century." Another commentator yet retorted, "what would the UN need intelligence for?" Although the intentions of these respondents were to question the relevance of the study, in fact, their questions, nonetheless, add important perspective to the dissertation. There are attitudes which can also be described as bordering on fear. But this is also understandable and unsurprising, especially among the staff at the UN, with respect to the sensitivity of the subject.

Furthermore, scholars who could have made valuable contributions declined to comment on any question containing the word "intelligence." This is also, perhaps, understandable since any association with the subject matter could jeopardise their careers and livelihood. In this vein, many scholars argued and advised that, in order to make progress with the enquiry, the term “information” could be substituted for “intelligence”. However, this argument is considered counterproductive on two grounds. First it would compromise ethical issues in the research, by misleading the participants. Secondly, the objectives of the study would also have been compromised, since the study is

⁶⁹⁶ Sir Michael Howard, quoted in Andrew, *ibid*

⁶⁹⁷ See Robertson, Kenneth G., “The Study of Intelligence in the United States”, in Godson, Roy Ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence*, (New York: Pergamon-Brassey’s 1988) pp7-42

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid*

⁶⁹⁹ Roy Godson, *comparing Foreign Intelligence*, 1988, p1

principally about understanding intelligence as a function of information and not about disguising intelligence under the pretext of information, if at all such a distinction exists.

In the final analysis, it is obvious that attitudes are rapidly changing in recognition of the concept and the rationale of the role of intelligence in collective security, even to the point of acknowledging, as the UN has done in recent times, that there is such a thing as intelligence in this domain. Among scholars also, the idea of a UN intelligence capability is being gradually embraced and there are beginning to emerge, a proliferation of literature, conferences, study groups and seminars, with the aims of exploring and expanding the depth of the subject area. It can be concluded that these developments will further advance the recognition of the importance of intelligence functions in the UN, forcing it to capitalise on its benefits. The culture of concealment of this function in the UN, is an important obstacle to selling the concept to politicians, but politicians also need to have a better understanding of intelligence processes.

Appendices

Appendix I

Summary of Research Notes

A number of research methods, encompassing conceptual and empirical approaches have been employed to meet the objectives of this dissertation. These include first, an extensive and in-depth analysis of the concepts of intelligence, their structure and relationships with governments, as well as a study of intelligence processes in their different settings. This exercise leads to the anticipation of a concept of intelligence capability within the United Nations system. Furthermore, analyses of the UN structure and means of integrating intelligence with its decision-making processes also provide an insight into existing practices, revealing their limitations and strengths.

Secondly, the research is interdisciplinary, in the sense that tools from disciplines which may not necessarily be familiar as analytical tools in the IR tradition, have been employed to facilitate the development of a model for collective intelligence. These have included, studies in symbolic logic, social welfare, social psychology, information technology and management studies, to mention but a few.

Field study

An intensive field study, lasting fourteen days was carried out in New York, in September 2003. The aims of this study were twofold; first, to obtain primary data, through face-face interviews with the staff at the UNHQ and individuals who are familiar with, or close to the UN system, as well as the intelligence establishments. Secondly, the visit to New York also enabled me to solicit the opinions of experts, including accomplished academics and diplomats in the field, and to test both the feasibility and general applicability of the concepts developed in this dissertation. As well as comprehensively attaining these goals, the field trip also benefited from the proximity to a wealth of resources within the UNHQ. For example, established contacts with the staff librarians at the UN provided invaluable advice on locating relevant documents.

The field study was principally based at the International Peace Academy (IPA) New York. The Academy works closely with the United Nations and collaborates with it on various projects.

Furthermore, IPA boasts a wide range of scholars with expertise in different IR sub-fields and its staff pool and associates include diplomats, military personnel and international lawyers, among others. In addition to benefiting from their experience and knowledge, the research also gained from the extensive reach of contacts available to IPA.

Sources of data

Interviews

Face to face interviews were conducted and on a few occasions, by telephone and through electronic mail. The number of interviewees was small but consisted of experts, practitioners and knowledgeable individuals in the field of study. This was practical and consistent with the research objectives. The interview questionnaire was not designed to generate quantifiable data, it strove to obtain qualitative data, essentially, to seek expert opinions that would lead to prognoses of viable collective intelligence systems.

Official documents

The case studies relied primarily on official documents and publications to generate inferences. These included, for example, Security Council *Provisional Verbatim*, statements of the President of the Council, reports of the Secretary General, Resolutions of the Council, Resolutions passed by the Assembly, as well as reports of "special commissions" and panels, among others. Many of these documents are accessible online. Correspondence with staff at the UN HQ was also useful in locating relevant documents.

Membership of study groups

Membership of study groups, such as Security Intelligence Studies Group (SISG), and Society for Judgements and Decisions (JDM-Society), an Internet based group, have been invaluable. These groups provide support and serve as point of contacts for members. Membership includes practitioners from various professions and scholars from different fields of study. In addition to providing the forum for discussing ideas and generating discussions of complex issues, these groups also provide the platform for presenting relevant papers at conferences and seminars.

Ethical issues

Lastly, due to the apparent sensitivity of the subject matter and consistent with ethical practices in research, significant effort has been made to guarantee the confidentiality of those who did not wish to be named. Furthermore, interviewees were informed about the scholastic purpose of the research. No sensitive or prohibited materials that could incriminate any individual concerned, or bring the University of Huddersfield into disrepute were exchanged in the course of the study. It is also important to stress that the outcome of this dissertation has not been influenced by any organisation,

and the results are the products of strict scholarly research and sound intellectual judgements, which strive for objectivity.

Appendix II

Shortcomings in Military Intelligence Branch

The following are excerpts of observations of military personnel as published in the *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*.⁷⁰⁰

Competing technologies and differences in intelligence culture

An⁷⁰¹ additional factor in the background of all dealings with our Allies was the impending NATO selection of a ground surveillance system. The French entrant in the competition is the Horizon, an MTI radar which lacks Joint STARS' synthetic aperture radar (SAR) capability. The Italians have a comparable heliborne platform called CRESO. The British Airborne Stand-Off Radar (ASTOR) is on the drawing board, with a 2001 projected service date. With two of these competitors supported by GSMs (Ground Station Module), tactical considerations potentially conflicted with national-level military and economic agendas. A final hurdle that the United States stumbled over on this deployment was the foreign release of Joint STARS-produced intelligence. Our joint doctrine calls for two categories of shared intelligence:

Level 1, which can be shown to but not retained by coalition and United Nations (U.N.) forces.

Level 2, which has been properly, cleared for release to coalition and U.N. forces.

It further states the methodology for exchanging intelligence should be conceived and exercised well before operations begin.

⁷⁰⁰ Some of the spellings in the articles have been changed to be consistent with spelling and grammatical conventions used in the United Kingdom, and headings have also been added to sections to give emphasis to the issues. Otherwise, the text excerpted here are the original authors' accounts. The views expressed in the articles are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Intelligence Centres or the authors countries.

⁷⁰¹ Agee, Lieutenant Colonel Collin A. "Joint STARS in Bosnia, Too Much Data Too Little Intel?" *Military Intelligence Bulletin*, October-December 1996

Early verbal guidance from the Joint STARS Squadron to the (Ground Station Module) GSM crews was consistent with Level 1: they could permit their NATO partners to view data on their screens, but were prohibited from providing hard copies, which reduced the utility of the product. The original written guidance in December 1995, promulgated by the U.S. Air Force's Disclosure Policy Branch, was ambiguous. EUCOM (European Command) did not publish definitive guidance until mid-February, a month and a half after initial operating capability was declared. In the absence of such guidance, elements at British, French, and multinational headquarters had to make their own, localized decisions on releasability.

In any coalition undertaking, coordination is more complicated and time-consuming. In this instance, NATO, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, EUCOM, U.S. Air Forces Europe (USAFE), and USAREUR were involved in planning for the deployment, not to mention the HQ at each GSM site.

Differences in personnel and resource

NATO and IFOR (Peace Implementation Force) nations' intelligence personnel differ in their training and experience and how they employed their NCOs (An intelligence noncommissioned officer). Each member of the intelligence team had differing background skills and strengths in intelligence. This ranged widely from the completely untrained to the MI officer with extensive formal schooling. The latter were generally the Canadian, British, and U.S. personnel. Regardless of parent Service or rank, however, most NATO nations provided quality personnel to support the HQ IFOR and AFSOUTH (Allied Forces Southern Europe) intelligence missions. Because of the austere personnel staffing, the CJ2 could not afford to retain those who could not contribute fully in Sarajevo. The lesser qualified remained in Naples and participated from there. Only the United States and the United Kingdom (UK) provided intelligence NCOs to AFSOUTH. Because most of the other IFOR nations did not have a developed, professionalised NCO corps, there was hesitancy to use the NCOs in HQ IFOR to the extent they would be in a headquarters comprised of only U.S. or UK personnel. All of the NCOs contributed significantly and could well have contributed as much as the commissioned officers present. However, their duties were limited in scope and level of responsibility by the overall NATO tendency to inhibit the role and responsibility of NCOs.

The Allied Command Europe (ACE) Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) serves as the ground component of IFOR. Without a doubt, the single most important intelligence product in the theatre was the daily ARRC Intelligence Summary (INTSUM). This

product, released each morning at approximately 0400 hours, was more of an operational INTSUM of the previous 24 hours than exclusively an intelligence summary. In fact, the mix of operational and intelligence information and the INTSUM's rather awkward format made immediate use of the document sometimes difficult at best again impacting the non-native English speakers at HQ IFOR. With blurred lines of reporting, the ARRC INTSUM often provided better operational reporting than that produced by the ARRC G3. As a result, there was frequent confusion or disagreement in the early morning hours in the HQ IFOR JOC as the CJ2 and CJ3 watch officers debated which directorate would report the information in the JOC Situation Report (SITREP) and in the morning briefing to COMIFOR (Commander IFOR).

Inconsistency in dissemination

The impact of the ARRC INTSUM was considerable. It was clearly the premier releasable intelligence information in theatre. There were other daily products of importance, notably the Joint Analysis Centre Molesworth, Balkan INTSUM and the ARRC Commander's Assessment Report and SITREP. HQ IFOR also received infrequent products from the national intelligence agencies of several NATO nations, including the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency. Unfortunately, most releasable reporting subsequent to the ARRC INTSUM was a regurgitation of the ARRC INTSUM in a variety of other formats. This led to redundant reporting of the same data by multiple reporters which can add an impression of multisource validation. To add to this confusion, some theatre and national intelligence agencies reported data as soon as possible, whether corroborated or not, often requiring retractions. There was relatively little analysis or assessment in most of the releasable intelligence products. As a result, some of these products and the intelligence centers producing them were extensively criticized by the IFOR leadership.

Impact of national agenda on field intelligence

A considerable surprise was the paucity of releasable intelligence information reporting reaching the HQ IFOR level considering the presence of nearly 60,000 potential intelligence collectors throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina and the array of intelligence assets and personnel deployed in theatre. Because all three of the multinational divisions had their own national agendas in addition to their NATO responsibilities, it is likely that significant portions of their intelligence collection were siphoned off to national command channels or national intelligence agencies rather than being reported to the ARRC and HQ IFOR.

Mini intelligence fiefdoms

Contributing to the intelligence frustration in the theatre was the proliferation of intelligence entities by nations and agencies. At HQ AFSOUTH (Allied Forces Southern Europe) in Naples, no less than six separate intelligence entities existed in addition to the AFSOUTH Intelligence Directorate. In Sarajevo, there were at least ten national intelligence centres primarily dedicated to providing intelligence releasable only to their own nations. With one exception, these centres were at the ARRC, fifteen minutes across town from HQ IFOR. It was clear that not only were they providing data of limited releasability, their focus was away from HQ IFOR.

Some of these intelligence entities did not even readily and easily share their intelligence information with consumers from their own nations. Three U.S. intelligence agencies shared an office adjacent to the COMIFOR's office. It is natural that COMIFOR, as a senior U.S. flag officer, would rely heavily on his own nation's premier intelligence agencies. Each of these entities ensured that their agency's product was prepared, packaged, provided to, and seen expeditiously by the COMIFOR. Cleared members of the HQ IFOR intelligence and operations staffs, however, sometimes received this information incidentally or accidentally and generally not in a timely manner.

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