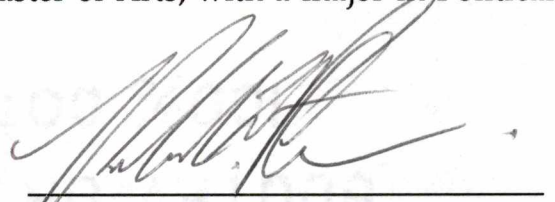


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INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND RHETORICAL REGIME:
AN ESSAY ON THE FUNCTION OF DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
with a Major in Political Science,
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Peter R. Wiley
December 1990 •

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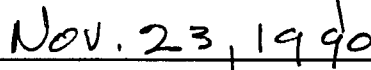
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This work is dedicated to
David and Anna Wiley

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ABSTRACT

International Order and Rhetorical Regime: An Essay on the Function of Diplomatic Discourse argues that international political discourse is an important mechanism of international political order. The essay defines politics as an essentially rhetorical process: the definitional and clarification of values in a way which allows for social action. A general definition and description of political discourse rooted in John Searle's theory of speech acts is then offered, together with a description of the role of rhetoric in determining the meaning and effect of political discourse.

The rhetorical view of politics presented is used to develop a theory of political institutionalization in which political discourse is the primary object of study. In essence, it is argued, political institutions exist to provide constraints on political discourse such that proposed institutional action must accord with the values of a political community. This theory of political institutionalization is then used to argue that, contrary to traditional assumptions about the nature of international politics, domestic and international politics are institutionalized in much the same way.

The essay argues that the recurrent rhetorical practices that develop within the context of specific inter-state relationships serve to reduce uncertainty about states' intended future courses of action by constraining what future courses of action might be justified to the community of states. It is because recurrent rhetorical practices, called *rhetorical regimes*, constrain the justification of states' future courses of action that international political discourse serves as a mechanism of international political order.

To demonstrate the plausibility of rhetorical regime as an analytical concept in the study of international politics, the U.S.-Soviet détente founded at the 1972 Moscow Summit is offered as a case study of a working rhetorical regime. On the basis of a rhetorical regime analysis of U.S.-Soviet communications, it is argued that the rhetorical regime of détente served to facilitate resolution of the crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations precipitated by the October 1972 Arab-Israeli War.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:
THE PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

A persistent problem for the study of international politics has been to explain orderly relations among states. Order in international politics is a puzzle because at first glance it seems so unlikely. As Raymond Cohen observed, the "collectivity of states would, on the face of it, seem to be subject to irresistibly disintegrative forces: scarce and inequitably distributed resources; cultural, ethnic and linguistic divisions which set nation against nation and breed fear and mistrust; ideological rivalry and competing visions and ambitions" (1981, 154). Yet, in spite of these potential sources of conflict, the relations among states are orderly more often than not and very much of the time peaceful.¹

Students of international politics have advanced a number of theories to explain international political order.² In one formulation it is the balance of power among states which results in political order. In a closely related view, order is maintained by a condominium of great powers. In another version of world politics the working of international law and diplomacy ensures world peace. Some scholars have pointed to the operation of "sets of implicit or explicit norms, rules, and decision making procedures" around

¹On this point see Cohen (1981, 2-3).

²Throughout the following essay the term 'theory' is used in the very loose sense of "set of ideas formulated to explain something," and more or less interchangeably with 'explanation,' 'approach,' and the ever troublesome 'paradigm.'

which states' expectations converge in a given "issue area," thereby ordering international relations (Krasner [1982] 1983, 2). The sets of norms, rules and decision-making procedures have been referred to, specifically, as international regimes, and more generally as "the rules of the game" of international politics. Each of these theories of international order, however, has been subjected to criticisms which have convincingly called into question their status as comprehensive and satisfying explanations of how international political order originates and is maintained.

This essay presents an argument for another explanation of international political order. It is the primary thesis of this work that *orderly relations among states are established and maintained in part by the creation and continuation of political discourse among them and other international actors*.

Because political discourse has not traditionally been thought of as a primary object of study in the study of international politics, there does not exist a well-developed terminology or distinct method of analysis with which to make sense of political discourse as a primary focus in the study of international politics. In order to advance the argument that political discourse serves as an ordering mechanism in international politics, it will be necessary to develop a general analytical framework within which the importance of political discourse in international politics can be demonstrated. Consequently, subsequent chapters will be concerned with subjects which will seem to carry the argument afield from the study of international politics proper: rhetoric, political discourse, political institutions, their interrelationship and dependence on one another, as well as their importance to international politics.

Although much of this essay will be concerned with developing an explanation of international order in which political discourse is an important variable, it is not intended to make an exhaustive defense or formulation of what might be called a general "discourse centered" theory of international politics. An essay which did justice to the project of developing such a theory would have to demonstrate the utility of its application to other analytical problems in the study of international relations besides the problem of international order, a task which is outside the scope of this work.

With the thesis that political discourse is an ordering mechanism in international politics, however, comes the unavoidable, if implicit, secondary thesis that an understanding of political discourse is important to a more general understanding of international politics. To suggest that political discourse is important to an explanation of international order is to choose from a host of other potential variables, and such a choice is unavoidably made on the basis of an underlying conception of international politics (Banks 1985, 7).

Any theory of international order, in other words, is premised on a more general theory of international politics. This is an implication which poses a particular dilemma for this study. Because the argument of this essay proceeds from several untraditional assumptions about the nature of international politics and the nature of international relations theory, these assumptions must be made clear and must to some extent be justified if the argument is to make sense. The danger in this necessary explication of assumptions is that the major thesis of this work may be lost sight of in the midst of it. Indeed, much of what follows will sound more like a general

theory of politics than an explanation of international order. I have tried to minimize the drift away from the primary thesis by presenting only so much of a general theory of international politics as I believe is needed to support it. In the end, the plausibility of the general theory implied will be demonstrated only to the extent that it allows international order to be made sense of in a way in which other explanations have not. A more comprehensive and rigorous defense of a discourse centered theory of politics will be left for another time and place.

Before turning to the argument on behalf of the primary thesis, the remainder of this chapter will more clearly define the problem for which it is presented as a possible solution: explaining order in world politics. First, some of the traditional explanations of international order mentioned above will be examined. Of particular concern is their relationship to general theories of international politics. The purpose of the examination is to suggest the range of assumptions and variables which have been considered important to an understanding of international order. Such understanding will allow them to be clearly contrasted with the assumptions and variables employed in this study.

THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Explanations of international order are theory-laden; that is, they make sense in light of particular sets of assumptions about the nature of international politics. To be more precise, explanations of international order have meaning as explanations within a context created by sets of assumptions about the nature of international politics and about the most appropriate means by which the propositions said to follow from those assumptions are

to be checked or verified. The concepts employed in explanations of international order, concepts like 'power,' 'interest' or 'law,' also take on particular meanings within distinct semantic fields created by assumptions about international politics.³ There is, however, no simple one-way dependence of the meaning of explanations, or of the concepts they employ, on assumptions. The meaning of explanations, concepts and assumptions depends on the field of semantic contrast they set up together.⁴ Consequently, if the range of concepts and assumptions which have been important to explanations of international order are to be clearly outlined, it is unavoidable that we first clearly distinguish between the various general theories of international politics.

A taxonomy of general theories of international politics will also allow a clear definition of what is being discussed as *the* problem of international order. The fact that distinct, and in many ways mutually exclusive, explanations of international order have been proffered suggests a troublesome issue: if it is assumed that particular explanations of international order, and by implication different conceptualizations of international order, only take on a distinct meaning within the context of particular sets of assumptions about the nature of international politics, the various explanations may be incommensurable. That is, it might not be possible to speak of a *single* problem of international order, but rather only possible to speak of several *different* problems of international order.

³ Throughout this essay concepts as employed in various general theories are indicated as such by single quotation marks; e.g. 'power,' 'national interest,' 'law,' 'alliance,' 'balance,' 'deterrence,' etc.

⁴ Here I am borrowing analysis and terminology suggested by Charles Taylor ([1971] 1985, 22-23).

Exactly how the differences between general theories should be characterized has been the subject of some debate among students of international politics, a debate which has not been definitively resolved in favor of any single point of view.⁵ There remains uncertainty about what distinguishes general theories of international politics.

They are not different "schools of thought" because in some instances the underlying philosophical foundations are taken for granted and are not examined or justified. Nor can the differences be viewed as constituting "analytical frameworks," inasmuch as more often than not the premises and procedures governing inquiry are implicit and inchoate, and thus lack the degree of articulation and coherence necessary to frame and guide analysis. Likewise the differences can hardly be treated as summing to competitive theories, since integrated propositions about the interaction of key variables are conspicuously absent from most formulations. (Rosenau 1982, 1)

Distinguishing between general theories of international politics depends to a large extent on how one wishes to conceptualize the differences between them.

A scheme for classifying general theories of international politics which makes their conceptualization of international order a distinguishing characteristic, and so is for our purposes useful, has been set out by James Rosenau. With a few modifications and for the sake of argument, Rosenau's taxonomy is adopted here. Rosenau distinguishes between three major general theoretical approaches to the study of international politics "each differentiated at its core by assumptions about the structure of the global system" labeled "state-centric," "multi-centric," and "global-centric"

⁵ This is no place to review the debate in detail, but for summaries of various aspects of it see: Light and Groom (1985); Maghrooi and Ramberg (1982); Dougherty and Pfaltzgraf (1981, 20-38; 84-6); Knorr and Rosenau (1969).

(Rosenau 1982, 2-3).⁶ Each of these major general theoretical approaches is associated with distinct conceptualizations and explanations of international order. This essay focuses on the "state-centric" and "multi-centric" approaches and their associated explanations of international order.⁷

State-Centrism and the Balance of Power

The state-centric approach is the oldest, most familiar and influential general theory of international politics and is more often discussed under the rubric of "realism."⁸ Over time the theory has been given a variety of not always consistent expressions, having "been continually recast to fit contemporary circumstances" (Banks 1985, 14).⁹ Nevertheless, most versions of the theory share a number of key assumptions and employ a number of similar analytic concepts.

The single theme which runs through all versions of realism is that international politics is about the use of power by states. It is rooted in the

⁶ 'Structure,' as in "the structure of the international system," is a concept which has come to have a variety of not altogether clear meanings in the theory of international relations (Little 1985; Wendt 1987). Unless otherwise noted, it will be used in this essay to mean simply the elements, parts or constitutes of an international system, as defined by any general theory of international politics.

⁷ A discussion of the "global-centric" approach has been excluded from this essay in the interest of keeping it to a reasonable length. Excluding the global-centric approach will also allow us to focus on the difference between the state-centric and multi-centric approaches which have been the source of much of the important theoretical debate in the discipline of international relations in the last 20 years.

⁸ In the interests of historical accuracy it should be noted that the term "realism" was employed by its proponents to distinguish themselves from a group of theorists they pejoratively labeled "idealists." The idealists were those who advocated after the First World War an international order based on the abandonment of the balance of power politics, disarmament, international law and mediation by international organizations like the League of Nations. Against the idealists the realists argued that it was neglect of balance of power politics which had led to the first war. After World War II and "the lesson of Munich," realism gained wide appeal and became the dominant mode of analysis of international relations in the United States (Maghrooi 1982, 9-12; Vazquez 1983).

⁹ On the variety of expressions of realism in the post war period see Smith (1986).

assumption that nation states are the most important actors in world politics and that their relationships define the 'structure' of international politics in that they are held to be its constitutive elements. The primary cause or determinant of inter-state relations is held to be power. 'Power,' in this view, is most commonly defined in terms of a state's military capacity or in terms of its 'national interest,' a concept often taken as no more than a shorthand reference to national security interests. With national power comes independence from the influence or coercion of other states. With independence comes the possibility of obtaining such domestic economic and political goods and order as a nation might desire to pursue.

An assumption frequently made together with the assumption that states are the primary actors in international politics is the idea that states are, or at least for the purposes of analysis can be construed as being, 'unitary purposive actors'. As unitary purposive actors, states are held to be 'rational' in that they choose from among possible courses of action which they believe most efficiently advance their national interests. Employed in the context of rationality, power is not only a cause in international politics, but also defines a logic of state action. Because states calculate in terms of power, or national interest defined in terms of power, they can be expected to act to both defend and increase their power and to seek resources which allow them to do so. Taken together, the assumptions of the rationality of states, that power is the currency of international politics, and that states are the primary actors in international politics, define the "hard core" of realism as a general theory of international politics (Keohane 1983, 508). The most important analytical concepts of realism—'state,' 'power,' 'national interest,'

'rationality,' and 'sovereignty'—take on their meanings in the context of these three assumptions.

From the hard-core assumptions of realism follow a number of conclusions about the nature of world politics. The most important for our purposes is the idea that, because states are the primary international actors calculating their actions in terms of power, international politics is "anarchic." From the realist view, international politics resembles nothing so much as a Hobbesean state of war of all against all distinguished by no common power of government to resolve conflict among states (Smith 1986, 14). Because states are sovereign and wish to reserve for themselves the benefits of independence, realism assumes that anarchy is, and is likely to remain, a fundamental characteristic of the structure of international politics.¹⁰ In the realist account of international politics, war is always a possibility if states believe their interests or independence to be at stake. International order, achieved as the result of an absence of war or other inter-state conflict which might provoke war, is also recognized as a possibility.

The explanation of international order which has traditionally been associated with realism is the 'balance of power.' Its meaning, it must be noted, is far from unambiguous. It has been, as Martin Wright and others have observed, an idea "so notoriously full of confusions. . .that it is impossible to make any statement about the 'law' or principle of the balance

¹⁰ Although realism strongly implies that the anarchic nature of international politics follows from its hard-core assumptions, anarchy is not generally treated in expositions of realist theories as if it were self-evident. There are a number of arguments which have been offered to demonstrate the relationship. Some of these will be reviewed in detail in Chapter Four.

of power that will command general acceptance" (Wright 1966, 149-50; Hass [1953] 1961). Nevertheless, it is possible to clearly outline a bare-bone version of the balance of power as an explanation of international order which is consistent with hard core assumptions of realism as variously expressed. On this view, the balance of power is a simple, almost elegant, explanation of international order. International order will obtain and will be maintained so long as there is a 'balance' of power among states--a condition in which no single state or alliance of states may, by the exercise of power, rob others of their independence or sovereignty (Wright 1966, 151; Morgenthau 1967, 161ff.). War, or disorder, when power is balanced, is unlikely because of the difficulties inherent in calculating the outcome of the exercise of power under such conditions: a state might initiate and win a confrontation, but it might lose as well, and can never be sure which. In such circumstances the 'rational' course of action is to exercise restraint in the use of power and maintain to the extent possible an international status quo.

For committed realists, the balance of power is more than an explanation; it is a law of cause and effect (power being the cause, balance and order being the effect), the validity of which is obvious to anyone who would but consult history. It at once follows from the assumptions of realism and demonstrates their validity. The balance of power on this view is "an essential stabilizing factor in the society of sovereign nations. . ." which is ". . . only a particular manifestation of a general social principle to which all societies composed of a number of autonomous units owe the autonomy of their component parts. . ." (Morgenthau 1967, 161). In this sense, the balance of power is a constitutive element of international politics and not only explains, but also defines, international order. 'Order' is the operation of the

balance of power as it works to prevent war or conflict which might lead to war. The plausibility of this view is enhanced by the fact that the balance of power has been used to describe international politics at least since the time of David Hume. It has been treated as a law-like theory of international politics by European statesmen and has been the object of much of their diplomacy (Wright 1966; Holbraad 1970). Because it has been an object of diplomacy, the balance of power as an explanation of international order has a powerful *Verstehen* appeal. The realist explanation of international order is easy to believe, because it very clearly suggests to an analyst what it would be like to be in the place of state decision maker.

The balance of power as an explanation of international order, especially as it has been expressed as a 'law' of international politics, does not rest solely on the hard-core assumptions of realism. There are also assumptions which lie in the background of the theory, not explicitly deducible from the core assumptions or even implied by them, but which are nevertheless important to making sense of the theory in the way that its proponents understand it. In the case of realism, an example of such a *background assumption* is a particular view of human nature.¹¹

There is tied up with the balance of power, for example, a strong implication that international politics is inherently conflictual and that states, given the chance, would choose to impinge on others' independence for their own purposes. This implication begs a question about why international politics should be inherently conflictual and about why power should be considered a cause of state behavior. One realist answer is that

¹¹ Throughout this essay terms or phrases used with a specially defined meaning appear, when defined, in italics.

human nature is such that states and statesmen crave power. With Hobbes, realists are skeptical of the capacity of human morality to reign in the human craving for power. Hans Morgenthau, for example, considered man to be, at bottom, an *animus domani*.¹²

The balance of power as an explanation of international order has been subjected to a variety of criticisms. One set of criticisms has concerned the analytical concepts which give it expression. The concepts of 'national interest' and 'power' have both been criticized as being too vague to be useful for analysis either by scholars or statesmen (Dougherty and Pfalzgraff 1981, 124-7). 'Power,' for example, "is used by some to refer exclusively to military capacity; while by others it is applied equally to economic or political leverage. It is used by some to refer only to the power to coerce; while others use it to refer to the capacity to influence or persuade. Some employ the term to apply to an *instrument* of action, by states or individuals, a means that is valued only because it can procure highly valued ends; while others refer it as the *objective* of such actions, valued as an end in itself" (Luard 1988, 1; Dougherty and Pfalzgraff 1981, 86-92). Any number of senses of 'power' describe some aspects of power-phenomenon in international politics. The problem with these multiple definitions of 'power' is that all do not mesh with the logic of state action suggested by realism.

What might it mean, for example, for there to be a balance of power in terms of influence? Such a circumstance is certainly not inconceivable. States do actively vie for international influence; the competition between the United States and the U.S.S.R. in the Third World serves as a prime

¹² A conception he worked out not in his famous text *Politics Among Nations*, but in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*. For an account see Smith (1986, 135-41).

example. But influence is a more ambiguous sense of power than 'military capacity'. Influence is not the same thing to all persons in all places at all times in the same sense that force is. The problem which this kind of ambiguity poses for the balance of power as an explanation of international order is that the more ambiguous the concept of 'power' with it, the more it is robbed of its *Verstehen* appeal. To be convincing as an explanation, the balance of power requires the analyst to believe that state decision-makers think with a concept of power that can be defined clearly enough so that they can judge their state's power relative to others. This is essential in the logic of the balance of power, because only if such judgement is possible can the potential outcome of the use of power be determined, and disaster avoided (or opportunities made the best of). The more ambiguous the concept of power used, the more difficult 'rational' judgement would seem to be and the more likely a decision maker might recommend the use of power in the "wrong" circumstances. The notion of 'balance' has been subject to similar scrutiny, as has the notion of 'national interest' used to stand for power.

More damning criticisms of the balance of power have been implicit in various criticisms of the hard-core assumptions of realism. As will be shown below, a number of students of international politics have questioned whether states really are the only actors of significance in international politics, whether power defined in the narrow sense of military capacity is the only form of power which counts in international politics, and whether states are really 'unitary purposive actors' or 'rational' in any sense. Clearly, affirmative answers to any of these queries calls the plausibility of the balance of power as an explanation of international politics into question. If states are not 'rational' actors, they cannot make the clear judgements the

balance assumes. If 'states' are not the only actors of significance in international politics, their actions alone might not be sufficient to maintain international order. If military capacity is not the only power that counts in international politics, then other international actors might well be able to exercise power in world politics.

Other criticisms of the balance of power are more difficult to characterize than those which take issue with its hard-core assumptions or the meaning of analytic concepts. In general, these are criticisms of one or another of the background assumptions of realism and the balance of power. These criticisms are more difficult to characterize because background assumptions are often not explicit nor directly deducible from core assumptions, and criticism of them thus depends on an interpretation of what the assumptions are. Consequently, criticisms of general theories which are criticism of their background assumptions are often idiosyncratic.

One consistent criticism of the background assumptions of realism has been to question the view of human nature which some versions of realism imply. It has been suggested that to attribute international conflict to the vagaries of human nature is too simple. The "importance of human nature as a factor in causal analysis of social events is reduced by the fact that the same nature, however defined, has to explain a wide variety of social events (Waltz [1959] 1969, 27). War or crime may be proof of the realist version of human nature, but these activities do not fully characterize the life of human society. Perhaps the rarity of war and crime is a better indication of human nature. "Maybe we have so *little* crime and so *few* wars because men, being good, adjust so amazingly well to circumstances that are inherently difficult" (Waltz [1959] 1969, 27; emphasis in original). To attempt

to judge what human actions are the real demonstrations of the real human nature is to "bog down in a welter of facts and value judgements" (Waltz 1959 [1969], 27). From the point of view of those who have been critical of realism for being, in general, unsystematic and idiosyncratic, this has been taken to be a crippling kind of criticism.¹³

Structural Realism. Also referred to as neo-realism, structural realism is a version of realism developed partly in response to various criticisms of "classical realism" (Keohane 1986, 15). Structural realism shares the hard-core assumptions of classical realism and also proffers the balance of power as an explanation of international order. Where structural realism differs from classical realism is, in part, in the background assumptions it accepts. Its proponents have consciously attempted to avoid the problems created by rooting the balance of power in the vagaries of human nature (Keohane 1983, 508).

What distinguishes structural realism is its assumption that state behavior is a consequence of "the nature of world politics as an anarchic realm," or in other words, is a consequence of the structure of the international system (Keohane 1983, 508; Waltz 1979, 92). The structure of the international system is treated as a cause, and it is assumed that, if the structure of the system is specified, an account of state behavior can be given in terms of it and that changes in the structure will result in changes in states' behavior (Keohane 1983, 509). This "structural" point of view is drawn from microeconomic theory which predicts market conditions by

¹³ By implication it is a point of view which appears to assume that explanations of international politics should not be, or at least are hampered by being, bogged down in a welter of moral judgements which, by their nature, cannot be handled in any scientific way. This kind of criticism is typical of "behaviorist" criticisms of classical realism.

postulating the existence of self-interested, profit-maximizing, coacting firms (Waltz 1979, 89-93). The international political system is like a market and can be analyzed in similar terms, because it is constituted by self-interested units, states, which coact.

According to structural realism, the structure of the international system is characterized, first, by anarchy. There is no hierarchic ordering of states in any important sense. Second, the international structure is characterized by self-interested "like units," states. "States are alike in the tasks that they face, though not in their abilities to perform them. The differences are of capabilities, not function. States perform or try to perform tasks most of which are common to all of them; the ends they aspire to are similar" (Waltz 1979, 96). The similar ends to which states aspire are, at the very least, survival; at most "universal domination" (Waltz 1979, 118). The third important characteristic of the international structure is the distribution of capabilities among states. Structures are distinguished according to the distribution of capabilities; the system changes as the distribution of capabilities change. The most important capability that states possess is the capability to use force because force is "*ultima ratio*" of international politics (Waltz 1979, 113). These three structural characteristics are held to impose definite constraints on states and so largely determine a logic of state action.

One of the patterns of state behavior which can be predicted from the structure of the international system on the structural realist view is the formation of balances of power (Waltz 1979, 118). Anarchic structures dictate a logic of state action which is much like what has been called *Realpolitik*.

The elements of *Realpolitik*, exhaustively listed, are these: The ruler's and later the state's, interest provides the spring of action; the necessities of policy arise from the unregulated competition of states; calculation based on these necessities can discover the policies that will best serve a state's interest; success is the ultimate test of policy, and success is defined as preserving and strengthening the state. (Waltz 1979, 117)

What the balance of power theory does is to explain the results of the methods of *Realpolitik* which are adopted because of the constraints imposed on states by the structure of international politics which are, as it happens, balances of power (Waltz 1979, 117-18).

Multi-Centricism, International Regimes, and the Operation of International Norms and International Law

The multi-centric theory of international politics developed in large extent out of a criticism of the hard-core assumptions of realism.¹⁴ Multi-centric theories either reject or are at least skeptical of the realist assumptions that states are the primary actors in international politics and that their behavior is determined by the threat of military conflict. Multi-centric theories tend to assume instead that international politics is characterized by an "interdependent structure with power distributed among a variety of type of actors. . ." or, in other words, that there are multiple centers of power in the international system (Rosenau 1982, 4).

Students of international politics were led to question certain of the assumptions of realism because, as many observed, they did not and likely

¹⁴ To pick up on the historical narrative, a debate between realists of both methodological traditions and those who would not accept for various reasons the hard core assumptions of realism began in the late 1960s and continued through the 1970s. The work generally credited with setting off the debate is Keohane and Nye's *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (1972) which appeared earlier as a special issue of *International Organization* (Summer 1971). Also important is their *Power and Interdependence* (1977) which sets off the notion of 'complex interdependence' opposed to realism.

could not adequately or accurately describe international politics after the 1960s. During the sixties, it was argued, a number of world-political, economic and social changes which occurred throughout the post-war period had the effect of changing the nature of world politics. Among the most significant of these changes were: the emergence of a number of newly independent nations; the institutionalization of nuclear deterrence; the proliferation and development of international organizations and transnational actors, such as multinational corporations; various technological changes; and the integration of national economies in a complex international economy (Magrhooi 1982, 16-7; Nye and Keohane 1972; Keohane and Nye 1977).

It was the institutionalization of nuclear deterrence between the superpowers which has led multi-centric theorists to question whether the threat of military conflict is a primary motivator of state behavior. The existence of nuclear weapons and the development of delivery systems made the exercise of military force to definitively resolve inter-state conflict appear to be highly irrational, if not impossible. Conflict between the major powers by proxy through the support of revolutionary movements or aid to embattled governments was constrained because it might escalate into global nuclear war. In any event, as U.S. involvement in the Vietnamese War had suggested, there seemed to be effective limits on achieving certain goals through the application of "conventional" military force in such circumstances. The declining utility of military force would mean, it was argued, that the game of international politics would no longer be structured around national security issues, but rather around economic, political, and social issues (Puchala and Fagan [1974] 1982, 38ff.; Brown [1973] 1982, 26).

'Power,' in the multi-centric view, is the capability to influence or determine the resolution of conflict arising from these "new" international issues.

Not only would the issues which structured the game of international politics change, according to the multi-centric view, the players would be different as well. The proliferation and development of various international organizations meant that a wide variety of actors, in addition to national governments, would compete in the international arena: "international organizations and directorates, multinational corporations, functionally linked transnational groups such as regional political parties and international guerilla organizations, and subnational groups such as departments of agriculture, ministries of finance or labor unions, business firms or philanthropic foundations—all formulating and exercising their own foreign policies in quasi-autonomous fashion" (Puchala and Fagan [1974] 1982, 40). The game would be played "on at least four levels: subnational, national, transnational and supranational" (Puchala and Fagan [1974] 1982, 40). Because many of the new actors could conceivably control enough resources to affect the resolution of various international political, economic and social issues, it was imagined that their influence would be far from insignificant.

Taken together, the assumptions that power defined as military capacity was not the prime mover of states and that states were not necessarily the only significant actors in international politics define the hard-core of the multi-centric approach. However, as will be seen below, multi-centric theories are more diverse in their interpretations of the consequences of these assumptions for the definition and analysis of international order (Maghrooi 1982, 17ff.).

Interdependence and International Regimes. The best known explanation of international order suggested by the multi-centric approach is the concept of 'interdependence,' also treated as an assumption of the approach by some (Maghrooi 1982, 16). Although interdependence has been used in various ways by various authors, it refers in general to an international system in which changes in one state may affect other states in significant ways and in which they may have little or no control over such effects. The effects states experience under interdependence are not effects which can be mitigated or defended against with 'power' in the realist sense. Power from the multi-centric view is held to be multi-dimensional and to vary from state to state and from issue-area to issue-area. Consequently, it is difficult for states to exercise such power as they have in a particular issue-area, because to do so might invite retaliation in an issue-area for which they have no capacity to mitigate change. Aware of this logic of interdependence, state decision-makers are led to exercise restraint in making decisions. As a result, inter-state conflict is restrained and orderly inter-state relations obtain.

Multi-centric interpretations of international politics have tended to assume that awareness of the logic of interdependence leads states and other international actors to attempt to actively manage interdependence.

Interdependence generates classic problems of political strategy since it implies that the actions of states, and significant non-state actors, will impose costs on other members of the system. The affected actors will respond politically, if they have the capacity, in order to avoid having the burdens of adjustment forced upon them. From the foreign policy standpoint the problem facing individual governments is how to benefit from international exchange while maintaining as much autonomy as possible. From the perspective of the international system, the problem is how to generate and maintain a mutually beneficial pattern of cooperation in the face of competing efforts by governments (and nongovernmental actors) to manipulate the system for their own benefit. (Keohane and Nye 1987, 730)

The result of attempts by international actors to manage interdependence has been called 'international regimes,' "sets of implicit or explicit norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which an actor's expectations converge in a given area of international relations" (Krasner [1982] 1983, 2). 'Order,' from this perspective can be defined as the operation and existence of international regimes. In support of their interpretation of international politics, advocates of multi-centric theories can point to a number of existing international trade, monetary, financial, environmental and technological regimes (Ruggie [1982], 1983; Gilpin 1987, 351-2; Young 1989).

There is a difference of opinion among proponents of a multi-centric approach as to whether interdependence necessarily leads to international cooperation and the extent to which it absolutely mitigates the utility of military force (Keohane and Nye 1987, 733-34). There are two positions which mark out ends of a continuum of opinion. The first derives from classical liberal economics. "Economic liberalism assumes that a market arises spontaneously in order to satisfy human needs and that, once it is in operation, it functions according to its own internal logic" (Gilpin 1987, 27). In that the market—an interrelationship of producers and consumers, buyers and sellers—arises spontaneously, it is treated as if it were 'natural,' an inevitable consequence of human interaction and the development of society. Liberalism assumes, as well, that markets exhibit "a powerful tendency toward equilibrium and inherent stability. . ." and "that a basic long-term harmony of interests underlies the marker. . .a harmony that will supersede any temporary conflict of interests" (Gilpin 1987, 29-30). The consequence of these assumptions for international relations is, eventually,

peace and orderly relations "because the mutual benefits of trade and expanding interdependence among national economies will tend to foster cooperative relations. Whereas politics tends to divide," the liberal view assumes that "economics tends to unite peoples" (Gilpin 1987, 31).

The liberal view of interdependence extends the liberal economic line of analysis into politics and sees international regimes as something like international political markets arising out of mutual interests, a "natural" result of the growing complexities of international politics. It is in this sense that interdependence is viewed as necessarily leading to international cooperation, because the costs of conflicts under interdependence would be too high. Clearly the liberal view assumes (or at least is compatible with) a conception of human nature and society very different from that of the realist view.¹⁵ Humans are less *animus dominandi* than they are reasonable political animals capable of recognizing the utility of coordinated interests.

The second opinion on the effects of interdependence does not see interdependence leading *necessarily* to international cooperation in the liberal sense. This position is a "modified-realist" view of interdependence and the operation of international regimes.¹⁶ This approach to regimes "is rooted in the classic characterization of international politics as relations between sovereign entities dedicated to their own self-preservation, ultimately able to depend only on themselves, and prepared to resort to force" (Stein [1982] 1983, 116). In this view, states or other international

¹⁵ For more detail on this interpretation of international regimes see Krasner ([1982] 1983, 13-4).

¹⁶ Krasner ([1982] 1983, 7) suggests the term "modified-structuralist" for this point of view, and again here I borrow from his analysis.

actors "forgo independent decision making in order to deal with the dilemmas of common interests and common aversions. They do so in their own-self interest, for, in both cases, jointly accessible outcomes are preferable to those that are or might be reached independently" (Stein [1982] 1983, 127). Regimes in this sense are instruments of foreign policy and can be potentially a source of power (Krasner [1982] 1983a, 364).

From the modified realist view, then, international order associated with regimes is an ordering of conflict, not cooperation, and does not negate the realist conception of an inherently anarchical and conflictual international politics. Regimes may be a possibility in certain circumstances to address issues of marginal significance to national interests. "However regimes cannot be relevant for zero-sum situations in which states act to maximize the difference between their utilities and those of others" (Krasner [1982] 1983, 8). It is asserted that "pure power motivations" can and will often "preclude regimes" (Krasner [1982] 1983, 8).

In spite of their differences, common to both the liberal and modified realist views of interdependence and international regimes, is the notion that something like common norms, rules, or decision-making procedures can and do have a role in international politics. Together with its hard-core assumptions, it is this idea which sets the multi-centric approach off from simple realism in which national power is a largely unmediated cause of state behavior. Even from the modified realist view, regimes can be "intervening variables" (Krasner [1982] 1983, 7-8). The idea of international regime is but one way to conceptualize the operation of norms or rules in the international system as an explanation of international order. It is a fairly

specific conceptualization in that norms can be conceived as operating within specific issue areas.

The Rules of the Game and International Law. There have been attempts at more general conceptualizations of the operation of international norms or rules. Raymond Cohen, for example, has argued that what he calls "the rules of the game" of international politics "perform the same function for international society as norms in domestic society; they indicate limits on permissible conduct, thereby permitting conflict to be contained, and act as guidelines for desirable behavior, thereby facilitating active cooperation" (Cohen 1981, 6). They are not limited in their influence to specific issue areas of international politics, but are rather a characteristic of international politics in general.

The need for the rules of the game. . . arises from the logic of the sovereign existence of independent states. In a world consisting of separate, willful entities, the behaviour of each one of which is inherently unpredictable, an uncertain future holds out not only the risk of repeated collision but also obviates the possibility of constructive planning. . . Rules of the game serve to reduce this dangerous uncertainty by prescribing a system of normative principle—prohibitions, permissions and obligations—to guide states in their conduct. Such principles, serving as landmarks in an otherwise featureless landscape, act as focal point around which states are able to coordinate their expectations of others' behaviour and hence harmonize their mutual actions. (Cohen 1981, 155)

In this view, international 'order' amounts to states following the rules of the game of international politics, and the principle mechanisms of world order are the rules themselves.

The rules of the game can be interpreted either as a liberal or a modified-realist conception of the operation of international norms and rules. Consistent with the latter position Cohen points out that there is "an organic connection between the rules of the game and *power*" (1981, 6;

emphasis in original). The rules reflect the distribution of power in the international system and those which do not soon fail to be recognized as rules. The rules of the game, implicit in the form of tacit understanding among states or explicit in the form of treaties or similar agreements, are an adjunct to power, clarifying and defining the uses of power acceptable to the community of states. "Conversely, power enforces and defines the scope of the rules of the game" (Cohen 1981, 6).

Cohen also suggests, however, that the rules of the game "should not be thought of as excluding the provisions of *international law* which contribute to international order, but rather as a wider concept than law, which they subsume" (1981 6; emphasis in original). In that there is a liberal interpretation of international law which suggests that it can be an effective instrument to mitigate conflict among states, the rules of the game can be interpreted as being consistent with a liberal conception of the operation of rules and norms as well.¹⁷

In that international law can be sensibly defined as consisting of "the rules, procedures, and practices that regulate the behavior of various actors within a world political system dominated by sovereign states of unequal power, wealth and prestige," there is a sense in which it is compatible with the multi-centric approach to general theories of international relations

¹⁷ It is not clear whether Cohen himself comes down on the liberal or modified-realist position. Consider these concluding remarks from *International Politics: the Rules of the Game*:

Whatever the occasional disappointments, there is surely no alternative in the nuclear age but for rivals to persist in their attempt to weave a fabric of coexistence. Fantasies of omnipotence at one extreme and disengagement at the other cannot wish away the inescapable need to sustain the normative basis of international order. Rules of the game are far from being a panacea. They are not self-enforcing and the wisdom of their management cannot be taken for granted. Equally they are not an optional extra to be discarded at will. They are a structural fact of life of the international community. (1981, 163).

(Falk et al. 1985, 7). As in the case of the rules of the game, and interdependence and international regimes, there are a variety of interpretations of the role of international law in international politics which range from liberal to realist. International law from the realist view is subservient to state power national interests and "reasons of state" are a sufficient excuse for evading it. Law, in this view, is defined as something like 'the rules of the balance of power,' or as Oppenheim suggests:

... a law of nations can exist only if there be an equilibrium, a balance of power, between members of the Family of Nations. If the Powers cannot keep one another in check, no rules of law will have any force, since an overpowerful State will naturally try to act according to discretion and disobey the law. As there is not and never can be a central political authority above the Sovereign States that could enforce the rules of the Laws of Nations, a balance of power must prevent any member of the Family of Nations from becoming omnipotent. (as quoted in Morgenthau 1967, 266)

In the liberal view, in the case of the international law often identified as the "Grotian tradition," international law has the task of "building up the normative expectations necessary to create a community of law that overcomes the limitations of a world order system based on exclusive reliance upon state sovereignty" (Falk et al. 1985, 8). Existing international law is interpreted as being antecedent to an international law fulfilling a number of goals: the total subjection of international relations to the rule of law; the abandonment of 'reasons of state' as an excuse for evasion of the law; the establishment of peaceful relations among states; and respect for the human rights of individuals by states under the law (Lauterpacht [1949] 1985, 15; 20; 26-8). In that these goals are clearly more "idealist," or "utopian," they are clearly not compatible with the assumptions of realism. In that they would appear to require the limitation of sovereignty and a restriction of

power as an *ultima ratio* in international politics, the Grotian tradition appears to be compatible with the multi-centric approach in general.

The multi-centric approach has been subjected to a wide variety of criticisms, as have the various explanations of international order associated with it. Perhaps the most obvious argument against the approach and its assumptions is realism. It may be argued that the approach may have drawn the wrong conclusions from an abnormal period of international politics, and that the assumptions of realism will still best describe the nature of international politics in the long term.

Against interdependence it has been argued that the concept "obscures the realities of international politics and asserts a false belief about the conditions which may promote peace" (Waltz [1970] 1982, 93). The effects of any imagined interdependence, it is argued, are limited by the two superpowers whose power capabilities are such that their relationship largely structures the international system and that they can control or dictate outcomes.

The great powers' power capacities also serve to insulate them from the effects of other states' actions. In addition the "inequality of nations produces a condition of equilibrium at a low level of interdependence" (Waltz 1979, 93). That is, the "large and economically developed countries, the very ones that are crucial in world politics" can quickly become self-sufficient in most important respects and at relatively low cost if necessary. "The low cost of disentanglement is a measure of low dependence" (Waltz [1970] 1982, 86). The less well-developed states are affected most significantly, not by states with whom they are interdependent, but rather by states on whom they are dependent. "What looks to some like

a thickening web of economic interdependence obscures relations that are best described as a compound of independence and dependence, and that is quite a different thing" (Waltz [1970] 1982, 87).

Any argument against interdependence undermines the notion of international regimes because regimes are held to be a consequence of interdependence. Yet, even if some degree of international interdependence is admitted, as many realists do admit, there are criticisms which can be leveled against the mechanism of international regime. One objection is that a focus on regimes "ignores the vast area of nonregimes that lies beyond the ken of international bureaucracies and diplomatic bargaining" (Strange [1982] 1983, 338). Regimes may not be a necessary nor sufficient mechanism of international order. Other international conditions, a balance of power say, may in fact be more important to the maintenance of international order than regimes. Indeed, they may determine a larger structure on which regimes depend; regimes may be a consequence of international conditions other than interdependence.

Another objection to the notion of international regime is that it leads to a static view of international politics which in turn raises questions about exactly what the concept refers to. For example, in the case of an international monetary regime,

. . . facile generalizations about "the Bretton Woods regime" abound—but they bear little resemblance to reality. It is easily forgotten that the original Articles of Agreement were never fully implemented, that there was a long "transition period" in which most of the proposed arrangements were put on ice, and that hardly a year went by in the entire postwar period when some substantial change was not made in the way the rules were applied and the way the system functioned. (Strange [1982] 1983, 347)

Under such conditions what, exactly, is being referred to as "the Bretton Woods regime?" The problem is that use of the term regime may imply that there was a stable collection of rules, norms or decision-making procedures which could explain orderly international monetary relations when in fact there were not. Any attempt to periodize regimes in terms of their effects clearly leads to the barest sort of tautology; yet, without doing so, it is difficult to say exactly what and when they were.¹⁸

As an explanation of international order, international law has also been observed to have a number of limitations. First, it is difficult to argue that international law is in any sense a "necessary or essential condition of international order" (Bull 1977, 142). Several state-systems have existed without the institution of international law. Second, it has been argued that "international law is not by itself sufficient to bring about international order" (Bull 1977, 143). A third objection to international law as an explanation of international order is that "international law, or some particular interpretation of international law, is sometimes found actually to hinder measures to maintain international order" (Bull 1977, 143). Finally, it can be objected that international law can be put to "purposes other than international order, and which may indeed be opposed to it" (Bull 1977, 145).

THE PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

We have seen that in various explanations of international order and their relationships to more general theories of international politics, 'order' or

¹⁸ How does one know the regime existed? Because there were stable international monetary relations? Why were there stable international monetary relations? Because the regime existed. Hardly insightful.

'international order' tends to be defined in terms of the mechanisms or conditions said to produce it. In the realist version of international politics international 'order' is produced and maintained by balances of power. On the multi-centric view 'order' is a consequence of the condition of interdependence and is maintained by the operation of international regimes. Employing a more general conception of international rules or norms, the multi-centric approach also admits that order might be defined in terms of the operation of international law or "the rules of the game."

We have seen as well that the analytic concepts used to give expression to explanations of international order—'structure,' 'power,' 'national interest,' 'interdependence,' 'rules,' 'human nature,' 'balance,' etc.—although similar enough to be recognizable as having a similar meaning, also differ in their exact meanings from explanation to explanation. There is clearly a realist sense of 'power' which is distinct from a multi-centric sense of 'power.' The theory-specific meanings of analytic concepts seem clearly to derive from distinct sets of assumptions about the nature of international politics.

It is the diversity of assumptions, meaning of analytic concepts, and explanations of international order which imply a degree of incommensurability amongst them. It is this implied incommensurability which gives rise to skepticism about whether there is a problem of 'international order' independent of theoretical definitions of it. It is clear, however, that there is a core concept of international order that is common to each of the explanations of international order we have reviewed. Regardless of how it is said to have come into existence or how it is maintained, 'international order' means *the absence of conflict among states*

of a kind which might lead to war. This implied core meaning of international order suggests that there is at least enough agreement between the various approaches and explanations of international order that we can speak of *the* problem of international order if what is meant by it is explaining how states manage to avoid the kind of conflict which leads to war so much of the time. This, if anything is, *the* problem of international order.

There is, however, a second dimension to the problem international order beyond defining what is meant by international order. This second aspect of the problem is to say exactly what is to *explain* international order. As was observed above, explanations of international order take on a particular meaning, not only in the context of sets of assumptions about the nature of international politics, but also within the context of sets of assumptions about the most appropriate means by which the propositions said to follow from those assumptions are to be checked or verified. In other words, part of the meaning of explanations of international order *as explanations* derives from assumptions about what it is to explain international order. This second dimension of the problem of international order is of interest because, as will become clear below, this essay examines the problem of international order from a methodological perspective different from the more traditional explanations of international order and international politics discussed above. Because it does so, this essay implicitly argues for an interpretive approach to the study of international order and international politics. The implications of this implicit argument will be discussed briefly in Chapter Eight.

Plan of the Argument

Any discussion of the idea that political discourse serves to order international relations obviously requires a clear conceptualization of what political discourse is. For this reason, Chapter Two will develop a definition of political discourse, its function in politics, and a definition of politics that follows from them. Chapter Three will expand the account of political discourse and its role in politics by developing a theory of the function of political institutions which suggests that political discourse is largely constitutive of them.

The theory of political institutions suggested in Chapter Three will be used in Chapter Four to critique the assumption that international politics is fundamentally different from domestic politics because it is not institutionalized. It shall be demonstrated that international politics is institutionalized in much the same way as domestic politics. Chapter Five will argue that while international and domestic politics are similarly institutionalized there remain significant differences between them in terms of the values that constitute them. It will be seen, nevertheless, that political discourse serves an important ordering function in international politics. Chapter Five will argue that the analytical concept of *rhetorical regime* can be used to identify and describe the ordering function of international political discourse.

In order to demonstrate the plausibility of the notion of rhetorical regime as an analytical concept, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven will briefly give an account of the rise and operation of a particular rhetorical regime: the U.S.-Soviet détente founded at the 1972 Moscow Summit. Chapter Six will describe the development of the rhetorical regime of détente, and

Chapter Seven will show how it served to facilitate a resolution to the crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations precipitated by the 1972 Arab-Israeli War. Chapter Eight will summarize the argument offered in the course of the previous chapters and will suggest what implications the view of international order developed here has for the study of international politics.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND RHETORIC

If the role of political discourse in the maintenance of international political order is to be understood, it is at first necessary to have an idea of what political discourse is. This chapter offers a description and definition of political discourse in terms of its purpose, structure and qualities. Theories and definitions of discourse abound. Some are philosophical; others belong to linguistics and are based on observation and experiment.¹ While it draws freely on both traditions, the definition and description offered here is in no way offered as a definitive account of political discourse. Its purpose is, rather, purely pragmatic: to provide a clear foundation for the discussion of the role of political discourse in political institutions and international politics in later chapters.

In brief, the case to be made in this chapter is that politics is a rhetorical process. In order to motivate action in society, politicians must be able to persuade others, particularly those who may be in a position to thwart action, that action is justifiable. The primary purpose of political discourse is to persuasively present good reasons for a proposed course of action, and when good reasons do not seem to be "obviously" good, to demonstrate that

¹ For a sense of the differences see Milroy (1980), Yule and Brown (1983), Hudson (1980), Perelman (1982).

in fact they are good reasons.² Politics is unavoidably a rhetorical process because, as will be seen, rhetoric is the tool with which political discourse is shaped in order to accomplish persuasion.

THE HIERARCHY OF GOOD REASONS

Politics abounds with good reasons if not with good reason.³ Good reasons are offered as reasons to act. Because politics requires action, it requires good reasons. A president withholds records of meetings with his staff from Congress; he invokes the good reason of "executive privilege." A state seeks to keep disputed sea lanes open; it invokes the good reason of "freedom of the seas." A secretary of defense asks for large defense budget increases; he invokes the good reason of "the Soviet threat." A lawyer seeks to have evidence excluded from consideration by a court; he invokes the good reason of "the Fourth Amendment." A candidate for president wishes to continue his candidacy after it is alleged that he is an adulterer; he invokes the good reason (not so good as it turns out) that "his private life is his own."

Some good reasons are codified as and embedded in formal institutional rules. Others exist in relation to bodies of practice, customs or traditions current in a society. Whether or not, however, good reasons are suggested by some set of formalized institutional rules or by some body of practice, tradition or custom, there is demonstrably a hierarchy of good

² Or, in the case of opposition to a proposed course of action, that proposed good reasons are in fact bad reasons for action. Although the argument that follows concerns arguments on behalf of proposed courses of action it can apply equally well to arguments against them.

³ The notion of "good reasons" has been employed by a number of students of political language. See, for example, Edelman (1985, 13), "Political Language and Political Reality", and Barry (1966) *Political Argument*. It is also not unknown in rhetorical studies. See, for example, Wallace (1963, 239-249) "The Substance of Rhetoric: Good Reasons."

reasons, with what are commonly identified as *values* at its apex. When a good reason is invoked in discussion or argument, it at least potentially implies a subsuming good reason or set of good reasons which potentially lead in the course of discussion to what are called values.

A good reason's relation to subsuming good reasons or values is what suggests that a reason is in fact a good one. If the relationship of a good reason to some subsuming good reason or set of good reasons is obvious or if it is well accepted, the act of invoking it, and acting on the basis of the invocation, is not likely to be controversial. If the relationship is obscure, confused or seems to directly contradict a subsuming good reason or value, then conflict, and more importantly, debate, about whether a good reason is good, is inevitable. The purpose of debate about the goodness of a reason is generally the same. The debate seeks either to:

1. (a) Immediately demonstrate that a proposed good reason directly conflicts with a subsuming good reason and is therefore not a good reason to act, or; (b) immediately demonstrate that a proposed good reason is consistent with a subsuming good reason and is therefore a good reason to act, or;

2. Clarify what is confused or obscure about the relationship of a proposed good reason to a subsuming good reason in order to be able to conduct the debate with propositions of the kind described in 1(a) and (b).

Arguments about the relationship of proposed good reasons to subsuming good reasons often end when the argument invokes what are recognized as (and often labeled as) values or *ultimate good reasons*. When the argument has reached the level of values or ultimate good reasons, it is often difficult for it to go any further. The interlocutors reach the point

where fulfilling the objectives of a debate about good reasons just noted is impossible for them. Try as they might, they cannot together clarify what seems to be confused or obscure about the relationship of a proposed good reason to a subsuming good reason because they can't agree on what the subsuming good reasons are. Anyone who has argued about some political or moral issue has had the experience of being at such a point in an argument. If one wants to remain friendly with the person with whom one is arguing one says something like "well, we will have to agree to disagree on *that* issue" and go on our merry way, flush and full of worry, resolved that we will never bring *that* up again with so and so and wondering how he or she could be so stupid as not to see things our way.

Getting to the level of ultimate good reasons in an argument with another who does not share our own ultimate good reasons can be an infuriating and frustrating experience. Part of the frustration, as Charles Taylor notes, comes from the fact that the questions we can ask of our interlocutor (how can he be so stupid?) can be asked of ourselves: "if I am this ill-equipped to convince a stubborn interlocutor, how can I convince myself? How can I be sure? Maybe my intuitions are wrong or distorted, maybe I am locked into a circle of illusion" (Taylor [1971] 1985, 18). The nagging uncertainty that such questions give rise to has resulted in much of the writing on epistemology in the tradition of western philosophy, a literature which attempts to tell us how we can be really sure we know the truth, whether we can trust our own ultimate good reasons.

Regardless of what progress has been made on epistemological issues in other realms of discourse, political arguments are still likely to become, and often are, mired in disagreements over ultimate good reasons. This is, if

anything is in the study of politics, a fact confirmed by observation. The fact is that no standards, about what it is to be certain or assured of the truth, have been advanced which are universally acceptable in the realm of politics. This observation may seem painfully obvious, but it is worth making explicit. There are realms of discourse, science for example, in which standards about what it is to be assured of the truth have been advanced, and which are more or less universally acceptable, and which have shaped our views of how politics can be understood. The existence of realms of discourse in which there are accepted universal standards of the truth holds the hope that such standards might be developed or discovered for politics. The obvious appeal of this project is that the "circle of illusion" might be transcended in politics or at least in the study of politics.

The existence of realms of discourse in which there are accepted universal standards of the truth is infuriating to persons who engage in political discourse precisely because it points out the intractability of their situation. As the old maxim instructs, they know that politics is the art of compromise because they can't do any better. The politician knows, and if he or she does not know soon learns, that in order to act he or she must generally avoid conflict over ultimate good reasons of the kind which foreclose debate and makes the coordination of social action impossible. Politics is, in other words, recognized as an art because it is manifestly not a science, at least from the politician's point of view.

The discussion to this point begs an interesting and important question: if political discourse has the character outlined, if one way that one can identify political discourse is that it gets bogged down in disputes over ultimate good reasons, how is politics possible? Why don't political

communities come to a grinding halt more often to argue about what holds them together? The answer is simple and obvious: It is simply too costly to argue about ultimate good reasons all, or even a good part of, the time. This answer is obvious because it has been an important one in the political philosophy of the West. Civil or political society is to be preferred to the state of nature, in which all persons can assert any value they like and in which, as a consequence, they can do anything they please.

Politics is often characterized, even defined, as conflict; that is, conflict of power or interests. Yet, politics is essentially, perhaps paradoxically, a cooperative conflict. It is conflictive because there can be differences in outcomes and there can be debate about what outcomes should be. It is cooperative because there is within a political community an agreed on, or at least potentially agreed on, range of outcomes which are acceptable. It is ultimate good reasons or values which stake out the range of acceptable outcomes. Politics is possible because arguments about ultimate good reasons are systematically avoided much of the time, or, when they are not, settled in such a way that preserves or extends the range of acceptable outcomes. When the range of acceptable outcomes can no longer be identified, there is an end to political community, an end to politics and the beginning of political violence.⁴

The question of how politics is possible can be rephrased as a definition of politics: politics is the process of avoiding and settling arguments about how ultimate good reasons stake out a range of acceptable political outcomes. Because there is a hierarchy (or hierarchies) of good

⁴See, for example, Valenzuela (1978), *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile*.

reasons which defines a political community, and because, as was noted above, debate about good reasons often has as its purpose to clarify what is confused or obscure about the relationship of a proposed good reason to a subsuming good reason, the definition for politics can be simplified to state that *politics is the definition and clarification of values in a way which allows action in society.*

POLITICAL DISCOURSE

If the definition of politics offered here is to be made plausible, it is necessary to explain how it allows for an account of political outcomes. The definition suggests that the primary object of study on this definition is *political discourse*, the argument about the relationship of good reasons, subsuming good reasons, and on occasion ultimate good reasons, to a proposed course of action. Explaining how the definition allows an account of political outcomes must begin with a description and definition of the object of study with which it concerns itself with.

The Structure of Political Discourse

In order to intelligibly analyze political discourse, it is first necessary to introduce some quasi-technical terms which will allow reference to the parts and the conditions from which political discourse arises.

Everyday experience instructs that political discourse is organized around *issues*. An issue is an argument or set of related arguments about what government (or a state) should or should not do. One characteristic of issues is that they acquire nicknames which stand for an argument or set of arguments about what government should or shouldn't do. When "the

issues" are talked about in a general way, we refer to these nicknames: "Toxic Waste," "Arms Control," "The Deficit," "Nuclear Power," "The Persian Gulf."

Issues exist as the result of someone's recognition of an *exigence*. For our purposes an exigence "is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing that is other than it should be" (Bitzer 1968, 6). An exigence is recognizable because persons have visions of the world as it should be which provide good reasons for acting. An act, or declaration of an intention to act, for which a good reason cannot be given, warns of an exigence.

An exigence is a component of what Lloyd Bitzer has called a *rhetorical situation*: "a complex of persons, events, objects and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partly removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" (Bitzer 1968, 6). Political discourse is composed of a class of rhetorical situations which can be called, for want of a better term, *political situations*. A political situation can be defined as a rhetorical situation in which those persons participating in politics are the agents influenced by discourse who can mediate the "significant modification" of an exigence by their action.

As a component of a political situation, an exigence has three important characteristics. First, an exigence which cannot be modified by the actions of persons participating in politics is not a political exigence. Second, whether or not an exigence is political is often not clear because it is not clear whether it can be modified. Third, in any political situation "there will be at

least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected" (Bitzer 1968, 6-7).

There are two other components of a political situation which affect the organization of political discourse. The first component is the *audience*: "those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and being mediators of change" (Bitzer 1968, 8). We have already suggested that a political situation is in part determined by the audience of political discourse, or persons participating in politics. A government, however, is a complex entity and might be best thought of as consisting of a number of audiences differing in their capacities to modify particular kinds of exigencies.

A second important component of a political situation is the set of *constraints* which it contains. Every political situation "contains a set of constraints which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain an action needed to modify the exigence" (Bitzer 1968, 8). The Congress, for example, through an act of Congress may seek to modify some exigence. The scope of the Congress's modification of an exigence, however, is limited by the President's veto power. This is an example of a class of constraints on a rhetorical or political situation which are intrinsically a part of the situation.

There is a second class of constraints which may operate in a rhetorical situation which are, as will be seen, of particular importance in politics. This class of constraints is composed of constraints "originated or managed" by the speaker and his or her method (Bitzer 1968, 8). A speaker can choose, for example, the terms of the discourse by which he or she will attempt to modify an exigence. If the speaker is skillful, he or she will choose terms

which both fit the situation and will invite the audience to act to modify an exigence in the way that the speaker desires. The choice of terms is critical; because once a speaker commits to particular terms they cannot easily be retracted or changed, and they effectively constrain all subsequent argument.

The terms which have been chosen by participants in the abortion debate in the United States provide an example of constraints originated and managed by a speaker. One side in the debate has chosen to structure the argument in terms of choice and argues that women have a right to an abortion because they have a "right to choose" what they want to do. The other side in the debate has chosen to structure the argument in terms of life and argue that women do not have a right to an abortion because a fetus is a human life and no one has a right to take a human life. The terms employed by both sides have constrained public debate on the issue. Indeed, today it is difficult to conceptualize the argument in any other terms. Anyone wishing to advance a third position must take account of the two extreme cases in order to be credible. He or she must prepare to be asked and answer: What about a woman's right to choose? What about a fetus' right to life?

Speakers, especially in politics, can manage more than the terms of a debate. They can attempt to choose the time of the debate. They can choose the forum or forums of debate. Within the structure of a party or institution they can choose who will present an argument or parts of an argument and the rules under which the debate will be conducted. Such choices, as we have noted, are often constrained by the situation at hand. Acts by agents which are unexpected or unpredictable, an act of war for instance, can create an exigence which demands immediate attention. Rules of debate may or

may not be subject to manipulation. A speaker may not have access to certain forums. Yet, the speaker generally has some choices to make about how he or she will present a case. Understanding these choices is critical to understanding political discourse and politics because they provide clues about the intent of the speaker. It is understanding intent which allows us to give an account of politics.

The Nature of Political Discourse

The above discussion has outlined the structure of political discourse. It remains to discuss its three essential qualities. We have already suggested the first essential quality of political discourse in our discussion of the hierarchy of good reasons. That is, political discourse has a particular purpose: to define or clarify values in a way which allows action. A second essential quality is that political discourse is an act performed with language. Third, political discourse has meaning for those who attend to it. Each of these qualities in turn will be discussed, beginning with the idea that political discourse is an act.

Political Discourse As An Act. Political discourse arises in response to, and refers to, an exigence which is part of a political situation, and it itself may become a part of the situation in time. Political discourse is, to borrow from Ricoeur, "always realized temporally and in the present" (1971, 198).

As an event, political discourse is composed of what Searle calls *speech acts*.⁵ Speech acts are what one does when one speaks. According to

⁵For the sake of the reader's (and the author's) well being, a detailed exposition of Searle's speech act theory is not presented here. It must be noted, however, that the present work draws on it in several places in a way which may be confusing for a reader not familiar with Searle's (1969) work.

Searle, one is performing at least three kinds of distinct acts when one speaks: "(a) The uttering of words (morphemes, sentences); (b) referring and predicating; (c) stating, questioning, commanding, promising, etc." (1969, 23). He has assigned names to these kinds of acts under the rubric of *speech acts*:

- (a) Uttering words (morphemes, sentences) = performing *utterance acts*.
- (b) Referring and predicating = performing *propositional acts*.
- (c) Stating, questioning, commanding, etc. = performing *illocutionary acts*. (Searle 1969, 24).

To these three kinds of speech acts Searle adds a fourth, which he borrows from J. L. Austin and which will become critical in our discussion of political discourse. Austin distinguishes what he calls a *perlocutionary act*:

Correlated with the notion of illocutionary acts is the notion of the consequences or *effects* such acts have on the actions, thought, beliefs, etc. of hearers. For example, by arguing I may *persuade* or *convince* someone, by warning him I may *scare* or *alarm* him, by making a request I may *get him to do something*, by informing him I may *convince him* (*enlighten, edify, inspire him, get him to realize*). The italicized expressions above denote perlocutionary acts. (Searle 1969, 25)

Persuasion would on this view count as a perlocutionary act.

The Meaning of Political Discourse. There are two sources of meaning in political discourse. The first source of meaning, as shown by Searle, is at the level of illocutionary acts. Political discourse has meaning, in part, because it is composed of illocutionary acts which have meaning because "language is a matter of performing speech acts according to systems of constitutive rules" (Searle 1969, 38). The second source of the meaning of political discourse, as I will attempt to demonstrate, is at the level of what will be called *discursive acts*.

On Searle's account of meaning, "a speaker's saying something and meaning it are closely connected with intending to produce certain effects on

the hearer." For the hearer, understanding a "speaker's utterance is closely connected with recognizing his intentions" (Searle 1969, 48). It is a speaker's and a hearer's common language which provides a bridge between speaker and hearer.⁶

The rules which govern the meaning of illocutionary acts are a class of rules which Searle calls *constitutive rules*. "Constitutive rules constitute (and also regulate) an activity, the existence of which is logically dependent on the rules" (Searle 1969, 34). The rules of games, such as chess or football, provide examples of constitutive rules. A rule in chess, e.g., "A checkmate is made when the king is attacked in such a way that no move [made by the king] will leave it unattacked," both regulates the game and defines it as an activity. Constitutive rules, in other words, "don't merely regulate, they create and define new forms of behavior" (Searle 1969, 33).

Searle contrasts constitutive rules with *regulative rules* and the contrast is useful in defining what constitutive rules are. "Regulative rules regulate a pre-existing activity, an activity whose existence is logically

⁶The bridge, according to Searle, works like this:

1. Understanding a sentence is knowing its meaning.
2. The meaning of a sentence is determined by rules, and those rules specify both the conditions of utterance of the sentence and also what the utterance counts as [that is, promising, commanding, stating, etc.].
3. Uttering a sentence and meaning it is a matter of (a) intending (i-1) to get the hearer to know (recognize, be aware of) that certain states of affairs specified by certain of the rules obtain, (b) intending to get the hearer to know (recognize, be aware of) these things by means of getting him to recognize i-1 and (c) intending to get him to recognize i-1 in virtue of his knowledge of the rules for the sentence uttered.
4. The sentence provides a conventional means of achieving the intention to produce a certain illocutionary effect in the hearer. If the speaker utters the sentence and means it, he will have the intentions (a), (b) and (c). The hearer's understanding the utterance will simply consist of those intentions being achieved. And the intentions will in general be achieved if the hearer understands the sentence, i.e., knows its meaning, i.e., knows the rules governing its elements. (Searle 1969, 48).

independent of the rules" (Searle 1969, 34). There are rules, as every new Boy Scout learns, about how to use an edged tool such as an axe or knife, e.g., "Always cut away from one's self." Yet, these rules do not define the activity of carving or chopping in any essential way, although they may usefully regulate it. "Regulative rules characteristically have the form or can be comfortably paraphrased in the form 'Do X' or 'If Y do X'. Within systems of constitutive rules, some will have this form, but some will have the form 'X counts as Y', or 'X counts as Y in context C'" (Searle 1969, 34-5).

What Searle argues is that our ability to understand and, hence, know the meaning of some illocutionary act, e.g., a promise, a question, a statement, depends on our knowledge (even if not a self-conscious knowledge) of constitutive rules governing promising, questioning, stating, etc. From this view, language "may be regarded as a conventional realization of a series of sets of underlying constitutive rules . . . speech acts are acts characteristically performed by uttering expressions in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules" (Searle 1969, 37).

While Searle's account of meaning can explain the meaning of a single sentence as an illocutionary act, it breaks down as an explanation of the meaning of an ordering of or a collection of sentences in a discourse. Even though every sentence of a discourse can be some kind of illocutionary act, and as such can have some meaning, a collection of sentences can have a meaning beyond the meaning that each has alone. A simple experiment demonstrates this point.⁷ The experiment consists of taking any discourse and selecting from it sentences out of their original order and recombining

⁷Similar experiments have been performed by a number of linguists and cognitive psychologists with similar results. See, P. N. Johnson-Laird (19 , 356-361).

them to form a new "discourse." Selecting sentences more or less at random from Searle's *Minds, Brains and Science* (1984), for example, yields the following paragraph:

The thesis of the first chapter may now be stated quite simply. Now that leaves us apparently with a gap, a gap between the brain and the mind. But if pains and other mental phenomenon are caused by processes in the brain, one wants to know: what are pains? The upshot of this discussion I believe is to remind us of something that we have known all along: that mental states are biological phenomena. It was a great honor for me to be asked to give the 1984 Reith Lectures.

It is clear that each sentence of the paragraph above is an illocutionary act of one kind or another and, if taken in isolation, has meaning. The mere *collection* of sentences, however, obviously doesn't make sense, at least what most hearer's would be apt to call sense.

The reason that the paragraph created in our experiment doesn't make sense is that the sentences have been arranged out of context. They are out of context because they no longer refer in the way that they did when they occupied their proper place in the discourse. We can demonstrate this contention in two ways. The first way is to attempt to make sense of the paragraph while carefully noting what we are doing as we attempt to make sense of it. The second way is to compare the sense of a sentence in the non-sense paragraph to the sense of the same sentence in the paragraph to which it belongs.

To begin with we read the first sentence of the non-sense paragraph: "The thesis of the first chapter may now be stated quite simply." We recognize the sentence as a statement, but it also creates the expectation that the thesis of the first chapter will be stated quite simply, and in this way it refers ahead in the discourse to something that we expect to recognize as a thesis, to the subject of the sentence. The problems begin when we read the

second sentence: "Now that leaves us apparently with a gap, a gap between the brain and the mind." We can recognize this sentence as a statement as well, but taken with the first it is hard to understand what it means. It invites us to ask some clarifying questions. For instance, what is it that leaves us, apparently, with a gap between the brain and the mind? Is it the fact that the thesis of the first chapter may now be stated quite simply? This would be what could be called the literal meaning, but it isn't what the first statement led us to expect exactly, and while it makes some sense it seems a bit remote.

The cumbersome process of self consciously reading the entire paragraph need not be pursued in order to understand that what we read leaves us with more questions than answers about what is being said about what and that sense is not being made. We find it impossible to find any consistent sets of references which allow us to make sense of what we read.

The non-sense condition can be contrasted with a sense-making condition by restoring one of the sentences to its proper place in the discourse. In the properly ordered text the sentence "It was a great honor for me to be asked to give the 1984 Reith Lectures," for example, appeared in the following paragraph:

It was a great honor for me to be asked to give the 1984 Reith Lectures. Since Bertrand Russell began the series in 1948, these are the first to be given by a philosopher.
(Searle 1984, 7)

The second sentence creates a context which is absent from the non-sense paragraph and from the sentence as a statement by itself. We can imagine from the second sentence why it was a great honor for Searle to have given the 1984 Reith Lectures. He was the first philosopher in thirty-six years to

have been asked to deliver the lectures, the implication being that he may have been the first philosopher thought worthy of the honor since Russell. That the last philosopher to have given the lectures was a philosopher of the stature of Russell also makes sense of "honor" in the first sentence. These meanings, obviously contained in the paragraph, can be inferred by a hearer or reader, and yet they are not part of the literal meaning of the sentences.

Our experiment demonstrates that there is a meaning contained in discourse beyond the meaning of the simple illocutionary acts which compose it. It appears that there is a meaning which arises out of the structure of the discourse, specifically, out of the system of references that the discourse creates in or brings to the mind of the hearer. It is this system of references which is the context of discourse. To account for this second source of meaning in discourse we need to understand and be able to recognize what distinguishes a meaningful structure of references from a non-meaningful structure of references. This second source of meaning in discourse can be explained by suggesting that the creation of meaning in discourse is, like the performance of illocutionary acts, a rule-governed behavior and that a knowledge of the rules allows a hearer to understand the meaning structured into discourse.⁸ These rules are constitutive rules, but they are not the same rules which give meaning to illocutionary acts. They are, rather, rules which govern the recognition of sense-making discourses about particular subjects under particular conditions.

In order to demonstrate that the creation of meaning in discourse is a rule-governed behavior, it will be helpful to introduce three "traits" of

⁸This is Searle's hypothesis about language (1969, 36-37), but I think it applies to discourse as well.

discourse, two of which have been suggested by Ricoeur (1971, 198) and which this discussion has hinted at. The first of these traits is that "discourse refers back to its speaker by means of a complex set of indicators such as the personal pronouns." Language as a virtual system does not specify who speaks. Discourse, on the other hand, generally identifies the speaker in some way.⁹ The second trait is that "discourse is always about something. It refers to a world which it claims to describe, to express, to represent." There is a third trait of discourse, suggested by the experiment with the *faux*-paragraph from *Minds, Brains and Science*. A speaker generally makes some kind of reference to the discourse itself, sometimes independent of references to himself or his subject. When a speaker is engaged in discourse, he or she performs at least three distinct kinds of acts suggested by these traits: (a) he or she refers to himself or herself, (b) he or she refers to the discourse itself and (c) refers to a subject or world. Following Searle, these acts might be called *discursive acts* and given the following names:

- (a) The speaker's referring to himself or herself = *self-referential acts*;
- (b) The speaker's referring to the discourse itself = *intra-referential acts*;
- (c) The speaker's reference to a world or subject = *pan-referential acts*.¹⁰

One way to recognize the existence of rules about behavior, as opposed to mere regularities, is that violating the rules is recognized as wrong or deviant in some way and may result in some penalty or other consequence.

⁹The notion that discourse refers back to the speaker can be extended, I think, to include the situation in which the speaker speaks, because in certain situations part of the speaker's identity is a person who can speak in a particular situation. The President of the United States, for example, always gives the State of the Union Address and identifies himself as the President of the United States on the occasion of the State of the Union Address. This is a point which will be reintroduced in the discussion of the function of political institutions.

¹⁰It should be pointed out that I mean something different by reference than what Searle means by reference (see Searle 1969, 26-29). As I understand the difference, he is referring to reference at the level of sentence, and I am referring to reference at the level of discourse.

It is not difficult to think of cases in which both rules of reference to a speaker and rules of references to the world are violated and which have penalties of some kind.

Suppose, for example, that I am walking along a street and a well-dressed young man stops me and says:

I bring you a message from Princess Anne. There are eyes in the sky and you must help me blind them.

My initial thought is likely to be that this man is mentally ill. Why can I have confidence in this supposition? I can have confidence in this supposition, in part, because, even though the young man has violated none of the rules regarding illocutionary acts, he has violated rules governing discursive acts. What is strange about his statement is that I cannot imagine that the world to which he refers—a world in which Princess Anne has sent him to me with the idea that I might help him blind the pursuing eyes in the sky—and the world I know about are the same world. What is also strange about his statement is the reference he makes to himself as a confidant of Princess Anne seems remote.

Looking at the case from Searle's perspective, we recognize that the young man's intentions in performing the illocutionary acts he does by uttering the two sentences he utters don't, from my point of view, count for very much. Because I know the rules governing the elements of a sentence intended to be a statement, I understand that the young man is intending to inform me of something, that he is, in other words, meaning what he is saying. The trouble arises, for the reasons just suggested, when I put the meaning of the two sentences together to construe the world the young man is referring to (just as I couldn't construe the non-sense paragraph above). I

understand what he is saying to me by Searle's criteria, but it doesn't make sense regardless of his intentions in performing illocutionary acts.

It is critical to realize that it is *because* I understand the young man's meaning at the level of illocutionary acts that what he says to me doesn't make sense. I might have had a similar encounter with someone who spoke Spanish and in that situation might have felt a duty to find a translator to sort the matter out. I would only have known that the sentences didn't make sense when I understood what the young man was saying. This does not refute Searle's account of meaning in illocutionary acts; what it does suggest is that there are at least two "levels" of meaning at work in discourse and that both are governed by exclusive if, as we will see, similar sets of rules.

To put the issue in the terms suggested above, the young man's self-referential and pan-referential acts don't follow the rules I know about self-referential and pan-referential acts. Violating these rules can have obvious kinds of consequences. The immediate consequence is that people won't talk to him for very long, and it is possible that if he keeps up such strange references he will be committed to an institution of some kind.

The example of the mentally ill young man is, of course, a special case. More often than not we are not invited to attend to discourses quite so bizarre. It is a useful example, however, because it is a case in which the importance of rules about discursive acts is very clear precisely because the young man's references seem so completely strange, so clearly not to make sense. The *faux*-paragraph created from *Minds, Brains and Science* is, also clearly a special case, although a similarly useful example.

The examples are not, however, so remote from everyday experience as they might at first seem. Every conversation and every debate or discussion is in some fashion governed by rules about discursive acts which, when violated, invite the kinds of clarifying questions we asked of the *faux*-paragraph from *Minds Brains and Science*. Because we know the rules governing discursive acts, we know what is for a discourse to 'be about' a subject or topic. Indeed, we expect a discourse to be about something and we employ our knowledge of the rules when we ask clarifying questions to resolve our confusions about subjects or topics. If we don't know the rules, we use such questions to learn them. Understanding what a discourse is about is critical to understanding its meaning, so critical, in fact, that in everyday language we seldom distinguish between the meaning of a discourse and its topic or topics.

There develops for each issue in political discourse a specific set of rules governing pan-referential acts. A discourse is recognized as 'being about' an issue because it (or rather an agent who constructs it) follows the rules about what references it must make to a world in order to be about an issue.¹¹ This assertion is easily demonstrated if we think self consciously about what happens when we are, in the course of everyday political discourse, presented with the nickname of an issue. Consider a discourse which begins:

¹¹I am making this assertion only in regard to what I have defined as issues. I make no claim that these rules have anything necessarily to do with the construction of meaning in *all* human discourse and claim only that the view I suggest is a simplifying way to think about some aspects of political discourse.

(1) This evening I am going to talk about the issue of abortion.

On the basis of this utterance alone we can immediately predict, within a degree of certainty, the topics that the speaker might address: e.g., when human life begins; the relationship of law to morality; the right to privacy; the right of individuals versus the requirements of society; etc. We can predict these topics because we know the rules about what it is to be talking about the issue of abortion. The rules which specify references to a world for an issue are constitutive rules because they define what one must do to talk about an issue. The rules define, in other words, what 'counts as' talking about an issue. These rules can be called *issue-rules*.

It may not seem that our ability to predict the *topics* of a discourse is the result of knowing rules about what specific *references* to a world a discourse must make in order to be about an issue. What, it might well be asked, have topics got to do with more specific references to a world? The answer is that we commonly employ the notion of topic to stand for sets or systems of more specific references to the world. This use of the concept of topic in this way is simply a feature of language used at a particular level of generality. To state a topic, in other words, is to imply in a way that a hearer can infer a certain set of specific references to a world and provide a conventional way of doing so. The collection of topics suggested by rules governing pan-referential acts for an issue I will call the *topic schema* of an issue.

Because issue-rules specify a *topic schema*, any number of utterances might take the place of (1). For example, a speaker might have said:

(1a) This evening I am going to talk about the right to life; or,

(1b) This evening I am going to talk about a woman's right to choose what to do with her body.

Either utterance would have brought to mind the system of references associated with the issue of abortion as effectively as (1). Indeed, we would be surprised if the speaker who utters (1b) went on to talk about arms control. The nickname of any issue—"The Palestinian Problem," "Arms Control," "Welfare Reform"—brings to mind associated topic schema.

Individuals need not know issue-rules in the same detail in order to recognize a discourse as addressing a particular issue; knowledge of only a few issue-rules will suffice for mere recognition of an issue. Issue-rules are learned through experience of political discourse. For an individual who does not 'know' an issue, political discourse will have the function of teaching issue-rules. For an individual who knows an issue, discourse will serve the function of extending his or her knowledge of issue-rules. Because persons know issue-rules in greater or lesser detail, the topic schema suggested by issue-rules will vary in complexity from individual to individual.

It has so far been suggested that issue-rules specify topics which must be addressed for a discourse to be recognized as being about an issue. This assertion assumes that topics are made explicit in discourse and can be unambiguously identified by an analyst. Topics are not, however, always made explicit. Topics are often purposely embedded in discourse by a speaker who assumes his audience will be able to infer them. Further, topics often defy summary into a single word or sentence, and they may, within the bounds of a particular discourse event, be interrelated in complex ways. If

the proposed function of issue-rules is to be taken seriously, the difficulties of recognizing the topic or topics of a discourse must be dealt with.¹²

The problems inherent in recognizing the topic or topics of a discourse for the purposes of analysis can be made clear by considering the following familiar political discourse:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives, that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have, thus far, so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave their last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these men should not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that, government for the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

To judge from the text itself, what could it be said is the topic of this discourse?

If we judge strictly from the text, without the aid of any background knowledge (an admittedly difficult task because the text is so well known), a number of crude topics suggest themselves. We might suggest that it is 'about' dedicating a cemetery, or the significance of a battle, or the nobility of men in battle. The text might be about whether a nation can survive a civil war or about the need for a re-dedication of the citizens of a nation to the

¹²Especially, of course, if we are to use the concepts for the purposes of analysis of the intent of political actors in particular situations as implied above.

task of ensuring that the nation will have "a new birth of freedom," as the speaker puts it. More appropriately, we could say that the text is about all of these topics. Yet these topics, which can be gleaned from the text, really tell us very little about the meaning of the discourse. In fact, they leave us with a number of meaning- and topic-clarifying questions, e.g., what nation, what battle, what battlefield, what civil war? Who are "our fathers"? What or when was the first or subsequent births of freedom? What happened "four score and seven years ago"? What we need to know to answer such questions, and to be able to identify more specific topics *and* their meanings, is the *context* in which the discourse uttered is common to speaker and audience. We need to know the answers to these questions in order to be able to interpret the text.

Most Americans and those who know American history, of course, are familiar with the context in which the discourse was uttered. They know, for example, that the speaker was an American President named Abraham Lincoln and that he was speaking just outside the town of Gettysburg shortly after the battle which took place near there in 1863 during the American Civil War. From these features of context, it is possible to render the topics of the discourse and their meaning in greater detail.

Because we know the date of the speech, we know that "four score and seven years ago" refers to the year 1776, the year in which the American Revolution began. It follows, if we know anything about the American Revolution, that "our fathers" refers to that group of men Americans refer to as the "founding fathers," Jefferson, Madison, Adams, Franklin, Hamilton, Jay et al. We know that the phrase "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" quotes, and by quoting makes reference to, the

Declaration of Independence which was signed in 1776 and which was the symbolic beginning of the Revolutionary War and the symbolic founding of the United States.¹³ It then seems clear that the Revolution was the first "birth of freedom."

Because we know that the "great civil war" is the American Civil War, we can understand that the speaker means to suggest, as is clear from the references made in the first paragraph of the speech, that the war is a test of the national purpose as established by the founders, a test of an importance similar to the Revolutionary War itself. We can also infer that the speaker believes that passing the test requires a re-dedication to the principles of the founding fathers. As Lincoln puts it: "It is for us . . . to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us . . . that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom--and that government of the people, for the people, and by the people shall not perish from the earth."

After describing the context in which the Gettysburg Address was uttered, its topic is arguably clearer, although we may still find it difficult to express simply in a sentence or two. We know now that the speech is about something like: "the testing of the founding principles of the United States by civil war and what is necessary for the United States to survive the test."

The example of the Gettysburg Address demonstrates that, in general, the recognition of topics in a discourse and, hence, knowing its meaning, depends on the *features of context* in which a discourse is uttered. As Hymes suggests, the "use of a linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. A context can support a range of meanings. When a form is used in a context,

¹³ Of course the Revolutionary War did not bring the United States as presently constituted into existence.

it eliminates the meanings possible to that context other than those the form can signal: the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those the context can support" (Hymes 1962, quoted in Yule and Brown 1981, 37-38). For the purposes of analysis, it is obviously necessary to specify what the context of a discourse is in order to understand what pan-referential acts are being performed and what meaning they have.

Yule and Brown (1981, 76-79) suggest five features of context which must be drawn upon to fully infer the topic of a discourse, many of which we have drawn on in interpreting the Gettysburg Address. The features of context they suggest are:

1. Objects and events referred to in the discourse;
2. Assumptions by a speaker about his hearer's knowledge in relation to that the speaker makes explicit in the discourse;
3. Why a speaker has said what he has said in a particular situation;
4. The physical context of the discourse external to the text;
5. The set of "discourse-internal elements" derived from conversation prior to the particular fragment being studied.

Elements of a text or discourse which are described or identified by these components are "activated" by a discourse and are suggestive of its topic and can be used for the purposes of analysis. While, however, these features of context are useful in inferring a portion of the meaning of political discourse, they cannot provide insight into the full meaning of political discourse. There is still, for example, an element of the meaning of the Gettysburg Address which remains elusive even after we understand the context in which it was uttered.

There is an overarching feature of context present to a greater or lesser extent in all political situations, which must be added to those mentioned above for the purposes of recognizing topics and meanings. The overarching context of political discourse is institutionalized; that is, political discourse occurs within the context of one or another political institutions. It is political institutions, as we see in the next chapter, which provide contexts for political discourse by grounding it in a hierarchy of good reasons through institutional practice.¹⁴

RHETORIC AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The foregoing sections have offered an interpretation of what political discourse does. It has been argued that political discourse has as its characteristic purpose the presentation of good reasons to act. We have suggested that when the good reasons presented by political discourse are not in some way obviously good there is debate about the goodness of a proposed reason. Debate about the goodness of a reason generally invokes some hierarchy of good reasons and attempts to show that a proposed good reason is good because it can be related to some subsuming good reason or reasons, which are in turn related to some value or values. If such a relationship can be established, then a proposed good reason can become a good reason to act.

Our account of political discourse to this point leaves an important question unresolved: if political action depends on creating a relationship

¹⁴ It is possible to bring what will be discussed in Chapter Three as the institutional context of political discourse within the scope of Yule and Brown's second and third features of context. It is assumed here, however, that political institutions largely delimit both the assumptions a speaker holds about an audiences' knowledge and his or her strategy in doing so. Institutional context, for this reason, can be thought of as an overarching feature of context lending meaning to political discourse.

between proposed good reasons and established subsuming good reasons, how exactly are such relationships created? The answer, to be developed in this section, is that such relationships are created by using the tool of *rhetoric*.

Students of contemporary politics will be most familiar with the pejorative meaning of the term rhetoric. In its pejorative sense rhetoric is often used to refer to affected, exaggerated, unsupported or inflated discourse. With reference to everyday politics in everyday conversation, it is not uncommon to hear a legislative or policy initiative dismissed as "only so much rhetoric," an allegation which suggests that the proposal has been designed to conceal a politician's real motivations, intentions or interests. Rhetoric in this sense is not quite a lie, but it isn't quite the truth or the substance of a matter either. Rhetoric is something suspiciously in between. To be told that something is "just rhetoric" is often a warning that the wool is about to be pulled over one's eyes.

The suspicion of rhetoric implied by the pejorative sense of the word is not only part of everyday politics but of more sophisticated political analysis as well. One introductory political science text explains that "[t]he political landscape is perpetually obscured by a fog of rhetoric." The result, the text continues, is "the sometimes systematic (but sometimes quite unconscious) distortion of reality . . .", the effect of which is to confuse us "about what is actually going on" (Donovan et al. 1986, 11). The same text laments the rise in what it calls "verbal pollution." If only the pollution of rhetoric could be gotten rid of, the assumption seems to run, it would be possible to really *understand* politics.

The pejorative meaning of rhetoric is not wrong, at least not exactly. It identifies and describes a real political phenomenon. Politicians have indeed been known to deliberately obscure their motivations, intentions and interests; and rhetoric, when conceived as a method, can be a means to such ends. Yet rhetoric entails more than the contemporary pejorative use of the term suggests.

Rhetoric has a history which begins with the Greeks who invented it as a self-conscious and systematic practice for addressing public assemblies and courts of law. Aristotle defined the art of rhetoric "as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle, 26-27). Under the influence of social science, contemporary rhetoricians have defined rhetoric as the purposive selection and arrangement of symbols in order to coordinate social action (Hauser 1986, 23). Rhetoric can also be thought of as "a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action" (Bitzer 1968, 4). It is this capacity of rhetoric that makes it a political instrument and it is with rhetoric in this sense that we shall be concerned.

For a political agent *the* rhetorical problem, and on our view *the* political problem, is to decide what to say and how to say it in order to motivate action in a given situation. With the definition of politics we have suggested, the problem is to create a linkage or *liaison* in the minds of an audience between what they believe to be good reasons to act and a proposed course of action.¹⁵

¹⁵ The term *liaison* is used here in the sense defined by Perelman (1982).

To solve a rhetorical problem, in the words of Cicero, an agent "must first hit upon what to say; then manage and marshall his discoveries not merely in an orderly fashion, but with a discriminating eye for the exact weight . . . of each argument; next go on and array them in the adornments of style; after that to keep them guarded in memory; and in the end deliver them with effect and charm" (Dixon 1971, 24). This procedure requires the agent to develop certain rhetorical skills. Rhetoricians have traditionally called these skills invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. All are essential to persuasion, but invention is paramount because on it the others depend. By exploring the process of invention it is possible to see the role that rhetoric plays in political discourse.

Invention is the process by which an agent finds or discovers matter pertinent to a specific case. Invention has traditionally been said to have three main branches: proof, topics, and commonplaces. Proof is of two kinds: inartificial and artificial. Inartificial proof, rare in politics, is virtually self-evident in the sense that facts may sometimes "speak for themselves." Inartificial proof is much like evidence introduced in a court of law; it is a contract, a receipt, a photograph, an object, or sworn testimony of a witness directly experienced. When, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States produced photographs of Soviet missile bases under construction in Cuba, it employed an inartificial proof. Inartificial proof is persuasive because it cannot be simply or directly refuted.

Artificial proof is "that which is worked out by the speaker himself, using his own art and 'invention'," and is required when the facts are subject to interpretation or do not speak clearly for themselves (Dixon 1971, 24). Most proof offered in political discourse is artificial proof because, as

Aristotle long ago pointed out, politics deals with contingencies. No inartificial proof can demonstrate what might or might not happen nor what might or might not be accomplished. It is because the outcome of a proposed course of action is always uncertain to some extent that good reasons for action can be challenged and why debate about them is often both unavoidable and necessary.

Artificial proof may be of three kinds: *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. *Ethos* and *pathos* are, respectively, proof which derives from an appeal to morality or the moral stature of an agent and proof which depends on the arousal of the emotions of an audience. Both are, of course, far from unimportant in political discourse. There have been political agents whose moral stature is such in the eyes of an audience that their word alone is accepted as proof by many: FDR and Ronald Reagan come to mind in the American context. Indeed, U.S. presidents in general have tended to possess something akin to "the divinity that doth hedge a king." In the post-war period, much of American foreign policy has been justified by appeals to popular fear of the Soviet Union and nuclear war.

Logos, or logical proof, is an appeal to reason rather than to moral or emotional sensibilities. Appeals to reason may employ strictly logical structures, such as syllogisms or scientific theories and findings. More often, however, a political agent will employ quasi-logical devices to make his or her case. These are arguments which "claim to be reasonable because they resemble the patterns of formal reasoning" (Arnold 1982, xi). There is a large number of such devices, too numerous to account in detail here.¹⁶ One of

¹⁶ For a good brief account of the range of quasi-logical devices in argument see Perelman (1982).

the most important, for instance, is argument by example, which is persuasive because it implies "and allegedly represents the operation of overriding rules or laws or principles" (Arnold 1982, xi). Thus, the Cuban Revolution and its outcome can serve as an example of the probable outcome to the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979 in arguments to support U.S. intervention in Central America.

Because reason is highly valued in our culture, *logos* has a special persuasive status; it is readily accepted where proofs based solely on emotional or ethical appeals may be suspect. While a skilled speaker will attempt to employ all three forms of proof if possible, special attention is given to appeals to reason. In our age the special status of appeals to reason is undoubtedly partly rooted in the success of science, which is held to be the province of reason. To make a scientific argument in our culture is to make an argument which is in many ways beyond question. It is for this reason that politicians seek the advice of experts--economists, sociologists, engineers, doctors. Such advice sometimes provides facts which can speak for themselves, but there is also often, without question, a rhetorical use of science in policy debates.

The remaining branches of invention are the *topics* and the *commonplaces*. The topics are "tested and approved ways of investigating a chosen subject, ways both of conducting an argument and of analyzing a theme prior to discussing it" (Dixon 1971, 24). The commonplaces are nothing more than topics of argument common to different subjects of discourse.

The intent of rhetoricians in subdividing and classifying rhetorical skills is to make the tasks which they require explicit in the mind of an

agent, both so that the skills might be developed and perfected and so they can be performed efficiently. Armed with an understanding of the branches of proof and their subdivisions, an agent is guided to ask questions suggestive of problems to be solved if persuasion is to take place: Is the case one which can be made with artificial or inartificial proof? What kinds of inartificial proof might be offered? If inartificial proof is required, what might be most effective in the given situation? What examples might be offered to make the case? To persuasively justify action, a political agent needs to know how to answer these and similar questions of invention.

While questions of invention provide an agent with a very general idea of what can be done to make a case, answers to them clearly will vary from situation to situation and will provide more material for invention than can or should be used to address a given issue. By asking and answering questions of invention, an agent may find that there are a wide variety of moral, ethical, and logical appeals which can be made, some of which may be contradictory of one another. Once he or she has discovered what can be said to persuade, an agent must choose what should be said to persuade in the context of a specific situation. By themselves questions of invention provide little guidance about how to make such choices.

Rhetoricians have long advised that in order to know what should be said to address a given issue it is necessary for an agent to know his or her audience as well as possible. To know an audience is to know what moves the emotions of its members, what moral standards they accept and what they consider to be reasonable, true or right. In terms used above, to know an audience is to understand the hierarchies of good reasons its members employ.

An agent's knowledge of an audience is critical because the aim of argument is not, unlike any formal logical or scientific demonstration, to prove deductively the truth of a conclusion from given premises; it is rather to get the members of an audience to transfer their acceptance of what they consider to be good reasons for action to reasons offered on behalf of a proposed course of action. If he wishes to be persuasive, an agent "can choose as his points of departure only the theses accepted by those he addresses" (Perelman 1982, 21).

Lest he fail in his mission, the speaker should depart from his premises only when he knows that they are adequately accepted; if they are not, the speaker's first concern should be to reinforce them with all the means at his disposal. This transfer of adherence is accomplished only through the establishment of a bond between the premises and the theses whose acceptance the speaker wants to achieve. If a conclusion runs totally counter to the convictions an audience holds, the members of the audience will probably prefer to reject one of the premises rather than accept the offending conclusion, and all the speaker's efforts will have been in vain. (Perelman 1982, 21)

In contemporary politics this advice has been institutionalized in many respects. It is routine, for example, that candidates for most important public offices hire consultants to conduct public opinion polls to discover the opinions and feelings of those whose votes they seek. The reason, of course, is to make it possible for a candidate to fit his rhetoric to his audience of voters.¹⁷

In some situations it is possible for a political agent to come to know an audience intimately enough to choose premises and appeals with precision. Faced with the problem of addressing an interest group, for

¹⁷ It has also, of course, been institutionalized in advertising and marketing practices, the methods of which political consultants have freely adopted and adapted to political purposes.

example, a politician can assume that his audience has been brought together by some common values or point of view and can fit his rhetoric to suit them.

More often than not, however, a politician is either limited in his ability to get to know an audience or faced with the problem of addressing an audience so complex that its members' opinions and beliefs cannot be simply or unambiguously characterized. In such circumstances, politicians typically adopt the strategy of appealing to values and qualities that all members of an audience are likely to share. At the very least, a political agent knows his audience is made up of human beings who are subject to similar passions and capacities for reason. He knows also that they are members of the same political community with a common political culture, a common history and common values on which appeals for action can be based. To win support for a course of action, an agent works to associate a proposed course of action with the community's history and values, to make them fit together as if one were the logical, necessary, and consistent extension of the other.

The values a politician invokes may be recognized to be explicitly political or more general values abroad within a community. In the United States; for example, "democracy," "freedom," and "equality" are political values which have distinct American meanings. There are also more general "American values" which are continuously incorporated and given expression in American political discourse. Among the more important are "individualism," "success," "progress," "suspicion of authority," "optimism," "hard work," "generosity," and "patriotism" (Hauser 1986, 77). Episodes in a nation's history, like the Revolution, the Civil War, and the

Western Expansion, in the American case for example, are often invoked to illustrate or give expression to national values.

To judge what should be said, then, out of all that can be said on behalf of a proposed course of action, a political agent looks to specific or very general characteristics of his audience. Knowledge of his audience allows him to narrow his choice of possible effective appeals. Knowledge of an audience is not a foolproof guide to persuasion, however, especially when only general characteristics of an audience can be known. In such a case especially, a political agent is wise to look to other sources of guidance for invention. One reliable and important source of guidance is what the agent knows to have been said in the past to motivate action similar to that he proposes.

In the case of specific political issues there develop over time distinct *issue-rhetorics*. In the United States, for example, there has developed a rhetoric of civil rights, a stock of moral, emotional and logical appeals employed in linking good reasons to proposed courses of action intended to resolve the exigencies to which the issue refers. If a political agent seeks political action on civil rights in the United States, he naturally looks to the rhetoric of civil rights as a model for invention.

As there is a rhetoric of civil rights, so is there also a rhetoric of arms control, foreign policy, Cold War, poverty, welfare, defense policy, deterrence, health policy and so on. Each of these issues has not only a specialized language associated with it, but also distinct arguments linking action and good reasons which are familiar to anyone who 'knows' the issue. Indeed, each issue can be thought of as having its own hierarchy of good

reasons which is given expression, developed and manipulated by its issue-rhetoric.

Beyond specific issues, there also develops within any political community a more general canon of rhetorical practice in political discourse. A common expression and evidence of rhetorical canons are anthologies of "great speeches," which are great because they are recognized as transcending a specific political situation to give expression to important and enduring community values, and beyond this, recognized as definitions of a community in terms of its values. In the United States the Gettysburg Address is recognized as one such speech, as are Washington's Farewell Address, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.¹⁸ Rhetorical canons of this kind are not confined to public address, of course, but include texts as well. To draw from a variety of political contexts, they are texts like *The Federalist Papers*, *The Collected Works of Lenin*, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man*, *The Communist Manifesto*, Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

The importance of a rhetorical canon for an agent faced with the problem of inventing a discourse to justify action in a situation is that it, like more specific issue-rhetorics, provides a set of models of invention. It provides a guide to what community values there are and, more importantly, how they have been invoked in the past to persuade.

In the process of rhetorical invention, then, a political agent looks for varieties of proof that might be employed in a given situation and then selects from all possible appeals those which his knowledge of an audience

¹⁸ For more comprehensive surveys of the American rhetorical canon see Baird (1956) and Brigance (1960).

and of past political discourse suggest to him to be useful for producing persuasion in the present. Nothing in the process of invention, it must be emphasized, is certain. Rhetorical invention is, as is the use of rhetoric more generally, an art or skill. It is not a science. There is, as in the case of all arts, a creative, insightful element in rhetoric which defies analysis and simple description. Nevertheless, its importance to politics cannot be denied.

Even this brief discussion of rhetorical invention is enough to suggest that politics is an intrinsically rhetorical process. Unless the idea that people act on the basis of moral and emotional reasons or reasons arrived through reason is to be given up, that rhetorical invention serves to discover such reasons and that rhetoric is used to present them are evidence enough that political action and rhetoric are unavoidably intertwined.

To suggest that politics is a rhetorical process is not to imply, as the examples employed above might, that persons always act on the basis of values that many accept as such because they are part of a well-articulated theory of the good. Appeals to self-interest, to greed, hate and enmity are as persuasive on occasion, and before certain audiences, as are appeals to more noble values. None are excluded from the notion of "good reasons" as defined above. Witness the nationalistic appeals of Hitler or Stalin. Rhetoric is not a theory about what to value, but rather a theory of the *use* of value and good reasons for the purpose of persuasion. It is of course for this reason that philosophy has for so long put rhetoric on trial.¹⁹

¹⁹ The classic example being Plato's *Gorgias* in which it is argued that "as cookery is to medicine in relation to the health of the body, so rhetoric is to justice" (Dixon 1971, 11).

To suggest that politics is a rhetorical process is also not to say that political discourse is always directly or explicitly concerned with values or ultimate good reasons in the sense of "freedom," or "democracy," or "communism," the grand, abstract, "essentially contested" concepts of political philosophy. As suggested earlier, there is much political discourse which is carried on in terms of good reasons far removed from abstract value. In many cases, in fact, once a political decision—a decision which represents a settlement on the relationship of good reasons to a proposed course of action in a particular situation—has been taken, subsequent debate on an issue can give the appearance of being apolitical. Once the decision to pass laws to protect the environment from pollution had been taken, for example, it was followed by what was largely a technical argument about what and how such laws should regulate rooted in the good reasons of the science of ecology. Nevertheless, the good reasons and values which inform a policy decision are always in the background of apparently technical discussions of its implications. Values may be taken for granted, but they can always be explicitly invoked afresh, as often happens when a "technical" debate recommends courses of action which appear to run counter to an original political agreement.

Rhetoric and the Meaning of Political Discourse

Just as a political agent can be understood as talking about an issue by making certain conventional references to the world in the form of topics, so can he be understood as addressing an issue by employing conventional modes of argument about an issue. The notion of topic schema and the notion of issue-rhetoric are much the same, in fact; the difference between

them being that a topic schema is an inventory of the parts of argument, while an issue-rhetoric is a guide to their assembly for certain purposes. That issue-rhetorics are issue-rules of a kind has two important implications.

The first is that issue-rhetorics are, for the same reasons that issue-rules are, partly constitutive of the meaning of political discourse. In the case of issue-rhetorics, however, there is an interdependence between the meaning of political discourse and its rhetoric. Debate about an issue gives expression, if in some ways implicitly, to an understating of the values of a political community. Such values also shape, in ways that we have suggested above, the kinds of argument which give expression to them. A mode of argument can come to be perceived as virtually identical with the values which give it its authority. In a community which places a high value on a scientific rationality, for example, it is not surprising to find that quasi-logical appeals are an important part of its rhetorical practices.

In his book *The Rhetorical Presidency*, Jeffery Tulis has made a similar point about the interdependence of presidential rhetoric in the United States and the relation of action and value represented as "doctrines of governance":

The relation between fundamental doctrines of governance and presidential rhetoric is more complex than simple cause and effect because rhetoric is not only the result of various ideas, but also the medium for their expression. Rhetorical practice is not merely a variable, it is also an amplification of vulgarization of the ideas which produce it. Political rhetoric is simultaneously a practical result of basic doctrines of governance and an avenue to the meaning of constitutional understandings. (1987, 14)

Political rhetoric is a partial result of doctrines of governance because the values expressed in such doctrines are suggestive of what kinds of arguments are important to particular issues. Because particular kinds of

arguments and issues are recognized as being expressive of basic doctrines of governance, they unavoidably shape such doctrines; this is why political rhetoric can be an avenue to "alternative constitutional understandings."²⁰

An implication of the fact that issue-rhetorics are issue-rules of a kind is that issue-rhetorics serve as constraints on political discourse. Because what can be said to justify action limits, what can be done to an extent, the issue-rhetorics serve as constraints on legitimate political action as well. The constraints that issue-rhetorics place on political discourse, however, are *open constraints*. They suggest what can't be done, but by doing so do not suggest what can or must be done. Rather, rhetorical constraints are boundaries within which much that is unconstrained can happen, just as the rules of chess do not determine what specific moves will be made in a given game, but nevertheless define the game. Issue-rhetorics do not rule out novel arguments or the justification of a course of action with good reasons or values not before used to justify them.

A second characteristic of issue-rhetorics as constraints on political discourse is that they are *dynamic*; that is, they change as new or different understandings of the relationship of good reasons, subsuming good reasons, value and action are developed and given expression in political discourse, and in turn present opportunities for new understandings. The idea of a constraint that changes may seem paradoxical. A common sense

²⁰ This point is similar to a more general point made by Taylor about the interdependence of the vocabulary of a given "social dimension" being grounded in the shape of "social practice." If we think of political argument as a social dimension, and rhetoric as a more general social practice, then we might say, with Taylor that the "situation we have here is one in which the vocabulary of a given social dimension is grounded in the shape of a social practice in this dimension; that is, the vocabulary would not make sense, could not be applied sensibly, where the range of practices did not prevail. And yet this range of practices could not exist without the prevalence of this or some other related social vocabulary" ([1971] 1985, 33-4).

notion of constraint suggests that constraints are defined as forces that prevent change, but this is not the case. The notion of a dynamic constraint can be expressed as the relationship between a stream and its banks. At a gross level of description the stream may always appear to run in the same direction and be found in the same place. Yet to look in detail at the banks which contain the stream is notice they they may change configuration a great deal, changes which subsequently and over time alter the flow of the stream. Nevertheless, the banks constrain the stream. It is in this sense that issue-rhetorics confine the development of politic discourse. The dynamic character of issue-rhetorics as constraints is a consequence of the interdependence of value and rhetoric.

A third characteristic of issue-rhetorics as constraints on political discourse is that they are *malleable*, that is, they can be evaded or transformed in the course of argument because they themselves can become the subject of debate or rhetorical manipulation. If an agent finds it difficult or impossible to justify a proposed course of action with conventional lines of argument, he can attempt to define a political situation in such a way that allows him to employ arguments better suited or more adaptable to his purposes. There is a number of rhetorical techniques that an agent can employ to define a political situation to suit his purposes. Two are so common to politics that they are worth mentioning.

A first common technique is for a political agent to present as the most important aspects of a political situation only those which will allow him to use lines of argument suited to making his case for a proposed course of action. "Choosing to single out certain things for presentation in a speech draws the attention of the audience to them and thereby by gives them a

presence that prevents them from being neglected" (Perelman 1982, 35; emphasis in original). This tactic can evade constraints imposed by issue-rhetorics, because by drawing an audience's attention to certain aspects of a situation an agent also draws its attention *away* from other conventional lines of argument that may advise against a particular course of action. The effective selective presentation of a situation can, in effect, create a reality in the minds of an audience and lead them to action consistent with it.

A second technique, an extension of the first, is for an agent to attempt to redefine a political situation in terms of an issue or issues other than those it might at first suggest. This is the ploy of defining for an audience what the *real* issue is or what is *really* going on. It goes beyond ignoring certain aspects of a situation to suggest that a situation is not what it may appear to be. Because it seeks to separate "appearance" from "reality," this mode of argument is concerned with "a *dissociation* which aims at separating elements which language or a recognized tradition have previously tied together" (Perelman 1982, 49; emphasis in original). In the case of political rhetoric, dissociation is concerned with dissociating a recognized relationship of action and good reasons and the rhetorical practice associated with it.

There are a number of ways dissociation can be accomplished. One way is to invent a new vocabulary of definition and description for an issue that does not "fit" with any issue-rhetoric and therefore removes the discussion of the issue from conventional rhetorical constraints. Thus did the Korean War become a "police action" and not a war.

The invention of a new vocabulary of definition and description can sometimes transform the discussion of an issue to suit the motives of an

agent. This was attempted by fundamentalist Christians in the United States, who in the late 1970s and early 1980s invented the "religion" of "secular humanism," defined almost coextensively with what was conventionally understood as a liberal education. They argued that the public schools were teaching the religion of secular humanism, in violation of their rights under the establishment clause of the First Amendment. The argument was developed in response to U.S. Supreme Court decisions that prohibited religious instruction or prayer in public schools as a violation of the First Amendment. Its effect was to stand the separation of church and state issue in the United States on its head.

Another way to redefine a situation is simply to argue that it represents a new issue and is therefore addressable with new or novel modes of argument, thereby avoiding the constraints of conventional arguments. "Unprecedented events," this kind of argument suggests, call for unprecedented courses of action and modes of argument. In the early years of the post-war period, justifications of American foreign and defense policies based on "America's new leadership role in the world," and the potential global scope of "the Communist threat," were arguments of this kind. They were designed, in part, to counter traditionally influential isolationist opinion in the United States.

Because they can be avoided or transformed by argument, the constraints that issue-rhetorics impose on political discourse are *weak constraints*. Yet, because they are weak, they are no less constraints. Some kind of argument is required to justify evading or transforming them, an argument that would not make sense or be required were such constraints not recognized to exist. Argument which attempts to evade the constraints

of issue-rhetorics can be, and often is, criticized on the grounds that it isn't conventional and so misunderstands an issue or the reality of a political situation. Again, such argument would not make sense were something like the constraints of issue-rhetorics not recognized.

It is because rhetoric has the capacity to "change reality through the mediation of thought and action" that it has been regarded with deep suspicion by those upon whom politicians practice it (Bitzer 1968, 4). It is the recognition of the potential power of persuasion to subvert or distort the values of a political community that has led the architects of government to attempt to limit the scope of rhetoric. As shall be seen in the next chapter, political institutions place constraints on political rhetoric that limits its capacity to motivate action in society in a way which tends to preserve the authority of the values of a political community.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL DISCOURSE
AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Although it may not at first seem likely, the definition of politics offered in the previous chapter and the discussion of the structure and nature of political discourse make it possible to develop, in the present chapter, a general theory of the function of political institutions. The theory of political institutions to be developed here will be applied to explain the role of political discourse in the maintenance of international political order in subsequent chapters. The theory will draw together two themes of the last chapter: that the meaning of political discourse is shaped by features of context and by rhetoric which gives expression to and creates interconnections of action, good reasons, and value.

To recall the first theme, Chapter Two argued that political discourse is about *issues*. Issues are arguments about what a government should or should not do in a particular political situation which arises in response to the recognition of an exigence. Political discourse acquires meaning by being about issues. There develops for each issue a set of *issue-rules* governing the *pan-referential acts* which a discourse must perform to be recognized as being about an issue. Listeners display their knowledge of issue-rules by being able to predict the *topics* which a discourse about an issue will address. Topics, as suggested above, are nothing more than tokens for more specific sets or systems of pan-referential acts. Topics may be made explicit in discourse, but more often the recognition of a topic depends on the context

in which a discourse is uttered. For the purposes of analysis it is necessary to describe the *features of context* of an utterance in order to grasp its topics and, hence, its effective meaning.

This chapter will suggest that the overarching feature of context in most political situations is the political institution within which discourse takes place. Political institutions exist, in part, to provide contexts for political discourse constitutive of its meaning and are established by the constraints political institutions make on political discourse in the form of what will be called *institutional discourse* and *institutional rules*. In other words, *the ultimate function of political institutions is to provide constraints on political discourse*.

To recall the second theme, Chapter Two also argued that the purpose of political discourse is to present *good reasons* in order to motivate action in society. This purpose is accomplished by linking via argument a proposed course of action and good reasons. Where good reasons are in some sense self-evident, political action may be relatively unproblematic. Where good reasons for a proposed course of action are not self-evident, then argument about the goodness of the proposed reasons is required. Argument about the goodness of a reason characteristically attempts to show that a reason is in fact good by clarifying what is obscure or confused about the relationship of a proposed good reason to a subsuming good reason. Because creating convincing linkages between courses of action and good reasons requires persuasion, *rhetoric* is the instrument of political discourse.

In this chapter it will be argued that the procedure of motivating action in society varies depending on the institutional context, or *location*, of the practice of political discourse. The action that political discourse attempts

to motivate in institutional contexts is institutional action: acts of legislatures, orders and decisions of courts and of executives, and governmental agencies and organizations of various kinds. Motivating institutional action is, as will be shown below, complicated by the constraints on political discourse set out by institutional rules and implicit in patterns of institutional discourse. It will be seen that institutional rules and institutional discourse work by constraining the process of rhetorical invention beyond the weak constraints of issue-rhetorics. Not only do the constraints placed on political discourse by institutional rules and institutional discourse suggest its meaning, they also constrain the use of rhetoric by creating contexts in which the process of rhetorical invention is so complex that it is difficult to successfully justify courses of action that lay far outside the scope of the values of a political community. A motive for—or if not always a motive an effect of—placing institutional constraints on political discourse is to constrain the potential power of political rhetoric.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE

To understand how political institutions serve as a feature of context for political discourse constitutive of its meaning, it is first necessary to define what it is that political institutions are. It is a commonplace to speak of societies as being composed of institutions. The term "social institution" is often used to refer to something like a 'significant and persistent element . . . in the life of a culture that centers on a fundamental human need, activity or values' and which "occupies an enduring cardinal position within society" (Neilson 1935, 1288). Other definitions extend the notion of "persistent element" to include specifically "an established law, custom, usage, practice,

organization or other element in the political or social life of a people" (Murray [1901] 1933, 354). Thus, marriage can sensibly be thought about as a social institution, as can law, economics, religion, science, art, literature, sport, politics, and so on. Each is a significant persistent element in our culture, entailing usages, practices, customs, and laws of various kinds. Each is endowed with some particular status, and each is said to meet some need, express some values, or organize some set of recurring activities or practices.

There is a less abstract definition of institution that is also important. An institution may also be referred to as an "established organization," or even more concretely a place to which we might be directed, the "building or buildings which house such an organization." By this definition, the U.S. Congress is an institution, as is the House of Commons, the U.S. Supreme Court, the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the National Institutes of Health. There are of course ways in which the two definitions of institution overlap. The definition of social institution utilized below depends on sorting out what underlies the difference between the two common definitions of institution and the differences between the institutions identified by both definitions.

The first definition of institution is identifiably a sociological definition of the term (Wells 1980, 6ff.). It has been developed in the attempt to understand the life of societies and cultures in a way which allows a systematic comparison of societies and the explanation of patterns of activity within them.¹ The term in this sense refers to patterns of rules or customs

¹ Dictionary definitions of institution before the development of social science, that is roughly before the last part of the 19th century, are subtly different than those which follow. In the earlier definitions, institutions are "established by authority" for particular purposes. There
continued

which are instrumentally related to objectives a society is observed to believe important for its continued existence. Rules or customs serve as norms, as constraints on behavior which assume that social life fulfills its objectives or functions. Institutions on this view "are systems of expected behavior in given circumstances . . ." (Wells 1980, 7).

The norms which define an institution for the sociologist may be "statistical" rather than "ethical," that is, not necessarily rooted in a philosophy of right or good conduct. Consequently, norms may be revealed or observed in regular patterns of behavior, and in this sense "discovered" apart from any account those doing the behaving may give of their actions. Indeed, the nascent sociologist is instructed that such accounts may be misleading as to what "is really going on." On the sociological definition, as long as patterns of behavior may be fit to some social objective or function, the existence of an institution may be inferred. The sociological definition assumes that:

In looking at any human society, an observer is usually able to define a number of general 'objectives' which that society seems to find necessary or important for its existence. The propagation of children into a stable and recognized primary group; the control of deviance and containment of disputes; the maintenance of right relations with some recognized non-human order of existence: these and other objectives may be inferred by the observer to have their place. (Wells 1980, 6)

As it is the observer who does the inferring, it is the observer who construes the existence of an institution. What underlies the sociological conception of social institutions is the special status of the observer as scientist which allows him or her to define the number of general objectives which a society

is little hint of sociological functionalism. See, for example, Webster (1828, 114) and Stormonth (1885, 501).

seeks, that is, "what is really going on." The special status of the observer *qua* scientist is conferred upon him by a belief in a positivist social science methodology.

There is a way in which the second definition of institution, "an established organization," can easily be made sense of in terms of the first. If a particular organization contributes to social objectives of some kind, then it is clearly an institution in the sense of the first definition. By this view the U.S. Congress, in that it passes laws, would qualify as a social institution, because law can be thought of as contributing to the objective of "containing disputes," or "social control" or some similar social objective. Identifying the Congress in this way not only explains what Congress is, but what it is for as well—supposedly the chief utility of a sociological definition of social institution.

There is a sense, however, in which it seems strange to identify Congress as an institution because it contributes in some way to "social control" or some similar abstract objective. What seems strange about this description/identification of Congress is that Congress *means* more to Americans than a mere "institution of social control." Indeed, in the context of American definitions of democracy, the phrase can sound scary to Americans. What Congress means for Americans is expressed when they give an explanation of what they think Congress is *for*, that is, when Americans express their normative theory about why the Congress exists, the goods it provides and the values it serves. Americans think of Congress as making law, not as fulfilling a function or objective in the sociological sense of establishing controls, but on behalf of the people who elected the members of Congress to represent them, because they see representation as a

good or as leading to a good. Or similarly, Americans think of Congress as serving as a check on the power of the President, because we see executive power as a potential evil and in need, therefore, of limits. What underlies the second definition of institution if it is *not* to be made sense of in terms of the sociological definition, is the common meanings institutions have for people within a political community, that is, the political goods they define them by.

The definition of institution to be used here is based on a particular conception of the "objectives" or "functions" that political institutions fulfill or perform. It is assumed that the objectives of institutions cannot be defined by universal sociological categories, but rather only in terms of the meanings institutions have for persons in the society of which the institutions are a part. The term "institution" will be used, then, to refer generally to specific organizations defined by purposes members of a political community believe the institution to fulfill, including the meaning of those purposes for the members of society. The "objectives" and "functions" which are important are those that the members of a society use to explain their own political experience.²

² This assumption implies a particular methodological point of view, of course. It is that articulated by Charles Taylor in his essay "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man" ([1971] 1985, 15-57). This view assumes with respect to social institutions that:

Inter-subjective meanings, ways of experiencing action in society which are expressed in the language and descriptions constitutive of institutions and practices, do not fit into the categorical grid of mainstream political science. This allows only for an inter-subjective reality which is brute-data identifiable. But social practices and institutions which are partly constituted by certain ways of talking about them are not so identifiable. We have to understand the language, the underlying meanings, which constitute them. ([1971] 1985, 38).

By "brute-data" Taylor means "data whose validity cannot be questioned by offering another interpretation or reading, data whose credibility cannot be founded or undermined by further reasoning." In other words, data that is discovered by mainstream positivist social-science methodology.

A *political* institution is an institution which is referred to by members of a society as *acting in* society. We habitually speak of an act of Congress. Presidents "take action." Courts "decide" and "order" things to be done. Agencies announce, as in "the Department of Commerce today announced." This definition grounded in action claims much for politics, but it sensibly excludes a number of social institutions from immediate consideration. We do not think of marriage as acting in society, although we do think of it as a social institution which fulfills some good purpose. Sport, literature, art, and science we speak of as having an influence upon or reflecting conditions in society, but we do not generally think of these institutions as acting in it in the same sense that we think of Congress or the courts acting in it. This is evidenced by the habit of anthropomorphizing political institutions in speech and holds an important clue to the meanings they have for the members of a political community. In fact, it is a habit partly constitutive of political institutions as they are understood as being capable of or necessarily fulfilling particular institutional purposes.

The definition of political institutions to be employed below is tied to the definition of politics offered in Chapter Two by its emphasis on action. The acts of political institutions require good reasons. The reasons which are used to justify institutional action are good to the extent that they can be related to a hierarchy of good reasons and to ultimate good reason values.

Institutional Discourse

For the purposes of the following argument, then, the definition of political institution focuses attention on a particular object of study: *institutional discourse*. Institutional discourse consists of the descriptions and

justifications given of institutional life of specific institutions within a political community. Institutional discourse also consists of the arguments that served to justify institutional action in society in the past and which are remembered so that they can be recalled in the face of future exigencies.

Institutional discourse is carried on in terms of of a political community's *common meanings*, "notions about what is significant, which are not just shared in the sense that everyone has them, but are also common in the sense of being in the common reference world" (Taylor [1971] 1985, 38). A part of the meaning of common meanings, in other words, is that they are common. Common meanings are the foundation of a political community and represent common aspirations that are "the common reference points of all debate, communication and public life within . . ." it (Taylor [1971] 1985, 39).

Common meanings contrast, however, with intersubjective meanings abroad within a political community. True, intersubjective meanings are meanings that are shared by all members of a political community, but they are not the focus of public life or politics. Many Americans may agree that rotten eggs smell like sulfur, that air travel is generally safe, that the colors of trees in the Fall are beautiful, that Elvis Presley is the king of rock and roll. These shared meanings are not of as much importance to public life in the United States as, say, the beliefs that Americans are a generous people or that they love liberty. Intersubjective meanings give a community a common language to describe and define social reality, "but only with common meanings does this common reference world contain significant common actions, celebrations and feelings" (Taylor [1971] 1985, 39).

In the life of political institutions there is a close relationship between the purposes a society believes an institution serves and the values of a political community. Sometimes the relationship between such *institutional purposes* and value is a virtual identity. In other cases, the relationship is tenuous. Frequently, most often perhaps, the relationship of institutional purposes and values is ambiguous and lies in need of clarification. Was the 98th U.S. Congress, for example, representative in the sense in which we conceive of representation to be a good? Did President Ronald Reagan exercise his powers in a manner consistent with the Constitution or, more generally, with "mainstream American values." These are questions which are clearly open to debate and interpretation.

Not only are such questions open to debate, they are open to debate at a variety of levels. One level of debate, often popularly referred to as "philosophical" or "theoretical," is debate at the level of *The Federalist Papers*. It concerns directly the relationship of institutional purposes and values. If representation is held to be a good, for example, such philosophical debate answers the question of what an institution should or should not be able to do in order to serve such a good. Another level of debate is, for want of better terms, "specific," "pragmatic," "practical." It indirectly concerns the relationship of institutional purposes. It is carried on in terms of subordinate good reasons more often than it is carried on in terms of value or ultimate good reasons. It addresses questions of the kind: "If welfare provisions have eroded the institution of the family, what should this Congress do to remedy the situation?" Or, even more specifically, questions like "How should the Congress spend federal revenue this year?"

There is nothing absolute about either of these levels of debate; one often freely draws on the other; but they are, nevertheless, familiar and distinguishable. What is ultimately common to both levels of debate is that they are, in the end, debates about how institutions can and/or should *act* in society. Both seek to provide justifications for institutional action and, consequently, both are identifiably political. Political in the sense, that is, that politics is the process of defining and clarifying values in a way which allows for action in society. The institutional discourse of political institutions encompasses both levels of debate about the relationship of institutional purposes and action, the values of a political community, and any levels of debate in between.

Institutional purposes are also within the realm of common meaning. For Americans, the purposes of the republic and the Constitution, the Congress, the courts and the several states are all clearly part of the "common reference world" of American society and culture. In American politics institutional purposes are indeed a common reference point for most political debate, communication and public life. Because they have this status in society, we can think about institutional purposes-as-common-meanings as *constitutive common meanings*; that is, there is a sense in which they both define and describe the American political community. They suggest what American politics is for.

That institutional purposes are common meanings does not eliminate the potential for conflict about them. As Taylor points out, they can "subsist with a high degree of cleavage . . ." ([1971] 1985, 39). They come to be articulated and lived differently by different groups in society and can, just because they embody common meanings, be the source of the bitterest fights

in a society. Indeed, disputes over common meaning are the bedrock substance of politics, the very definition of political life and politics which come to the fore when institutional action must be taken.

Such conflict is most often expressed in debates about the exact relationship of ultimate good reasons to institutional purposes, or rather, in the justification of institutional purposes in terms of value. An American, for example, believes she understands what the U.S. government is obliged to do (or not to do) by the First Amendment to the Constitution. Yet, her interpretation of institutional purposes and value she expresses in her interpretation of the First Amendment may be radically challenged by others with other interpretations. When challenged, she attempts to justify her view, to defend her interpretation, and she does it by finding ways to link her values with various institutional purposes. It is debate of this kind which is the substance of the institutional discourse of political institutions. It accomplishes the grounding of political institutions in common meanings and yet has the potential to simultaneously alter a community's understanding of its common meanings. The outcome of such debate is critical because it is on the outcome that an institution's ability to act in society depends. More than this, the existence of an institution in a particular form is at stake in such debates, because social practices are constituted by a vocabulary descriptive and expressive of common meanings.

Given traditional definitions of politics by political scientists, it may seem strange to put the institutional discourse of political institutions at the heart of politics, but it is not too strange. In societies where the constraints on institutional discourse are severe, the whole problem of political change

comes to be recognized as the problem of creating a vocabulary in which alternative social realities can be conceived of and with which institutional purposes can be redefined. Consider, for example, Adam Michnik's analysis of why Poles submitted to the Stalinization of their country:

The communists who arrived at the end of the war succeeded in imposing false solutions [to the problems of Polish society] because they succeeded in imposing their own language. I would even say that the debate over language is the debate concerning the entire intellectual life of these past 36 years. . . . During the course of those years, most of our society lost its language. The reality was terrible and we could not find appropriate terms to describe it. (1981, 67)³

Reft of common meaning, alternative proposals for actions of political significance in the face of Stalinism were impossible to formulate.

Even in societies where the constraints on institutional discourse are not severe, powerless groups seeking political power or groups seeking to reclaim power have seen the interpretation of common meanings as part of their political problem. In 1967, for example, in the midst of what some interpreted to be a fundamental ideological reorientation of American society, the Foundation for American Christian Education published a facsimile edition of Noah Webster's *First American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828). "Today," the edition's preface stated,

the necessity of restoring the clarity and identity of Constitutional meanings is obvious if we are to make substantial progress in rebuilding the foundations on which this nation was established. Without a standard reference for America's history and philosophy of government, students cannot be expected to make the distinctions and discriminations between similar terms used in history books today. (Slater 1967)

³ The struggle to find a language of dissent has been a large part of the accomplishment of the Polish trade union movement Solidarity. See Kemp-Wech (1980) for an account.

The purpose of re-issuing Webster's dictionary was to literally re-establish the "original" meanings of words, so that the original common meanings of the U.S. Government could be restored. Since the dictionary was "produced when American, home, church and school, were established on a Biblical and patriotic basis," it could uniquely serve, according to its editor, such a purpose.

Political Institutions as Contexts for Political Discourse

Institutional discourse serves as a feature of context for political discourse, because it is generally fixed in some way so that it may be recalled in the face of exigencies. Institutional discourse may be fixed not only in memory, it may be written down, formalized and/or codified. *The Federalist Papers* are a part of the institutional discourse of federal government in the United States, the Congress, the federal courts, the Presidency, as are *The Congressional Record*, *West's Federal Reporter* and *The Federal Register* at another level of discourse. The work of historians and political scientists, in that they explore the relationship of institutional purposes to values of one kind or another, is also a part of institutional discourse. Journalism, as it fixes current debate, is also a part of institutional discourse. In short, any work which fixes a case linking institutional purposes to value may properly be thought of as institutional discourse. All such discourse may potentially be drawn upon in the course of a new debate seeking to justify institutional action. The institutional discourse of political institutions is what we can know in the form of fixed discourse about how the action of political institutions has been justified.

To put the point in the language of Chapter Two, institutional discourse serves as the source of good reasons for institutional action. As with the good reasons of political discourse, the good reasons of institutional discourse are good because they can be related to subsuming good reasons which may in turn be related to ultimate good reasons or values. The fixed versions of such arguments form institutional discourse.

As there are issues in political discourse, so there are issues in institutional discourse. Issues in institutional discourse are not arguments about what is to be done, but rather about whether what is to be done *can* be done by a particular political institution. Many laws, policies or other acts are conceivable in the face of a particular exigence. What specific law or policy to enact or adopt is an issue in political discourse. Good reasons may be given and accepted for many possible courses of action. Where limits exist on institutional action (in the form of constitutional rules for example), however, not all courses of action are possible even if they are desirable or expedient.

Issues in political discourse and issues in institutional discourse are often distinguished from one another in time, place, and style. Debate over the wisdom of a course of action need not always raise institutional issues. Discussion of general limits on institutional action need not contain specific proposals for action. Nothing in *The Federalist Papers* suggests how to modernize the U.S. nuclear arsenal. In fact, discussions of political and institutional issues are frequently carried on within very different institutions and within different forums concerned with different types of issues at different levels of debate.

Within legal scholarship, for example, are discussions of constitutional issues of various kinds: about what it is a constitution says and about how it is to be interpreted. Within political science, in a sub-field which defies simple description, are found discussions of nuclear deterrence and what varieties of weapons systems will contribute to it. Such discussions are often carried on with universities and communities of scholars in the form of professional publications and acquire, over time, a life of their own within these forums. Like issues in political discourse they come to be known by their nicknames: judicial review, original intent, strict constructionism, interpretivism, balance of power, functionalism and so on. Any may at any time be incorporated into political discourse for the purpose of justifying institutional action.

Because there is a range of limits on institutional action, some informal and traditional, others formal and codified, there is a range of issues in institutional discourse. The violation of some limits may constitute nothing more than a breach of decorum, taste or political common sense; for others the cost of violation may be severe and sanctioned by law. Which limits are which is often itself a subject of dispute. At one end of the range of limits, and therefore of issues, are what are often called "constitutional issues" of one kind or another. In American politics, and in the politics of many other countries, there is no greater damnation of a proposed course of action than the allegation that it is somehow "unconstitutional." Such allegations transform political debate completely because the charge suggests that institutional purposes and, by implication, the larger values of a society or community, are being subverted or damaged.

Institutional Rules

Because institutional discourse and political discourse provide the basis for institutional action, political institutions not infrequently place constraints on political discourse. Because what can be done depends in large part on what can be said, what can be said limits what can be done. The constraints which political institutions place on political discourse, consequently, are rules about how political and institutional discourse is to be carried out in order to count as a justification of institutional action. Most frequently, such constraints take the form of rules, of form and presentation, and rules of procedure. These *institutional rules* may be formal and/or codified. Rules of evidence and procedure in law courts are rules of this kind, as are the rules of procedure in legislatures. The rules may be informal as well, as in the expectation that presidents will not make sectarian religious pronouncements; these are, nevertheless, rules.⁴ Institutional rules, in that they can govern what subjects can be addressed within an institution, may also determine the kind of exigencies that an institution can attempt to resolve. For those who take part in the life of political institutions, these rules are features of context that partly constitute the meaning of the political discourse that is carried on within the context of an institution.

The authority or status of institutional constraints on discourse is ultimately grounded in the purposes of institutions and in this way connected with value in the same way in which the purposes of institutions are connected with value. The rules of procedure and evidence in courts, for example, are to facilitate the purposes of the courts, the resolution of

⁴ See Robert Bellah "Civil Religion in America" in McLoughlin and Bellah (1968).

disputes in law, and in doing so the larger value of justice. The rules of procedure in legislatures may be justified by the representative purpose of legislatures in that the object of many of the rules is to prevent the domination of an assembly by majorities considered to subvert the good of representation. Institutional rules are, in essence, tokens representing the settlement of past political arguments. Indeed, all rules of political life, including law, are in some sense tokens for arguments that in the past linked action, good reason, and value.

Institutional Discourse as a Feature of Context

It follows from the foregoing discussion that a political agent seeking to motivate institutional action must invent and use political discourse fitted to the institutional context in which he wants to make his appeal. If he did otherwise, his discourse could neither count as nor be understood as justification of a proposed course of action. As in any political discourse, the agent's purpose is to offer good reasons for action. In a specific institutional context, this purpose, and the process of inventing discourse to fulfill it, is complicated and constrained both by institutional rules and institutional discourse.

The way in which institutional discourse complicates and constrains the process of inventing political discourse can be revealed by considering the kinds of arguments an agent must make to justify institutional action. In general, to motivate institutional action a political agent must invent arguments to perform the following *discursive tasks*:

1) to persuade his audience that there is, in fact, an exigence; something other than it should be;⁵

2) to persuade his audience that the institution *should* act to modify the exigence;

3) to persuade his audience that the institution *can* act to modify the exigence. That is, that a course of action necessary to modify the exigence does not fall outside any established limits on institutional action;

4) to persuade his audience that a specific proposed course of action, is capable of modifying the exigence.

If each of these discursive tasks is looked upon as presenting a rhetorical problem or set of rhetorical problems, then the task of motivating institutional action is clearly complex.

Of the four discursive tasks, the first is more than the others within the province of political discourse alone. To persuade an audience that something is other than it should be, an agent can draw on hierarchies of good reasons which for the moment lie outside the scope or concern of institutional discourse and politics. These are hierarchies which, as was observed in Chapter Two, give expression to values abroad in a community which are not yet recognized to be explicitly political. This does not mean, of course, that an agent cannot draw upon the good reasons given expression in institutional discourse. A skilled politician will attempt to demonstrate a coherence and connection between such reasons and other reasons abroad in

⁵ The term audience refers here to: "those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and being mediators of change" (Bitzer 1968, 8). In the case of a legislature, for example, this audience would be its members; in the case of a court of law, a judge and, perhaps, jury.

a community in order to portray his proposed course of action as a natural extension of both.

The other three discursive tasks must of necessity, however, be performed by drawing on the good reasons of institutional discourse. Even if an agent can persuasively define an exigence, its modification may seem to lie outside the statutory or traditional scope of institutional action. Many citizens of the United States, for example, are convinced that there is an exigence in the easy availability of handguns and urge institutional action to resolve it. This proposal has run afoul of the constitutional limit on institutional action that says a right to keep and bear firearms must be respected by government. The rhetorical problem for proponents of handgun control in the United States is in part to reconcile their proposals for action with the values given expression in the U.S. Constitution. Such an argument must involve debate about whether an institution can or should act and about whether a given course of action is capable of modifying the exigence.

The necessity of drawing upon institutional discourse to motivate institutional action complicates the task of rhetorical invention because, not only must discourse designed to motivate institutional action perform the first task, it must often simultaneously perform the latter three tasks without obviously contradicting itself. This is not easy, because what may appear to be good reasons within the context of a particular political situation may not be compatible or reconcilable with the good reasons of institutional discourse. As material for invention, the good reasons of institutional discourse are limited in that they are the product of finite institutional experience. The development of a proposed course of action is constrained

by what can be justified by the good reasons of institutional discourse. It is in this sense that institutional discourse is a constraint on both political action and political discourse.

The good reasons of institutional discourse are discovered in the construction of arguments about the relationship of proposed good reasons to institutional purposes which are the expression of a community's understanding of political value. They are consequently recognized to represent the constitutive common meanings that define political community. To stray too far from the good reasons of institutional discourse, then, is to invite the criticism that a course of action contradicts the constitutive values of a political community. Because, as observed in Chapter Two, argument in terms of ultimate good reasons or value is generally so intransigent, even unpolitical in a sense, institutional discourse serves as a *strong constraint* on political discourse as long as politicians are interested in preserving politics. Because rhetoric is interdependent with value, institutional discourse also serves as a strong constraint on the use of political rhetoric.

On occasion, discursive tasks may be performed by a single political agent in a discreet period of time. More often than not, however, these tasks are performed by a variety of agents in a variety of ways over what can be long periods of time. Exigencies are rarely self-evident. Attempts to define them as problems requiring institutional action can be difficult and often require political organization of the effort. To attempt to define an exigence is often to challenge a political community's understanding of its constitutive common meanings. Such challenges inevitably raise opposition, counter-argument and counter-organization. Proponents of

women's suffrage and desegregation in the United States had to argue for some time before the exigencies they sought to define and address were thought to be exigencies in need of or resolvable by institutional action.

Institutionalized action, then, requires that institutional discourse be incorporated into political discourse which seeks to justify action to modify an exigence. If understanding discourse is being able to give an account of what it is 'about,' to predict the topics it will address and the pan-referential acts it will perform, then the understanding of political discourse requires the understanding of institutional discourse as well. Political discourse takes on its fullest meaning as *political* discourse only when one can give an account of how and why institutional discourse will be incorporated into political discourse on an issue. In part, as suggested above, this understanding is also a matter of knowing what institutional rules shape the meaning of political discourse that occurs within the context of a given political institution.

The meaning that political discourse has for those who participate in the life of a political institution and who can by their actions cause a political institution to act in an attempt to modify an exigence—that is, the audience of a political discourse—is its *effective political meaning*.⁶ For a judge, the effective political meaning of a discourse is that which leads him to render a specific judgement. For a legislator, the effective political meaning of a discourse is that which leads him to vote for or against proposed legislation. While a political discourse may be interpreted to have many meanings

⁶ Here "effective" is used in the sense of "producing or adapted to produce the desired impression or response" and not to suggest that there is no meaning if there is no action of an institution in response to it.

within the context of a whole political community, its *effective* political meaning is delimited by the institutional context within which it is presented in an attempt to motivate or justify action in the face of a specific exigence. In order to understand how political discourse serves to motivate and justify institutional action, one must attempt to infer its effective political meaning.

Our view of the way in which political institutions serve as contexts for political discourse begs an important question: If institutional discourse provides a context for political discourse, what provides a context for institutional discourse? How, on the theory presented, are we to be able to understand institutional discourse? In the case of specific institutions—the Congress, the Supreme Court, the Presidency, the States—the question can be answered by suggesting that such specific institutions function within the context of larger identifiable institutional discourses. For example, in the case of the institutions listed, the larger discourse is that of the U.S. Government. Yet, this answer hardly removes the objection. The question must still be answered. What ultimately grounds such larger institutional discourses?

The answer, which underlies the argument of this chapter, is that institutional discourse is grounded in what can be *done* with it. To the extent that it allows action in society in order to fulfill, or attempt to fulfill, various values, it has meaning for the members of a political community. Because recognition of an exigence depends on our interpretation of society based on our own values, institutional action to modify an exigence depends on bringing institutional purposes within the scope of certain values. As suggested above, this is the substance of institutional discourse.

The Nature of Values in Political and Institutional Discourse

To maintain that values are the overarching feature of context of institutional discourse is incompatible with the definition of politics suggested in Chapter Two: the definition and clarification of values in a way which allows for social action. If values are the anchors of institutional discourse, one might well ask, doesn't the suggestion that they are ill defined and unclear raise certain problems? Two issues may seem particularly troubling. First, if values are subject to re-definition, cannot a re-definition of values transform the purposes of political institutions and, with them, politics? Second, aren't we led into a kind of value-relativism if we accept that values are subject to the kind of re-definition which has been suggested? Addressing both of these issues will help to further clarify how institutional discourse can serve as a feature of context for political discourse.

The first issue is likely to seem a problem for those who see the necessity for a certain kind of "stability" in political life and who fear (not without cause) the kind of radical transformation of politics that sweeping re-definitions of values might bring about. That this issue can be an issue is, in effect, a confirmation of the position advanced here about the role of value political discourse. If such were not the case, the fear expressed about radical transformation wouldn't make sense as a criticism. The re-definition of values can transform, however, the purposes of political institutions and politics more generally. In the history of the West there are a number of such transformations which stand out: the English Rebellion of 1640-42, the American Revolution, the French Revolution of 1789, and the Russian Revolution of 1917. When the political and institutional discourses in the

societies in which these revolutions occurred are examined, one finds at their core the re-definition of value in an attempt to transform the possibilities for political action in society.

In each case, what the revolution was 'about' in a deep sense was a re-conceptualization of universal political values such as right, justice, duty, obligation, and so on. The re-conceptualizations were revolutionary just because their effect would be to alter the politics of the society in which they were accomplished. It is the recognition of the potential for revolutionary, or less than revolutionary but nevertheless significant, clarification or re-definition of values used to justify political action which leads to constraints on political discourse, which can lead to institutional action. On the "other side" of the revolutions were those seeking to defend and conserve their conception of the values constituting the political community in which they lived.⁷

The second issue, related in important ways to the first, is more difficult to deal with. Asking whether the view of the role of value in political discourse leads to a kind of value-relativism, is really another way of asking whether knowable, identifiable values exist. A full treatment of this issue is beyond the scope of this work, but to make what has preceded seem plausible, some response to this concern is necessary.

In order to accomplish the discursive tasks necessary to bring about and justify institutional action, an agent must make an effective argument; that is, he must make a persuasive argument. To make an effective argument, an agent must, as Perelman points out, choose only those points

⁷ I must give thanks to Anna Wiley for this latter point.

of departure accepted by the audience his discourse addresses, in our case those capable of bringing about institutional action to modify an exigence.⁸ In argument the rhetorical task in a large sense, as well as the method, is to transfer to the conclusions of an argument the adherence an audience accords to its premises. If an agent is to succeed in this task, he or she must employ premises either known to be accepted by his audience, or "reinforce them with all the means at his disposal" (Perelman 1982, 21). In the terms employed above, a premise is an implied good reason with a position in a hierarchy of good reason.

The source of premises for an argument which seeks justification for institutional action is institutional discourse. Because institutional discourse fixes justifications of institutional action, and because other agents who participate in institutional life unavoidably become acquainted with its issues, an agent may, and often must, draw upon it as a source of premises. He seeks to transfer the adherence given to justification arguments for past institutional actions to the argument and justifications he makes for future action. If his premises touch upon issues in institutional discourse—disputes about what an institution can do—he must attempt to resolve the issue in some way before preceding with his argument. To do otherwise, as Perelman notes, is to commit the error of *petitio principii*, the error of begging the question, and leaving his premises open to attack by opponents. It is building support for shaky premises drawn from institutional discourse

⁸There is certainly nothing novel in Perelman's advice. It has been the advice rhetoricians have given speakers since at least the time of Aristotle. Since parts of Perelman's argument is useful to our later argument, I have chosen to use his expression.

which is a large part of the activity of bringing institutional purposes within the scope of particular values.

As suggested in Chapter Two, it is characteristic of political discourse that it involves disputes about the relation of good reasons to subsuming good reasons. These disputes are in essence attempts to construct or to find suitable premises or to discredit attacks on premises. Such argument is often difficult and complex since it involves not only finding premises for political discourse but for institutional discourse as well. Controversial political issues, definitively, are entangled in arguments and disputes about appropriate premises.

The argument about desegregation in the United States provides a good example of political discourse which became embroiled in disputes over the appropriate premises of arguments justifying institutional action. In response to the proposed civil rights legislation of 1956, Southern congressmen issued what was called the "Southern Manifesto," setting out their opposition to federal legislation forcing desegregation. The principle reason offered was that such legislation would exceed the constitutional limits on the federal government's power to legislate for the states, in particular the rights of states to formulate and enforce their own legislation in matters not specifically reserved to the Congress. In reference to *Brown vs. Board of Education* and other school desegregation cases, the Manifesto proclaimed that the representatives of the southern states regarded the

decision of the Supreme Court in the school cases as a clear abuse of judicial power. . . . This unwarranted exercise of power by the Court, contrary to the Constitution, is creating chaos and confusion in the states primarily affected. . . . Without regard for the consent of the governed, outside agitators are threatening immediate and revolutionary changes in our public school systems. (as quoted in Andersen 1964, 32)

The signatories of the Southern Manifesto were attempting to make the proposal for federal civil rights legislation into an argument about "states rights," a fundamental constitutional issue. In the language employed above, they were attempting to raise an issue in institutional discourse. The argument amounted to an attempt to attack the premises of the argument for federal legislation on civil rights. A principle premise of the proponents of civil rights legislation was that the Supreme Court had acted in *Brown* to make school segregation illegal and that, were it to uphold the Constitution, the Congress should, in effect, act in support of the decision.

What is significant about the Southern Manifesto's argument is that what it is not is an argument disputing what would appear to be the real dispute: that the Constitution should be read to mean that the equality before the law it guarantees extends to the provisions of public services irrespective of race or, more generally interpreted, that government cannot make distinctions in the treatment of citizens on the basis of race. Rather, it makes the argument that proposed Congressional action exceeds the limits on its action. It is an argument difficult to reject solely on the grounds that it is an excuse for continued segregation, because the rights of states are indeed an important constitutive element of U.S. Government.

Raising the issue of states rights as a *constitutional* issue made, and was intended to make, the task of finding justifications for institutional action by advocates of Congressional action on civil rights' more difficult. The argument was designed to place the advocates of action in the position of finding a way to make an argument that justified federal intervention in the case of segregation possible in a way which would not justify federal

intervention in *any* case. Phrasing the issue in terms of states rights also suggested that those who opposed federal civil rights legislation did so not because they were racists, but because they were concerned with upholding the fundamental law of the land instituted to serve such purposes as inspired by "regard for the consent of the governed." The argument also allowed the supporters of federal legislation to be portrayed not as ardent constitutionalists but as usurpers of the Constitution.

When presented with such a case, looking to the justificatory argument alone, how is it possible to say *what* values are being appealed to and expressed? If something like a universal value of "equality" is at the heart of the dispute, how is it possible to suggest that either side in the dispute is appealing to the same "equality" or that there is in fact universal agreement to say what the value means? It is difficult to suggest, in fact, that a common meaning of the value is expressed. If it were otherwise, it would indeed be difficult to make sense of the dispute. Both sides in the dispute characterized themselves as "upholding the Constitution," and by implication, "upholding American values" on which the document is based. Yet, both sides are clearly "reading" the Constitution and American values rather differently. The case is one in which intersubjective meanings allowed the discourse to take place, yet not in terms of common meanings of the kind constitutive of community.

As Perelman points out, we can without contradiction suggest that values (what he calls universal values, what we have called ultimate good reasons) exist because they are the object of the agreement by the "universal audience." In the case of civil rights in the United States the universal audience can be thought about as those for whom the justification of the

civil rights legislation of 1956 was intended to be convincing. "Those values are the object of universal agreement as long as they remain undetermined. When one tries to make them precise, applying them to a situation or to a concrete action, disagreements and the opposition of specific groups are not long in coming" (Perelman 1982, 27). American citizens may all approve of "American values" as long as they remain abstractions. An audience can make of the term what it likes. When it is suggested that American values as expressed in the Constitution require Congress to act to desegregate the public schools—"our schools" in the words of the Manifesto—the opportunities for persuasion, and hence for institutional action, are transformed.

The issue, then, is not so much whether values exist in any metaphysical sense, but rather whether it is in the nature of values as employed in political and institutional discourse that they can exist apart from the language used to express or develop the agreement of the universal audience. If we take political and institutional discourse as evidence, it is difficult to say that universal values have an existence separate from language used to express them and the arguments used to act with them. Against those who would assert that there is *a* set of values—necessary to raise the issue of value relativism—we may contend that the contention that there exists *a* set of values misunderstands the role of values as used in public life and its discourse. It is for this reason that politics can be thought about as the clarification and definition of values which allow for social action.

Nevertheless, universal values are critical to political discourse. To suggest that they do not exist apart from the language used to express them

on a particular occasion is not to say that they do not exist and in no way diminishes their significance. As Perelman writes:

Universal values play an important role in argumentation because they allow us to present as specific values [or good reasons], those upon which specific groups reach agreement as more determined aspects of those universal values. The insertion of specific values into a framework which goes beyond them shows that we wish to move beyond specific agreements by recognizing both the importance of the universalization of values and also the importance that we attach to the agreement of the universal audience. (Perelman 1982, 27)

In other words, the notion of universal values allows us to give expression to common meanings as "objects in the world which everyone shares" and which can form the "common reference points for community life."

As we have attempted to show above, it is institutional discourse which has the task of presenting specific values, or good reasons, as more determined aspects of universal values. In that institutional discourse attempts to accomplish this task, it is similar to what Taylor defines as social theory. Institutional discourse does indeed attempt to "define common understandings and hence to sustain or reform political practices . . ." and is, in this sense, a self-definition of political practice, the self-definition of a community. Such self-definition "is essentially a definition of norms, goals, or values; and there are in each case practices of which it is the essential enabling condition" (Taylor [1971] 1985, 107).

THE WEB OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The nature of the complex relationship between political discourse and institutional discourse discussed in this chapter can be summarized in a simple metaphor. The structure of relations between good reasons, subsuming good reasons and ultimate good reasons is a web-like labyrinth.

Values lay at the center of the web surrounded by subordinate good reasons radiating from it. At the periphery are the good reasons of institutional action. This web-like hierarchy is not, however, a rigid pyramidal hierarchy. Like a spider's web, which is damaged from time to time and then repaired, there is a dense network of interconnecting strands in regions associated with particular political institutions and the issues discussed within them, and a sparser, less interconnected network in regions associated with other institutions. Institutional discourse serves as a map of the web, a necessary guide to its conceptual complexity. Actors involved in the everyday life of political institutions use the map of institutional discourse as a guide to justifying action. To attempt to bring about institutional action is to become entangled in the web and to necessitate repairing it. It is political discourse which repairs the web, spinning together again value and reason in a way which allows for institutional action.

It has been argued in this chapter that the institutional discourse of political institutions—past arguments justifying or motivating institutional action fixed so that they can be recalled in the face of present exigencies—serves as the principle feature of context of political discourse. As the principle feature of context for political discourse, institutional discourse determines the meaning of political discourse. In particular, it determines its effective political meaning: the meaning it has for those capable of modifying an exigence by their action within a political institution. Institutional discourse, it has been argued, is also in effect a strong constraint on the invention of political discourse, because it complicates the task of inventing effective political argument.

The major conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing discussion is that the creation of political discourse, which incorporates past good reasons for action in order to demonstrate the consistency of a proposed course of action with the values of a political community, is the core of institutionalized politics. In other words, political institutionalization is nothing more than the process of the emergence of the patterns of political discourse described above. The following chapter will begin to examine the implications of this conclusion for the description and analysis of international politics.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL DISCOURSE
AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

This and the following chapter return to an explicit discussion of the problem of international political order. Together they will suggest how the analysis of political discourse and political institution presented in Chapters Two and Three can be applied to describe and explain international politics and international order.

The focus of this chapter is a critique of the assumption common to many theories of international politics: that international and domestic politics are significantly different because international politics is not institutionalized as is, or in the same way as, domestic politics. As will be seen, this critique is rooted in the theory of political institutions presented in Chapter Three and will conclude that international and domestic politics are not only both institutionalized, but institutionalized in much the same way. Even though, however, international and domestic politics are similar because they are institutionalized, there remain significant differences between them. Chapter Five will consider the nature and extent of these differences and will explain how consideration of them can lead to an account of the role of political discourse in the maintenance of international order.

THE SIMILARITY OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Almost all theories of international politics are premised on the assumption that international and domestic politics are significantly different in character. Indeed, to distinguish between international and domestic politics at all implies a difference between them. The reasonableness of this assumption of difference is partly rooted in the observation that international politics does not seem to be institutionalized in the way that domestic politics is. In contrast to domestic politics, the politics of states appears not to be constrained by a "final repository of decision making authority . . ." or by a "single body which possesses a monopoly on the legitimate use of force . . ." (Clark 1980, 14-5). In other words, there are not state-like institutions effectively performing state-like functions in the international system, including the function of maintaining civil order. It is for this reason that international politics is held to be anarchical, a political order in which force is the *ultima ratio*.

Yet, states, as participants in international politics, can qualify as institutions in the sense of the term developed in Chapter Three: entities conceived of as acting in society, in this case, the society of states. As participants in international politics, states qualify as institutions in our sense of the term: entities conceived of as acting in society, in this case international society. As in the case of domestic institutional action, state action *qua* institutional action requires justification, a definition and/or clarification of values which allows for action by making it acceptable to other agents. Because the creation of political discourse is at the core of all political institutions as they act in society, to the extent that international politics requires the creation of political discourse it is institutionalized in

just the same way as domestic politics. In other words, the difference between international and domestic politics is not a difference of kind in respect of institutionalization.

The idea that international politics is not constrained by a "final repository of decision making authority . . ." is not as significant as might be supposed because, as was implied in Chapter Three, no domestic political institution is itself ever really a final repository of decision-making authority. The basis of decisions once made can be brought into question by political argument at any level and challenged by the assertion that they did not or now no longer fulfill institutional purposes or the values of a political community. Similarly, the notion that international politics is different because there is no "single body which possesses a monopoly on the legitimate use of force . . ." is not as significant as commonly imagined, because the use of force can be determined to be illegitimate in the course of political argument. Witness, in the context of domestic politics in the United States, the public debate over the use of force in the Vietnam War.

There can be little doubt that international politics depends to some extent on an international political discourse. States rarely act without some attempt to justify their actions to other states, especially to those states likely to interpret their actions as threats or acts contrary to their own interests. States also seek to motivate other states to act or to join with them in acting in the face of particular exigencies.

International and domestic politics can be seen to be, then, significantly similar because both require the political discourse to motivate or justify action in society. Moreover, international politics is effectively institutionalized by the creation and continuation of international political

discourse. Evidence of these assertions can be found in an examination of the similarity of the structure and nature of domestic and international political discourse, an examination which the remainder of this chapter presents. Before turning to an examination of the similarity of domestic and international political discourse, however, it will be appropriate to briefly consider what may appear to be a problem in the following argument.

Why Institutional Action Requires Political Discourse

One difficulty in making the argument that international and domestic politics are significantly similar because they both require political discourse lies in clarifying what is meant by the assertion that state action *requires* the creation of political discourse—an issue glossed over in the previous chapters. In the case of domestic political institutions, it is relatively easy to see that political discourse is required for institutional action. This requirement is easy to see because, as was shown in Chapter Three, the occasion, form, and style of political discourse are formalized by a variety of rules, customs and traditions. In the case of international institutions, the requirement is less easy to see because the occasion, form and style of international discourse are not as formalized and derive less of their meaning from formalization. Diplomatic practice has formalized international political discourse to an extent, but there are significant limits to its influence and effect.¹

¹ For suggestions of how the discourse has been formalized, see Satow's (1922) *Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, which sets out some of the more formal means of inter-state communication.

One must not mistake, however, the absence of the formalization of discourse for an absence of institutionalization in our sense. The necessity of political discourse to institutional action is not in any case mandated by rules per se, but rather by the necessity of the task that political discourse must perform to allow institutional action: defining or clarifying values in a way which will create an acceptance for action. Specific formal rules regulating the performance of discursive tasks, as was suggested in the last chapter, are really only tokens representing the settlements of arguments made in previous political discourse, arguments concerned in general with the purposes of the institution within which they regulate discourse. Because arguments about the purposes of institutions seek to ground institutional purposes in value, resolutions of them have an authority and status of value. It is because we recognize the connection of rules and value that "following the rules" can come to be seen as a good in itself. Consequently, it is easy to regard the requirement that discourse must facilitate action as solely a *normative* requirement and to imagine that where a normative requirement does not exist there is no real requirement for discourse to justify action.

While the necessity of political discourse, particularly discourse of a certain form, may take a normative meaning, political discourse is also required in the sense that it is impossible to act in society in its absence. As the Greeks well understood, human nature, society, and action are characterized and dominated by the human capacity for language. Isocrates, the great fifth-century teacher of rhetoric, is said to have put the point in this way:

In most of our abilities we differ not at all from the animals; we are in fact behind many in swiftness and strength and other resources. But because there is born in us the power to persuade each other and to show each other whatever we wish, we have not only escaped from living as brutes, but also by coming together have founded cities and set up laws and invented arts, and speech has helped us to attain practically all the things we have devised. For it is speech that has made laws about justice and injustice and honor and disgrace, without which provisions we should not be able to live together. By speech we refute the wicked and praise the good. By speech we educate the ignorant and inform the wise. . . . With speech we contest about disputes and investigate what is unknown. . . (in Kennedy 1963, 8-9)

The idea that political action *qua* institutionalized action requires political discourse is rooted then in an assumption about human nature: that human beings are by their nature communicative social animals that use language to structure their social relations.

Yet this view of the necessity of discourse to social action does not free us from normative concerns, because it is a characteristic of the human capacity for language that normative and deliberative discourse is distinguished as a special variety of discourse and is carried on in terms specific to and constitutive of it. As was noted in Chapter Two, political discourse is a special variety of discourse because it attempts to define or clarify *values* in a way which allows social action. In the last chapter, by making a distinction between political and institutional discourse, it was seen how the "logic" of political discourse within an institution was set out by a stock of arguments justifying institutional action which "ground" institutional purpose in terms of value. Consequently, if ones wishes to give an account of politics or explain political outcomes, we have to understand the logic(s) governing the discourse which are their vehicles. In other words, we must adopt a *Verstehen* method and not exclude specific normative terms from explanation, because to do otherwise would be to exclude from full consideration what may well be the most significant

determinants of or constraints on political action.² To suggest that state action requires political discourse, then, means that it is required because there is no way to accomplish social action without it *and* that it *might* be required by some specific set of customs, traditions or rules consistent with certain purposes grounded in value.

POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

With the foregoing discussion in mind, it is now possible to turn specifically to the argument that domestic and international politics are institutionalized in much the same way by asking whether domestic political discourse and international political discourse are significantly similar. The analysis of political discourse and political institutions presented in the last two chapters suggests two questions which will allow us to address this major issue: first, does international political discourse seem to be structured in the same way as domestic political discourse; and second, does international political discourse derive its meaning from the same sources as domestic political discourse?

The Structure and Nature of International Political Discourse

In Chapter Two it was observed that political discourse is structured by issues: an argument or set of related arguments about what a government should or should not do. This observation describes international political discourse—the political discourse of states—as much as it does domestic political discourse. For anyone with even a passing acquaintance with

² A thorough-going defense of this view is outside the scope of the present essay. For general, and very different, defenses of this position see Hilary Putnam (1978) *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* esp. "Lecture VI" and Charles Taylor's (1985) essay "Understanding and Ethnocentricity."

international politics it is easy to list the nicknames of a number of current international issues: "Arms Control," "Non-Proliferation," "Terrorism," "The Palestinian Problem," "Third World Debt" and so on. Each nickname, commonly used by the media and official spokesmen, refers to an argument about what states should or should not do in relation to one another.

There is a dimension to issues in international political discourse not often present in domestic political discourse. While the conduct of relations between states was once a more or less private affair among their representatives, today many international issues may have an influence on domestic political issues or be closely related to them. As Abba Eban notes, the modern statesman "cannot escape the duality of his role. He must transact business simultaneously with his negotiating partner and his own public opinion" (1983, 345). Domestic political considerations may serve as effective constraints on the development of a state's policy on an issue. Groups with domestic political influence may have an interest in their state's treatment of an international issue and may seek to make it a part of domestic politics. The response of Jews and Arabs living in the United States to U.S. Middle East policy is a case in point. A state's treatment of an international issue may also give birth to new domestic issues, as in the case of domestic peace movements seeking reduction or elimination of a state's nuclear weapons. While the potentially dual nature of international political issues makes them more difficult to address, it in no way suggests that these issues do not organize international political discourse.

As in domestic politics, international political issues exist as the result of the recognition of an exigence. Each of the issues listed above has developed and been articulated as the result of an imperfection marked by

urgency. The issue of arms control in its contemporary sense arose out of the fear that a nuclear war among the leading powers could destroy civilization, if not the human race. Terrorism as an issue has arisen as the result of the problems states have had in securing their borders, and their nationals traveling abroad, from attack by military forces not associated with any identifiable state.

Because an international exigence may often be modified by discourse, most commonly in the form of negotiations resulting in agreements between states about their future conduct, the general concept of a political situation would also seem to be applicable to the description of international political discourse. The elements of domestic political situations seem equally present in international politics. It is, for example, no real distortion of international political reality to identify audiences composed of persons who may be influenced by international political discourse and who are capable of modifying an exigence by their actions. For the most part these audiences are smaller than the audiences of domestic politics, being primarily composed of the foreign policy decision-makers at a variety of levels in various states. In respect, however, of the dual domestic/international character of some international political issues within states where the population is capable of sanctioning decision-makers, such audiences may be very different in different states. It is equally sensible to speak of an international political situation as being dominated, especially bilaterally, by a "controlling exigence." In the case of U.S. Soviet relations, for example, all other issues are dominated by and discussed within the context of the variously expressed ideological enmities between the two countries

Constraints on discourse which are inherent in the situation and cannot be changed, and those which can be organized and managed by a state, exist in the international as well as the domestic arena. In the first category are actions taken by states or other international actors, physical characteristics of the situation, and state capabilities.³ That an airliner has been hijacked and taken to a particular place, for example, is a fact which no discourse can modify. Whatever discourse is invented in an attempt to resolve such an exigence must take such a situation as it is. In the second category of constraints, states may have a wide variety of choices. They may choose the forum of the debate—the U.N. Security Council, for instance, over a private back-channel. They may choose non-verbal over verbal forms of communication (Cohen 1987). State decision-makers may also consciously choose the terms of debate they feel suited to a particular purpose. As we noted in Chapter Two, choices about the terms of debate can be critical in that they may serve to constrain future debate and, consequently, action. Such choices have been far from inconsequential in international politics. As Eban suggests, the United States may well have made the “opening” of Communist China and the progress of arms control with the Soviet Union more difficult for itself by the adoption of a violently moralistic anti-communist rhetoric in the 1950s and 60s (1983, 350-1).

While it is easy to see that domestic and international political discourse are fundamentally similar in their structural characteristics, it is

³ There are, of course, long-term and short-term aspects of state capabilities. A state which sees its power eroding relative to some other state may take steps to develop capabilities to remedy such an exigence in the long term. A state which must cope with sudden violence against its nationals in a place where it has little influence or which is beyond its reach militarily is, essentially, stuck with things as they are.

more difficult to see that they are of the same nature, that is, distinguished by qualities which set them apart from other forms of discourse but which do not distinguish between them significantly. In at least one of the qualities mentioned in Chapter Two international and domestic political discourse are obviously similar. Both are eventful. The creation of domestic or international political discourse is a discreet act in response to an exigence and is concerned with modifying the exigence in some way. That much of inter-state communication is, as Cohen (1987) has observed, marked by quasi-theatrical conventions suggests as much.

It is not clear, however, that international political discourse is characterized by the other qualities of domestic political discourse discussed in the last two chapters, namely, that it seeks to define and clarify values in a way which allows for state action, and that it derives its effective political meaning from an institutional context in the form of institutional discourse. There has been historically a great deal of skepticism that the values of international politics are, or should or can be anything like, the values of domestic politics. It is also difficult to see just how international political discourse can derive meaning from an institutional context when it has been argued, not without merit, that international politics can in one sense be defined as politics in the absence of established institutions. Our answers to these objections, by now, should be obvious. The objections are based on misunderstandings of what political institutions are and of the role that values play in politics. In the next section an attempt will be made to correct these misunderstandings as they relate to international politics. In particular, the concern will be to show how international political discourse

derives its effective political meaning from a distinct institutional discourse of international politics.

The Context of International Political Discourse

It was argued in the last chapter that many domestic political conflicts were expressed as arguments about the relationship of ultimate good reasons, or value, to institutional purposes. As suggested above, institutional purposes are concepts in the realm of common meaning, "notions about what is significant which are not just shared in the sense that everyone has them, but are also common in the sense of being in the common reference world" (Taylor 1985, 38). As notions about what is significant, common meanings and institutional purposes as common meanings are related to value. It is for this reason that they are the foci of political conflict. Different groups in society come to understand the relationship of value to particular institutional purposes differently. These differences become sources of conflict when institutional action contrary to a group's conception of institutional purpose is proposed. Where institutional purposes have a constitutional status, they are constitutive of the political community itself, and conflict about their relationship to value may not only become very bitter, but may re-define the very existence of the community.

The resolution of conflict over the relationship of institutional purpose to value for the purpose of justifying institutional action is accomplished by the creation of political discourse which attempts to reconcile differing interpretations of the relationship in the face of a particular exigence. Within the context of a particular institution, such discourse characteristically incorporates institutional discourse in the

performance of discursive tasks similar to those listed in Chapter Three. Political institutionalization, in sense described in Chapter Three, can be identified by revealing the general pattern in the use of discourse just described on behalf of entities conceived of as being actors in society. While the creation of political discourse may be subject to formalization of one kind or another, formalization is not in itself sufficient or necessary to institutionalization in the sense that the term is employed here.

If international political discourse and domestic political discourse are significantly similar it should be possible to:

1. Identify a similar relationship of value and common meaning in discourse which is intended to justify state action;
2. Show that inter-state arguments about the relationship of value to common meanings have been the source of significant conflict among states;
3. Show that such arguments have been on-going and have been drawn upon by international political discourse addressing current international exigencies.

This third demonstration is of considerable interest because, if it can be accomplished, we will have identified the institutional discourse which is the context of international political discourse and which gives international political discourse its effective political meaning.

To reveal a relationship between value and common meaning in international discourse which seeks justification of state action we must, at minimum, suggest what common meanings, constitutive or otherwise, there are in international politics, illustrate that they appear in and structure international political discourse and, finally, suggest that international

political discourse relies for its effect on their understood relationship to value or explicitly attempts to associate them with value.

There is contained within all international political discourse a set of constitutive common meanings which define international politics. At minimum these meanings are: the 'nation-state', 'sovereignty', 'power', 'national interest', 'diplomacy', 'international law', and 'war'. In contrast with those employed in domestic politics, they are relatively few in number, but they are nevertheless well-developed meanings, without which it is impossible to imagine international politics, and are obviously within the common reference world of statesmen. There could be no *inter-national* politics in the sense that we understand the term today without the emergence of the concept of the nation-state and the subsequent justification in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of the absolute sovereignty and juridical equality of states. Nor could we, in the absence of the concepts of diplomacy and international law regulating the conduct of states in war and peace, make sense of relations between states in the way that we do.⁴

Each of the constitutive common meanings of international politics is identifiable in part because each has traditionally, like the purposes of institutions in domestic politics, referred to specific relationships and conditions recognized as significant in some way, without at the same time being precise. There has been a continually expressed difficulty of defining

⁴ It is possible, of course, that the list of the constitutive meanings of international politics list could be expanded in a number of ways. 'International Law,' for example, brings to mind concepts like 'treaty', 'recognition', 'innocent passage', 'occupation', 'intervention', etc. These notions are no less constitutive of international politics that 'international law.' Here the general terms are used simply to stand for such associated meanings.

some of these meanings—'sovereignty', 'power', 'national interest'—in a consistent or tangible way. For example, H.F. Hinsley writes of sovereignty:

Men do not wield or submit to sovereignty. They wield or submit to authority or power. Authority and power are facts as old and as ubiquitous as society itself; but they have not everywhere and at all times enjoyed the support or suffered the restraints which sovereignty, a theory or assumption about political power, seeks to construct for them. Although we talk of it loosely as something concrete which may be lost or acquired, eroded or increased, sovereignty is not a fact. It is a concept which men in certain circumstances have applied . . . (1986,1)

National interest, although central as we have seen to the realist conception of international politics, has been a notoriously difficult notion to illustrate precisely.⁵ What Hinsley speaks of as "the fact of power" is itself a concept which has not been defined clearly or consistently by participants in and observers of international politics, although all agree on its significance (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 1981, 86-92). "Power," Rosenau suggests, "is as elusive and ambiguous a concept as is interest. Its components are a matter of dispute" (1980, 288).

Diplomacy now no longer refers to the means of managing the relations of states which were developed and utilized within European international society, even though current diplomatic practices may bear a "family resemblance" to them (Bull and Watson 1984, 95). Even the concept of the state has not always, or even recently, referred to the same kind of political entity as Bull implies when he writes that:

One feature of the present international order is that much of the world is under the sway of states which are not states in the strict sense, but only by courtesy. They are governments or regimes and exercise power over persons and control over territory, but do not possess authority as distinct from mere power; they do not possess enduring legal

⁵ For a good summary of the general problem see Rosenau (1980).

and administrative structures capable of outlasting individuals who wield power at any one time; still less do they reflect respect for constitutions or acceptance of the rule of law. (Bull 1984a, 430)

The point is not so much that the constitutive common meanings of international politics have definitions that have changed over time, or that they are imprecise in their reference, but rather that in spite of change and imprecision there remains within the society of states a sense in which such meanings define international politics as a distinct variety of political activity. The meanings are in this sense clearly "objects in the world which everybody shares" (Taylor [1971] 1985, 39). While states may differ in particular circumstances about what power, national interest or sovereignty mean, often quite contentiously, they do not suggest that these concepts be replaced by others. Were such meanings not recognized as somehow defining the essence of international politics, there would be very little at stake in how they are defined and in what their definition required or implied for state action.

Together with what we have called the constitutive common meanings of international politics are associated a host of intersubjective meanings which give international politics a set of common terms of reference. As noted in the last chapter, intersubjective meanings give "a people a common language to talk about social reality and a common understanding of common norms . . ." (Taylor [1971] 1985, 39). There is clearly a language of this kind associated with international politics. The doctrine of *ius cogens*, the norms of non-intervention and non-use of force, the status of international human rights are discussed with such a language as are the analysis of a state's interests or power by other states.

As is the case in domestic political discourse, there is often only a fine distinction between common meanings and intersubjective meanings in international political discourse. It is hard to imagine international politics without a doctrine like *pacta sunt servanda*, and indeed, it might be imagined as being constitutive of international politics. It is perhaps easier to make a distinction between common meanings and intersubjective meanings in a domestic context, where an intimate political contact between groups and individuals not possible in an international context has over time resulted in the development of richer intersubjective languages. The difficulty in making a clear distinction between common and intersubjective meanings in international political discourse suggests an important difference between domestic and international political discourse. This difference, as we will see in the next section, is of some significance to our contention that political discourse contributes to the maintenance of international order.

It should by now be obvious that the terms proposed as referring to the constitutive common meanings of international politics appear in inter-state discourse which attempts to justify state action. Nonetheless, it will be useful to present examples of how they appear in international political discourse, both to demonstrate that they do appear there and to show that they are not unique to any particular form of inter-state discourse, but rather run through all political communications between states. The examples will also serve to suggest that the communications between states also make justifications for state action with reference to particular values.

As a first example we could consider a small portion of the "personal" correspondence between Anthony Eden and Dwight Eisenhower during the

Suez Crisis of 1956-7.⁶ The correspondence qualifies as an example of an international political discourse, because it clearly seeks both the modification of various exigencies and the justification of state action (or in the U.S. case, inaction). The controlling exigence in the Suez Crisis was, from the British perspective, the nationalization of the Suez Canal by the government of Gamal Abdel Nasser on 26 July 1956. Eden and his cabinet saw the nationalization of the canal as a threat to Britain's oil supply and to British interests in the Middle East. The Cabinet at once agreed that Nasser should be politically pressured to return the canal to international control, preferable by a coalition of "maritime and trading nations whose interests would be most directly affected" (Cabinet minutes 27 July, 133). It was also determined, that should political pressure fail, force would be used even if Britain should find itself in the position of acting unilaterally.

The Eden-Eisenhower correspondence began the day after the nationalization and was initiated by Eden. Eden's first letter had three simultaneous purposes. The first was to inform Eisenhower about what the British response was likely to be. The second was to solicit U.S. support for returning the canal to international control, including military support should it become necessary. The third was to present the British case for the de-nationalization of the canal in order to accomplish the first purpose and, also, to begin to justify British action should the support of the United States not be forthcoming, the possibility of which Eden and his Cabinet were well aware (Cabinet minutes 27 July, 135). Eden attempted to accomplish these

⁶ The correspondence and cabinet minutes quoted in the following paragraphs appear as appendices to Carlton (1988,113-55). References are to page numbers in Carlton.

purposes by making direct appeals to U.S. national interest and, with less emphasis, to international law.

Eden suggested that U.S. interests in the Middle East were at stake as a result of the nationalization of the canal and that protecting them meant taking action against Nasser. "If we take a firm stand on this now," he wrote, "we shall have the support of all the maritime powers. If we do not, our influence and yours throughout the Middle East will, we are all convinced, be finally destroyed" (27 July, 113). Eden also implied that other more vital interests might be at stake as well. "The immediate threat is to the oil supplies of Western Europe, a great part of which flows through the Canal. . . . The Canal is an international asset and facility, which is vital to the free world" (27 July, 113). Eden's implication was, in that the United States had pledged itself to the re-construction and defense of "Western Europe" and the "free world", that a failure to oppose Nasser would appear to be inconsistent with these promises.

What was not necessary to have said in the context of the situation, was that the Soviet Union would be the principle beneficiary of a lack of resolve on the part of the United States. The idea that the Soviets would benefit from American lack of resolve in defending the interests of the West was a theme established with religious fervor in American policy pronouncements of the period which tended to equate anti-communism with U.S. national interest. It was a theme upon which Eden played. To fail to oppose Nasser, who had just concluded an arms deal with Czechoslovakia and had recognized the Mao government in China, would be to leave the way clear for the expansion of communist influence in the Middle East. Allow the disruption of oil supplies to Europe and the resulting economic

problems might create an opening for Soviet subversion. It was possible threats to U.S. national interest that Eden meant to raise in Eisenhower's mind, issues which he thought might lead the U.S. to action.⁷

Eden also raised the issue of the legality of Nasser's action under international law. The Cabinet was agreed, he reported to Eisenhower, "that we cannot afford to allow Nasser to seize control of the Canal in this way, in defiance of international agreements." Yet, he also noted that "we should not allow ourselves to become involved in legal quibbles about the rights of the Egyptian Government to nationalize what is technically an Egyptian company. . . . I feel sure that we should take issue with Nasser on the broader international grounds . . . " (27 July, 1956, 144). The implication was that it was on the basis of common national interest that the West should act.

Eisenhower's reply to Eden four days later was sympathetic to the British position, but made it clear that he did not accept Eden's reading of U.S. interests. "Grave problems are placed before both our governments," wrote Eisenhower, "although for each of us they naturally differ in type and character" (31 July, 1956, 114). For the United States, Eisenhower implied, the issue was not one which should or could be resolved with the use of force or other more severe political pressures. He favored a "reasonable and

⁷ As the correspondence went on into August, and as it became clear that the U.S. would not lend Britain the support it desired, Eden attempted to raise these issues much more explicitly. Eden to Eisenhower, 27 August: "I have no doubt that the Bear is using Nasser, with or without his knowledge, to further his immediate aims. These are, I think, first to dislodge the West from the Middle East, and second to get a foothold in Africa so as to dominate that continent in turn. . . . Meanwhile the communist bloc continue their economic and political blandishments towards the African countries which are already independent. Soon they will have a wider field for subversion as our colonies, particularly in the West [of Africa], achieve self-government."

conciliatory, but absolutely firm, position" which left room for diplomatic maneuver. "We recognize," he wrote,

the transcendent worth of the Canal to the free world and the possibility that eventually the use of force might be necessary to protect international rights. But we have been hopeful that through a Conference in which would be represented the signatories to the Convention of 1888, as well as other maritime nations, there would be brought about such pressures on the Egyptian government that the efficient operation of the Canal could be assured for the future. (31 July 1956, 114-5)

Keeping the canal open was not, in other words, necessarily a problem of getting Nasser to de-nationalize it. Eisenhower was convinced of "the unwisdom of even contemplating the use of force at this moment." Even if force should become necessary, he was not convinced it could be successful without heavy costs, or that public support for it could be maintained either internationally or in the United States, most critically within the Congress (31 July, 1956, 115).

Eisenhower was especially concerned that military action not be "undertaken until every peaceful means of protecting the rights and the livelihood of great portions of the world had been thoroughly explored and exhausted" (31 July 1956, 116). There should be, he wrote, "no grounds for belief anywhere that corrective measures were undertaken merely to protect national or individual investors, or [that] the legal rights of a sovereign nation were ruthlessly flouted" (31 July 1956, 115). Eisenhower's appeal here is to international law and sovereignty. Also implied is how the issues raised by the nationalization of the Canal were of a different "type and character" from the U.S. perspective. The American pledges to protect the free world and Western Europe, to which Eden had referred in his first letter, were rooted in particular principles. Among these, as expressed in the so-

called "Truman Doctrine," was the idea that a nation should be free from outside pressures to determine its own political course. Eisenhower was well aware that aggressive U.S. action, in the absence of thorough-going diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis, could be interpreted as blatant hypocrisy on the part of the U.S., as it had been in other instances, could hurt its influence in the Third World, and undermine domestic support for its foreign policy.⁸ The issue of importance to the U.S., of this there was no doubt, was that its resolution could not be allowed to harm its wider interests, influence, or reputation.

What is, for the purposes of this essay, of interest in the Eden-Eisenhower correspondence is the way in which the constitutive common meanings of 'national interest,' 'international law,' 'sovereignty' and 'power' serve to structure its meaning and, to a lesser extent, its content. The common meanings of international politics serve to structure the meaning of the discourse, because in addition to being common meanings they are also akin to what Hymes identifies as a *linguistic form*, or a "way of talking about things" in the world possessed of its own vocabulary of intersubjective meanings. Thus, 'international law' and 'national interest' have always been spoken of in rather different terms and styles; one being "legalistic," the other "pragmatic." The different linguistic forms also imply rather different

⁸ As it became clear to Eisenhower that the British would not be steered off a military course of action, he attempted to make his point more forcefully. Eisenhower to Eden, 2 September, 1956: "We have two problems, the first of which is the assurance of the permanent and efficient operation of the Suez Canal with justice to all concerned. The second is to see that Nasser shall not grow as a menace to the peace and vital interests of the West. In my view these two problems need not and possibly cannot be solved simultaneously and by the same methods. . . . The first is the most important for the moment and must be solved in such a way as not to make the second more difficult. Above all there must be no grounds for our several peoples to believe that anyone is using the Canal difficulty as an excuse to proceed forcibly against Nasser."

associations of good reasons and value. Joshua Fishman has developed a similar notion which he calls *domains* of language use.⁹ Domains are associated with "concepts such as 'home', 'school', 'work', 'religion' and so on" which denote distinct social contexts (Hudson 1980, 80). With each domain is associated a conventional vocabulary and patterns of language use.

For the moment, however, the point is only that reference to constitutive common meanings in discourse is also simultaneously a reference to rather different ways of talking about international politics or, in the cases above, how a specific international crisis is to be described. How and why this reference happens, as well as its implications for the meaning of a discourse, are suggested by the passage from Hymes we quoted in Chapter Two: "The use of a linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. When a form is used in a context, it eliminates the meanings possible to that context other than those the form can signal: the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those the context can support" (Hymes in Yule and Brown 1981, 37-8). In Chapter Two this passage was used to suggest the importance of context in understanding the meaning of discourse. Here it is used to note that a context is subject to mediation by the language used to describe it. Just as Taylor suggests, there is no simple, one-way dependence of meaning on context and vice versa in such discourse ([1971] 1985, 33-4). The meaning of the discourse is structured by reference to the constitutive common meanings of international politics

⁹ The notion of domains was developed by Fishman, a sociolinguist, to describe and analyze language use in bilingual communities in which individuals must make choices about what language to use in what social contexts. Here the idea is extended to encompass language choices related to constitutive meanings of international politics (Hudson 1980, 80).

because, as linguistic forms of a kind, they eliminate the meanings possible to the context "other than those that the form can signal."

In the case of the Eden-Eisenhower correspondence, Eden's framing of the crisis in terms of U.S. and British national interest, and his reference to the Cabinet decision to use force, were an attempt to get Eisenhower to see the crisis as the kind of threat to national interest which had to be met with force and which might only be solved by force. In that protection of the national interest has usually been associated with the use of force and is spoken of in a vocabulary of intersubjective meanings tied to power and force, Eden's strong appeal could be seen as a reasonable persuasive strategy from his point of view.

Unmoved by Eden's appeal to U.S. national interest, Eisenhower, in his references to diplomacy and international law, attempted to persuade Eden that the crisis was not of the kind Eden thought it to be. Implicit in this process were the motives of both Eden and Eisenhower to fulfill the values each considered important to the state they represented. Both also seem to have relied upon what they understood to be the connection between the domains of 'national interest,' 'power,' 'diplomacy,' 'international law' and value to convey their messages. In this case, the values to which these concepts were linked were those that the United States and United Kingdom professed to hold in common in the period of the Cold War, often vaguely defined as the "democratic values" of the "free world."

A second example of the articulation of value in terms of the constitutive common meanings of international politics as a justification for state action is the development of the so-called "standard of civilization" by European states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The

standard was developed to organize the relationship of European states in and to the non-European world as they expanded their influence there. The standard also "provided the European powers with an explanation and justification of their global expansion . . ." (Gong 1984, 7).

By the turn of the century, the standard of civilization "had emerged as an explicit legal principle and an integral part of the doctrines of international law prevailing at the time" (Gong 1984, 14). In general, the standard defined a "civilized state" as a state which met the following requirements:

1. a 'civilized' state guarantees basic rights, i.e. life, dignity, and property; freedom of travel, commerce, and religion, especially that of foreign nationals.
2. a 'civilized' state exists as an organized political bureaucracy with some efficiency in running state machinery, and with some capacity for self-defence;
3. a 'civilized' state adheres to generally accepted international law, including the laws of war; it also maintains a domestic system of courts, codes, and published laws which guarantee legal justice for all within its jurisdiction, foreigners and native citizens alike;
4. a 'civilized state' fulfils the obligations of the international system by maintaining adequate and permanent avenues of diplomatic interchange and communication. . . .
5. a 'civilized' state by and large conforms to the accepted norms and practices of the 'civilized' international society, e.g. suttee, polygamy, and slavery were considered 'uncivilized', and therefore unacceptable. (Gong 1984, 14-5; sic)

These requirements—which were notions codified in treaties between European states and non-European countries, and therefore can be considered international political discourse—explicitly and obviously linked the constitutive common meanings of international politics with "the norms of the liberal European civilization . . ." (Gong 1984, 15).

The effect of the standard was, in essence, to redefine the notion of 'state' as a 'civilized state.' A state was a state by this definition because it was

civilized. By implication, by this definition uncivilized countries could not be actors in international politics in the way that the European powers were. This re-definition served to justify standards of conduct for European states in their relations with non-European states quite different from those that they applied amongst themselves.¹⁰

The standard of civilization was an international legal principle, not made only by the European state, but also for them and "served to facilitate the maintenance of European or Western ascendancy" (Bull 1984, 218). As such, the standard came to be the source of much political conflict between European and non-European countries. The non-European world, of course, had its own standards of civilization that did not define an international politics as conceived of by European statesmen. These different standards of civilization provided innumerable opportunities for the misunderstandings that were invariably seized upon. "Indeed, to echo a Claueswitzian idea, many of the nineteenth century's military engagements, for example, the Opium Wars, were extensions of conflicting standards of 'civilization' by other means" (Gong 1984, 7-8). The legacy of conflicts over standards of civilization has remained very much a part of international politics. The old European arguments developed to justify the standard of civilization have often been recalled as indictments against the Western states by Third World states, as Ali Mazrui suggests when he writes of the "prison-houses" Western civilization created for Africa (1984, 289).

¹⁰ A notion articulated, as Gong (1984, 6) points out, by the international lawyer James Lorimer who relegated "countries unable to meet the standard of 'civilization' to inferior status in international law."

A final example of the articulation of value in terms of the constitutive common meanings of international politics as a justification for state action, familiar enough not to need extensive elaboration, are the various theoretical justifications for the balance of power developed in Europe during the period of the Concert of Europe. During the period of the Concert, a variety of theoretical justifications of the 'balance of power' was articulated which tied it, and the conceptions of 'national interest', 'power', and 'sovereignty' associated with it. Perhaps the best known are Metterich's conservative, and Castlereagh's relatively more liberal, justifications for the balance of power.¹¹

This chapter has argued on behalf of the idea, which is also its major conclusion, that international and domestic politics are institutionalized in much the same way because, political discourse being the core of institutionalized politics, political discourse fulfills the same function in international politics that it does in domestic politics: linking constitutive common meanings with value for the purpose of justifying institutional action. This similarity of international and domestic politics does not mean, however, that there are not significant differences between them. These differences and their significance to international political order will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹¹ For a detailed account of the various theoretical explications of the balance of power in the period of the Concert, see Holbraad (1970).

CHAPTER V

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ORDER
AND RHETORICAL REGIME

The last chapter argued against the common assumption that domestic and international politics are significantly different because the latter is not institutionalized. This assumption is mistaken because it is premised on a misunderstanding of the nature of political institutions. In the end, domestic politics is more like international politics than commonly imagined. There are, however, also significant differences between domestic and international politics, and it is the task of this chapter to give an account of them. As will be seen, recognition of these differences follows from the conception of politics and political institutions offered in Chapter Two and Chapter Three and suggests the role political discourse plays in the maintenance of international order.

DISTINGUISHING INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

We have seen that international politics is institutionalized in the sense that international political discourse performs functions characteristic of political institutions. That is, it is used to link constitutive common meanings with value for the purpose of justifying institutional action—in the case of international politics, the action of states.

The most significant differences between domestic and international politics are, for want of a better term, substantive differences. In essence, international politics differs from domestic politics in the same sense that

U.S. politics differs from, say, French politics: they are defined and distinguished by the process of defining and clarifying different sets of values constitutive of them as distinct political communities. The "substance" that distinguishes them, in other words, is value.

In light of the conception of politics and political institutions presented in Chapter Two and Three, the substantive distinction between international and domestic politics has at least two important consequences. First, as suggested in Chapter Four, the language or vocabulary of inter-subjective meanings used to discuss and describe international politics is, in its effective political meaning, different from that employed in the discourse of domestic political orders. Second, international political discourse is, relative to domestic political discourse, compartmentalized into domains of discourse associated with each of the constitutive common meanings of international politics. Each of these characteristics of international political discourse will be discussed in turn, as each is considered for how it shapes international political order.

The Inter-subjective Meanings of International Political Discourse

The distinction between the inter-subjective meanings of international politics and those of domestic politics can be imagined to be something like the distinction between the language of a people or society far removed from our own in place, time, and experience. In the sixteenth century, for example, there was no language to describe or discuss aviation, electronics, political rights or the process of voting in a contemporary sense. In present day international politics there is no language to describe, as there is in domestic political orders, executive-legislative interaction or constitutional

interpretation. These have no place in the political discourse among states within the context of the constitutive common meanings of international politics because there has been no experience of them, just as there was no experience of human flight in the sixteenth century.

To put the point more generally, distinctions between vocabularies of inter-subjective meanings arise from, and can be defined by, differences in social experience of the communities in which they develop.¹ The difference between the vocabularies of inter-subjective meanings of domestic and international politics can be described by drawing a distinction between the political experience of domestic political communities and the community of states.² The most significant distinction between the political experience of states and domestic political communities is that the experience of international politics has been characterized by the definition and clarification of values different from those invoked in domestic political discourse.

International politics is the politics of interacting political communities self-defined by various and often mutually exclusive values. The conflict of what are traditionally referred to as "national interests" is really nothing more than a conflict of value. "In fact, the very distinction between 'interests' and 'values' is spurious. An interest is not an interest until it concerns something that is valued" (Dore 1984, 410). It is thus sensible to speak of "American values, "Soviet values," or "Japanese

¹The conclusion that human communities develop unique languages to share their shared experiences is a commonplace of sociolinguistics. Here the notion is being extended to include the "experience" (see note 2 below) of states. For a good overview, see Hudson (1980), esp. chapters 3, 4 and 6.

²It is not implied that states as abstract entities or as "unitary purposive actors" actually have experiences. I am simply following the linguistic convention of referring to states (or other political institutions) *as if* they had experiences.

values," and to see state actions informed by them and conflicting as a result of them. The notion of "national values" in this sense is, of course, an abstract one. As was suggested in Chapter Three, "national values" do not always have unambiguously identifiable referents. They often remain indeterminate until invoked in the face of a particular exigence.

Nevertheless, the *concept* of national values or national interests in international politics is important because such values are recognized to be constitutive of the states without which there could be no *international* politics. Dore has referred to national values as "*idiosyncratic values/interests* which some states have and others do not depending on their 'culture'" (1984, 410; emphasis added).

The idiosyncratic values/interests of states contrast with what can be called, for want of a better term, *international values*. International values are those values which underlie an international political order and that are represented, in the way that institutional rules represent constitutional or institutional purposes in domestic political orders, by what are recognized as rules of international order.

The rules of order in a society of states—that agreements should be obeyed, that envoys should be immune, etc.—rest on some sort of perception of the inevitability of continuing intercourse, some sense that the society of states requires moral commitment to certain basic rules because it is a community and there is no alternative to that community continuing to exist—neither the alternative of withdrawal of self, nor of the elimination by genocide of the other. The society of states, that is to say, requires the existence of some sort of moral community, some degree of Kantian reciprocity and ability to take the role of the other which at minimum rules out the contemplation of genocide—at the very least it requires some such sense of community among those who act on behalf of states. . . . (Dore 1984, 408)

It is international values that are constitutive of international politics in our sense, that define the political community of states and which have

grounded the rules of international order in the variety of forms they have taken in the course of history.

The vocabulary of inter-subjective meanings used to describe and discuss international politics is, and has been fashioned in the process, of defining and clarifying international values. It is international values that statesmen have sought and seek to define and clarify in order to justify state action in the international community. It is this process of definition and clarification of values that is the political process on our definition and which is, when concerned with international values, the unique and definitive experience of international politics.

The distinction between international and domestic inter-subjective languages may seem odd at first because international politics is also made sense of in terms of domestic inter-subjective meanings. Americans tend to make sense of and describe international politics in one way, Iranians in another. Such domestic making sense of international politics may indeed give rise to a set of domestic inter-subjective meanings about international politics and the role of a state in the world—a national eschatology—which can be elevated to the level of meanings constitutive of a national political community or national values. The notion of a “manifest destiny” in the United States serves as an enduring example. Such domestic inter-subjective languages are not, however, necessarily coextensive with international inter-subjective languages. What is referred to here is the languages that states speak amongst themselves in the conduct of international relations. States, of course, don’t use language. Diplomats, domestic political leaders and policy makers do, however, and they understand that it is not the language of their domestic political intercourse

and has its own conventions and meanings.³ Indeed, one of the common frustrations of professional diplomatists is the misunderstanding of this fact by politicians without experience of diplomacy.⁴

To suggest that domestic and international inter-subjective meanings are not completely coextensive is in no way to rule out the possibility of some significant overlap or similarity of meaning between the realms of domestic and international politics. In the case of arguments on behalf of international human rights, for example, there have been concerted efforts to incorporate concepts into international political discourse that have traditionally had their fullest effective political meaning within domestic political orders. Nevertheless, were the notion of human rights not in some sense excluded from the inter-subjective meanings of international politics, no concerted effort at incorporation would be necessary.

Domains of International Political Discourse and the Institutional Discourse of States

A second difference between domestic and international political discourse, one that also follows from the difference between international and national values, is that international institutional discourse is, relative to domestic institutional discourse, divided into distinct domains of discourse. These distinct domains of discourse are roughly associated with each of the constitutive common meanings of international politics. This difference is

³For a useful description of some of the characteristic features of diplomatic language in this regard see Cohen (1981, 31-35).

⁴A frustration expressed, for example, by George F. Kennan's account of a visit to Joseph Stalin by several drunken U.S. Congressmen (1967, 276-7).

partly a consequence of and partly a reason for the distinction between domestic and international intersubjective languages.

A domain of discourse, to recall, refers to a way of talking about things associated with distinct social contexts. 'Home', 'school', 'politics', 'work', are all examples of domains or social contexts within which there are appropriate and legitimate ways of talking about the world, even if the conventions exist only between two or a few people. Agents tend to choose language appropriate to the social context in which they find themselves. Just as there is one way of talking about things in the context of 'church', so is there a way of talking about things appropriate to domains identified by 'national interest', 'international law', or 'war' in international politics. Such ways of talking about things are in part constituted by the various intersubjective meanings used in international political discourse.

It is, of course, possible, it must be said, to identify domains of discourse within domestic institutional discourse—international institutional discourse is not different from domestic institutional discourse simply because it encompasses distinct domains. What is significant about the fact that international institutional discourse encompasses distinct domains is that they are, to put it crudely, relatively more distinct from one another than are the domains of domestic institutional discourse. This relative distinction is important because it suggests the way in which international values shape and constrain international institutional discourse and the way in which international institutional discourse shapes international values. In order to demonstrate this interdependent relationship, it is first necessary to more fully describe the character of the

distinction between domestic and international domains of institutional discourse.

Domestic political institutions, as was argued in Chapter Three, are recognized to be grounded in values given expression as the constitutive common meanings of a political community. Institutional purposes are held to be consistent with and expressive of community values and can be justified by good reasons and explain their connection with value. All domestic political institutions are "constitutional" in this very literal sense and are thus supposed to be responsible to overarching national values, at least until the relationship is brought into question by argument. Because the various domains of domestic political discourse are encompassed by a political language expressive of value in terms of common meanings, there is a sense in which they are inevitably interconnected with one another in terms of value even though, almost paradoxically, they can be distinguished from one another.

The nature of the interconnection between domains of domestic institutional discourse can be clarified by noting that their language is used to give expression to distinct hierarchies of good reasons. The clearest distinctions between them exist fairly far down these hierarchies. The rules of procedure for the U.S. House of Representatives, for example, can be supported by good reasons specific to its institutional discourse. Political discourse within the House draws on such institutional discourse and takes on its effective political meaning within its context.

At levels of argument higher up a hierarchy of good reasons, however, clear distinctions between the domains of domestic institutional discourse are more difficult to make. At levels of argument that approach

the values grounding institutions as institutions of a specific political community, there is always present the possibility that arguments in one domain of institutional discourse can draw upon, make use of, and effect the the good reasons of other domains of institutional discourse. Thus, at some level of argument, good reasons supporting rules of procedure in the House and the rules of procedure of the federal courts are similar if not the same. They are similar because they support institutions thought to be consistent in some sense(s) with the values of the political community of which they are a part.

Within domestic political orders politicians generally recognize that arguments which may appear to be confined to one domain of institutional discourse might be reformulated in terms of subsuming good reasons, good reasons higher up a hierarchy of good reasons, in order to bring them within the scope of another domain of institutional discourse. This kind of rhetorical move can be used to transform the debate on a given political issue.

The recognition that domains of institutional discourse other than those obviously relevant to a political situation can be invoked in political discourse, as has been argued above, serves as a constraint on the invention of political discourse. The caution that domestic politicians take in defining proposed courses of action in order to avoid the re-definition and discussion of them in terms of subsuming good reasons is not only evidence of the existence of domains of institutional discourse but also an indication of their political importance.

To invoke the web metaphor of Chapter Three, within domestic political orders political discourse has woven a very densely interconnected

web of good reasons, value, and action as institutional discourse. Some regions of the web, those corresponding to the domains of institutional discourse, are very densely interwoven, very densely interconnected. In the domestic case these regions are also very densely interconnected with one another, especially as argument approaches the value-laden center of the web. To propose action, as we have suggested, is to become entangled in the web and to face the problem of restoring it with the invention of political discourse. Within the very densely woven web of domestic institutional discourse, becoming entangled may disturb very many different regions of the web at a variety of levels of argument. Consequently, political argument ranging over many regions and levels of the web may be required to make the web whole again and clear the way for action.

Together with the constraints placed on invention by institutional rules, the complexity of restoring a complex web of meaning serves as a strong constraint on invention. It is just because the problem of restoring the web of domestic institutional discourse is so complex that proposed courses of action are often framed in such a way as to disturb as little of the web as possible, a fact that can account for the incremental nature of much political decision-making.⁵

What it means then to say that the domains of domestic institutional discourse are "more distinct" from those of international politics is that the domains of international institutional discourse are not as interconnected with one another as are the domains of domestic institutional discourse. While domains of international institutional discourse may be very densely

⁵ This is another way to make the point made by Braybrooke and Lindblom's notion of "disjointed incrementalism" ([1963] 1969).

interwoven within themselves, there is not the dense network of interconnections *between* domains that characterizes the web of domestic institutional discourse. In other words, the relationship between hierarchies of good reasons given expression by the domains of international institutional discourse is not as well articulated as similar relationships within domestic political orders. Thus, it is possible for the good reasons of 'international law', or 'diplomacy' to be excluded by the good reasons of 'national interest' or 'sovereignty'.

The distinction between domains of international institutional discourse is, it must be emphasized, a distinction more of meanings than of words or terms alone. The term "international law," for example, turns up in much international political discourse, but with an effective political meaning that depends on the domain of institutional discourse within which it is used. If the language of 'national interest' is being used, "international law" has a meaning distinct from what it has if the language of 'international law' is being used. The term can be used also to express both meanings simultaneously. Exactly what meaning a term has within the context of a political situation is a matter that an agent, based on his own interpretation of the situation, must decide. It is an interpretation that opposing agents will attempt to influence in their creation of political discourse via their rhetorical strategy. It is for this reason that diplomatic language is, as Raymond Cohen notes, characterized by "non-redundancy." "Ideally a diplomatic communication should say neither too much nor too little because every word, nuance and omission will be meticulously studied for any possible shade of meaning" (Cohen 1981, 32). Such scrutiny is necessary just because it is recognized that the terms of diplomatic

communications can have different meanings within different domains of international institutional discourse.

Constraints on International Political Discourse

An important consequence of the fact that the vocabularies of inter-subjective meanings of international politics are less distinct from those of domestic politics is that the institutional discourse of states does not serve as a constraint on international political discourse in the strong sense discussed in Chapter Three. The reason that the institutional discourse of states does not serve as a strong constraint is, again to put it crudely, that it is recognized to give expression and refer to values of a different character than those expressed and referred to in domestic institutional discourse. The different "character" of the values again amounts to the distinction between national and international values. The former are constitutive of distinct political communities, while the latter are constitutive of a political community of distinct political communities, and it is the recognition of this distinction itself which is partly constitutive of international politics.

It was argued in Chapter Three that institutional discourse serves as a strong constraint on political discourse because it both "contains" and expresses good reasons for institutional action which must be incorporated into political discourse in order to motivate institutional action in the face of a particular exigence. What makes institutional discourse a strong constraint in a domestic context is the recognition by political actors that the good reasons it expresses are, if only implicitly and potentially on many occasions, related to (and by being related to expressive of) the constitutive values of a community. To ignore the good reasons of institutional

discourse in a political discourse that seeks support for a proposed course of action is thus tantamount to ignoring the values of the community on which they depend and is, therefore accusing oneself of ignoring the values of the community.

International institutional discourse also contains and expresses good reasons for institutional action which must be incorporated into political discourse in order to motivate or justify institutional (state) action. To ignore the good reasons of international institutional discourse is also to call into question the legitimacy of action taken without their support. States generally can't ignore, at least not completely, the good reasons of 'peace', 'war', 'sovereignty', 'international law', 'diplomacy' and so on.

Nevertheless, international values do not always have the trump-like status in international politics that national values have in domestic politics. There is, indeed, a distinction in this regard between the discourse of domestic political orders founded with the idea of fulfilling specific values, and the discourse of a community which is a community because there is no alternative to the community continuing to exist. This distinction is in part, as has been argued above, that the relationship between hierarchies of good reasons given expression by the domains of international institutional discourse are not as well articulated as similar relations within domestic political orders. Beyond this distinction, and the reason for it, is an uncertainty at the normative center of international politics that is itself constitutive of international politics. This uncertainty is a consequence of the idea that states should determine their own purposes, which is the value that underlies the common meanings of international politics--'national interest', 'sovereignty', 'war' in the sense that war is a means of self-help, and

'power' in the sense that it is used for the pursuit of state purposes. Anarchy in this view is not, as it is often held to be, a law of nature from which follows definite structural characteristics of the "system" of international politics, but rather the result of respect for the value of self-determination. Paradoxically, it is the acceptance of this cardinal value that makes acceptance of other values appear to be impossible, because what international politics 'is for' is the freedom of states. Yet, this paradox does not mean that values play little or no role in international politics.

For the moment, the point to be made is that the institutional discourse of states does not, and in international politics as presently constituted cannot, serve as a strong constraint on international political discourse. The institutional discourse of international politics cannot serve as a strong constraint, because its good reasons are not expressive of values constitutive of the community of states because its central value restricts the establishment of universal values constitutive of the community.

This conclusion does not mean, however, that there are no constraints on the political discourse of states, but only that they are of the relatively weak variety described in Chapter Two. The constraints that the domains of the institutional discourse of states imposed on international political discourse are much like the constraints imposed on domestic political discourse by issue-rhetorics. They are open, dynamic and malleable by the application of rhetoric in the face of a particular exigence. Condemnation of state action on the basis of the good reasons of 'international law', for example, can be rebutted by appeals to 'national interest'. The good reasons of 'diplomacy' can be made to yield to those of state 'power'. The good reasons of 'war' can be made to displace those of

'peace'. In short, the good reasons of each domain of the institutional discourse of states can potentially be linked to the good reasons of a states' own purposes; not at all times, in all cases or with complete impunity, but with the imaginative construction of discourse, often.

It is as a consequence of the weak constraints on international political discourse that there is a great space for the play of rhetoric in international politics. This is the condition that Coral Bell points to when she writes that "words are political acts for high policy makers and ambiguities among their necessary weapons" (Bell 1977, 2). Beyond words are the ways in which statesmen use words to create political reality to motivate action through the deployment of rhetorical and the use of rhetorical strategy. The room for the play of rhetoric in international politics has, as will be argued below, important consequences for the nature of international politics.

RHETORICAL REGIME

Because international political discourse is not as strongly constrained as domestic political discourse is, there is always present the possibility that states can justify a wide range of actions in the face of a particular exigence. It is possible, for example, for a state to justify intervention in the domestic politics of another state, even though such action violates accepted norms of international law, in terms of 'national interest.' Such justification is possible, in the view outlined above, because 'national interest' has few well-articulated and understood connections to 'international law in terms of international value. Indeed 'national interest' arguments are in many cases defined in opposition to 'international law.' Any contradictions that do

appear between the discourse of one domain and the other may be transformed for the moment by the application of rhetoric, because the process of rhetorical invention is not, as noted above, tightly constrained by a dense web of international institutional discourse.

That states can potentially justify a wide range of actions results in uncertainty about what they may do in the future. In a domestic political order, by contrast, the actions of institutions are predictable to a greater degree than are the actions of states. The potential actions of domestic institutions are predictable because the connections between the good reasons of institutional discourse, institutional rules and value are understood well enough that actors can estimate within a range of certainty possible courses of institutional action in the face of a particular exigence. Such relative certainty doesn't obtain in international politics. Uncertainty is an important political problem in international politics, a problem to which rhetorical regimes are a necessary, if perhaps partial, response.⁶

The Problem of Uncertainty in International Relations

The problems of international politics, like the problems of all politics, are about what action should be taken in the future. Future action is a problem because social life is marked by contingency. Uncertainty about the future is a particular political problem for states.

States can be likened to sailing ships attempting to navigate through narrow straits in thick fog without the use of radio or radar. Both fog and future are equally opaque. The shape of the channel and the position of the ship may be known; the great danger is of collision with other ships similarly edging their way through the mist. In this sort of situation the problem of the ships' officers is twofold: to plot a safe course for

⁶ Reification of the notion rhetorical regime isn't intended here. To say that they are necessary is not to imply they exist, but merely to refer to the bundle of functions they perform that appear to be necessary to international order.

their own vessel and to estimate the probable course of other ships out there in the fog. Whether a collision is to occur or to be avoided depends on all sides correctly estimating the relative position and movement of ships with respect to each other. In navigation, as international relations, it takes two to collide. In Dr. Kissinger's words: "What endangers international peace and security is not determined by the unilateral declaration of the country going to war, but also the reactions of the other members of the system." (Cohen 1981, 15)

The problem of uncertainty in international politics, then, is the problem of states discovering means to communicate "reliable information about *intended future courses of action*. Only on the basis of such anticipations, which are less than knowledge but which can substitute for it in the making of decisions, can collision be avoided and coordinated behavior achieved" (Cohen 1981, 15: emphasis in original).

How the problem of communicating reliable information about intended future courses of action is solved by states has been explained in a number of ways. One general line of explanation has been to suggest that uncertainty is mitigated by rules of some kind, either in the form of "rules of the game" or "international regimes" which apply to specific issue areas of international politics. Both the rules of the game and international regimes are held to work in much the same way. Both provide a means by which states can establish a logic of mutually reliable expectations that permit "glimmerings of certainty to be projected onto an otherwise impenetrable future so that decisions which depend on the intentions of others can be taken with at least minimal confidence" (Cohen 1981, 16).

In the case of the rules of the game, rules are said to "perform the same function as norms in domestic society; they indicate the limits of permissible conduct, thereby permitting conflict to be contained, and act as guidelines for desirable behavior thereby facilitating active cooperation" (Cohen 1981, 6). In Cohen's formulation, the rules of the game facilitate

active cooperation in a number of ways, each of which gives expression to specific varieties of reliable expectations. The rules of the game, for example, define "boundaries" beyond which the actions of states are expected not to cross. They serve as "signposts" "pointing toward some predetermined pattern of behavior which it is agreed will come into effect in certain defined circumstances," such as the rules of the road at sea (Cohen 1981, 17). Rules may also serve a "timetable" function, providing a routinization of contacts between one state and another, limiting possible misinterpretations of state action. The rules also sometime serve as "tripwires" indicating, by being violated, that the boundaries of permissible conduct are being approached or are about to be exceeded.

The coordination of mutual expectations is also a part of the commonly cited definition of international regimes as "norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations" (Krasner 1983, 2). While the logic of the rules of the game might be applied to any issue area, international regimes are held to be fairly specific solutions to the coordination of state behavior in one or a few clearly related issue areas, such as international finance, monetary relations, arms control, the use of space or the deep sea bed. International regimes are also often thought about as artifacts of international politics; that is, they come into existence not by the tacit means through which the rules of the game evolve, but rather by carefully calculated bilateral or multilateral negotiations. Nevertheless, the logic of mutually reliable expectations by which international regimes function is much the same as that of the rules of the game, and indeed, regimes can easily be thought of as part of or an extension of them.

As was explained in Chapter One, the rules of the game and international regimes figure heavily in multi-centric explanations of international order as the mechanism of international order. What international political order is in this view is the working of the rules of the game or international regimes. In that rules or regimes are held to be mechanisms of international order, because they are solutions to the problem of uncertainty, there is a direct relationship between the problem of uncertainty and the problem of international order. Solving the former, in the common multi-centric view, amounts to solving the latter.

The rules of the game and international regimes as explanations of international order have not been traditionally associated with realist or state-centric conceptions of the nature of international politics. Indeed, the multi-centric conception of international politics, with which the explanations have associated, contradict realism on many important points. It might appear, then, that the realist mechanism of international order, the balance of power, is necessarily incompatible with rules and/or regimes conceived of as mechanisms of international political order. This is not, however, necessarily the case.

If the hard-core realist assumptions about the nature of international politics are laid aside for the sake of argument, it is not difficult to see the balance of power as a kind of international regime governed by norms, rules and decision-making procedures specific to it—a “power regime.” Alternatively, it is possible to see the balance of power as a part of the game of international politics sustained rules — a “power game.” Very similar to both of these possible conceptions is the “traditionalist” view that sees the balance of power as an element of a concert of powers. As Coral Bell has

written, a "balance of power may be regarded as a sort of force of history that tends to assert itself automatically in any system of independent sovereignties. A concert of power, on the contrary, must always be a construction of conscious statecraft" (1977, 25). The tendency of much contemporary academic theory of international relations (that produced since 1945) has been to see the balance of power as a kind of historical force—more than this, a law of history—or as an essentially spontaneous characteristic of an anarchical political system. Less emphasis has been placed on the balance of power as a construction of conscious statecraft.

The reason for the lack of attention to the balance of power as an element of a concert of powers is that it implies the existence of something like Bull's society of states or an international society. According to Bull, a society of states "exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and values, forms a society in the sense that they conceive of themselves to be bound by a set of common rules with one another and share in the working of common institutions (1977, 13). It was Castlereigh, the leading English theorist of the great European concert of powers, who noted that "in a concert system the powers feel a common duty as well as a common interest" (Bell 1977, 25). A duty grounded in a society of states is a society even if they share only the minimal international values mentioned above.

Because the notion of international society implied by a concert of powers inevitably raises the problem of the role of value in international politics, it was incompatible with the desire for a "scientific" theory of international politics widely expressed as a consequence of the so-called

behavioral revolution in American political science.⁷ It is also, by no means, unreasonable to suggest that the emphasis on the balance of power as an historical or social-scientific law was partly the consequence of the circumstances of the post-war international politics dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union. A conflict characterized by the kind of profound ideological differences said to separate the superpowers is not one which admits a concert of power defined by a sense of duty rooted in shared values. Social-scientific laws, because they exclude the consideration of value by definition, could serve to justify the necessity of a balance of power without raising the issue of what values states might have in common.

In any case, it is at least conceivable to bring the notion of the balance of power within the scope of rules-regime mechanisms of international order and, in turn, to see it as an aspect of the problem of uncertainty in international politics. A power regime or a power game which mitigates uncertainty about the use of force in international politics is not excluded by the logic of mutually reliable expectations even though the overarching theoretical conception of international politics with which the balance of power as an explanation of international political order has been traditionally associated has appeared to do so.

The idea that something like the rules of the game and/or international regimes contribute to the maintenance of international order by serving as solutions to the problem of uncertainty is a compelling, almost elegant, one. It is, however, as an explanation of international order, incomplete. It is incomplete because it fails to take into account what we

⁷ The well known volume *Contending Approaches to International Relations*, published in 1968, expressed this desire as well as the points of conflict between "traditionalist realists" and "scientific realists."

have discussed in previous chapters as the rhetorical nature of politics and political institutions.

As was argued in Chapter Three, rules in politics, both institutional rules, laws and implicit or tacit rules, are in essence only tokens for the outcome of past political arguments about the goodness of possible courses of action. Rules are in this sense artifacts of past political discourse in attempts to define and/or clarify the values of a political community. Rules are always grounded in and have political meaning within the context of such arguments fixed as institutional discourse. It follows that some account of the institutional discourse that grounds the rules of the game or the rules, norms, and decision-making procedures of international regimes, might provide the starting point for a fuller account of rules and regimes as mechanisms of international order. There is, however, a sense in which considering the rules of international politics as artifacts of the institutional discourse undermines the assertion that rules work by mitigating uncertainty and bring into question the conclusion that they can serve as reliable mechanisms of international order.

Part of the appeal of the rules-regime mechanism of international order is that rules and regimes can be imagined to be static. Cohen, for example, portrays rules as terrain features, "landmarks in an otherwise featureless landscape" that are able to work as points of reference because they are fixed (1981, 155). Rules as artifacts of political discourse are not static in this sense. They are dynamic and potentially changeable even if for the moment unchanged. If they resemble terrain features at all, they are like sand dunes, always recognizable as such, but subject to erosion, disappearance or complete transformation.

Rules as artifacts of political discourse are dynamic because they are tokens for past political discourse the outcomes of which have been distilled into rules that restrain, encourage, or require action. As long as good reasons offered for a course of action are fixed in the form of institutional discourse and can be recalled in present or future circumstances, or as long as reasons can be invented to fit new circumstances, rules are always subject to interpretive scrutiny. It can always be argued that a rule does not apply in present circumstances. It may be argued that a rule is outmoded or obscure, in that it no longer serves the purpose for which it was once meant. There may be recognized exceptions to rules that apply in certain circumstances that must be identified in argument. To advance any one of these or similar arguments is to bring the status of rules as landmarks into question, and all are obviously characteristic of much political argument.

Within domestic political orders, there are strong constraints, as we have seen, that restrain argument about the applicability of rules by complicating the process of invention. There are also weaker constraints in the form of issue-rhetorics as described in Chapter Two. Yet, neither of these constraints is always sufficient to completely restrain political argument that attempts to reinterpret rules in the face of an exigence. Some kind of rhetorical challenge to rules is always possible, if not always successful. The consequence of this condition is that there is always a range of uncertainty about what the rules really say and, therefore, about what the rules actually are.

As was suggested in the last section, rules are likely to be especially uncertain in the context of international politics because the strong constraints on political discourse present in domestic political orders is

absent. Because there is a greater room for the play of rhetoric in international political discourse, it is to be expected that rules in international politics are to be subject to a relatively wider range of rhetorical reinterpretations and manipulations. Rules as artifacts of political discourse would appear to be inherently susceptible to rhetorical manipulation and, as a consequence, unable to mitigate uncertainty by providing mutually reliable expectations. Where a rule can have a range of potential meanings, many actions may be possible because many actions might be permissible or, more importantly in our view, be made to seem permissible by argument.

If rules of the kind that are important to international politics are inherently ambiguous, there is no reason to suggest that they are not important or effective. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is not ineffective or politically unimportant because it is vague when applied in certain contexts or subject to interpretation. Similarly the international norm of non-intervention is not unimportant solely because many sets of exceptions can be and have been made to it. What is suggested by the foregoing analysis is only that it is necessary to revise our ideas about how rules work or function in international politics. It is necessary to recognize that rules in international politics function in the same way as they do in domestic politics—as tokens of past political arguments that have staked out ranges of permissible courses of action. In order to fully appreciate the necessity of this revision in the conceptualization of international rules, and to understand why it counts as a revision, we must at last introduce the concept of rhetorical regime.

The "Logic" of Rhetorical Regime

It has been seen in this chapter that the international values that constitute international politics are not such that the institutional discourse of states can serve as a strong constraint on international political discourse. A consequence of this condition is that there is a greater room for the play of rhetoric in international politics and therefore the possibility that states can justify a wide range of actions consistent with the good reason of international politics. This potential leads, in turn, to uncertainty about the courses of action a state might take in future. If rules in the form of the rules of the game or international regimes or more general power regimes are significant to rhetorical manipulation, it would appear that the problem of uncertainty—in so far as the problem of uncertainty is related to international order—is a problem in international politics without solution.

The difficulty with the conclusion that the problem of uncertainty in international politics is insoluble is, of course, that states and their political leaderships do appear to deal with it successfully much of the time. As noted in Chapter One, international politics is orderly much of the time. Our problem then is to suggest what mechanism, consistent with the view of politics advanced in the foregoing chapters, works to mitigate uncertainty in international relations.

The solution to be offered here is that the problem of uncertainty in international politics is solved by rhetorical regime, literally, a rhetorical order. In essence, rhetorical regimes are the recurring rhetorical practices of states in the conduct of their relations with one another. Rhetorical regimes are solutions to the problems of uncertainty because they serve to organize the institutional discourse of specific inter-state relationships in much the

same way that a rhetoric of common values organizes the institutional discourse of domestic political communities. To understand how rhetorical regimes organize the institutional discourse of states, it will be useful once again to return to the discourse as web metaphor of Chapter Three.

The relationship of institutional discourse and political discourse can be likened to a spider's web. The values of a political community given expression by its constitutive common meanings lay at the center of the web, surrounded by subordinate good reasons. At the edge of the web are the good reasons of everyday institutional action. The web, as suggested above, is very densely interconnected in regions associated with certain institutions, less densely interconnected in regions associated with others. To propose institutional action is to become entangled in the web of good reasons and to necessitate repairing it in order to act. It is political discourse that repairs the web, spinning together again value and reason into a whole that allows for social action.

Institutional discourse serves as a map of the web, a guide to its conceptual complexity, and so also as a guide to the complex task of rhetorical invention within a given institutional context. Institutional discourse serves as a map of the relationship of good reasons, subsuming good reasons and value, because it consists of the arguments that have in the past been used successfully to motivate institutional action. The rhetoric of institutional discourse forms a distinct rhetorical canon that is also drawn upon in the invention of political discourse. Because there is a necessary interdependence of value and rhetoric, the rhetorical canons of institutional discourse are not only guides to invention, but are expressive of the constitutive values of a political community as expressed in constitutive

common meanings. The rhetorical canons of institutional discourse are, in other words, rhetorics of common values that both express and simultaneously shape them. A consequence of this condition is that rhetorics of common values organize or order domestic institutional discourse and are strong constraints on the invention of domestic political discourse, and such constraints make domestic politics relatively predictable and give it a comprehensible continuity.

As has been argued in this chapter, the institutional discourse of states is not, and because of the nature of international values cannot be, the same kind of complex interconnected whole that domestic institutional discourse is. While the institutional discourse of states is well developed within distinct domains associated with its constitutive common meanings, it is not related to the kind of value-laden "center" that exists in domestic politics. The cardinal international value—that states should determine their own purposes—has restricted the construction of such a center of international politics. It is this condition that is mistaken for what is commonly called anarchy. On the view advanced here, however, the observation (or complaint) that international politics lack authoritative institutions or means for reconciling inter-state conflict, means only that there are no universal common values or institutional purposes to authorize such settlements.

The absence of universal common values in international politics does not, however, remove the need of common values. Common values are needed in international politics because without them politics is an unpredictable, unstable, and dangerous business. Without the constraints on political discourse that common values provide, almost any act might be

justified and the world might very well come to be a war of all against all. It is for this reason that states seek out common values, or put more conventionally, mutual interests in their relations with one another. Such agreements may take the traditional form of treaties or other written agreements or of tacit understandings. It is mutual interest that in the practice of international politics fills in the empty normative center of international institutional discourse. It is the development of mutual interest that gives particular inter-state relationships predictability and recognizable continuity.

Because there is an unavoidable interdependence of rhetoric and value, the rhetorical practices by which the mutual interests of states are expressed, and with which they attempt to justify to one another that their actions fall within the scope of particular mutual interests, develop over time into rhetorical regimes—a rhetorical order—much like the issue rhetorics and rhetorical canons of domestic politics. Like the issue rhetorics and rhetorical canons of domestic politics, rhetorical regimes are constraints on invention and provide a convenient means of recognizing whether an action, by the language used to justify it, falls within the scope of mutual interests. These constraints are stronger than the weak constraints of issue rhetorics, yet weaker than the strong constraints imposed by the rhetorical conventions of the institutional discourse of long-standing domestic political orders. Nevertheless, rhetorical regimes are effective constraints, and to violate them is to call into question adherence to the mutual interests that order specific interstate relationships.

As is the case in domestic politics, there is a “play” in rhetorical regimes, space for the working of rhetoric and attempts to redefine or clarify

mutual interests in a way that allows for action in the face of a particular exigence. Just as no domestic constitution or law can anticipate every contingency of social life, so no inter-state agreement on mutual interests can anticipate every contingency of international politics. Political argument about what kind of actions fall within the scope of particular mutual interests is essential to preserving them, essential, in the language of Chapter Two, to extending the range of acceptable political outcomes. Whatever rules of the game or international regimes may come to be accepted are grounded in international political discourse about what the mutual interests that constitute a given inter-state relationship are. As they have an effect in specific inter-state relationships, the rules of the game and/or international regimes are tokens of the settlement of such arguments.

Because rhetorical regimes embody rhetorical practices and intersubjective meanings expressive of mutual interests they are solutions to the problem of uncertainty in international relations. If there is a recognized, limited range of means by which state action can be justified, then there is a limit on the range of state action, at least as long as states are intent on preserving a politics of common interests. In a world of states that balance their own purposes against the values that they are willing to hold in common with other states, there is of course no absolute certainty that mutual interests will endure. Yet, mutual interests do endure, and as long as they do they are characterized by the operations of rhetorical regimes. In that rhetorical regimes mitigate uncertainty by ordering the institutional discourse of specific inter-state relationships, thereby ordering the relationship, it can be said that they serve as effective mechanisms of international political order.

Expectations conveyed by rhetorical regimes are of particular importance in the context of international crisis, when uncertainty about the intentions of an adversary may be greatest. As Henry Kissinger has remarked:

A crisis does not always appear to a policy maker as a series of dramatic events. Usually it imposes itself as an exhausting agenda of petty chores demanding both concentration and endurance. One is forced to react to scraps of information in very limited spans of time; longing for full knowledge, one must chart a clear route through the murk of unknowing. Operationally, a crisis resolves itself into minutiae that must be attended to with painstaking care, which includes the need to ensure that all parties work from the same body of information. (Kissinger 1982, 451)

Expectations formed about the potential behavior of an adversary prior to the advent of a crisis, as well as knowledge of potential limits on the course of action he may take, are critical under such circumstance. Continuities with past behavior are perceived as particularly reliable scraps of information and important clues to the intention and will of the other.

To suggest that rhetorical regimes function as mechanisms of international political order is also to suggest how it is that, as defined above, the creation and continuation of international political discourse orders international politics. Without the creation and continuation of international political discourse, it would be impossible for rhetorical regimes to be expressive of the values that states hold in common to come into existence or evolve. International political discourse is essential to orderly international relations because it is the primary means by which states come to understand, through the process of political argument, the full effective political meaning of the values they hold in common.

RHETORICAL REGIME AS AN ANALYTICAL CONCEPT

If the notion of rhetorical regime is to have value as an analytical concept, it is necessary to be more specific about the characteristics of rhetorical regime than has been the foregoing explication of its "logic." Bearing this in mind, rhetorical regime can be more fully defined by a number of essential characteristics.

First, rhetorical regimes are specific to and have an effect within the context of specific *inter-state*, relationships. In other words, a rhetorical regime may characterize the U.S.-Soviet relationship, Japanese-Soviet relations, the German-Soviet relationship, and so on. In international politics it is also sensible, however, to speak of non-state institutional relationships. Thus, one can speak of rhetorical regimes in the context of NATO-Warsaw Pact relations, the U.S.-U.N. relationship, and similar multilateral relationships.

Second, rhetorical regimes shape the effective political meaning of what are spoken of as "universal" elements of international institutional discourse within the context of specific inter-state relationships. As noted above, rhetorical regimes become expressive of the interests that states hold in common and which "fill-in" the absent center of the web of the institutional discourse of states. It is to this center of mutual interests that the domains of international institutional discourse associated with the constitutive common meanings of international politics are ultimately related. Thus, the language of 'national interest' and 'international law' may take on a certain range of effective political meanings within the context of U.S.-Soviet relations and another within the context of U.S.-U.K. relations.

Third, to invoke the notion of political situation described in Chapter Two, the rhetorical practices and inter-subjective meanings that comprise rhetorical regimes often develop in response to a "controlling exigence," an exigence that dominates the relationship and serves as an organizing principle in the creation of political discourse and which specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected in order to resolve the exigence. In the case of U.S.-Soviet relations, for example, a good case can be made that its controlling exigence has been the ideological enmity between the powers and their possession of nuclear weapons systems capable of destroying the other. Certainly much of the international political discourse of the U.S. and the Soviet Union has been aimed at modifying the latter part of this controlling exigence.

Fourth, the inter-subjective language and rhetorical practices of rhetorical regimes are "present," that is, understood as rhetorical regimes by a wide variety of audiences and are subject to interpretation by them. An audience is those persons capable of being influenced by international political discourse and capable of being mediators of change to resolve a given exigence. Within any state there are a number of such audiences distinguished by the kind of change they can bring. In the United States, for example, there are the President, his advisors, the military establishment that goes by the nickname of "the Pentagon," the media, the voting public or "the people," the Congress (House and Senate), the leadership of the political parties, academic analysts, and a number of others. Each is capable by some action of modifying an international exigence, and international political discourse might potentially address, and often does, specifically address one

or more of them.⁸ Some audiences can, of course, do more to modify an exigence more directly and immediately than are others and, therefore, may be relatively more important than others. Yet, in states like the United States, in their political complexity where decision-making authority is divided, a number of different audiences may be important.

Because international political discourse may be aimed at a variety of audiences within a state (or other international institution), the analysis of rhetorical regime must take into consideration the possibility that rhetorical regimes develop not only as a consequence of formal inter-state communications between "obvious" foreign policy decision-makers, but also as a consequence of less formal communications between states. Such informal communications might be media coverage of an inter-state relationship, academic analysis of the relationship, editorial opinion, and so on. Even if audiences capable of taking relatively more direct action to modify an exigence are privy to privileged communications, they are not necessarily unaffected by discourse aimed at other audiences for what may seem to be separate purposes.

A fifth, but not necessarily always present, characteristic of rhetorical regime is that rhetorical regimes, like issues in domestic political discourse, often come to have nicknames which serve as a shorthand reference to the existence and nature of specific interstate relationships; e.g. '*Ostpolitik*', '*détente*', 'the special relationship', 'the good neighbor policy', 'the open door', 'cold war', 'human rights', etc. While not all rhetorical regimes come to be nicknamed, the common use of a nickname to describe the tenor of a

⁸ In the 1970s, for example, the Soviet Union made a concerted effort to represent its policies and view to American academics in the hope that they would eventually be in a position to influence U.S. foreign policy making. See Schwartz (1978) for an account.

specific interstate relationship often identifies the emergence of a rhetorical regime, because it evidences the need to have a name for current circumstances descriptive of the current character of an inter-state relationship.

Having further defined rhetorical regime in terms of its more important characteristics, it is now possible to turn to the problem of how it is possible to identify a rhetorical regime and to demonstrate its operation as a mechanism of international political order.

The primary objects of study with which a rhetorical regime analysis of international politics is concerned is international political discourse (the discourse that states invent to justify or explain their actions to one another) and international institutional discourse (the past international political discourse that is fixed in some fashion and that motivated or justified state action in the past). More specifically, a rhetorical regime analysis is concerned with the political and institutional discourse that transpires between specific states; e.g. the United States and the Soviet Union. What is to be looked for are recurrent rhetorical practices and inter-subjective meanings that appear to be unique to a specific inter-state relationship as they are employed to justify or motivate state action.

To examine the whole of the political discourse that characterizes an inter-state relationship might appear to be an overwhelming, if not impossible, task, but it can be much simplified by adopting the unit of analysis suggested in Chapter Two: the political situation. A political situation, to recall, is "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence that can be completely or partly removed if discourse introduced into the situation can so constrain human

decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" (Bitzer 1968, 6).

There are three components of any political situation: an exigence, an audience, and a set of constraints. An exigence is simply something other than it should be in the relations between states or other international actors. The audience is assumed to be those persons most capable of directly and immediately taking action to modify an exigence and, consequently, those at whom the most significant international political discourse is addressed. Finally, there are constraints in any political situation "which are part of the situation because they have the power to constrain an action needed to modify an exigence" (Bitzer 1968, 8). There are in general two classes of constraints in any political situation. The first are those that are imminent "in" a situation. That the Soviet Union has the border it does, for example, obviously constrains the range of actions it can take in international politics. The fact that nuclear weapons exist and can be manufactured is a similar constraint on action. The second class of constraints are those which can be managed or organized by an agent in inventing a discourse.

The operation of a rhetorical regime can be studied, then, by examining the political discourse of states created in the context of various political situations, that is, in the face of various exigencies within a particular inter-state relationship. The exigencies of political situations are in general not difficult to identify. States clearly draw the attention of other states to exigencies in their relationship, sometimes in the form of formal diplomatic protests, sometimes in less formal but no less important complaints, public and private. Some exigencies are obviously more urgent than others. The launching of Sputnik, the overflight of the Soviet Union by

American U-2 reconnaissance planes, the location of Soviet missiles in Cuba, the U.S. mining of Haiphong Harbor during the Vietnamese War all clearly marked exigencies of great or potentially great urgency.

The identification of an exigence, because an exigence requires the actions of specific agents to bring about its resolution, also serves to identify the audience or audiences at which political discourse intended to modify the exigence is aimed. The identification of an audience, in turn, allows one to identify the most significant political and institutional discourse in the context of a given political situation—significant precisely because it is intended to persuade those agents most capable of modifying the exigence. Because there is in the context of many political situations a flood of discourse aimed at a variety of audiences, the identification of the most significant audience(s) simplifies greatly the problem of analysis: attention can be directed to that discourse aimed at those most capable of modifying a given exigence. As suggested above, where decision-making responsibility is divided, as between the U.S. Senate and the President for example, attention may have to be focused on separate discourses aimed at different audiences, or on the impact of a single line of discourse on a wide variety of audiences.

Of course it may not be possible, as has always been the case for similar varieties of analysis, to have direct access to the arguments made to the most significant audiences in a given political situation. In such circumstances a knowledge of the constraints present in a situation may allow the inference of what arguments framed for a particular audience might have been. In the case of arms limitation talks, for example, a constraint present in the situation is the capability of the weapons systems possessed by both sides. Although the subject matter of such negotiations may be secret, it is no leap

of faith to infer the issues under discussions relative to capabilities of existing weapons systems and with them the kinds of arguments that might be offered. One can, in effect, place oneself in the position of those facing the task of making arguments to the other side.

Inference of the topics or issues of international political discourse from constraints present in a situation, although a familiar mode of "traditionalist" analysis of international relations and foreign policy, cannot in the case of rhetorical regime analysis substitute for first-hand knowledge of arguments made in the context of a given political situation. Because a rhetorical regime analysis concentrates on the use and effects of conventional rhetorical practices, it is obviously necessary to have at hand the actual texts of arguments, documents that result from such arguments or, at least, detailed first-hand reporting of arguments offered in the context of a particular exigence. In a case where it is possible to assume the existence and operation of a particular rhetorical regime, however, it may be possible to predict with relative certainty the range of possible arguments to motivate action in a given context. Even in such cases, however, the process of invention as a creative act cannot be accounted for in the absence of relevant documentary materials.

If it is accepted that the political situation as a unit of analysis can be employed to direct attention to significant international political and international institutional discourse as primary objects of study, it is possible to identify a rhetorical regime and its operation if it can be shown:

1. That in the context of a specific inter-state relationship, political discourse that attempts to justify or motivate action employs rhetorical practice more or less unique to it. On the definition of

rhetorical regime offered above, it is obviously necessary to demonstrate this kind of continuity in the construction of international political discourse;

2. That the rhetorical practices and inter-subjective meanings have been used in discourse that has successfully worked to mitigate various exigencies in the context of a specific inter-state relationship. Not only must there be a continuity in the use of various rhetorical practices, they must come to be identified with the successful management of a relationship;

3. That, within the context of a specific inter-state relationship over time attempts to justify or motivate the action of other(s) with political discourse relies for its effect on the rhetorical practices and inter-subjective meanings defined above;

4. That, within the context of a specific inter-state relationship, failure to employ the rhetorical practice and inter-subjective meanings identified above leads to or suggests a change in the character of the relationship.

It is 3 and 4 which are central to determining the operation of a rhetorical regime, because the "logic" of rhetorical regime as a mechanism of international order depends on the rhetorical conventions that constitute a regime being used often enough so that they allow anticipation of the range of actions states may take in future. The abandonment of their use immediately raises questions about whether the behavior of the other can be predicted within reasons.

Having now outlined the logic that underlies rhetorical regime as a mechanism of international order, and the way in which it can be employed as an analytical concept, we shall now turn to a description of a rhetorical regime in action: U.S.-Soviet détente in the period 1969-1980.

CHAPTER VI

DÉTENTE AS A RHETORICAL REGIME

It is the task of this and the following chapter to attempt to demonstrate more fully the plausibility of rhetorical regime as a mechanism of international order by presenting a brief case study of a rhetorical regime in operation. It will be argued that the détente in U.S.-Soviet relations engineered during the Nixon Administration after 1969 and continuing until roughly 1980 was a working, if often strained, rhetorical regime.

At the outset, it is necessary to note that the description of détente and its portrayal as a rhetorical regime which follow are necessarily schematic and limited in scope. The politics and diplomacy of détente were complex, involving not only the United States and the Soviet Union directly, but also the People's Republic of China, all of the major European states, and many so-called Third World nations besides. Up until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which may be considered the bitter end of détente, U.S.-Soviet relations were troubled by dozens of exigencies many of which tested, defined, or extended détente in some fashion. As a policy, détente was pursued to a greater or lesser extent by three separate U.S. presidential administrations. A full-blown account of détente as a rhetorical regime

would, in short, be too cumbersome for present purposes and no attempt at such an account is made below.¹

To demonstrate the mere plausibility of rhetorical regime as a mechanism of international order, it will be sufficient to focus on the major features of U.S.-Soviet détente diplomacy: the controlling exigence of détente and the political situation it defined, the rhetorical practice of détente and its effects in resolving subordinate exigencies in U.S.-Soviet relations, and finally, the degree to which the rhetorical practices of détente served to order the institutional discourse of U.S.-Soviet relations. We turn first, then, to the problem of definition of the political situation of détente.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION OF DÉTENTE

Rhetorical regimes develop over time in the course of states' representations of their actions in the context of a controlling exigence in their relationship. A controlling exigence, to recall, is an exigence that functions as an organizing principle of discourse, specifying the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected in order to significantly modify an exigence (Bitzer 1968, 6-7). Identification of a political situation within the context of which develops a rhetorical regime must begin with the identification of the controlling exigence of an inter-state relationship. This identification is critical to a rhetorical regime analysis because, as suggested in the last chapter, it is possible to identify the political discourse most important to modifying an exigence by identifying the audience capable of modifying it,

¹ For an encyclopedic account of détente see Gartoff (1985). For briefer and more manageable accounts, see Ulam (1983), Bell (1977), Stevenson (1985) and Bowker and Williams (1988). The chapter draws heavily on all four.

which in turn depends on who, within a given political order, can do what about what kind of exigence. The controlling exigence suggests, then, the boundaries of an overarching political situation and the range of audiences important to the conduct of a particular inter-state relationship.

The Controlling Exigence of Détente

In the case of U.S. Soviet détente in the period under consideration there cannot be much doubt that its controlling exigence was the emergence after 1967 of a rough strategic parity between the United States and the Soviet Union.²

By 1969 it was clear to U.S. policy makers, and certainly clear to their counterparts in the Soviet Union, "that the number of Soviet missiles capable of reaching the United States would soon equal that of all American missiles available for retaliation against the Soviet Union, and, if Soviet building programs continued through the Seventies, would come to exceed them" (Kissinger 1974, 124). In such circumstances it was recognized that there could no longer be any doubt that a full-scale nuclear exchange between the superpowers would destroy both of them, if not the whole of humankind. Of course a nuclear war prior to the emergence of parity would have wrought unimaginable destruction on both countries. What is important about the emergence of parity is that it marked a significant psychological turning point in the post-war U.S.-Soviet relationship at which each side had good reasons to alter its appraisal of the other's potential future courses of action.

² "Strategic parity," a notoriously difficult notion to define, is here used to refer to a rough numerical and technological equivalence of U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear forces.

The United States could no longer claim a simple numerical superiority over the Soviets in nuclear weapons (although its technological superiority would be much touted), and on this measure it would appear for the first time "weaker" than the Soviet Union. As the U.S. doctrine of "strategic sufficiency" accepted, a parity or disparity of absolute numbers of weapons would make little difference to the logic of deterrence, but in United States politics the "apparent balance" of forces was important. "The 'apparent balance' or 'perceived balance' as against the real balance must not provide too available a handle for politically ambitious persons out to advance their electoral fortunes by arguing that existing office holders were neglecting the country's security interests" (Bell, 1977, 54-5). This dilemma is well understood by American political leaders who are thus sensitive to the apparent balance of forces as a potential political issue. It is also understood by the Soviet leadership as a source of "sudden and frightening bursts of energy" (as after the launching of the first Sputnik) in which the United States became preoccupied with the Soviet Union as a threat (Ulam 1984, 48). Parity, from the Soviet view, might lead to a spasm of increased U.S. defense spending, as well as a renewed and uncomfortable toughening of its Soviet policy, neither of which would be the Soviet Union's long-term interest.

With the emergence of strategic parity, the Soviet Union could for the first time, and with much self-satisfaction, claim "equality with the United States in at least one significant field of endeavor," the consequence of which would be "equality of rights in word behavior" (Garthoff 1985, 55). For years it had been imagined by the Soviet leadership that an international double standard had been applied to it vis-a-vis the United States. This double standard that allowed "the United States but not the Soviet Union the right

to ply the world's oceans and seas, to have military bases up to the very borders of the other power, and to intervene to support or dispose of rulers of small and medium-size countries . . ." (Garthoff 1985, 55). The outcome of the Cuban Missile crisis remained a painful reminder of the political dilemmas of strategic weakness.

The achievement of strategic parity with the United States provided the Soviet Union with a feeling of greater security and a new international-political self-confidence. As foreign minister Gromyko trumpeted to the 24th Congress of the CPSU in 1971:

Peace and our country's security are today safeguarded more dependably than ever before. We know this and our friends know this. Our adversaries also know this. The Soviet Union's position on the international scene has grown firmer, and our foreign policy enjoys enhanced prestige.

. . . No question of any importance today is resolved without the Soviet Union. If anybody were to try and prove that it is possible to resolve these questions without the Soviet Union he would be regarded as a crank. (Gromyko [1971] 1979, 53; 54)

The danger in this new attitude, from the American point of view, was that in feeling its muscles the Soviet Union would also be tempted to flex them as it had not previously. Such activity might bring the Soviets into unexpected, sudden, and direct conflict with the United States.

Parity, because it might provoke (in the Soviet view) American insecurities, running in the worst case to paranoia, and (in the American view) Soviet confidence, running in the worst case to bravado, was perceived to hold potential dangers for the superpowers. In fact, though rarely said in public by either side, parity brought with it increased fears of the ultimate danger in U.S. Soviet relations: a full-scale nuclear war. Such fears had always been a part of U.S.-Soviet relations, but parity seemed to give them a renewed urgency and importance.

There were also at least two "objective" aspects of strategic parity recognized to a greater or lesser extent by both sides that contributed to the urgency of strategic parity as exigence. First was the general issue of the cost of a new round in the arms race should in future either side seek to gain a decisive strategic superiority over the other. In the United States during the late 1960s military spending had become unpopular. The war in Vietnam suggested to many Americans that the U.S. was "overextended" in its defense commitments and that these needed to be scaled back. "The passionate critique of the war in Vietnam spread into an attack on the defense establishment as a whole. . . . 'Reordering national priorities' from defense to domestic problems was the slogan of the period; it was a euphemism for severe cuts in the defense budget" (Kissinger 1979, 199). In such a domestic political atmosphere it might prove difficult to find support for the development and deployment of a new generation of strategic weapons.³ Avoiding a renewal of an arms race with the Soviet Union in the short term would allow the U.S. room for maneuver until the national political mood changed.⁴

Although there is reason to suspect that the cost issue played less than a major role in the Kremlin's calculations, Kissinger suggests that it was a factor. "The Soviet leaders were especially worried about the impact of a new arms race on the Soviet economy: they therefore gave top priority to arms limitation" (Kissinger 1979, 128). In particular it appears that the

³ As the fate of the B-1 bomber and the MX missile, funded in fits and starts through the late 1970s and early 1980s, suggests. On the politics of the defense budget from American policy makers in the 1970s see Kissinger (1979, 199-215).

⁴ Such a consideration is implied by Kissinger: "The Nixon Administration began essential new programs—the B-1, the Trident, the cruise missile—and laid a foundation on which it was possible to build when the Congressional mood changed in the mid 1970s" (1979, 215)

Soviets did not want to engage in a race with the U.S. for ABM development and deployment, a venture in which the U.S. would have a clear (or so the Soviets supposed) technological advantage, an advantage that would be costly for the Soviets to match (Ryavec 1989, 142).

A second and more important objective aspect of the emergence of parity was that it could be seen as undermining the logic and thus the stability of deterrence. With the advent parity deterrence had become symmetrical. "The United States could threaten the Soviet Union with annihilation, but the Russians could not annihilate America. The threat of massive retaliation which was at the heart of the deterrent strategy was therefore losing its credibility" (Nogee and Panier 1988, 154). Was it really reasonable or "rational" to believe that a Soviet attack on a single American city would bring a massive retaliation? Such a retaliation would only invite a counter-retaliation from the Soviets, resulting in destruction of the United States. An American President facing such a situation might be hard pressed not to retaliate in hopes of preventing or forestalling further attack. As national security advisor, Kissinger was "concerned that as strategic equivalence between the United States and the Soviet Union approached, strategic forces might be used in less than an all out attack" (1979, 216). Paradoxically, then, the emergence of parity might make nuclear war more likely.

Both sides understood as well that technological improvements soon to be made to strategic missiles—the MIRVing of warheads along with significant improvements in their accuracy—could further undermine faith in deterrence. Because the increased accuracy of strategic missiles would make success in a first-strike counter-force attack more likely, it might also

make the possibility of a first strike more likely, a possibility that worried Kissinger: "Strategic forces, at once highly vulnerable and extremely powerful could in a crisis tempt one side to strike first, especially if it feared that it might lose its means of retaliation to a first blow." It was this concern that led Kissinger to favor "a conscious policy of stabilizing the arms race" (Kissinger 1979, 202-3; as quoted in Freedman 1989, 340). The possibility of a first strike might in turn lead to one side's adoption of a "launch on warning" policy, making nuclear war by accident more likely in the event of a superpower crisis. These possibilities lent further urgency to the condition of parity.

The Audiences of Détente

If the audiences of détente are regarded as those persons most capable of modifying the exigence of strategic parity by their actions or by their capacity to motivate institutional actions, then the audiences of détente are clearly identifiable. On the American side the most important audience consisted of President Nixon and National Security Advisor, later also Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger and their respective staffs responsible for the development of Soviet policy. On the Soviet side the most important audience consisted of General Secretary Brezhnev, the Politburo of the CPSU and those staffs attached to Brezhnev, the Politburo and the Central Committee of the CPSU responsible for Soviet U.S. policy. Consequently, the analysis of the rhetorical practice of détente offered below focuses on the discourse most likely to have been taken as indicative of the goals and intentions of the each side's policymaking leadership: statements by their

opposite numbers and/or their authorized representatives on the nature and scope of détente in U.S.-Soviet relations.⁵

THE RHETORICAL PRACTICE OF DÉTENTE

Détente as a condition of U.S.-Soviet relations was symbolically founded during the May 1972 Moscow Summit meeting between President Richard Nixon and CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev. It was at the Moscow Summit that the first major détente documents were signed: the SALT accords, consisting of the ABM treaty and the Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, and the Basic Principles of Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁶ It was during and after the Moscow Summit that the rhetorical regime of détente was founded and developed in the course of U.S. and Soviet characterizations of the content and significance of the détente accords and the Moscow Summit. An analysis of the rhetorical regime of détente must begin with an account of this international discourse.

Only hours after returning from the Moscow Summit, President Nixon traveled to Capitol Hill to address a joint session of the Congress. In

⁵ It may be argued that on the American side audiences other than Nixon, Kissinger and their staffs were important and this is of course correct. The U.S. Senate, in that it must consent to treaties, and the House of Representatives, in that it must approve funds for the implementation of policy (especially expenditures on weapons systems) were both important audiences in the détente period. Senator Henry Jackson led a vocal campaign against the Nixon-Kissinger détente policy and was important in developing détente as a domestic issue in the United States. The full complexity of the audiences on the U.S. side has been ignored here in the interest of keeping the following account to an appropriate length.

⁶ At the Moscow Summit the United States and the Soviet Union also signed an agreement on commercial and economic relations, an agreement on measures to prevent incidents at sea, on cooperation in space and in science and technology, on environmental protection, and also agreed to allow and promote scientific, technical, educational and cultural exchanges between the two nations.

spite of his protestations to the contrary, the timing and situation of the address were obviously intended to convey the importance the Administration wished to attach to the results of the summit. In American politics joint sessions of Congress are special occasions reserved for special addresses such as FDR's request for a declaration of war on Japan in 1941, State of the Union addresses and speeches by foreign heads of state.

In his speech Nixon⁷ declared that the foundation had been laid for a "new relationship between the two most powerful nations in the world" (Nixon 1972, 661). He contrasted the summit with the "well known" pattern of U.S.-Soviet relations during the cold war, an observation that pointed to his view of the importance and significance of the agreements reached. The meeting had been unique, he implied in the whole course of the post-war U.S.-Soviet relationship:

One meeting after another produced a brief euphoric mood—the spirit of Geneva, the spirit of Camp David, the spirit of Vienna, the spirit of Glassboro—but without producing significant issues on the really difficult issues. . . . We sought not to establish a superficial spirit of Moscow, but a solid record of progress on solving the

⁷ The implicit ascription of authorship of the June 1st address to the President himself is, of course, a fiction, a stylistic convenience. It is unclear who among Nixon's speech writers wrote the speech. Neither Nixon nor Kissinger refer to its author in their memoirs. It is of interest, nevertheless, to note Kissinger's observations on the role of White House speech writers while he was in office:

The choice of speech writers always determined the tone and not infrequently the substance of a Presidential speech. The common conception is that speech writers are passive instruments who craft policy into eloquent prose and the policy thought of their principles. On the contrary, the vast majority of them are frustrated principles themselves, who seek to use their privileged position to put over their own ideas. Well aware that a Presidential sentence can be used as a charter for the bureaucracy, they seek to manipulate the final process, rationalizing their efforts as a struggle for the soul of the President. Whatever it was we were struggling over, there were occasionally quite bitter exchanges between my staff and the writers when we saw the mutations they had wrought (Kissinger 1979, 77-8).

This passage implies in an oblique way that Kissinger himself may have had a role in setting the tone of Presidential addresses on foreign policy matters.

difficult issues which for so long have divided our two nations and have divided the world. Reviewing the number and scope of the agreements that emerged, I think we have accomplished that goal. (Nixon 1972, 661)

The Moscow Summit, had gone far, in other words, in establishing the "era of negotiations" that the Nixon Administration had promised in the preceding years.⁸

The President singled out two agreements for special attention and explication in his speech. The first, the "most important" agreement reached at the summit, was the SALT accords. The SALT agreements were also portrayed as unique in the history of U.S.-Soviet relations because they would "limit, for the first time, both offensive and defensive strategic nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union" (Nixon 1972, 662). The agreements were, Nixon maintained, in the interests of both nations and would not harm the security of the U.S. or what he termed its "vital interests" (Nixon 1972, 663). The agreements would also reduce the dangers of the arms race and the fears of a global nuclear war. "Three fifths of all the people alive in the world today," he said, "have spent their whole lifetimes under the shadow of a nuclear war which could be touched off by an arms race among the great powers." By signing the SALT accords the U.S. and the Soviet Unions had "... begun to check the wasteful and dangerous spiral of nuclear arms which has dominated relations between our two countries for a generation. We have begun to reduce the

⁸ In public statements on the goals of its foreign policy, especially in the President's reports on Foreign Policy to the Congress, the Nixon Administration stressed that it aspired to establish an "era of negotiations" in international politics.

level of fear by reducing the causes of fear for our two peoples and the peoples of the world" (Nixon 1972, 661).⁹

Nixon also discussed the Basic Principles, a "landmark declaration" which was to provide "a solid framework for the future development of Soviet-American relations" (Nixon 1972, 664). He continued on to list and characterize the provisions of the document; its recognition that the two superpowers had no alternative as a consequence of the nuclear threat but to coexist peaceably, and its expression of a commitment by both sides to "avoid direct military confrontation and to exercise constructive leadership and restraint with respect to similar conflicts in other parts of the world that could drag the major powers into war" (Nixon 1972, 664). Nixon also emphasized that the Basic Principles disavowed "any intention to create spheres of influence or to conspire against the interests of any other nation . . ." (Nixon 1972, 664). The Basic Principles, he concluded, would serve as a "road map" and that the responsibility of both powers was now to follow it.

Then the President adopted a different tone and theme, one contrasting with the optimism of the first part of the address. It must be remembered, Nixon warned, "that Soviet ideology still proclaims hostility to some of America's most basic values. The Soviet leaders remain committed to that ideology. Like the nation they lead, they are and they will continue to be totally dedicated competitors of the United States of America" (Nixon 1972, 664). Nixon interpreted this fact to have two major consequences.

⁹ It is interesting that in his characterization of the effects of the SALT accords, Nixon did not characterize the condition produced as one of peace, but rather of the reduction of fear. The significance of this portrayal of what the SALT accords accomplished is that it is consistent with the definition of 'peace', to be discussed below, under the rhetorical regime of *détente*.

First, the United States would still have to "maintain our defenses at an adequate level until there is mutual agreement to limit forces." It was, after all, the "time tested policies of vigilance and firmness" that had led to the summit and which were "the only ones that can safely carry us forward to further progress in reaching agreements to reduce the danger of war."

Second, the United States would have to maintain its obligations to existing allies:

... we must stand steadfastly with our NATO partners if negotiations leading to a new détente and a mutual reduction of forces in Europe are to be productive. Maintaining the strength, integrity and steadfastness of our free world alliances is the foundation on which all our other incentives for peace and security in the world must rest. As we seek better relations with those who have been our adversaries, we will not let down our friends and allies around the world. (Nixon 1972, 664)

Nixon concluded his address with a final appeal to the uniqueness of the the achievements of the Moscow Summit and America's role in and responsibility to history, an appeal which the timing and situation of the speech greatly reenforced. The president proclaimed that:

An unparalleled opportunity has been placed in America's hands. Never has there been a time when hope was more justified or when complacency was more dangerous. We have made a good beginning. And because we have begun, history now lays upon us a special obligation to see it through. We can seize this moment or we can lose it; we can make good the opportunity to make good a new structure of peace in the world or we can let it slip away. Together, therefore, let us seize the moment so that our children and the world's children can live free of the fears and hatreds that have been the lot of mankind through the centuries.

Then the historians of some future age will write of the year 1972, not that this was the year that Americanwent up to the summit and then down into the depths of the valley again, but that this was the year when America helped lead the world out of the lowlands of constant war, and on to the high plateau of lasting peace. (Nixon 1972, 666)

Such a conclusion could leave little doubt as to the importance the Nixon Administration attached to the results of the Moscow Summit.

In the months following the Moscow Summit President Nixon's characterization of its importance and the détente accords was repeated and amplified on a number of occasions by National Security Advisor Kissinger, Secretary of State Rogers and other State Department officials. On June 15th Kissinger gave a briefing for 122 members of Congress on the content of the SALT accords. As had Nixon, he portrayed the accords as being in the best interests of the United States and as no threat to the nation's ability to protect itself and its interests. Summing up the course U.S. -Soviet relations had taken in the 1970s, he too emphasized the uniqueness of the agreements. "Never before," he said, "had the world's most powerful nations, divided by ideology, history and conflicting interests, placed their central armaments under formally agreed limitation and restraint" (Kissinger 1972, 41).

As had Nixon Kissinger also noted that the differences between the U.S. and the Soviet Union remained "real and deep." Characterizing the differences he said that:

We are ideological adversaries and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. We are political and military competitors, and neither can be indifferent to advances by the other in either of those fields.

We each have alliances whose association we value and whose interests and actions of each impinge on the others at numerous points. . . . (Kissinger 1972, 41)

Consequently, Kissinger implied that the United States-Soviet relationship would still be a competitive one, if on new terms, sobered by the nuclear threat: "Although we shall compete, the conflict will not admit of resolution by victory in the classical sense. We are compelled to coexist" (Kissinger 1972, 41).¹⁰

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that a Soviet listener might find in Kissinger's comment that the United States and the Soviet Union were compelled to coexist an official U.S. admission of the
continued

The initial official Soviet characterizations of the outcome of the summit were considerably different in tone and style. There was no public occasion (and no need of one) for a dramatic address by the General Secretary.¹¹ Rather, as reported in *Pravda* the day after Nixon's speech, Brezhnev presented a report on the summit to the Politburo, the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Presidium, the Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers. The agreements signed at the summit were said to be "of great international importance and constitute an essential step in the development of Soviet-American relations; they promote the strengthening of the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and the cause of peace and security of peoples" (*Pravda* June 2, 1972: 1).¹²

The Brezhnev report characterized the the SALT agreements simply, as "a highly important step conducive to lessening the threat of nuclear war, curbing the arms race and opening up prospects for progress on general disarmament." The agreement was said to correspond to the "interests of the Soviet and American peoples and to all of mankind." The Basic Principles were interpreted as creating "prerequisites in international law making it possible to build trust and cooperation between the two countries in all fields of mutual interest on a firm, long-term basis, without in any way harming the interests of third countries" (*Pravda* June 2, 1972: 1).

Soviet view that the U.S. had been forced by the Soviet Union to the bargaining table, as would be implied in Soviet statements about the Moscow Summit.

¹¹ Perhaps another reason why there was no major public announcement of the policy implications of the Moscow Summit was that the policy leading to it had already been set out in dramatic form at the 24 th Party Congress in 1971.

¹² Citations to English translations of Soviet sources appearing in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* are to page numbers in *The Current Digest*.

The Brezhnev report apparently made two additional points of significance about the consequences and importance of the Moscow summit. First, the results of the summit would not affect the commitment of the Soviet Union either to the "just cause of the Arab peoples" or the "unshakeable" support of the "Land of the Soviets with the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people . . ." By implication, the agreements reached at the summit would not affect the Soviet's support of revolutionary or liberation struggles. The second point was that the conclusion of the summit demonstrated to all willing to draw the lesson that "in today's conditions disputed international questions cannot be resolved by methods of a 'position of strength' policy." Rather, they "can and must be settled by negotiations based on the equality and equal security of both sides, the mutual respect of interests, and the universal affirmation in international relations of the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, regardless of whether the states are large or small" (*Pravda* June 2, 1972: 1). The significance of this second point is suggested by the reference to "'positions of strength' policy," a reference in other words to the Soviet belief that the U.S.S.R. had been dictated to by the United States in the post war period. Part of the significance of the Moscow summit was, thus, that its results indicated that the Soviet Union had arrived at a point where Soviet-U.S. relations were to be conducted on an equal and truly reciprocal basis.¹³

Soviet assessments of the significance of the summit would find fuller and more rhetorical explication during the weeks following in various

¹³ On this point see Garthoff (1985, 55) as noted above.

articles appearing in *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, *Kommunist* and *International Affairs*.¹⁴

Writing in *Pravda* the week after the summit, the director of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Science's Institute of World Economics and International Relations considered the significance of the agreements signed in Moscow. The SALT agreements were of "primary importance" because: first, in them the powers had decided to take "practical actions" to achieve their long expressed aim of reducing the danger of nuclear war; and, second, the U.S. and the Soviet Union had agreed to take steps to limit the arms race that were rooted in the recognition of the principle of "equal security for both sides and the inadmissibility of gaining, by direct or indirect means, one-sided advantages"; finally, the agreements were "a concrete expression of the intention of the sides to promote progress at subsequent talks . . ." (Inozemtsev 1972, 2). In sum:

All this means that the dogmas of the "cold war" and the conceptions of "intimidation" and "superior force" have been dealt serious blows. Through the joint efforts of the two sides, real measures have been adopted to ensure observance of each side's interests and that reduce the danger of a nuclear missile clash. Formidable obstacles have been placed in the path of the arms race, which drains off immense materials and human resources in many countries of the world. All peoples stand to gain. . .

Thus, substantial progress had been made in the struggle to avert a world thermonuclear war. This is a major success of the Soviet Union's principled and consistent policy. (Inozemtsev 1972, 2)

The primary significance of the the Basic Principles according to Inozemtsev was that they contained an explicit recognition of the principle

¹⁴ It is necessary here to make note of the dilemma one faces in determining what writings in the Soviet press can be taken as authoritative statements of Soviet policy and official thinking on foreign policy issues.

of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems (1972, 4). In Inozemtsev's formulation:

Renunciation of war as a means of solving disputes among states; solution of disputes through negotiation; renunciation of the use or the threat of force; noninterference in internal affairs; and the recognition of the right of all peoples to solve all of their countries' problems for themselves; inviolability of borders; respect for the sovereignty, equality and independence of all countries; the development of mutually advantageous economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation—such are the basic elements of the policy of peaceful coexistence. (1972, 4)

Writing in *Izvestia* later in the month, Gregori Arbotov, Director of the USA Institute, characterized the Basic Principles as "a far reaching document filled with profound meanings," a document that "essentially formulates the international legal principles between the two states. Among these, above all, is the principle of peaceful coexistence of states belonging to different social systems" (Arbotov 1972, 4). Like Inozemtsev, Arbotov found the principle significance of the SALT accords to be the fact that they could "prevent a dangerous new upward turn in the spiral of the arms race." Arbotov also noted that the accords were "distinctive" because they went further in imposing restraints on strategic weapons than had any previous agreements (1972, 4).

Another theme expressed in Soviet expositions of the significance of the Moscow Summit was that the agreements reached did not constitute "'a deal between the two superpowers . . .'" The agreements were, noted Inozemtsev, "quite insistent in stressing the fact that they are not directed against any third country whatsoever or against the interest of such countries" (1972, 33). Moreover, the agreements did not mean that the Soviet Union would give up its support for revolutionary movements:

The Soviet Union has been, is and will always remain a true friend of the peoples struggling for national independence and freedom against imperialism and colonialism. . . .

The Soviet Union emphasizes again and again the internationalist essence of its foreign policy and reflects the unity of the basic foreign policy interests of the Soviet people and the peoples of the countries waging a struggle for peace, freedom and independence. (Inozemtsev 1972, 34)

This commitment was demonstrated by the Soviet Union's "solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people. . ." (Arbotov 1972, 5; Inozemtsev 1972, 33-4).¹⁵

Soviet commentaries on the significance of the Moscow Summit also maintained that the major significance of the event, as well as the accords reached at it, was that they were a manifestation of political-historical changes in international politics that favored socialism as a social system and the interests of the Soviet Union itself. As Arbotov put it, there was "every reason to draw the conclusion that the success of the Soviet-American talks is the logical result of major objective changes that have already taken place in the world" (1972, 5). These were changes recognized by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and on the basis of which it had formulated the Soviet Union's foreign policy. Arbotov's summary can represent the main thrust of the argument:

The C.P.S.U.'s most important documents stress that the balance of forces in the world arena is continuing to change in favour of socialism. Recent international events have provided practical confirmation of these conclusions and have shown that the change in the balance of forces is not some kind of abstract formula but a tangible reality that is making the imperialist powers adapt to the new situation and making it possible to bring about major changes in the international arena. . . .

. . . there can be no doubt that any change in the balance of forces in favour of imperialism would entail not the easing of but increased tensions, by whipping up the aggressive aspirations of reactionary circles. . . .

¹⁵ For further documentation of similar Soviet statements see Nelson and Schwartz (1988, 89-109).

Thus, the recent period has demonstrated the correctness and profound realism of the Party's foreign policy course which is based on a precise analysis of the balance of class forces and the world situation. At the same time, this period has demonstrated something else—that this course is steadfastly and skillfully implemented. (Arbotov 1972, 5)

The class analysis and policy course to which Arbotov referred were set out in Brezhnev's report to the 24th Party congress in what came to be labeled as the "Peace Program" of the Communist Party.¹⁶

Whether or not the Soviet leadership took ideological analysis like Arbotov's at face value, the claim that the summit was a concrete manifestation of a sea-change in international politics foreseen and acted upon by the Party demonstrates they did look upon the summit as a particularly significant event. To take credit for a successful outcome of the summit was a move to use it to legitimize the Party's rule, in general, and more specifically, the leadership of Brezhnev. At least the Soviet leadership saw the summit as the first fruits of a new era in U.S.-Soviet relations characterized by a new international respect for the Soviet Union vis-a-vis the United States and, in particular, from the United States. Such descriptions of the Summit can also be seen as Soviet recognition of the uniqueness of the event.

Soviet characterizations of the outcome of the summit also gave expression to skepticism about the ultimate goals and motivations of the United States. This skepticism was often indicated in the observation that the United States might not live up to the spirit of détente in practice. Writing on the implications of the Basic Principles, Arbotov noted that in the end "practice alone will answer the question of how considerably the . . .

¹⁶ For a text of the report see *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* XXIII (12): 3-13 (August 20, 1971)

principles are put into effect," suggesting that they might not be respected by the United States. Six months after the summit, before a joint meeting of the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet, Brezhnev himself noted that:

. . . We are realists and are well aware that influential circles in the imperialist world have not yet abandoned attempts to conduct policy from 'positions of strength.' The arms race which they have started, and which is a threat to peace is still continuing. Naturally our allies and we cannot help but draw the necessary conclusions. ([1972], 1979, 9)

Such remarks, which may well have been a response to the Nixon Administration's contention that détente did not lessen the need for a strong defense and new weapons programs, suggested that the U.S. might not be trusted. On occasion, this theme was tied explicitly to Soviet support of revolutionary movements. As one commentator wrote in an article on peaceful coexistence in *International Affairs*:

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other Marxist-Leninist parties have drawn a clear line of distinction between the area in which the peaceful coexistence principle operates, and the area of the national liberation struggle. They proceed from the fact that there can be no peaceful coexistence between the oppressed and the oppressors, between the exploited and the exploiters, between the imperialist states and their colonies. There can be no peaceful coexistence in the context of the internal processes of the class and national liberation struggle in the capitalist countries and the colonies. (Sovetov 1972, 14-5)

In other words, peaceful coexistence as a "real factor in international relations" had its limits. U.S.-Soviet relations in the case of national liberation struggles was still to be seen as intrinsically conflictual. In the world-view of Marxism-Leninism, capitalist states could not be other than exploiters of weaker states and opponents of socialism.¹⁷

¹⁷In his report to the 24th Party Congress in 1971, just the year before the Moscow Summit, Brezhnev had this to say about the role of the United States in International politics:

continued

The Rhetorics of Conciliation and Collaborative Competition

Apparent from an examination of the initial U.S. and Soviet characterizations of the Moscow Summit is the similarity of their rhetorical forms. Both made use, if in different idioms, of what can be called a rhetoric of conciliation and a rhetoric of collaborative confrontation. It was the use of these rhetorics that together comprised the practice of the rhetorical regime of détente.

The rhetoric of conciliation expressed the desire for and emergence of a new period of U.S. Soviet relations. It embodied above all appeals to the fear of nuclear war between the superpowers and so directly addressed the controlling exigence of détente by attempting to create an atmosphere in which nuclear war might be avoided. Few statements from either side about U.S.-Soviet relations after the Moscow Summit failed to mention the "progress" that had been made by signing the SALT accords. Few statements did not suggest that the risk of war had begun to be mitigated, and few failed to express relief at this result. Moreover, it was on the foundation of the

The foreign policy of imperialism in the past five-year period has provided new evidence of its unchanging reactionary and aggressive nature.

In this connection one must speak above all about American imperialism, which in the past few years has reasserted its endeavor to play the role of a kind of grantor and protector of the international system of exploitation and oppression. It seeks control everywhere, interfering in the affairs of other peoples, unceremoniously violating their legitimate rights and sovereignty, trying by force, bribery and economic penetration to impose its will on states and entire areas of the world (Brezhnev 1971, 8).

Inclusion of this passage in a speech that also made significant conciliatory junctures to the United States and the West (Bowker and Williams 1988, 191) suggests that Brezhnev could not ignore those in the Party who took a "hard-line" view of the U.S.

SALT accords which further progress in U.S.-Soviet relations was said to depend.

Because it appealed to the fear of nuclear war, the rhetoric of conciliation was simple. Its appeal worked at a visceral level. Visceral and yet intellectual. U.S. policy makers, as well as those who sought to advise them on nuclear strategy, had, by the late 1960s, become concerned with the moral implications of nuclear war plans, convinced that they were no more than plans for mass murder or, in Fred Iklé's words, "a form of warfare universally condemned since the Dark Ages—the mass killing of hostages" (Freedman 1989, 349).¹⁸ The foreign and defense policy makers on both sides were perhaps in a unique position to understand exactly what nuclear war would mean as they were privy to the best estimates of its likely results.

Another aspect of the rhetoric of conciliation, and another reason why it may be said to have operated on a visceral level, is that it was also rooted in an appeal to the most noble purposes of both nations, to a variety of patriotism that expressed pride in each nation's foresight and international responsibility. Expressed in references to "mankind" in Nixon's address or "all peoples" in the Soviet accounts, acting to mitigate the threat of nuclear war was portrayed as the fulfillment of each nation's historical mission. Thus did Nixon speak of the special obligation that history placed on the American nation to lead the world onto the "high plateau of peace." Similarly did Soviet characterizations of the summit credit the results to "the correct Leninist policy of the C.P.S.U. and the selfless labor of the Soviet people" (*Pravda* June 2, 1972: 25).

¹⁸ On the growing doubts in U.S. policy making circles about the policy of mutually assured destruction, see Freedman (1989, 348-51).

The rhetoric of collaborative competition was more complex than the rhetoric of conciliation, more political, and provided the rhetorical means by which the superpowers would seek to justify their actions to one another.¹⁹ It was the rhetoric of collaborative competition that expressed the existence of a lingering conflict between the two countries and which gave voice to exceptions and reservations to conciliatory acts in the new era of U.S.-Soviet relations. The rhetoric of collaborative competition also blatantly conflicted with the rhetoric of conciliation and, consequently, gave rise to not inconsiderable ambiguities in the détente relationship.

The rhetoric of collaborative competition principally appealed on both sides to each side's fears and suspicions about the ultimate goals and intentions of the other. These were fears that had been given wide public expression within both countries, and that came to play a significant role in the domestic politics of each nation in the post-war period, and which were the basis of the rhetorical regime of the cold war. It was the importance of such images of the other, the obvious presence of them in the domestic institutional discourse of each state and in the international institutional discourse of the U.S. Soviet relationship after 1945, that made it possible to ignore these fears in addressing the exigence of strategic parity.

On the Soviet side during the post-war period under Stalin, the United States, as the leading capitalist-imperialist power, was considered to be the principle threat both to socialism and to the Soviet Union itself. Soviet foreign policy was still officially proclaimed to have the aim of staving-off "capitalist encirclement." Conflict with the West and the United States was

¹⁹ The term "collaborative competition" is borrowed from Breslauer (1983).

seen as inevitable and open war likely at some point in the near future. As one Soviet text on the history of Soviet foreign policy explained, in capitalist society

... the driving force between foreign policy is the desire of the ruling class to consolidate the exploiting system and expand the sphere of exploitation by seizing markets, strategic positions, and foreign territory by subjugation of other peoples. By virtue of its social nature, capitalist foreign policy is one of expansion and aggression, of preparing and starting wars of aggression, of creating military blocks and furthering the arms race. (Ponomayov et al. 1969 quoted in Schwartz 1973, 100)

Such was the image of the United States that came to dominate Soviet domestic and international agitprop in the post-war period, especially after 1948 (Ulam 1974, 437).

Conflict with the capitalist West became an important element of Soviet post-war domestic politics, just as conflict with the U.S.S.R. would become an important element of U.S. domestic politics. Competition with the West, the U.S. in particular, came to be the political cement that held together "the leadership and society around a kind of consensus whereby all accept heavy constraints bearing on internal development and national security" (Mendras 1989, 130). The Soviet cold war image of the United States thus partly legitimized "a climate in which arbitrary decisions, good shortages and limited freedom" were readily accepted (Mendras 1989, 130). The image undoubtedly had its domestic political uses even if not taken seriously by top Soviet policy makers.²⁰

Certainly the Soviet cold war image of the United States was taken seriously in the U.S., with considerable consequences for the tenor of its

²⁰ Which is not to say that the image was not taken seriously, but as Ulam (1974, 438) points out each side's more dire formulations of the intentions of the other over-dramatized each side's actual abilities and intentions in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

politics in the early post-war period. Even when Soviet policy and action were restrained, Soviet rhetoric exuded "bellicosity, hostility and contempt" for the United States and the West. "Soviet ideologues thus helped convince the United States that the USSR's objectives in Europe were unlimited" (Schwartz 1971, 32). Krushchev's often quoted remark to the United Nations, "we will bury you," was interpreted by many in the United States to mean that the Soviet objectives were unlimited everywhere. This evaluation of Soviet motives and intentions was expressed in National Security Council Memorandum 68 of April 14, 1950:

The fundamental design of those who control, the Soviet Union and the international communist movement, is to retain and solidify their absolute power, first in the Soviet Union and second in the areas now under their control. In the minds of Soviet leaders, however, achievement of this design requires the dynamic extension of their authority and ultimate elimination of any effective opposition to their authority.

The design, therefore, calls for the complete subversion or forcible destruction of the machinery of government and the structure of society in the countries of the non-Soviet world and their replacement by an apparatus and structure subservient to and controlled from the Kremlin. . . . The United States, as the principle center of power in the non-Soviet world and the bulwark of opposition to Soviet expansion, is the principal enemy whose integrity and vitality must be subverted or destroyed by one means or another if the Kremlin is to achieve its fundamental design.

In the wake of the invasion of Korea, the authors of NSC 68 were convinced that war with the Soviet Union was likely and based the document's plan for defense of the U.S. on this premise.

Soviet views of the United States began to soften after Stalin's death. The doctrine of capitalist encirclement was abandoned at the 20th Congress of the CPSU. The Soviet vision of its and the U.S. role in international politics was reconsidered. "Revising Stalin, the new leadership formally declared that the outside world was no longer uniformly hostile, and, implicitly, that the dangers of a threatening environment had been

somewhat reduced" (Schwartz 1971, 32). In the mid-1950s Soviet academicians were specifically instructed "to abandon the 'dogmatic and oversimplifying' attitudes of the past" (Schwartz 1978, 2). The new Soviet leadership hoped to find a new and more objective basis for Soviet foreign policy.

By the time Brezhnev came to power it had become permissible to speak of "sober" elements in American "ruling circles" with which the Soviet Union might do business.²¹ The Soviet foreign policymaking apparatus, in particularly the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee, became one of the more ideologically pragmatic institutions within the Soviet political system (Petrov 1971, 826). This was due partly to the arrival within the ranks of the apparatus of a new generation of foreign policy specialists trained at new institutions of higher learning in the late forties and early fifties (Hough 1980). The change in the Soviet view of the United States in the period was also affected, as noted above, by the emergence of strategic parity between the superpowers. The Soviet leadership felt less threatened by the United States because their capacity to respond to the threat had improved markedly.

Nevertheless, for domestic political reasons, no Soviet leader could ignore the cold war image of the United States promulgated in the years before. To renounce the image completely would be to refute central tenets of Marxism-Leninism in such a way as to question one's adherence to the legitimizing ideology of the regime. Even to soften it would entail political costs. In particular it would imply more open-mindedness on domestic

²¹ For a detailed account of the change of Soviet images of the United States largely wrought by Soviet-US specialists see Schwartz (1978).

issues than the regime would have been willing to tolerate.²² Also undoubtedly important was the belief among some in the Soviet leadership, well known to their opposite numbers in the U.S., in the reality of the Soviet cold war image of the United States, tempered though it may have been by a growing number of more "objective" assessments in scholarship about the United States and the West. In any event, Brezhnev's détente policy, as its practice in Europe would demonstrate, was premised on a re-evaluation on the U.S. threat.

Similar considerations undoubtedly played a role in U.S. thinking. The cold war image of the Soviet Union and Communism as a social movement were important in U.S. domestic politics, providing as it did the legitimation for the bulk of U.S. defense and foreign policies. At the time of the Moscow Summit, the United States was still engaged in the Vietnamese war, a conflict it had entered for reasons suggested by the cold war image of the Soviet Union. Inattention to the image of the Soviet Union as a nation hostile to U.S. values would not only further call into question the logic of U.S. defense and foreign policy in general, but would openly undermine the rationale for U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Both sets of questions had already been raised by various domestic critics of the Nixon Administration, specifically, and of the American political and social "establishment" more generally, and were very much a part of the domestic political situation in which the Nixon Administration found itself. As in the Soviet case there were those in the U.S. defense, foreign policy and political leaderships who

²² Writing in 1971 Petrov (1971, 845) made the observation that the Soviet leadership was at that time concerned principally with the preservation of social order and the status quo at home, a concern which would characterize the "era of stagnation under Brezhnev.

remained convinced, as was well understood by the Soviet leadership, that the cold war image of the Soviet Union was to some degree correct.²³

The rhetorical problem for both the United States and the Soviet Union was, then, remarkably similar. Both leaderships had to soften cold war images of the other to an extent that made the agreements reached at the Moscow Summit politically acceptable at home, or at least palatable for potential domestic critics. This was accomplished in part by the rhetoric of conciliation that attempted to negate the fearful images of the other with the fear of nuclear war, the avoidance of which was easily characterized as a universal good.

At the same time, however, both leaderships faced the problem of softening the image of the other only to the extent that would make continued political conflict and political competition—which both sides fully expected—not appear to undermine the goods achieved through conciliation. This was the task of the rhetoric of collaborative competition. The rhetoric of collaborative competition consisted of the practice of juxtaposing conciliatory themes with invocations of the cold war image of the other together with observations that the U.S.-Soviet relationship would remain competitive for the foreseeable future.

Neither side was willing to ultimately compromise principle and/or abandon influence or opportunities for influence in the rest of the world outside their bilateral relationship. This exception to the theme of conciliation was expressed by invoking the cold war image of the other

²³ Including, first of all, Nixon and Kissinger. See Kissinger's characterization of Communist ideology (1979 116-19). Nixon articulated his views as a senator, vice president and president. See his memoirs (1978) and subsequent writings especially *The Real War* (198).

because the image suggested the need for a healthy skepticism about the other's "real" ultimate intentions. Thus, as was often said, only events would tell whether détente would become a reality. Paradoxically, the potential for violation of the spirit of détente by the other side was made to justify continued competition in other areas of the world, as well as the continuation of competitive defense policies; not only made to justify, but also to signal, the intention and acceptability of doing so.

Because the rhetoric of collaborative competition gave expression to each side's understandings of the scope of conciliation, it in effect delimited the range of expectations about what acts conciliation excluded and about what acts would be acceptable under détente. This function of the rhetoric of collaborative competition can be seen clearly in U.S. and Soviet characterizations of the Basic Principles of Relations after the Moscow Summit which, as will be argued below, attempted to define the common values—the mutual interests—of the U.S.-Soviet relationship under détente.

INTERPRETING THE "BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONS"

Of the achievements of the Moscow Summit it was the "Basic Principles of Relations" between the United States and the Soviet Union, together with the SALT agreements, that were unique; constitutive, in fact, of détente as a new "mood" or period in U.S. Soviet relations. The Basic Principles "which are sometimes described as a charter for détente, reflected an attempt to specify the kinds of restraints that were both appropriate to and necessary for the maintenance of détente" (Bowker and Williams 1988, 79). The Basic Principles have subsequently been much maligned as mere rhetoric and

ineffective in any significant sense, especially by domestic critics of détente in the United States, because they failed to prevent U.S.-Soviet conflict. In a sense this conclusion is correct. The Basic Principles did not serve as a detailed, authoritative code of conduct for U.S.-Soviet relations in the period of détente. Yet, this conclusion is based, as will be seen below, on a misunderstanding of the status and significance of the Basic Principles to the superpowers. In fact, the Basic Principles seem not to have been intended to serve as an authoritative, all-purpose code of great power conduct in specific situations (Bowker and Williams 1988, 77).²⁴

The Basic Principles are of interest here, not because they were either a marked success or failure as rules of U.S.-Soviet behavior, but because they may be taken as tokens of the value(s) that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. agreed to hold in common in the conduct of their relations. Within the context of the political situation of détente, as suggested above, the primary value on which the superpowers could agree was that nuclear war among them must be avoided. It is this common value that the Basic Principles recognized and which discourse interpreting them institutionalized, with important implications for the subsequent conduct of the U.S.-Soviet relationship.

The potential exigence of nuclear war, as well as parity-as-exigence, are obviously present in the Basic Principles. In the Basic Principles the Powers agreed to proceed "from the common determination that *in the nuclear age* there is no alternative to conducting their mutual relations on the basis of peaceful coexistence"(Public Papers of the Presidents 1972a, 633; emphasis

²⁴ In his memoirs Kissinger downplays the significance of the Basic Principles to the U.S., implying that was something that the Soviets wanted and which the United States agreed to in order to secure progress in other areas of negotiation (Kissinger 1979, 1132).

added). They agreed further to "do their utmost to avoid military confrontation and to *prevent the outbreak of nuclear war*" (Public Papers of the Presidents 1972a, 633; emphasis added). The parties would "continue to make special efforts to limit *strategic armaments*" and to conclude concrete agreements on strategic armaments "whenever possible" (Public Papers of the Presidents 1972a, 634, emphasis added). The United States and the Soviet Union would not engage in attempts to gain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other either directly or indirectly (Public Papers of the Presidents 1979a, 633).

Intertwined with the recognition of the need to avert nuclear war were statements with potentially broader implications for the character of U.S-Soviet relations. It was explicitly recognized that differences "in ideology and in the social systems of the USA and USSR are not obstacles to the bilateral development of normal relations based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual advantage. The "prerequisites for maintaining and strengthening peaceful relations between the USA and the USSR" were held to be "the recognition of the security interests of the parties based on the principle of equality and the renunciation of the use or threat of force" (Public Papers of the Presidents 633). As permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the powers agreed "to promote conditions in which all countries will live in peace and security and will not be subject to outside interference in their internal affairs" (Public Papers of the Presidents 633). It was from such passages that some observers inferred that the Basic Principles committed the United States and the Soviet Union to scaling back their competition for global influence, especially in the Third World.

As has been pointed out by more than one student of U.S.-Soviet relations, the passages in the Basic Principles that seemed to constrain U.S.-Soviet competition were at best vague. On this view "the Basic Principles document was only a pseudo-agreement. It gave the erroneous impression that the United States and the Soviets were in substantial agreement on the rules of the game and the restraints to be observed in their competition in third areas" (George 1983, 110). In the context of U.S. domestic politics, this impression was part and parcel of what critics of Nixon and Kissinger would later refer to as the "overselling" of détente (George 1983, 110).

To see the Basic Principles as a pseudo-agreement because they were vague about how U.S.-Soviet competition was to be regulated in third areas, however, makes the assumption that they were either intended or interpreted to limit such competition. In light of what the agreement said and how the outcome of the Moscow Summit was interpreted by both sides, such an assumption is unwarranted. To see the Basic Principles as intended to apply to *all* aspects of the U.S.-Soviet competition is to mistake the interpretations of later critics of the Principles and détente for the interpretation offered by official Soviet and American interpretations of them in the immediate aftermath of the Moscow Summit.

A careful reading of the Basic Principles in the context of the political situation of détente suggests that they were understood by both sides to apply to U.S.-Soviet actions *only in so far as they might lead to the outbreak of nuclear war*. The specific references in the Basic Principles document to the potential exigence of nuclear war have been noted above. Even in the passages that might imply broader restrictions on U.S.-Soviet actions there were suggestions that they would not apply outside the specific context of the

U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship. Differences in ideology were to pose no obstacles to the *bilateral* development of normal relations. There is no mention of how such difference might affect each country's relations with third states. Peaceful relations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were to be premised first on a joint recognition of their *security interests* which might well include recognition of spheres of influence: those existing or perhaps yet to be developed.

That the Basic Principles were not to apply outside the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship is also, and more significantly, suggested by the way in which the agreement was characterized and interpreted in the aftermath of the Moscow Summit.

At a press conference for U.S. journalists in Kiev just after the summit Kissinger explained that the Basic Principles had been intended to formally mark the departure of U.S.-Soviet relations from the familiar cold war pattern. Said Kissinger:

... given the fact that we had moved forward on a broad front and given also the fact that it was at least our intention—and we hope, of course, the reality will not belie this—to mark the transformation from a period of rather rigid hostility to one in which, without any illusions about the differences in social systems, we would try and behave with restraint and a maximum of creativity in bringing about a greater degree of stability and peace. (Kissinger 1972, 892)

Of interest in this characterization of the Basic Principles are Kissinger's reservations: "we hope that the reality will not belie this" and "without illusions about the differences in social systems . . ." These remarks, indicative of the rhetoric of collaborative competition, clearly qualify the Basic Principles. To suggest for an American audience that the U.S. would deal with the Soviet Union "without illusions" and to hope that reality would not "believe" the agreement, is to invoke the cold war image of the

Soviet Communists as manufacturers of illusions to hide their "real" reasons or motivations for acting. Such a meaning would convey a message to the Soviets as well: roughly, "do not attempt to act under the cover of détente." If the Basic Principles were in fact intended to apply to all aspects of U.S.-Soviet relations, and if conflict of certain kind was thus not to be expected, such a qualification may not have been necessary or wise given the circumstances.²⁵

At another press conference the same day in Moscow Kissinger interpreted the Basic Principles to constitute not a binding set of legal obligations, but rather a "spirit" of improved relations. No hard and fast set of principles of relations, he suggested, could be used as a cookbook applicable to any and every situation (Kissinger 1972, 886). The implication was that the Principles were subject to interpretation in context of specific situations, thus leaving open the possibility of separate unilateral judgements as to their applicability. Again, it is difficult to understand why, if the Basic Principles were to apply to all aspects of the U.S.-Soviet conflict, they would have to be interpreted. In Moscow, Kissinger also explained that the Basic Principles were "an attempt to state a positive direction of how these two nuclear superpowers, in a period which is marked by ideological difference and by fundamentally different perspectives, but nevertheless by the reality that the two of them hold literally the survival of mankind in their hands, can regulate their relationships in such a way that not only reduces war but can do some positive good for mankind" (Kissinger 1972,

²⁵ It is of interest to note that Kissinger's qualification used the language employed by the Soviets to refer to the distinction between the U.S. and the Soviet Union; i.e., "differences in social systems."

887). Clearly, regulation of the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship was very much in mind.

Garthoff suggests that the Nixon Administration's overall assessment of the Basic Principles is to be found in its fourth special foreign policy report to Congress. According to the report: "What we have agreed upon is not a vain attempt to bridge ideological differences, or a condominium of the two strategic powers, or a division of spheres of influence. What we have agreed upon are principles that acknowledge differences, but express a code of conduct which, if observed, can only contribute to world peace and to an international system based on mutual respect and self-restraint. These principles are a guide to further action" (Garthoff 1985, 293). Of interest here is the assertion that the Principles did not efface ideological differences but actually *acknowledged* them, noting that an attempt to bridge them would be in "vain." The code of conduct would in any event work only *if* observed, suggesting the possibility that it might not be. Indeed, the Basic Principles outlined principles fully applicable only in the future. This characterization of the Basic Principles both attempts and leaves room for evasion of the principles by either side.²⁶

The Soviets seem to have had much the same general understanding of the Basic Principles as the Americans (Bowker and Williams 1988, 77-8). Yet the Soviets were more effusive over the Basic Principles than the Americans and made greater claims for them (Garthoff 1985, 293ff.).²⁷ Soviet

²⁶ On the calculations of U.S. policy makers in this regard see Ulam (183, 59-61).

²⁷ Garthoff notes that American officials were largely reticent about the Basic Principles (1985, 293). This also seems to have been the case with the American press in the period immediately after the Moscow Summit. There is, for example, no mention made of the agreement in Time magazine's Summit coverage. Garthoff's account of Soviet perceptions of

continued

enthusiasm for the Basic Principles stemmed from their recognition of both peaceful coexistence—a distinctly Soviet way of viewing the superpower relationship—and the international political equality of the USSR and the USA. As understood by the Soviets, however, neither appeared to have ruled out the significant U.S.-Soviet competition. As has been seen, the notion of peaceful coexistence had its limits. It did not apply in “the area of the national liberation struggle.” In fact, it had been explicitly associated with “the prospect of further deepening and extending the development of the world revolutionary process” (Sovetov 1972, 13).

U.S. recognition of the strategic and political equality of the Soviet Union, however, was perhaps more important in Soviet interpretations of the outcome of the Summit. As suggested above, for the Soviet leadership the condition of “parity marked the emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower in *political as well as military terms* (Blacker 1983, 125; emphasis in original). The recognition of the principle of equality in U.S.-Soviet relations in the Basic Principles was thus interpreted by the Soviet leadership as recognition of the Soviet’s new world-political status.

The recognition of the Soviet Union as the international political equal of the United States apparently led the Kremlin to imagine that it could exercise a greater freedom of action in the Third World as the United States had throughout the post-war period.

The Soviets went to considerable lengths from 1972 to 1974 to emphasize that the détente relationship with the United States would “powerfully and materially” assist the cause of national liberation, precisely because it should restrain U.S. power in pursuit of “counterrevolutionary” aims. The Kremlin did not seek to mislead U.S. policy makers on this issue; in fact it attempted to persuade Washington to accept

the Basic Principles Agreement merits consideration because it is based partly on interviews of the Soviet participants in the negotiation of the document (1985, 294; n13).

Moscow's view of the realities. Soviet spokesmen repeatedly stressed that the "international class struggle," the historically determined conflict between the forces of socialism and imperialism would continue unabated regardless of the bilateral relationship between Washington and Moscow at any given time. (Blacker 1983, 127)²⁸

Indeed, the point was politely hinted at in a speech during the Moscow Summit by N.V. Podgorny at a dinner in honor of President Nixon. "Of course," Podgorny said, "the difference in our social systems and the divergent positions of our states in a number of essential sectors of world politics give rise to serious complications in Soviet-American relations, and we are by no means playing down these problems (*Pravda*, May 23, 1972, 4). In interpreting Podgorny's remarks it must be remembered that the United States was still at war in Vietnam and that U.S. aircraft were being shot down over North Vietnam with Soviet-made ground-to-air missiles. In April the United States had both mined and bombed Haiphong harbor in North Vietnam, through which Soviet supply vessels traveled regularly, resulting in injury to Soviet citizens and destruction of Soviet property. Undoubtedly Vietnam might have been on the minds of U.S. and Soviet officials as one of the "essential sectors" of world politics about which the positions of the two states diverged and of the kind which "seriously complicated" U.S.-Soviet relations.

That the Moscow Summit was held after the Haiphong incident is itself remarkable and served to reënforce the Soviet observations about the "divergent positions" of the U.S. and the Soviet Union in world politics. It was, in fact, widely believed that the Soviet would, at least, cancel the Summit as a response to the U.S. actions. "There was to be sure an outburst

²⁸ On this same point see Ulam (1983, 54-6).

of Soviet rhetoric usual for such occasions ("unless . . . , the gravest possible consequences will follow")" (Ulam 1983, 74). Nevertheless Moscow's invitation to President Nixon was not withdrawn. As Kissinger would later characterize the situation: "What was significant was not that the [Soviet] reaction stopped short of a protest, but that Moscow maintained its invitation even in the face of an unprecedented assault on its client" (1979, 1122). Apparently Kissinger believed, not without reason, that the Soviets were so concerned by Nixon's diplomatic opening to China, that they wanted the Summit under almost any condition. The Soviet's desire to hold the Summit under such conditions can be interpreted in a different way, however, one not inconsistent with their concerns over improving U.S.-Chinese relations. Held in the immediate aftermath of a U.S. assault on an important Soviet client, the Moscow Summit might serve as a precedent for high-level superpower negotiations on strategic issues even as they were engaged in conflict in third areas.²⁹ Conflict in third-areas was thus to be expected.

That the Basic Principles did not apply outside the Soviet-American strategic relationship is also suggested by the emphasis given the SALT accords as the major accomplishment of the Summit. According to the joint

²⁹ That the U.S. might have been concerned that some might interpret the outcome of the Summit in this way, and draw from it the conclusion that the superpowers had reached a great-power condominium, is suggested by the treatment of the Basic Principles in the President's 1973 special foreign policy report to Congress quoted above. The passage explicitly states that the Basic Principles were not "a condominium of the two strategic powers, or a division of spheres of influence."

It is difficult to believe that Nixon and Kissinger, sensitive as they were to "linkage," could have been completely unaware of the meaning and significance of the Moscow Summit being held in such a context. Rather, they were perhaps unconcerned with the precedent because they did not consider it a precedent that should or could be avoided under the circumstances.

communique issued after the Summit, the two sides "gave primary attention to the problem of reducing nuclear war," a problem to which the SALT accords constituted a "major step" towards solving (Nixon 1973, 636). From the Soviet view the SALT accords were particularly significant because negotiating them was a concrete recognition of their status as a military equal of the United States. It is similarly significant that the only agreement to significantly follow up on the spirit of the Basic Principles was The Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War (APNW), concluded at the second U.S.-Soviet Summit in June 1973. "Of particular interest is that the second agreement included a much stronger and more explicit obligation that the two powers engage in urgent consultations if situations developed anywhere in the the world that raised the risk of nuclear war" (George 1983, 111). Although the United States and the Soviet Union never engaged one another about the operational implications of the APNW, it clearly reënforced the importance of the strategic exigence in U.S-Soviet relations (George 1983, 114).

On this reading of U.S. and Soviet interpretations of the Basic Principles, it is possible to suggest at least four expectations about future actions that were given expression by the document and its interpretation by both sides:

1. Nuclear war was to be avoided, if not ruled out completely, as a viable military option;
2. The risk of nuclear war was to be reduced through continuing negotiations on arms control issues;
3. Political and military conflict was to continue and could continue outside the context on U.S.-Soviet relations defined by their bilateral strategic relationship;

4. The continuation of conflict in third areas was not to escalate to the point where it might lead the powers into nuclear war.³⁰

As these understandings were articulated by the rhetoric of conciliation and the rhetoric of collaborative competition, they came to be associated with these understandings. To continue to employ the rhetoric was to signal that the understandings still obtained.

DÉTENTE AND THE CONSTITUTIVE COMMON MEANINGS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

In Chapter Five it was argued that states' agreements about what common interests to hold in common "filled-in" the empty normative center of international institutional discourse in the context of specific interstate relationships. Such agreements in effect also determine what good reasons of institutional discourse associated with the domains of discourse (in turn associated with the constitutive common meanings of international politics) might be linked to common interests. The rhetorical regime of détente established such linkages, and it is appropriate to briefly observe how U.S.-Soviet agreement on restraint in the use of nuclear weapons defined the constitutive meanings of international politics for the two states under détente.

First, the agreement clearly had implications for how 'peace' and 'war' might be applied in the context of U.S.-Soviet relations. 'Peace' was to be

³⁰ It is not claimed that this list represents a definitive or exhaustive list of understandings conveyed by the Basic Principles, only that these seem to have been the most important and obvious.

defined as the absence of the threat of nuclear war, 'war' was thus implicitly defined as a nuclear exchange between the superpowers. Conflict or competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union on these definitions of war and peace might still qualify as peaceful relations or, in the Soviet phrase, "peaceful coexistence," and not as conflict of a kind that might lead to war.

Such a view of 'peace' and 'war' was consistently expressed, if implicitly, in U.S. and Soviet statements about U.S.-Soviet relations under détente. The achievements of the Moscow Summit were of significance, Nixon noted, because they presented the opportunity for the U.S. to lead the nations of the world "onto the high plateau of peace" *because* the summit was the occasion of the signing of the SALT accords attempting to limit the threat of nuclear war by limiting strategic arms (Nixon 1972, 666). Nevertheless, the foundation of peace would require continued defense spending and a policy of vigilance because the Soviet Union still proclaimed "hostility to some of America's most basic values" even if its leaders had agreed to limit nuclear arms (Nixon 1972, 664).

Looked upon as an appeal to reason, the view of peace and war expressed in Nixon's post summit address is plainly contradictory. How was it possible, after all, to achieve "lasting peace" on the basis of agreements with a nation admitted to be hostile to American values to an extent that vigilance was still necessary? Yet, as was suggested above, Nixon's address was not primarily an appeal to reason, nor was the whole conciliatory rhetoric of détente. It was rather an *emotional* appeal both to the danger and fear of nuclear war and to the noblest elements of American purpose. What Nixon argued, in effect, was that American purposes in the world

could still be fulfilled without the threat of nuclear war and in spite of an adversary that, in the minds of most Americans, threatened it. This was much the same view that Kissinger gave voice to when he suggested to members of Congress that: "Although we shall compete, the conflict will not admit of resolution in the classical sense. We are compelled to coexist" (1972, 4). The compulsion of coexistence, in other words, required that U.S.-Soviet conflict take a new non-classical form. It would not be 'war' as commonly understood, nor would it be peace, because the U.S. and the Soviet Union would still compete, still conflict.

Brezhnev seemed to express a similar conception of 'peace' and 'war' in his speech to the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet:

We are realists and are well aware that influential circles in the imperialist world have not yet abandoned attempts to conduct policy from 'positions of strength.' The arms race which they have started, and which is a threat to peace, is still continuing. Naturally our allies and we cannot help but draw the necessary conclusions. However, our peace-centered foreign policy remains unchanged and in the present situation the potential for peace loving forces in the struggle against the forces of aggression and war is greater than ever. (Brezhnev [1972] 1979, 9)

In other words, while the actions of the other side might pose a threat to peace, it was nevertheless still possible. Moreover, it would be possible to achieve while the Soviet Union supported national liberation struggles abroad. This is, again, a view of peace between the superpowers that makes at least rhetorical sense, if 'peace' is viewed as the absence of the threat of nuclear war.

When Kissinger spoke of the impossibility of conflict in the classical sense, he was also in effect suggesting a revision in the common understanding of 'power' in international politics. "Classical" power was military power, the capacity to enforce demands or to engage in self-help in

the event of the breakdown of diplomacy. Yet, the central weapons of the military power had come to be ones that could destroy any political objectives to be gained by their use in the classical sense. This effect of nuclear weapons had been long commented upon by the time of the Moscow Summit, but it was the Nixon Administration and the Brezhnev Politburo that had politically admitted the circumstance by negotiation of the SALT accords.³¹ Even "conventional" military capacity had begun to appear less than useful in the hands of the superpowers, as the American experience in Vietnam demonstrated to many.³² The power that counted under détente, then, was recognized to be power as defined by the possession of nuclear weapons and this power as, paradoxically, a power that no one could imagine using.

As has already been suggested, détente also reshaped Soviet conceptions of power. Power defined in terms of strategic parity brought a political equality with the United States which, in the Soviet view, the détente accords recognized, the Basic Principles of Relations in particular. This equality brought with it a responsibility for restraint in the strategic relationship with the United States, a responsibility that the Soviet partly admitted to by negotiation of the SALT accords. Yet, in this admission there was the benefit of equal restraint from the United States and, moreover, at last an opportunity to compete with the United States in the Third World on

³¹ This theme was amplified in American policy, as noted above, in the articulation of the notion of interdependence in various explications of the conditions of contemporary international politics by State Department officials.

³² This was a lesson that many academic observers and critics of U.S. foreign policy had drawn in the Vietnam years and after and which became a part of the domestic institutional discourse of foreign policy in the United States. As examples see the essay in Rosencrance (1976) *America as an Ordinary Country*. As important was Keohane and Nye's (1977) *Power and Interdependence*.

an equal footing should opportunities present themselves. Such freedom of action was to be one of the principle benefits of the fact that the U.S. had come to reject a "position of strength" policy. The competition between the Soviet Union and the United States was to be expected, then, and it was this expectation that warranted a re-definition of power in the Soviet view. As Kissinger would later put it: "Détente was conceived of as a relationship between adversaries; it did not pretend friendship" (1982, 469).

'Diplomacy' under détente also acquired rather specific meanings in the context of U.S.-Soviet relations. It boiled down to the attempt to manage the U.S.-Soviet conflict in areas where conciliation could not be agreed to.³³ It was to have the purpose of attempting to create what the Nixon Administration called a "structure of peace" between the superpowers (Nixon 1973, 6). The diplomacy of détente was to be a diplomacy of summits and other high-level negotiations, of back-channels, business-like in character, circumventing much conventional diplomatic procedure. The purpose of the attempt at managing U.S.-Soviet conflict was, to put it in the language used above, to mitigate the exigence of parity in a way that would not risk nuclear war.

This chapter has briefly outlined the rhetorical practice of détente, suggesting the substance of détente as a rhetorical regime. In doing so this chapter has made one of the first of the demonstrations necessary to revealing the operation of a rhetorical regime listed at the end of Chapter

³³ This is much the same view advanced by Bell (1977).

Five: that the political discourse of U.S.-Soviet relations under détente was characterized by rhetorical practice more or less unique to it.

It remains to suggest how the expectations established by the rhetorical regime of détente and the rhetorical practice that defined it facilitated the mitigation of exigencies arising within the context of U.S.-Soviet relations after 1972. This is the subject of the next chapter, which attempts to demonstrate how the rhetorical regime of détente served to facilitate resolution of the crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations precipitated by the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

CHAPTER VII

DÉTENTE AND THE OCTOBER WAR OF 1973

It is the purpose of this chapter to suggest how the rhetorical practice of détente served to mitigate the crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations precipitated by the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War. It will attempt to demonstrate that the political discourse between the United States and the Soviet Union during the crisis relied for its effective political meaning on the rhetorical practice of détente described in Chapter Six. This demonstration will require, first, documentation of U.S.-Soviet communications during the crisis and, second, an analysis of the communications.

ANATOMY OF THE OCTOBER CRISIS

The crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations that arose amid the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war began to develop the day the war started, October 6 1973. The crisis would continue for twenty days, until the 25th, when Egypt withdrew its request of the U.N. Security Council that the United States and the Soviet Union provide troops to implement a cease-fire in the Sinai, a request which, as will be seen, might have brought the superpowers into armed conflict in the Middle East.

For the sake of discussion, the October Crisis can be divided schematically into three phases. The first phase ran from the Egyptian and Syrian simultaneous two-front surprise attack against Israel on October 6 to October 9. Over these three days the Israeli armed forces suffered losses of

men and materiel so great that on the 9th they were forced to request substantial resupply from the United States. Initially both the United States and the Soviet Union believed that the war would be brought to a negotiated settlement quickly; and although they kept one another informed on the progress of the fighting in a relatively cooperative manner, they both delayed significant diplomatic action to end the war. As it became clear that the Israelis had taken a beating, the Soviets put forward a cease-fire proposal that favored Egypt and Syria. It called for a cease-fire in place and negotiations "on the basis of liberation of all Arab lands occupied by Israel" (Kissinger 1982, 498). This proposal was unacceptable to both the United States and Israel. The United States stalled negotiations to give Israel time to recover from its setbacks.

The second phase of the crisis ran from October 10 to October 23. On the 10th the Israelis managed to launch a concentrated offensive against Syria. Their strategy was to attempt to remove Syrian threat so that their full attention could be turned to the Egyptian armies in the Sinai. In spite of a Soviet airlift of supplies to the Arabs that began on October 10, the tide of battle shifted in favor of the Israelis who managed to push within twenty miles of Damascus.

On October 12 the Soviets gave some indication of willingness to accept a cease-fire proposal made by the United States, yet reneged before the proposal could be introduced in the Security Council. On October 13 the Egyptians launched a renewed attack in the Sinai hoping to lessen pressure on the Syrians. Suspecting that the Soviets had been stalling to allow Egypt to prepare its counteroffensive, the United States responded by beginning its own airlift of supplies to the Israelis. With the help of these supplies, the

Israelis were able to break the Egyptian offensive. On October 15 a small Israeli contingent crossed to the the west bank of the Suez Canal and harassed the Egyptian rear. By the 18th Israel had begun to reenforce its bridgehead and effectively cut off the Egyptian Third Army, stranding it on the east side of the waterway.

As it became clear that the Egyptian offensive had been defeated, the Soviets advanced a new cease-fire proposal that included terms acceptable to the United States. Although the U.S. again attempted to delay negotiations until the Israelis could further improve their position in the Sinai, it was forced to actively consider the proposal when General Secretary Brezhnev invited Kissinger to Moscow to work out any problems with it. Kissinger went to Moscow and, on the 21st the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had agreed on the text of a cease-fire resolution. On the 22nd, the text was passed by the U.N. Security Council as Resolution 338.

The third phase of the October Crisis ran from October 23 to October 26. The cease-fire called for in Security Council Resolution 338 and accepted by all sides was immediately violated. By the 23rd, the Israelis had completely cut off the Egyptian Third Army from any hope of resupply from Egypt by advancing south along the west bank of the Red Sea, although at the time they claimed only to be defending themselves against Egyptian attacks.

On the 24th the Soviets demanded that the United States take steps to force the Israelis to comply with the cease-fire resolution. President Sadat of Egypt asked President Nixon to use U.S. troops if necessary to contain the Israelis. On the afternoon of the 24th, Egypt made a formal request to the U.N. Security Council that the United States and the Soviet Union send troops to the Sinai to stop the renewed fighting. That evening the Soviets

threatened unilateral action if the United States did not comply with the Egyptian request.

The United States interpreted the Soviet threat of unilateral action as an ultimatum and in response, near midnight on the 24th, put U.S. forces around the world on DefCon III alert. Early on the morning of the 25th the United States also put the 82nd Airborne on alert, moved strategic bombers back to the United States from Guam, and reenforced U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean. Later on the morning of the 25th the Egyptians withdrew their request for U.S. and Soviet troops, and the Soviets, as if the ultimatum of the 24th had never been issued, informed the U.S. that it was sending a force of seventy observers to the Middle East to observe implementation of the cease-fire. The Soviets had thus "backed down" and the crisis was abated. In what follows, U.S.-Soviet communications, private and public, during the crisis are documented in detail.¹

U.S.-SOVIET COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE OCTOBER CRISIS

Phase I: October 6 to October 9. Henry Kissinger had spent the night of October 5, 1973 at the Waldorf Towers Hotel in New York City. The hotel was serving as his headquarters for the annual U.N. General Assembly meeting. On the morning of the 6th, at 6:15 A.M., he was awakened with a

¹ The account of U.S.-Soviet communications during the October War that follows is based for the most part on Kissinger's (1982) recollections in *Years of Upheaval*, which remains the most complete account of the communications. It does not detail all U.S.-Soviet communications during the War, but focuses on those which appear to have been most significant from Kissinger's account.

warning that Egypt and Syria were about to go to war against Israel.

Kissinger was completely surprised by the news.²

Two hours before in Jerusalem, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Kenneth Keating, had met with Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir at Meir's urgent invitation. She told Keating that Israel had been observing Egyptian and Syrian troop movements over the last 12 hours and had concluded that both states were preparing a general attack against Israel to be staged across the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights. She asked Keating whether the United States would convey the message to the Soviet Union and the various Arab states that it was not Israel's intention to launch a pre-emptive attack, even though Israel had begun to call up reservists as a purely defensive measure, purposefully stopping short of a general mobilization (Kissinger 1982, 450-1). It was Keating's report on the meeting that led Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Joseph Sisco, to wake Kissinger in New York. In the hours that followed, Kissinger made a flurry of phone calls to representatives of various nations in an attempt to prevent the attack, or at least mitigate its consequences.

Kissinger's first call was to Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin at the Soviet embassy in Washington. Kissinger passed along Meir's message.³ In Kissinger's recollection:

Dobrynin at first claimed that the whole episode must be an Israeli maneuver to justify a preemptive attack. I told him that my point in calling him was precisely to

²Unless otherwise noted, times given for events are from Kissinger's account in *Years of Upheaval* and are U.S. Eastern Standard Time.

³ Apparently Kissinger had by this time a note from Meir which he read to Dobrynin over the phone. While Kissinger does not explicitly mention having done so, he does write that, in his subsequent conversation with the Egyptian Foreign Minister he read el-Zayyat the message verbatim. He notes that: "Zayyat like Dobrynin, made me re-read the message" (1982, 453).

guarantee the opposite. Next, pedantically diplomatic, he wanted to know who was sending messages to whom—was it an assurance from Israel to the Arab countries or from the United States to the Soviet Union? I cut him off impatiently: "If this keeps up there is going to be a war before you understand my message." (1982, 451)

Dobrynin then complained that he would not be able to get a message to Moscow in time to take effective action. Kissinger offered use of the Hot Line to reach Moscow, but Dobrynin suggested it was too far from the foreign office. Kissinger then offered the use of the White House switchboard, which Dobrynin accepted "with a show of gratitude" (Kissinger 1982, 451).⁴

Kissinger then called the Israeli chargé d' affaires in Washington, Mordachi Shalev, with the news that the Israeli message had been conveyed to the Soviets. He then spoke with Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohammed el-Zayyat, also in New York for the U.N. General Assembly. Zayyat acknowledged the Israeli message and said that it would be transmitted to Cairo immediately, "though he professed to be very apprehensive that it was a pretext on Israel's part" (Kissinger 1982, 453). Attempts by Kissinger to reach Syria proved futile.

After hearing a reiteration of Israel's assurances that it would not launch a pre-emptive attack against Egypt and Syria from Shalev, Kissinger called the Soviet Embassy only to discover that Dobrynin was still on the phone with Moscow via the White House switchboard. Kissinger called el-Zayyat to repeat Israel's assurance of no pre-emptive attack. He then again spoke with Dobrynin, who acknowledged that the initial Israeli message had been passed to Moscow. Kissinger asked Dobrynin's help in getting in touch

⁴ Kissinger noted that Dobrynin's complaints about his ease of communication with Moscow were "nonsense" because Dobrynin demonstrated on several other occasions during the crisis that he could communicate quickly with Moscow when the situation demanded it (Kissinger 1982, 453).

with the Syrians and assured the Soviet Ambassador that the U.S. would "play no games' . . ." Moscow was to be kept informed of U.S. communications with the parties (Kissinger 1982, 453).

At 8:15 A.M. Kissinger received a call from Egypt's el-Zayyat. El-Zayyat claimed that Israeli naval forces had attacked Egyptian positions in the Gulf of Suez. The attack was being repulsed and an Egyptian communiqué had been issued. Kissinger conveyed the wish that the Egyptians confine their response to the immediate area of the supposed attack and said that he would seek clarification on the situation from Israel. Kissinger was already convinced, however, that the Egyptian claim was "preposterous." It was unlikely, he reasoned, that Israel would attack on one of the most holy days of the Jewish year. After speaking with el-Zayyat, Kissinger phoned Abba Eban, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, with a report of his conversation. Eban said that he would check with Jerusalem about the Egyptian claims (Kissinger 1982, 454).

Shalev called Kissinger at about 8:30 A.M. with the news that Egyptian and Syrian forces had been attacking on all fronts for the last half-hour, or since about 2:00 P.M. in the Middle East. On hearing from Shalev, Kissinger dispatched urgent messages to the Kings of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, appealing to them to use their good offices to avert a general war.

At 8:35 A.M. Kissinger called Alexander Haig, Nixon's White House Chief of Staff, who was in Key Biscayne, Florida, where the President was on vacation. Kissinger suggested "that the White House spokesman in Florida . . . say no more than that the president was getting regular reports on events and was on top of things" (Kissinger 1982, 454-5).

After speaking with U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, to inform him of the situation and to encourage his efforts to restrain the Egyptians and Syrians and again with Abba Eban, Kissinger spoke with General Brent Scowcroft, deputy NSC Director, in Washington. Kissinger had spoken with Scowcroft earlier in the morning to order a 9:00 A.M. meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG) to "canvass the views of the government."⁵ Kissinger now turned to instructing Scowcroft on the agenda for the WASG meeting and asked that he obtain plans for moving the U.S. Sixth Fleet into the eastern Mediterranean and to reenforce the force if necessary. He emphasized that no departments of the government were to brief the press on their own. "When anything was to be said," Kissinger ordered, "Haig or I would clear it. The President or Haig should decide whether the White House or some other agency would do the briefing" (Kissinger 1982, 455).

At 9:00 A.M. Kissinger was informed by Shalev that the Egyptians were now attacking across the the Suez Canal in force. Eban would call soon after with the same information. At 9:20 A.M. Kissinger again spoke with Dobrynin having "long since resolved any doubt as to what was happening." In Kissinger's words:

... I told Dobrynin that Egypt and Syria had launched a surprise attack. When Dobrynin protested that Zayyat was claiming the opposite, I replied sharply.

⁵ As Kissinger explains: "The Washington Special Actions Group, or WSAG, was an interdepartmental group responsible for coordinating policy during crises and reviewing contingency plans. It was formed in 1969. It was chaired by me and included the Deputy Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, together with whatever other experts the subject required" (1982, n316).

You and I know that is baloney. If they [the Israelis] are going to attack they are not going to attack in the the Gulf of Suez. . . . How is it that the Syrians and Egyptians are starting at the same minute all along the front if it started with an Israeli attack?

I warned Dobrynin that all that had been achieved in East-West relations might be at risk if the Middle East went out of control. (1982, 458-9)

The conversation, Kissinger has suggested, was "the beginning of a protracted duel in which Washington and Moscow, each professing its devotion to cooperation, sought to weaken the other without risking an open confrontation" (1982, 459). The duel was also to be the first serious challenge to the U.S.-Soviet détente founded at the Moscow Summit.

Kissinger believed that the Israelis would, as U.S. experts had advised him, win the war within seventy-two hours after recovering from the initial surprise of the attack (Kissinger 1982, 472). On the basis of this assumption and on his assessment of the U.S. diplomatic position in the Middle East, Kissinger proposed that the U.S. strategy for dealing with the war should be to delay any significant action until the Israelis were posed to win. His initial tactic was to propose to the Soviets that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. offer a joint resolution in the U.N. Security Council, calling for a cessation of hostilities and a return of forces to pre-war lines. If the Soviets agreed to co-sponsor such a resolution, Kissinger reasoned, the war could be brought to a quick end, with little or no increase of Soviet influence in the region. If the Soviets refused, as Kissinger knew was probable, the U.S. "would have gained the time for Israel to restore the status quo ante" (Kissinger 1982, 471). In the meantime Soviet action might be delayed by diplomatic wrangling over a possible resolution. The proposal would also have the advantage of appearing to be a balanced one, taking into consideration Soviet interests and not openly hostile toward the Arab states.

By 9:35 on the morning of the 6th, after consulting with Alexander Haig and President Nixon, Kissinger put a proposal for a jointly sponsored Security Council cease-fire resolution to Dobrynin. The U.S. would support a simple cease-fire with a return by both sides to pre-war lines. The U.S. would be prepared to insist that Israel return to positions occupied before October 6. As Kissinger recalls:

I warned that if the Soviets acted irresponsibly we would have no choice but to let nature take its course, that is to say, simply wait for the inevitable Israeli victory. "That," I said ominously, "will affect a lot of relationships." I told Dobrynin that we would not proceed in the Security Council until we had a reply from Moscow to our proposal and expressed the hope that Moscow in its turn would refrain from unilateral action (Kissinger 1982, 471).

On the pretext of rumors that the Egyptians were planning their own action in the Security Council, Kissinger spoke with Dobrynin at 11:25 and again suggested that Soviet failure to support the U.S. cease-fire proposal would have adverse effects on the future course of U.S.-Soviet relations. Kissinger argued that the U.S. "offer of a joint cease-fire resolution adhering to the status quo ante was to our mutual advantage."

[W]e don't believe this will last 72 hours and after that the problem will be to get the Israelis back to the cease-fire line. If we agree on this course no matter what the military operations, no matter how successful the Israelis might be, we will stick to this proposal and we will be prepared to oppose them. (Kissinger 1982, 472)

He asked Dobrynin for an "urgent reply" to the U.S. proposal.

At 2:30 P.M. of the 6th Kissinger left New York for Washington. While Kissinger was en route the first official communication from Moscow since the beginning of the war arrived at the White House. It made plain what the initial Soviet response to the U.S. cease-fire proposal was to be: delay. According to Kissinger the message read:

The Soviet leadership got the information about the beginning of military actions in the Middle East at the same time that you got it. We take all possible measures to clarify the real state of affairs, since the information from there is of a contradictory nature. We fully share your concern about the conflagration of the situation in the Middle East. We repeatedly pointed in the past to the dangerous situation in that area.

We are considering now as well as you what to do, possible steps to be taken. We hope soon to contact you again for possible coordination of positions. (Kissinger 1982, 473)

The Soviets were going to wait and see what was to happen, just as the Americans would, a response that Kissinger saw as "not inconsistent" with his strategy. The mention of possible coordination of responses indicated to Kissinger that the Soviet Union would not "mount a political assault against us in the United Nations" (1982, 473). Kissinger replied to Dobrynin that he had received the Soviet note, and said:

"I can't say that it is a model of solidity. It either means you are confused or you are cooperating with them." Dobrynin volubly protested that Moscow needed only a few more hours to chart its course; meetings were taking place that very moment. I warned that we would consider a General Assembly debate a "frivolous act." And I ratcheted up our warnings another notch:

If it turns into a General Assembly debate we will let it take its course. We are certain it will turn out to be a military victory for the Israelis. Then everyone would come to us. If it turns nasty we will shut off communications for awhile. (Kissinger 1982, 473)

In other words, if the Soviets weren't going to deal on the U.S. terms, they might be shut out of the solution all together.

Later in the evening, at 7:20 P.M., Kissinger called Dobrynin to say that the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. had been instructed "to consume the evening in 'consultations'—the process of informal meetings among delegates, by which the Security Council establishes its jurisdiction, without holding a formal session or bringing matters to a vote" (Kissinger 1982, 474).

Kissinger reviewed the U.S. proposal and position to date and said that the U.S.

. . . reading of the situation is that the Arab attack has been totally contained, that they are now going to be pushed back and the process will accelerate as the [Israeli] mobilization is complete which will not be later than Monday morning and after that we will see what we have seen before. (Kissinger 1982, 474)

The Arabs had made their point, Kissinger continued, the problem now was to end the war as quickly as possible. Dobrynin replied with the principle Soviet problem and concern: "As I understand our position the difficulty we are now facing is that the Arabs are trying to regain the lands occupied by Israel. They have been using the argument to us and for us to tell them you cannot free your land, it is ridiculous" (Kissinger 1982, 474). Kissinger replied that the U.S. would give the Soviets until 9:00 A.M. the next day to decide what they wanted to do and convey it to the United States.⁶

It was not until 3:30 P.M. on the afternoon of October 7 that the Soviet response reached Kissinger in the form of a letter from Brezhnev. As Kissinger recalls:

It turned out to be essentially another stall. . . . Brezhnev's letter to Nixon avoided any reference to joint action at the Security Council. It dealt not with how to terminate the war but with Brezhnev's favorite Mideast theme: joint U.S.-Soviet diplomacy to impose a Mideast peace on Arab terms, based on the familiar total Israeli withdrawal in return for security guarantees that were not spelled out. Pending that, Brezhnev wrote that, it would be "very important" for Israel to indicate "without any reservations" its willingness to withdraw from all Arab territories. Brezhnev implied that this would speed the end of the war but indicated no firm reciprocal Arab step. We were generously given the task of obtaining Israel's acquiescence by using our "influence." (1982, 480-1)

⁶ Kissinger admits that this was a bit of bravado on his part, noting that if "your side is winning—or you think it is—you can afford such abrupt procedures" (1982, 475). He makes no mention that the Soviets might have been offended by such tactics.

On the evening of Monday, October 8th, Kissinger gave a "long-prepared speech to the Pacem in Terris Conference in Washington. In his memoirs Kissinger noted inserting "a few sentences warning the Soviet Union: 'Our policy with respect to détente is clear: We shall resist aggressive foreign policies. Détente cannot survive irresponsibility in any area, including the Middle East'" (Kissinger 1982, 490-1). Apart from the warnings inserted to address the current situation, the speech contained an extensive characterization of détente with the Soviet Union and U.S. foreign policy objectives.

The first official public U.S. statement on the war came in a news conference by Department of State spokesperson Robert J. McCloskey in New York on the morning of the 6th (Gwertzman 1973a, 1).⁷ During the news conference McCloskey gave an account of Kissinger's activities during the morning. Kissinger was said to have "'urged restraint to avoid undermining any violation of the cease-fires in effect since August 1970, ' and to avoid any escalation and continuation of the fighting'" (Gwertzman 1973a, 1). McCloskey noted that Kissinger had spoken with U.N. General Secretary Kurt Waldheim to discuss possible action in the Security Council. He revealed that cables had been sent to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and King Hussein of Jordan in an effort to get them to urge restraint on the Arab states. McCloskey also reported that Egyptian Foreign Minister el-Zayyat had been spoken with prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

In *New York Times* reporting of the U.S. reaction, a "well-placed American official" was quoted as saying that the United States had been

⁷ Kissinger makes no note of the New York news conference in his account of the crisis. The text of the news conference was never printed in the State Department Bulletin.

surprised by the outbreak of the war and that the U.S. was inclined on the basis of the evidence it had received to "'accept Israeli claims that the Egyptians and the Syrians 'jumped off' first at 8:00 A.M. our time'" (Gwertzman 1973a, 14). In his news conference McCloskey said that the United States did not "'have sufficient information at this time' to determine who fired the first shot"(Gwertzman 1973a, 14).

Later in the day McCloskey held a second news conference in Washington after the conclusion of the WSAG meeting there. The decision had been taken, said McCloskey to "'continue in any appropriate way to use American influence toward achieving a cessation of fighting because we have always felt that a conflict in that part of the world could carry very serious consequences'" (Gwertzman 1973a, 14).

On the 7th, the United States publicly called for a meeting of the U.N. Security Council to call for an end to the hostilities. In a news conference McCloskey explained that the U.S. position was to approach the "'Security Council consideration with a view to finding the most appropriate means for bringing hostilities in the area to an end.'" McCloskey claimed that U.S. "'... interests are also to help find the means to restore conditions in the area conducive to a settlement of long-standing disputes and differences in the Middle East'" (Gwertzman 1973b, 1, 15).

During the news conference McCloskey also officially announced that the United States had become convinced that Egypt and Syria were responsible for initiating the war. He noted as well that "the Unuited [sic] States was less interested in passing judgement than in resolving the crisis"(Gwertzman 1973b, 15). The United States had been in communication, McCloskey continued, with the Soviets, the British, the

Israelis, the Egyptians and Secretary General of the U.N. in attempts to bring an end to the war. McCloskey admitted that the Sixth Fleet had been moved but would not comment on any reason why. He also revealed that there had been ongoing meetings of the WSAG since the war began.

On October 8, the White House disclosed that President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev had exchanged private messages on the war the night before (Gwertzman 1973c, 1). No details of the exchanges were discussed, but news reporters were invited into the Oval Office to hear from President Nixon and Kissinger. According to the *New York Times* report of the meeting, the President "expressed the American desire to get a broad consensus in the United Nations" and that the U.S. "was not seeking a 'grandstand play where the United States will go in and unilaterally make a move which then fails'" (Gwertzman 1973c, 16).

The *Times* also reported the views of "a well-placed official" who said that the United States and the Soviet Union were maintaining contact with one another "and were trying to reach agreement on what to suggest to the United Nations Security Council." The source also said that "the exchanges were being carried out under a general understanding between the two countries to avoid confrontation . . . and not on the basis of any specific Soviet-American accord" (Gwertzman 1973c, 16). A spokesman for the State Department was quoted as saying that the U.S. and the Soviet Union were cooperating "in the spirit" of the two summit meetings.

The *Times* also briefly mentioned Kissinger's speech at the Pacem in Terris Conference in Washington in which he said that while the likelihood of Soviet-American confrontation had been greatly reduced détente could not survive irresponsibility in the Middle East. An aide to Kissinger was

quoted as having said after the speech that Kissinger "did not intend to suggest that Moscow was acting in anything but a responsible manner" (Gwertzman 1973c, 16).

The first official Soviet public response to the war came on October 8 in a government statement printed in the Communist Party daily *Pravda*. The statement blamed the war on the Israeli government:

Frustrating all efforts aimed at the establishment of a just peace in the Near East and perpetuating constant provocations against neighboring Arab states, the Israeli military has done everything possible to fan the smoldering coals of military conflict in the region—a conflict unleashed by Tel Aviv in 1967. The Israeli military's incessant armed provocations against Egypt, Syria and Lebanon have repeatedly created critical situations in this area. Israel recently concentrated considerable numbers of armed forces along the ceasefire line with Syria and Egypt, called up its reservists and, exacerbating the situation to the breaking point, launched military operations. (*Pravda* October 8, 1973; 15)

The statement continued on to condemn the "annexationist policy of Israel" and to state the Soviet Union's firm support for "the legitimate demands of the Arab states for the liberation of all Arab territory occupied by Israel in 1967" (*Pravda* October 8, 1973; 15). The statement noted as well that Israeli actions "may cost the people of Israel dearly" and that the consequences of "such an unreasonable course will be fully borne by the leaders of the state of Israel" (*Pravda* October 8, 1973; 15-6).

The publicly professed Soviet attitude toward the United States vis-a-vis the war, however, was markedly more temperate. During a speech in honor of visiting Japanese Premier Kaknei Tanaka on October 8th, Brezhnev "put special emphasis on the importance relaxing East-West tensions." He noted that it "was in this connection that he dealt with the Middle East" (Smith 1973a, 17). He said that the Soviet Union was prepared to make its contribution towards insuring peace in the Middle East. Brezhnev did not

mention the United States directly in connection with the war or in connection with ongoing negotiation efforts. Nevertheless, Brezhnev did refer to the "Arab countries as long-term 'victims of aggression by Israel,' but notably, he refrained from calling for a cease-fire in the conflict and from specifically accusing Israel of having started the flare-up" (Smith 1973a, 17). Nixon Administration officials publicly commented on the moderate tone of Soviet statements on the war, noting that Brezhnev's comments "were regarded as keeping with the apparent Soviet desire to avoid a confrontation with the United States" (Gwertzman 1973c, 17).

Early on the morning of October 9, however, Kissinger received a call from the Israeli Ambassador, Simcha Dinitz, asking if the United States could resupply Israel with war material. Kissinger was surprised by the request because only hours before Dinitz had given his assurances that the war was going well for Israel. In truth, the situation had changed rather drastically. Israeli losses in men, equipment, and supplies had been greater than at first thought, especially on the Siani front. If Israel were to prevail immediate resupply was necessary. It was deemed so essential, in fact, that Dinitz, in a secret meeting with Kissinger in the Map Room of the White House, revealed that Golda Meir was prepared to come to Washington to put the Israeli case directly to Nixon. Dinitz also told Kissinger that the immediate Israeli strategy would be to launch what they hoped would prove a decisive offensive against Syria in order to be able to turn full attention to the Egyptian front (Kissinger 1982, 493).

The news of Israel's losses changed the diplomatic situation completely. As Kissinger admits in his memoirs, his "entire diplomacy and resupply policy had been geared to a rapid Israeli victory. . . . Israel [now]

stood on the threshold of a bitter war of attrition that it could not possibly win given the disparity of manpower" (1982, 492). The new situation created an obvious diplomatic opportunity for the Soviet Union. An Arab victory over Israel with Soviet arms would do much to enhance Soviet prestige in the region. It would also demonstrate to the Arabs that they might gain their political objectives by force rather than by negotiation with the United States and Israel. Because Kissinger's previous Middle East policy had sought to create a circumstance in which negotiations were the only viable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an Arab victory at arms would be a serious setback for U.S. diplomacy in the region.

On the 9th the Soviet public position appeared to change somewhat when a message from Brezhnev to Houari Boumediene, the President of Algeria, was made public. It called on the Algerian leadership to "use all means at their disposal and take all required steps with a view toward supporting Syria in the difficult struggle imposed by the Israeli aggressor" (Gwertzman 1973d, 1; 20). The *New York Times* reported that similar messages had been sent to all of the Arab states with whom the Soviets had relations. Kissinger recalls that reports of the messages caused him some concern about Soviet motives (Kissinger 1982, 494). Official U.S. sources were quoted as saying, however, that the Soviet's message was to have been expected for political reasons in the circumstances. One source said that if the Soviets had remained silent "' . . . they would have been finished off in the Middle East'" (Gwertzman 1973d, 20).

On the morning of the 10th Kissinger was told that "some twenty [Soviet] transports were on the way to Syria via Hungary and Yugoslavia" (Kissinger 1982, 479). Just after 8:00 A.M. Dobrynin called with a message

concerning recent developments, a message that "he deemed important: The Soviet consultations with Egypt and Syria had been 'protracted' and 'not easy'." In any event the Soviet Union was now ready "'not to block adoption of a cease-fire resolution in the Security Council'." The Soviet Union, he said, would veto any call for a return to pre-war lines and instead favored a "cease-fire in place." The Soviet Union was also prepared to facilitate a negotiated peace "'on the basis of liberation of all Arab lands occupied by Israel'" (Kissinger 1982, 498). In other words, the Soviets were proposing a settlement that would allow the Arabs to retain gains made in the fighting and demonstrated their determination to support those gains by the initiation of the resupply airlift to Syria.⁸

Kissinger replied that the Soviet proposal was "constructive." He also let Dobrynin know that the United States was well aware of the Soviet airlift to Syria. The airlift, he said, was not helpful, and it would likely require the United States to do "at least the same" (Kissinger 1982, 498-9). Kissinger also said that the United States would need time to study the Soviet proposal. He would now stall negotiations with the Soviets in order to gain time to organize an American airlift and for the Israelis to organize their offensive against Syria. At 9:45 A.M. on October 10 Kissinger called Dobrynin to say that the U.S. would not be ready with a response for the Soviets until the next day. According to Kissinger: "Dobrynin, who knew very well what I was doing, responded with affable menace: 'You are playing quite well. Don't overplay the theme of Soviet irresponsibility.' I warned him again about the massive Soviet airlift" (Kissinger 1982, 503).

⁸ For a detailed account of the Soviet airlift effort see Quandt (1976).

Phase II: October 10 to October 18. On the 10th the Israelis had begun their counteroffensive against Syria across the Golan Heights. By the end of the day the tide of battle had again turned and the Israelis were within twenty miles of Damascus. On the same day Soviet supplies began arriving in Egypt via a new phase of the Soviet airlift. Kissinger would learn that three (a number later revised by U.S. intelligence to seven) Soviet airborne divisions had been put on alert.

On Friday, October 12, Kissinger gave his first news conference of the war. The occasion was the first at which a high-ranking U.S. official publicly articulated U.S. policy and explained U.S. actions during the conflict. Kissinger points in his memoirs to the news conference as a significant statement of U.S. policy, because it was intended to convey the moderate nature of the U.S. position with respect for the war so far. The news conference contained a number of implicit assurances to the Soviets that the United States wished to adhere to the understandings of détente in the current situation.⁹ After the news conference Kissinger lunched with Dobrynin, who presented Kissinger with an unsigned note complaining about U.S. public criticism of Soviet support for the Arab side and about maneuvers of the U.S. Sixth Fleet near Crete. After all, Dobrynin pointed out, the U.S. had been helping the Israelis, and the Soviets had not made much of it. Kissinger responded by letting Dobrynin know that the U.S. was aware that the Soviet had placed airborne divisions on alert. The news, according to Kissinger, made Dobrynin "stiffen," perhaps with surprise.

⁹ The substance of Kissinger's news conference of October 12 will be considered in greater detail below.

Kissinger warned that any Soviet military intervention would be "resisted" and would "wreck the entire fabric of U.S.-Soviet relations" (Kissinger 1982, 508).

At 8:00 P.M. Dobrynin delivered two new messages from the Soviet leadership. The first protested alleged Israeli air attacks on civilian targets in Egypt and Syria, as well as a torpedo boat attack against a Soviet ship in a Syrian harbor. The second note accused the United States of resupplying Israel, an accusation which Kissinger regarded as "pure insolence" in the circumstances and which he "curtly dismissed." Kissinger now warned that any Soviet military intervention, whatever the pretext, would be met by U.S. force. It was a much more specific threat than he had made at lunch and, therefore, more forceful. He also informed Dobrynin that the United States had asked Britain to "explore the idea of submitting a cease-fire resolution the next day," a request that Kissinger had made of the British earlier in the day (Kissinger 1982, 509-10).

By the end of the evening of the 12th, Kissinger believed that he might have secured British agreement to introduce a cease-fire resolution to the Security Council that the Soviets were prepared to accept. The proposed resolution would call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to pre-war borders. On the morning of the 13th, however, the tentative plan fell through. The British were concerned that the proposed resolution would not be effective and thus had doubts about whether they should be involved with it. The Soviets, after initially signalling acceptance of an alternate proposal to be put forward by Australia in the event that Britain begged-off the original plan, also balked.

While the British and Soviets were considering the U.S. cease-fire proposal, the United States received information that the Egyptians were preparing a new offensive in the Sinai, partly to relieve pressure on Syria. Kissinger suspected that the Soviets had been using consideration of the cease-fire proposal to gain time for the Egyptians to prepare their attack. It was very probably at this point in the war that Kissinger decided that any Soviet rejection of the cease-fire resolution should be met with a U.S. airlift of supplies to Israel at "maximum capacity" using U.S. planes.¹⁰ He had by this time become convinced that some kind of confrontation was inevitable (Kissinger 1982, 518). By 5:30 P.M. on October the 13th the U.S. airlift was well underway.

The U.S. airlift was an unmistakable signal to the Soviets that the United States was not to be intimidated by the Soviet airlift, the alert of Soviet airborne divisions, or by the possibility of a renewed Egyptian offensive. Kissinger prepared the way for this message and reenforced it in two conversations with Dobrynin. On the afternoon of October 13 when the Soviets formally rejected the Australian variation of the cease-fire, Kissinger told Dobrynin that the United States would now "wash its hands of it [the

¹⁰ To this point in the War the United States had been supplying Israel with equipment, but the material was being carried to Israel on planes owned by the Israeli airline El Al and was limited to what had previously been purchased by or promised to Israel. No U.S. planes had been used and the effort was limited in scope. The eventual U.S. decision to resupply Israel using U.S. planes had been taken over the objection of several members of the Nixon Administration, some of whom believed that Israel was in better shape than it had admitted (Kissinger 1982, 500; 515). The initial U.S. effort was to have used charter flights, although this plan fell through because no U.S. air-charter company was willing to take the risk. Kissinger was also of a mind to delay until the battlefield situation was clearer and until diplomacy had had a chance to work (Kissinger 1982, 502). On October 13 Nixon ordered the beginning of the U.S. efforts which was to use U.S. transport aircraft, including the largest plane in the American fleet, the C-5A, which would provide replacements for Israeli warplanes lost in the fighting to date.

cease-fire proposal] and would let nature take its course." His meaning, Kissinger recalls, was conveyed to Scrowcroft in Kissinger's instructions for the airlift: "'Since we are going to have a confrontation we should go all out.' I instructed him to load ships with equipment for Israel so that a cease-fire that ended each side's airlift would not suddenly cut off Israel's lifeline" (Kissinger 1982, 520). The Soviet's reception of the American message was indicated by Dobrynin's delivery of an "oral message" from Brezhnev late on the 13th to the effect that Moscow had been prepared all along to implement a cease-fire but U.S. delays had caused the Arabs to change their minds.

Kissinger replied

. . . . sarcastically to Dobrynin that perhaps the growing Soviet airlift (now 140 planes) contributed to Arab determination. Dobrynin reiterated the hope of his leadership that what happened should not undo all the good that had been accomplished. But the time for soothing generalities was over. A tolerable conclusion depended on our ability to convince the Soviets that there would be no flinching on our part, either to protect détente or for the fear of the Arab reaction. "We will not under any circumstances let détente be used for unilateral advantage," I said. "[D]on't think that we will accept a military setback in the Middle East". . . . I claimed that we had delayed to give diplomacy a chance. But the Egyptian proposal that a return to the 1967 borders be a precondition of a cease-fire was, and would remain, "unacceptable." At most we would consider a reference to Security Council resolution 242 as part of a cease-fire but would not go beyond it or define "secure boundaries" more precisely. Basically, I said, we would let matters develop for three or four days and then see what the situation was. We were ready to discuss a Middle East settlement but only after a cease-fire. Moscow should not believe that it could pressure us by military means. Dobrynin was not eager for controversy. He would report everything I had said, "quote . . . unquote," he assured me. (Kissinger 1982, 521; correction in original)

At noon on the 14th, after the Egyptian offensive had started and after the U.S. airlift had begun in earnest, Kissinger again spoke with Dobrynin to reenforce the U.S. message: "I told Dobrynin that Soviet actions had provoked a U.S. airlift of considerable magnitude. I warned him against raising the ante; we had the capacity to expand the scale of the airlift to match any Soviet escalation. By the same token, we were prepared to stop the airlift

after a cease-fire was achieved. Dobrynin, subdued, said he would report this to his leaders as a 'direct quotation'; it was 'important for them to know the mood'" (Kissinger 1982, 522). The U.S. airlift of supplies had by then exceeded the Soviet effort (Kissinger 1982, 525).

On the 15th the Soviet Union repeated its public pledges of support for the Arabs. In a joint communiqué on meetings between Brezhnev and the President of Algeria, the Soviets had promised to "'assist in every way' the Arab effort to recapture territory ceased by Israel in 1967. . . . (Smith 1973d, 1). Similar pledges had been made in a speech by Soviet Premier Kosygin in which he said that the Soviet Union would "'continue strengthening further solidarity' with the Arabs . . ." (Smith 1973d, 17). Kosygin's speech also explicitly rejected the idea that the Soviets were not interested in improved relations with the West in general, and with the United States in particular:

We cannot help but see that the opponents of détente are trying to use every pretext to revive the atmosphere of the cold war and cause mistrust in the policy of peaceful coexistence. . . . They are now trying in every way to exploit for these purposes the resumption of hostilities in the Middle East, whitewashing the aggressor and accusing the victims of aggression. . . .

They have gone so far in this that they are presenting the Soviet Union's solidarity with the victims of Israeli aggression—with the Arab countries—as the very source of tension in that area. . . . It is difficult to imagine anything further from the truth (quoted in Smith 1973d, 17).

On October 15 the Israeli Army had managed to repulse the Egyptian attack in the Siani. Kissinger was advised by U.S. experts that the Israelis would have broken the Egyptian lines within a week. News of these developments on the battlefield apparently had an immediate effect in Moscow. On the morning of the 15th Dobrynin informed Kissinger that the Soviet leadership was now studying the U.S. proposal "to link a cease-fire

proposal not to Israeli's withdrawal to the 1967 borders but to a general reaffirmation of Resolution 242. . ." (Kissinger 1982, 525). This indicated a substantial change in the Soviet's instance of the 6th on a negotiated peace "on the basis of liberation of all Arab lands occupied by Israel."

On the morning of the 16th Kissinger received news that Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin was on his way to Cairo to personally negotiate with Sadat on a cease-fire resolution along the lines of the American proposal.¹¹ On the same day the United States also received news that a small force of Israeli tanks had rushed behind Egyptian lines, crossed the Canal and was in the process of attempting to destroy Egyptian surface-to-air missile (SAM) emplacements. This news was significant because the SAM sites had prevented the Israelis from using the full weight of the air-power against Egyptian armor. The Israelis would likely be able to press their attack with success. By the end of the day, Kissinger felt confident enough about the Israeli's position to report to President Nixon that "the odds were two out of three in favour of a rapid conclusion of the war" (Kissinger 1982, 532). The next morning Israel was able to reenforce its bridgehead across the canal. Over the next day Israeli forces had managed to cut off lines of supply for the Egyptian Third Army, stranding it on the east side of the Suez Canal.

On the evening of October 18th Dobrynin called Kissinger with a message from Brezhnev. It was "a Soviet draft proposal for submission to the Security Council: (1) a call for a cease-fire in place; (2) an appeal for an immediate phased Israeli withdrawal 'from the occupied Arab territories to the line in accordance with Resolution 242 of the Security Council, with

¹¹ An account of the meetings between Kosygin and Sadat over the next four days can be found in Sadat (1978, 258-9).

completion of this withdrawal in the shortest period of time'; and (3) an appeal for 'appropriate consultation' aimed at establishing a just peace" (Kissinger 1982, 539-40). Kissinger rejected the second point as unacceptable on its face; the third he noted needed to be more specific. The first was acceptable because it had been a part of U.S. proposals for a cease-fire resolution. The message from Brezhnev indicated to Kissinger that the Soviets were for the first time really ready to negotiate, but he decided to delay the process in the hopes that the situation on the ground would strengthen the U.S. and the Israeli diplomatic position (Kissinger 1982, 540).

In response to Kissinger's efforts at delay Brezhnev proposed that Kissinger come directly to Moscow to work out all problems with the cease-fire proposal. The invitation, addressed to President Nixon, arrived in Washington just after 11:00 A.M. on October the 19th. Noting the potential danger for U.S.-Soviet relations in the Middle East, the message proposed that

Since time is essential and now not only everyday but ever hour counts, my colleagues and I suggest that the U.S. Secretary of State and your closest associate Dr. Kissinger come in an urgent manner to Moscow to conduct appropriate negotiations with him as your authorized personal representative. It would be good if he could come tomorrow, October 20. I will appreciate your speedy reply (Kissinger 1982, 542).

Kissinger informed Dobrynin that he would study Brezhnev's proposal and invitation to Moscow. After consultation with the Israeli Ambassador and the President, it was decided that Kissinger would go to Moscow, as suggested by Brezhnev, on the morning of October 20th.

It was in Moscow that the text of the cease-fire proposal, passed as Security Council resolution 338 of October 22, was agreed upon during the meeting on Sunday the 21st. To Kissinger's surprise Brezhnev and

Gromyko, with whom the talks were conducted, accepted a draft American proposal within four hours of discussion and with only minor editorial changes (Kissinger 1982, 554). On his return from Moscow on October 22 Kissinger paid a visit to Tel Aviv at the invitation of Golda Meir. Kissinger briefed Meir on the negotiations in Moscow and on the U.S. position. Meir asked Kissinger whether there had been any secret U.S.-Soviet agreement to force Israel back to the 1967 borders. He "reassured Golda and her colleagues that there were no secret deals nor any restrictions on what would be put forward by the parties" (Kissinger 1982, 565). While he was in Israel, Kissinger received news that Egypt had agreed to the cease-fire effective at 5:00 P.M.

Phase III: October 23 to October 26. The cease-fire called for in Security Council resolution 338 was violated almost immediately. During a stopover in London on the way back to the United States, Kissinger was informed of rumors of a Syrian offensive, information that he relayed to Moscow via the Soviet Ambassador to Britain. He warned the Soviets that the U.S. could not be responsible for what might happen as the result of a new Syrian attack. Both sides accused the other of having been the first to resume fighting. When he finally arrived back in Washington at 3:00 A.M. on October the 23rd, Kissinger was greeted with complaints of violations from both the Israeli and Egyptian governments.

Kissinger called Yuli Vorontsov, the Soviet chargé in Washington,¹² to inform the Soviets of the cease-fire violations. He proposed that the

¹² Dobrynin had been in Moscow for negotiations on the cease-fire proposal and had not yet returned to Washington D.C.

Secretary General of the U.N. be instructed by the Security Council to ask the parties to comply with the cease-fire immediately. Kissinger also suggested that a U.N. peacekeeping force might be dispatched to the area of the violations. Within minutes of his conversation with Kissinger, the Soviet chargé called with a message from Brezhnev that had been, atypically, addressed directly to Kissinger rather than to the President. In the note, according to Kissinger, Brezhnev

... told me that Israeli forces were moving southward along the West Bank of the Suez Canal. This information came from Moscow's "own reliable information"—in other words, not from Egyptian sources, but presumably from the supersonic MiG 25 Foxbats that were flying reconnaissance missions from Egyptian airfields. Brezhnev called Israeli actions "unacceptable" and a "flagrant deceit" from which one had to conclude that the Egyptians were in deep trouble. He suggested a Security Council meeting at noon—less than two hours away—reconfirming the cease fire, and ordering all forces to be withdrawn to the line they occupied when the October 22 cease-fire resolution had been passed. . . . (Kissinger 1982, 570)

Shortly after 11:00 A.M. Kissinger received a call from Golda Meir with the message that it had been the Egyptians who had been the first to violate the cease fire. She conveyed to Kissinger the impression that the Egyptian Third Army had now been completely cut off from any resupply. Kissinger realized that Israel was now in a position to starve the army out of existence (Kissinger 1982, 571). He suggested that the Israelis agree to stop fighting and pull back a few hundred yards from whatever positions they currently held. After speaking with Meir, Kissinger called Vorontsov to say that the United States would not be ready to vote in the Security Council until late in the afternoon. At noon, the Israeli Ambassador called to say that Israel would not withdraw from any positions that they then occupied.

Soon after, at 12:36 P.M., Kissinger received another message from Brezhnev that "spoke heatedly of Israel's 'treachery'. It offered absolute

assurance that Arab leaders would observe the cease fire" (Kissinger 1982, 572). The message did not, however, suggest whether or not, or to what line, the Israelis should withdraw. The message's ambiguity, given the Israeli refusal to withdraw, was useful to Kissinger, who decided to preempt a more concrete Soviet proposal that would make for Israeli intransigence a new and probably difficult issue. Kissinger replied:

I want to assure you that we assume full responsibility to bring a complete end of hostilities on the part of Israel. Our own information would indicate that responsibility for the violation of the cease fire belongs to the Egyptian side, but this is not the time to discuss that particular issue. We have insisted with Israel that they take immediate steps to cease hostilities, and I urge you to take similar measures with respect to the Egyptian side. (Kissinger 1982, 572)

This reply promised more than Kissinger might actually have been able to deliver in the circumstances, conveying as it did the impression that the U.S. had such influence with Israel that it could assume full responsibility for Israeli actions on the battlefield.

At 1:30 P.M. Kissinger spoke with Vorontsov to say that the United States would support a call in the Security Council for a cease-fire and a return to the lines occupied by both sides when the cease-fire went into effect. They agreed that there be no open argument between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the Security Council. On October 23 the Security Council passed resolution 339, urging a resumption of the cease-fire on the terms Kissinger and Vorontsov had discussed.

On October 24 the U.S. was informed by Cairo that the Israelis had resumed attacks against Egyptian positions. In another note to Nixon, President Sadat asked that the U.S. ensure that the Israelis be held to the

cease fire, using U.S. troops if necessary.¹³ Through their Ambassador in Washington the Israelis claimed that the Egyptian Third Army had attempted to break out of Israeli encirclement in several directions. Israel was not simply defending itself. Kissinger was by now extremely skeptical of Israeli claims and warned Ambassador Dinitz about continuation of the fighting. If it were allowed to continue, Kissinger said,

... a confrontation with the Soviets was inevitable. Gone too would be all hopes for a new relationship with Egypt, together with all prospects for negotiation. Late the previous evening the Soviets had issued an official statement warning Israel of the "great consequences" if it did not stop its "aggression." All the factors that had elicited the alerting of Soviet airborne divisions and the augmentation of Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean had increased in ominous importance with Brezhnev's personal involvement. I told Dinitz that the art of foreign policy was to know when to clinch one's victories. There were limits beyond which we could not go, with all our friendship for Israel, and one of them was to make the leader of another superpower look like an idiot. I said to Dinitz that if Sadat asked the Soviets, as he had us, to enforce the cease-fire with their own troops, Israel would have outsmarted itself. (Kissinger 1982, 576)

Dinitz replied that Israel would stop fighting if Egypt did.

On the assumption that Sadat had sent a similar message to the Soviets, Kissinger decided to head-off a Soviet response by speaking with Dobrynin before the Soviets had time to formulate their position. At 9:45 A.M. Kissinger called Dobrynin, and attempted to distance the superpowers from responsibility for the continued fighting, noting that "the madmen in the Middle East seem to be at it again." He said that the United States had asked Israel to stop any offensive operations against Egypt. Kissinger also

¹³ This was not, it must be noted, the first Egyptian communication with the United States. The U.S. had first heard from the Egyptians, with whom they did not at the time have diplomatic relations, on October 7; and they stayed in contact with the U.S. throughout the war (Kissinger 1982, 481). While these U.S.-Egyptian communications are of importance to the whole story of Kissinger's diplomacy during the crisis, they do not bear directly on U.S.-Soviet communications and have for the sake of brevity been ignored in the foregoing account.

suggested, in a fashion that might make it appear as if it were a concession by the U.S., that the United States might be willing to send military attachés to the front to observe the cease-fire until U.N. observers could be put into place. He also said that he would send along a copy of Sadat's message to Nixon. In Kissinger's reasoning, the proposal "would give the Kremlin a face-saving formula if it were seeking one," and the copy of Sadat's message was "a sign of goodwill" (Kissinger 1982, 577).

At 10:19 A.M. Dobrynin called to say that another message from Brezhnev was on its way. It detailed Israeli attacks on both sides of the Suez Canal within hours of the last cease-fire resolution (339). It was "sharp" in its tone and, as Kissinger saw it, "its conclusion was as vague as its tone was menacing:

We, naturally, have questions as to what is behind all this. I wish to say frankly, Mr. President, that we are confident that you have possibilities to influence Israel with an aim toward putting an end to such provocative behavior of Tel Aviv.

We should like to hope that we both will be true to our word and to the understandings that we have reached.

I will appreciate information on your steps towards Israel's strict and immediate compliance with the decision of the Security Council of this October 22 and 23.
(Kissinger 1982, 578)

Kissinger told Dobrynin that the U.S. would take some time to consider its reply.

Kissinger then spoke with Alexander Haig to ask that Haig speak with Ambassador Dinitz in Nixon's name to urge restraint, hoping that a message directly from the President would have greater impact on Israeli behavior. Haig learned from Dinitz, a message that would also be conveyed to U.S. Ambassador Keating by Golda Meir, that the Israelis were now trying to "absorb fire without answer," that they were not trying to advance, and that

they had no intention of prosecuting any attack on the west bank of the Suez Canal. At 1:00 P.M. Kissinger sent a message in Nixon's name to Brezhnev and Sadat reporting on Israel's assurances to Haig and Ambassador Keating.

Soon after, Kissinger received another note from Sadat to Nixon saying that Israel was continuing offensive operations and agreeing to what the United States, according to Kissinger, "had not offered: the immediate dispatch of American observers or troops for the implementation of the Security Council cease-fire on the Egyptian side" (Kissinger 1982, 579). Apparently, Kissinger's indication to Dobrynin of American willingness to send U.S. observers to the front had been transmitted to Sadat by the Soviets and had been either misunderstood or misrepresented. Sadat indicated that he was "formally" making the same request of the Soviets. Shortly after receiving Sadat's message, Kissinger was informed that Egypt had publicly called for a Security Council Meeting to request that U.S. and Soviet troops be sent to the Sinai to enforce the cease-fire.

At 3:35 P.M. Dobrynin called Kissinger with a message from Foreign Minister Gromyko saying that the Israelis were continuing their attacks against Egyptian positions and were in fact escalating them. In a meeting with Dobrynin at 4:00 P.M. Kissinger told the Soviet Ambassador that the U.S. would veto any Security Council resolution calling for the introduction of "troops by permanent members of the security Council—both a delicate way of raising the issue" according to Kissinger, "and a face-saving formula for the Soviets to back down" (1982, 580). Dobrynin was conciliatory, suggesting that the Security Council need not consider any new formal action, but simply express a "consensus" on the need for a return to the cease-fire. Kissinger believed that this would have been a good way to

"diffuse the crisis" and came away from the meeting thinking that he and Dobrynin had begun to do so (Kissinger 1982, 580).

To Kissinger's surprise he learned from Dobrynin later in the evening of the 24th that the Soviet representative to the U.N., Yakov Malik, had received instructions "to support a resolution calling for the dispatch of Soviet and American troops to the Middle East if someone introduced it" (Kissinger 1982, 581). As the Egyptians had already publicly proclaimed their intention to do so, Security Council consideration of such a resolution was inevitable. Kissinger interpreted the message to mean that the Soviets "had decided on a showdown" (Kissinger 1982, 581). Dobrynin told Kissinger that what he had told him in their discussion earlier in the evening had been "wrong." The Soviet Union now wanted the United Nations to send troops—including Soviet troops—to the Middle East. Kissinger "curtly" told Dobrynin that the United State would veto any such proposal.

Kissinger called Dobrynin again at 7:25 P.M. and, according to his recollection:

I urged him not to push us to an extreme. We would cooperate on sending more U.N. observers; we would not accept Soviet troops in any guise. Dobrynin replied that in Moscow "they have become so angry they want troops." He blamed us for allowing "the Israelis to do what they wanted. I urged him to prevent such a resolution being introduced: "It would be a pity to be in a confrontation." In a crisis there was nothing congenial about Dobrynin; he was all business. He would mention any concerns to Moscow, he said, but he was sure that they had already made up their minds. (Kissinger 1982, 582)

At 8: 25 P.M. Dobrynin informed Kissinger that the Egyptian Foreign Minister had, in a speech to the Security Council, formally asked that the United States and the Soviet Union send troops. Kissinger instructed Dobrynin on the need for restraint.

At 9:35 P.M. Dobrynin called Kissinger with another message from Brezhnev, so urgent that it had to be read over the phone. As Kissinger interpreted it, the message was

in effect an ultimatum: It proposed joint Soviet and American military forces to ensure not only the implementation of the cease-fire but also "of our understanding with you on the guarantee of the implementation of the decisions of the Security Council—in other words, the imposition of a comprehensive peace:

. . . Let us together, The USSR and the United States, urgently dispatch to Egypt the Soviet and American military contingents, to insure the implementation of the decision of the Security Council of October 22 and 23 concerning the cessation of fire and of all military activities and also of our understanding with you on the guarantee of the implementation of the decision of the Security Council.

It is necessary to adhere without delay. I will say it straight that if you find it impossible to act jointly with us in this matter, we should be faced with the necessity urgently to consider the question of taking appropriate steps unilaterally. We cannot allow arbitrariness on the part of Israel. . . .

It was one of the most serious challenges to an American President by a Soviet leader, from its peremptory salutation, "Mr. President," to its equally peremptory conclusion demanding an "immediate and clear reply." In between it proposed that American and Soviet military forces impose not just a cease-fire but a final settlement on terms that were not specified but that had been repeatedly spelled out by Moscow during the year and had just as often been rejected by us. And it threatened to send troops unilaterally if we refused. (Kissinger 1982, 583-4)

Kissinger warned Dobrynin that Moscow should not undertake any unilateral moves. That evening Kissinger was made aware that Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean were being reenforced. He had learned from the CIA that the Soviet airlift had been stopped earlier in the day; "the ominous implication being that the aircraft were being assembled to carry some of the airborne divisions whose increased alert status had also been noted" (Kissinger 1982, 584). East German forces had also been brought to an increased level of readiness. Kissinger recalls that there "were other ominous reports in especially sensitive areas," suggesting that Soviet

strategic forces had been alerted or placed in a higher condition of readiness (1982, 584).

After briefly conferring with Alexander Haig, Kissinger called a WSAG meeting for 10:00 P.M. to consider responses to the Brezhnev note. He then spoke with Israeli Ambassador Dinitz and briefed him on the Brezhnev letter, stating the U.S. intention to reject the proposal. Kissinger then spoke with Dobrynin to say that a meeting was being assembled to consider the Soviet note and warned him that: "This is of great concern. Don't you pressure us. I want to repeat, don't you pressure us!" (Kissinger 1982, 585).

It was at the WSAG meeting on the evening of the 24th that the decision was taken to move U.S. armed forces to DefCon III status in response to Brezhnev's letter.¹⁴ Orders to that effect were issued at 11:41 P.M. The Soviets were not to be informed of the global alert directly, but were intended to discover it through their own intelligence channels. The alert was to be an unmistakable signal that the United States was not going to be intimidated by Soviet threats of unilateral action or by its insistence that the U.S. "adhere without delay" to Soviet instructions. It would illustrate that Kissinger's previous threats to resist Soviet intervention had not been idle. The WSAG meeting also approved a message to be sent to Sadat in Nixon's name urging the Egyptians to withdraw the request for U.S. and Soviet forces and pointing out that, if Soviet troops were introduced into the Sinai, the

¹⁴ As Kissinger explains in his memoirs, U.S. forces were "normally in various states of alert called DefCons (for Defense Condition), in descending order from DefCon I to DefCon V. DefCon I is war. DefCon II is a condition in which attack is imminent. DefCon III increases readiness without the determination that war is likely; in practice it is the highest state of readiness for essentially peacetime conditions" (1982, 587-8).

United States would have no choice but to confront them on Egyptian soil (Kissinger 1982, 588).¹⁵ Deputy National Security Advisor Scrowcroft was sent out of the meeting to call Dobrynin to say that the Administration was considering the Brezhnev letter and to say that any unilateral Soviet action would be met with "most serious consequences."

In the belief that the Soviets might not detect the DefCon III alert, the WSAG decided to alert the 82nd Airborne Division for possible movement and U.S. naval forces were ordered to move into the eastern Mediterranean. In addition, the aircraft carrier *John F. Kennedy* was ordered from the Atlantic into the Mediterranean. At 3:30 A.M. sixty B-52 strategic bombers stationed in Guam were ordered to return to the United States to provide the Soviets with "another indication that we were assembling our forces for a showdown" (Kissinger 1982, 591).

Two hours after the B-52s in Guam had been ordered to the United States, at 5:40 A.M., a reply to the Brezhnev note prepared by the WSAG in Nixon's name was delivered to Dobrynin. The letter had been ready since 12:40, but its delivery had been delayed to give the Soviets time to notice the U.S. alert and force movements. The Israelis had been informed of the letter's contents at 2:09 A.M. It is of interest to note that the letter to Brezhnev was apparently drafted without the active participation of President Nixon and that many of the actions of the 24th and 25th were taken by the WSAG in his name. Before deliberations on the Brezhnev letter had begun, Haig and Kissinger had come to the joint conclusion that the President was too distraught over the Watergate scandal to participate

¹⁵ A fragment of the text of this note is given in Nixon's memoirs (938-9).

fully in the discussion. Kissinger admits that it "was a daunting responsibility to assume" (1982, 585). There is in Nixon's memoirs, however, little note of his absence from the meetings of the night of October 24-25. As Nixon recalled events:

When we were sure that the Soviets had picked up the first signs of the alert, I sent a letter to the Soviet Embassy for immediate transmission to Brezhnev from me, and beneath the diplomatic phraseology it minced no words:

Mr. General Secretary:

I have carefully studied your important message of this evening. I agree with you that our understanding to act jointly for peace is of the highest value and that we should implement that understanding in this complex situation.

I must tell you, however, that your proposal for a particular kind of joint action, that of sending Soviet and American military contingents to Egypt, is not appropriate in the present circumstances.

We have no indication that the cease fire is now being violated on any significant scale. . . .

In these circumstances, we must view your suggestion of unilateral action as a matter of gravest concern involving incalculable consequences.

It is clear that the forces necessary to impose the cease-fire terms on the two sides would be massive and would require the closest coordination so as to avoid bloodshed. This is not only clearly infeasible but it is not appropriate to the situation.

I said that I would be prepared to agree that some American and Soviet personnel go to the area, but not as combat forces. Instead, they might be included in an augmented UN force. But even this kind of arrangement would have to follow carefully prescribed lines:

It would be understood that this is an extraordinary and temporary step, solely for the purpose of providing adequate information concerning compliance by both sides with the terms of the cease-fire. If this is what you mean by contingents, we will consider it.

Mr. General Secretary, in the spirit of our agreement this is the time for acting not unilaterally but in harmony and with cool heads. I believe my proposal is consonant with the letter and spirit of our understandings and would ensure a prompt implementation of the cease-fire. . . .

You must know, however, that we could in no event accept unilateral action As I have stated above, such action would produce incalculable consequences which would be in the interest of neither of our countries and which would end all that we have striven so hard to achieve. (Nixon 1978, 939-40)

In his memoirs Kissinger provides the text left out of the last paragraph of Nixon's response to Brezhnev. It read in full:

You must know, however, that we could in no event accept unilateral action. This would be a violation of our understandings, of the agreed Principles we signed in Moscow in 1972 and Article II of the Agreement to the Prevention of Nuclear War. As I have stated above, such action would produce incalculable consequences which would be in the interest of neither of our countries and which would end all that we have striven so hard to achieve. (Kissinger 1982, 591)

The passage was a gentle reminder not only that détente was at stake, but also of what the consequences of escalation under the circumstances might mean.

On the morning of October 25 Kissinger received a letter from Cairo saying that Egypt would ask the Security Council to provide an international peacekeeping force to implement the cease-fire. By altering its request, Egypt had in effect withdrawn its request for Soviet and American troops because UN practice excluded the armed forces of permanent members of the Security Council as peacekeeping forces. A second message from Sadat to Nixon conveyed the same message. The revision of the Egyptian request removed the major issue of the crisis and thereby defused it. After briefing Congressional leaders with the President on the events of the night before and the alert, Kissinger met with the press at noon on the 25th for his second news conference of the crisis. His remarks focused on the the U.S. interpretation of the crisis and an explanation of the alert.¹⁶

¹⁶Which had, to Kissinger's surprise become public knowledge almost immediately (Kissinger 1982, 591). The content of the news conference is considered in fuller detail below.

At 2:40 P.M. Dobrynin phoned with a message from Brezhnev.

According to Kissinger:

It was written as if the crisis of the night before had never occurred. Without any reference to the previous night's threat of unilateral intervention, Brezhnev informed Nixon that instead he had dispatched seventy Soviet 'representatives'—apparently not military personnel—to observe implementation of the cease-fire. Indeed Brezhnev, with characteristic swagger presented his stand down from confrontation as if we were yielding to his proposal: "Since you are ready now, as we understand, to send to Egypt a group of American observers with the same task, we agree to act jointly in this question." And he advanced the startling thesis that the events of the past twenty four hours should be the prelude to even more conspicuous cooperation:

Following dispatch of observers we in an urgent manner will continue also our other political measures which correspond to the decision of the Security Council and to the understanding between us, reached in Moscow with Dr. Kissinger, who conducted negotiations on your behalf.

The Soviets had backed off. The immediate danger was over. We were still navigating a narrow passage. But we knew that with luck and skill we would enhance our influence on the peace process; indeed, that prospect had already helped persuade Sadat to refrain from inviting Soviet military forces back on Egyptian soil. (Kissinger 1982, 597)

U.S.-SOVIET CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS AND THE RHETORIC OF DÉTENTE

The rhetorical regime of détente both shaped and contributed to the resolution of the October Crisis because it defined the context within which U.S.-Soviet Communications were to be interpreted over the course of the crisis. In other words, the rhetorical regime of détente determined to a large extent the effective political meaning of U.S.-Soviet communications during the October War. As was observed in the last chapter, there was an effort by both the Soviet Union and the United States to interpret the détente accords after the 1972 summit. These interpretations were the beginning of the institutional discourse of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. détente relationship and were characterized by their use of the rhetorics of conciliation and collaborative confrontation, which together constituted the rhetorical regime of détente,

and defined the rhetorical practice of *détente*. It was this institutional discourse that served to lend meaning to U.S.-Soviet communications during the October Crisis and that formed the political subtext of the diplomatic proceedings.

The full role of the rhetorical regime of *détente* is not immediately obvious because U.S.-Soviet communications during the crisis took three relatively distinct forms: (1) public interpretations of events and explications of policy by government spokespersons, policymakers and other unidentified "official sources" in press reports; (2) private diplomatic communications between the various parties' policy makers and/or their representatives; and (3) the U.S. and Soviet resupply airlifts to Israel, Egypt and Syria, as well as the movement and/or change in alert status of U.S. and Soviet military units. These forms of communication are often considered separately in traditional accounts of international politics, with one given priority over the others. Private diplomatic communications are often presumed to reveal the "real" story of a crisis, because they are presumed to be authoritative representations of events and policy. It is partly on this basis that Kissinger gives priority to private communications in his account of the October Crisis, largely ignoring declaratory policy.¹⁷ Similarly, the movements of military forces is often seen and represented as the ultimate expressions of a state's intention and/or political will (Cohen 1981, 41ff.).

To understand, however, how the rhetorical regime of *détente* shaped the effective political meaning of the messages conveyed by each of the three

¹⁷ With the notable exceptions of his news conferences of October 12 and 24, of which he makes explicit mention, although he does not say, as will be seen, all that can be said about them. It has already been noted that Kissinger makes no mention of the State Department news conference given by State Department spokesperson Robert McCloskey during the war.

forms of communication in the context of the October crisis, it is necessary to consider them as a whole discourse. They are a whole discourse within the context of the political situation defined by the exigence of the war in U.S.-Soviet relations and within the overarching context of détente. In the analysis that follows, it will not be possible to explore all the interrelationships of all public and private U.S.-Soviet communications during the October Crisis. Rather, the exploration will focus on those messages that serve to illustrate how they invoked the rhetorical regime of détente and, in doing so, how the regime shaped their effective political meaning.

U.S.-Soviet Private Diplomatic Communications

From the account of U.S.-Soviet communications presented above, it is apparent that the private diplomatic communications between the United States and the Soviet Union generally had two purposes and effects. The first was to convey each side's information about and interpretation of events as they unfolded in the Middle East. The first U.S. communication to the Soviets about the war, for example, was Kissinger's call to Dobrynin to say that Israel had given its assurance to the United States that it would take no preemptive action against the Arabs and to ask Dobrynin to pass the message along to Cairo and Damascus (Kissinger 1982, 451). Minutes later, Kissinger followed up the initial call to see if the Israeli message had been conveyed. It was during the follow-up call that Kissinger specifically assured Dobrynin that the U.S. would "'play no games'. . ." and that Moscow would be kept informed of U.S. communications with the parties.

Kissinger's initial calls to Dobrynin were informative at an obvious level. They made the Soviet Union aware that the U.S. knew hostilities were imminent. That Kissinger himself conveyed the message to Dobrynin (it is conceivable that it could have been conveyed at a lower level) signaled the significance of the Israeli message to both the U.S. and the Israelis. Kissinger's assurance that Moscow would be informed of U.S. communications with the parties, manifested by the fact that Kissinger called Dobrynin with the Israeli message almost immediately after receiving it¹⁸, read in the context of détente, carried at least two other messages. First, under the circumstances, the message could be read as an invocation of U.S.-Soviet agreement in the Basic Principles to prevent "the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of U.S. Soviet relations." Indeed, Dobrynin may have been more than "pedantically diplomatic" when he wanted to know from Kissinger who was sending messages to whom. When he asked whether the message was being sent from the Israelis to the Arabs or from the U.S. to the Soviet Union, he may well have been asking whether or not the U.S. intended, by sending the message, to invoke the understandings expressed in the Basic Principles and subsequent interpretations of them.¹⁹ If the message was one primarily from

¹⁸ Of course Dobrynin had no way of knowing this except from Kissinger's assertion of it, which did not for Dobrynin exclude the possibility that Kissinger was attempting to mislead the Soviets on behalf of the Israelis. For that matter, as will be discussed below, if the Soviets had in fact attempted to warn the U.S. of intending hostilities, and if Dobrynin was aware of these efforts, he may well have assumed that the U.S. had gotten the message and was now up to some kind of trick.

¹⁹ The meaning with which the word "invoke" is used here and in the remainder of this chapter is "to cite in support or justification." To invoke the Basic Principles, then, is to make implicit reference to the common interests and good reasons they express with an argumentative purpose. To invoke the rhetoric of conciliation or collaborative competition is to make implicit reference to the understandings of détente they gave expression to, and the good reasons and values which underlie them, with an argumentative purpose.

the U.S. to the Soviets, it could be interpreted as an invocation of the Basic Principles. Kissinger's subsequent assurance that the Soviets would be kept informed of all American communications with the parties could be taken to mean something similar.²⁰

In the context of détente, the the message can also be seen as the explicit identification of the situation in the Middle East then developing as a situation that could lead to a "dangerous exacerbation" of U.S.-Soviet relations. Indeed, Kissinger made this possibility explicit in his third conversation with Dobrynin on October 6 when he warned him that all that had been achieved in East-West relations (i.e. détente itself) might be at risk if the situation got out of hand (Kissinger 1982, 458-9). Kissinger made a similar threat on several subsequent occasions. This was a threat that would have had little meaning outside the context of détente.

Later in the day, Kissinger also informed Dobrynin of the instructions that had been given to Ambassador Scali, the U.S. representative to the United Nations. He made it clear that the Ambassador would delay any significant U.S. action in the Security Council until the Soviets had time to consider the cease-fire proposal (Kissinger 1982, 474). The U.S., Kissinger seemed to imply, would not blind-side the Soviet Union. Later in the crisis, Dobrynin informed Kissinger of the instructions of the Soviet Ambassador to the U.N., Yakov Malik, to support any resolution calling for the introduction of U.S. and Soviet troops to enforce the cease-fire. Part of Dobrynin's motive in doing so was, perhaps, to avoid a surprise that would

²⁰ Perhaps, in the interim between the calls, Kissinger had understood the importance of Dobrynin's question and felt the need to make the subsequent assurance that Moscow would be kept informed of what the U.S. knew.

provoke the United States. Both messages can be seen as attempts at conciliation even in difficult circumstances.

In general, the significance of the information provided in U.S.-Soviet private diplomatic communications was determined by the context or the "atmosphere" of détente. This was true in two senses. First, the fact that the communication was taking place at all indicated to both sides that each was attempting to cooperate with the other as required by the spirit of détente, if not by the letter of the Basic Principles. The fact of the communications on the war in itself brought the communications within the scope of the rhetoric of conciliation; in the rhetorical logic of détente communication was conciliatory because it required conciliation, that is, an abandonment of the mutual suspicion that U.S. and Soviet Cold War images of the other had created and fostered and which might lead to misinterpretation or miscalculation.

The second sense in which the context of détente determined the significance of information in U.S.-Soviet communications is that it suggested an interpretive test for the information provided: whether or not it was information of a kind that would facilitate cooperation or at least allow the avoidance of confrontation. When Kissinger told Dobrynin that the U.S. would "play no games," he was in effect suggesting that the Soviets would not have to second guess information provided by the United States. As has been seen, Kissinger on several occasions felt as if he were being, or had been misled, by the Soviets, which led him to question the Soviet Union's "real" motives in the affair. The expectation created by détente that duplicitous behavior might be kept to a minimum lent particular significance to what Kissinger believed might be Soviet deceptions. In the

absence of such an understanding, the appearance of Soviet duplicity would not have had such significance.

The second major purpose and effect of private U.S.-Soviet communications was to convey warnings about what actions of the other side would not be tolerated under the circumstances. From Kissinger's account, it is apparent that the U.S. issued more warnings to the Soviets than the Soviets issued to the United States overall. Initially the warnings were related to the development of a cease-fire proposal that both sides could live with and were threats of diplomatic sanction. When the U.S. was convinced that the Israelis would quickly win the war, it threatened that Soviet refusal to co-sponsor a cease-fire resolution with the United States would "affect a lot of relationships" (Kissinger 1982, 471). When the Soviets acted to resupply the Arabs, the U.S. was warned not to "'overplay the theme of Soviet irresponsibility,'" implicitly indicating possible sanction if they did so (Kissinger 1982, 503). During the third phase of the crisis the warnings became more grave and concerned threats of military response should unilateral action to stop the fighting be taken.

The warnings were part and parcel of what Kissinger called the "duel in which Washington and Moscow, each professing its devotion to cooperation, sought to weaken the other without risking open confrontation" (1982, 450). In fact, the open communication that cooperation would seemed to have required, also created the means and forum for the conduct of the duel. As was argued in the last chapter, this circumstance was not likely a surprise to either the United States or the Soviet Union in that the articulation of the conciliatory/cooperative theme of *détente* was marked by reservations about continued differences between the two Powers. This

was an observation that Kissinger publicly reenforced during the war itself in his speech to the Pacem in Terris Conference in Washington on October 8. The Nixon Administration , he said, had "never had any illusions about the Soviet system." Coexistence with the Soviet Union, in the U.S. interpretation, had "a very precise meaning:

We will oppose any attempt by any country to achieve a position of predominance either globally or regionally.

We will resist any attempt to exploit a policy of détente to weaken our allies.

We will react if relaxation of tensions is used as a cover to exacerbate conflicts in international trouble spots.

The Soviet Union cannot disregard these principles in any area of the world without imperiling its relationship with the United States. (Kissinger 1972, 528)

Kissinger's articulated "principles" of the U.S.-Soviet relationship, really more warnings in themselves, conveyed the impression that détente did not rule out conflict in a conciliatory environment. Kissinger's remarks were thus an expression of the rhetoric of collaborative competition in that they attempted to stake out limits of the conciliatory theme of détente.

Kissinger's speech to the Pacem in Terris Conference suggested as well that the warnings conveyed in the private diplomatic communications during the crisis could be read as being consistent with and expressive of the rhetoric of collaborative competition, because they too were intended to stake out limits of conciliation and cooperation under détente. The letter to Brezhnev drafted by the WSAG in Nixon's name on October 24 made this connection explicitly:

You must know, however, that we could in no event accept unilateral action. This would be a violation of our understandings, of the agreed Principles we signed in Moscow in 1972 and Article II of the Agreement to the Prevention of Nuclear War. As I have stated above, such action would produce incalculable consequences which would

be in the interest of neither of our countries and which would end all that we have striven so hard to achieve. (Kissinger 1982, 591).

Here is a clear invocation of the good reasons of détente as represented by the Basic Principles and the APNW. The message conveyed is clear: unilateral Soviet action would violate the understandings of détente and end it. It is a message that would have been without the same rhetorical force had the détente accords not been agreed to and had not the understanding of conciliation with collaborative competition not been subsequently established though the interpretation of the détente accords.

Brezhnev's "ultimatum" of October 24 also invoked the "understandings" of détente when it suggested that the U.S. and the Soviet Union should both send troops to the Middle East

... to insure the implementation of the decision of the Security Council of October 22 and 23 concerning the cessation of fire and of all military activities and also of our understanding with you on the guarantee of the implementation of the decision of the Security Council.

It is necessary to adhere without delay. I will say it straight that if you find it impossible to act jointly with us in this matter, we should be faced with the necessity urgently to consider the question of taking appropriate steps unilaterally. We cannot allow arbitrariness on the part of Israel. . . . (Kissinger 1982, 583)

Here the argument is made, ultimately rejected by the United States, that the U.S. ought to act with the Soviet Union according to and because of the understandings of détente. The warning of unilateral action in the note also depends for its effect on the détente understandings, in effect arguing that if the U.S. did not live up to its agreements Soviet unilateral action could be justified by the U.S. failure. In such circumstances, in other words, the good reasons of détente might actually *justify* Soviet unilateral action. Its attempt at rhetorical manipulation of what the U.S. took to be the understandings of détente was likely the reason Kissinger interpreted the note as an

ultimatum. Because the Brezhnev note attempted such an obvious rhetorical manipulation of the détente understandings, it serves as an excellent example of the play of rhetoric in international politics.

Even though the private diplomatic communications of the October Crisis invoked the understandings of détente and made oblique use of the rhetorics of conciliation and collaborative competition, they were in many respects non-rhetorical, or at least not rhetorical, in the sense that public statements of policy often are. In part, the non-rhetorical tenor of private diplomatic communications is a part of diplomatic convention, yet one that does not completely rule out rhetorical manipulation.²¹ If, as was argued in Chapter Five, the working of a rhetorical regime depends on the use of established rhetorical conventions within the context of specific inter-state relationships, it might appear that the rhetorical regime of détente had only an oblique impact on mitigating the October Crisis. To see that this was not the case, we must turn now to a consideration of public U.S. and Soviet communications during the crisis.

²¹ As Raymond Cohen nicely explains, the non-rhetorical tenor of diplomatic language is in itself a rhetorical feature of diplomatic communications:

The principle underlying diplomatic language is that of non-redundancy. Ideally a diplomatic communication should say neither too much or too little because every word, nuance and omission will be meticulously studied for any shade of possible meaning. Nor is the convention of tact and politeness in the wording of diplomatic communications just an anachronistic tradition but refers back to the same principle of non-redundancy: rudeness or abruptness would in itself be assumed to carry an important aspect of the message (1981, 32).

As would noticeable rhetorical flourishes.

U.S. and Soviet Public Statements During the October War

The principal purpose and effect of the U.S. and Soviet public statements of the October War was, for want of a better term, to further contextualize their private communications within the scope of détente. Public statements provide a different forum for communication than do private correspondence. Easily portrayed as being principally intended for domestic audiences, they can send messages, in a way, less rigidly bound by the conventions of diplomatic practice. In the context of specific inter-state relationships, particularly in a crisis situation, they may provide a means of "checking" interpretations of the meaning and intent of concurrent private communications. Consistency between public and private statements may convince the receiving party that they are not being misled. As Coral Bell notes, declaratory signals cannot be safely disregarded by an adversary as "signals of will," because of ambiguity associated with the problem of interpreting the political will of the leadership of a state (Bell 1989, 23).

Most important for our concerns is that public statements can be more fully rhetorical—that is, they may put forward fuller, more calculated and carefully reasoned justifications than may be possible or advisable in private diplomatic communications. Because they are often more fully rhetorical, public statements of policy are occasions during which states may demonstrate their adherence to the common values of inter-state relationships through the use of the rhetorical practices associated with them.

As suggested above, public diplomatic communications can take at least two forms: (1) speeches, press releases and news conferences by policymakers and/or their representatives; and (2) press coverage of policy in

which unnamed "official sources" are the principle source of the coverage. Obviously the former often has greater potential significance than the latter, but both can be used by a state to send messages to another as an alternative to formal diplomatic channels.

That U.S. public statements on the war were being studied with concern by the Soviets is indicated by Dobrynin's warning to Kissinger after Kissinger's speech to the *Pacem in Terris* Conference not to "overplay the theme of Soviet irresponsibility" (Kissinger 1982, 503). The warning suggests that the Soviets were looking to Kissinger's address specifically for indications of future U.S. action. That the United States was monitoring the Soviet press and official statements for indications of the Soviet future action is suggested by Kissinger's remark during his news conference of October 12 that the Soviet press's comments on the war had been "moderate" in tone (Kissinger 1973b, 535-6).

In general, both Soviet and U.S. public statements during the crisis were more moderate in tone than their private diplomatic communications. They were designed to demonstrate superpower restraint to the world community as well as to one another, reenforcing the conciliatory aspects of their private communications. Even so, as will be seen below, they too contained warnings about the limits of *détente* and so, just as the warnings in the private communications, were expressions of the rhetoric of collaborative competition. It was by being expressive of both conciliation and competition that the superpowers' public statements, reenforced what was being said in private and located them more explicitly within the rhetorical practice of *détente*.

Soviet Public Communications. Conspicuous by its absence in the initial Soviet public reactions to the outbreak of the war was any mention of the United States. Although the first official Soviet government statement on the war blamed Israel for "launching military operations" against the Arabs, there was no specific mention of U.S. involvement (*Pravda* October 8, 1973; 15).²² Subsequent initial press reports of the war in the Soviet media also maintained that the war had been begun by Israel. Significantly, some initial public statements made at the highest levels did not suggest that Israel bore responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities. Brezhnev's speech of October 8 reportedly refrained "from specifically accusing Israel of having started the flare-up" (Smith 1973a, 17). The Soviets also refrained from launching any political attacks against the United States in the Security Council, a possibility which had explicitly concerned Kissinger early on in the war (Kissinger 1982, 473).²³ In his speech of October 8 Brezhnev also proclaimed that the Soviet Union "'has been and remains a supporter of a just and stable peace in the Middle East and of guaranteed security for all countries and peoples of the area, which is so close to our frontiers. We are prepared, therefore, to make our contributions toward insuring such a peace'" (Smith 1973a, 17).

²² It should be noted that there was reference to "those foreign reactionary circles that continually indulge Israel in its aggressive aspirations" (*Pravda* October 8 1973; 15). This may very well have been meant to be interpreted as a reference to the United States. The statement obviously stopped well short, however, of specifically invoking the cold-war image of the United States.

²³ The Soviets did walk out of a Security Council meeting on October 9 when Israel's representative expressed condolences for Syrian civilians killed during Israeli air attacks on Damascus. Yakov Malik, the Soviet representative to the Security Council, said that they had been unwilling "'to hear condolences from murders and international gangsters'" (Alden 1973, 1).

The public characterizations of the Soviet position that perhaps most concerned the United States were not direct public statements by the Soviets, but rather press reports of Soviet encouragement of various Arab states to enter the war in support of Egypt and Syria. On October 9 a message from Brezhnev to the President of Algeria was made public that had asked the Algerians to "'use all means at their disposal and take required steps with a view toward supporting Syria and Egypt in the difficult struggle imposed by the Israeli aggressor'" (Gwertzman 1973d, 1). The *New York Times* was able to report that similar messages had been delivered to the leaders of all Arab countries with which the Soviets had diplomatic relations. Reports of these messages had caused Kissinger concern about the real nature of Soviet intentions vis-a-vis the war (Kissinger 1982, 494). It is possible that reports of Soviet diplomatic activity were leaked to the press with the intention of demonstrating Soviet intentions of standing by their allies—an intention that the Soviet airlift to Syria beginning on the 10th would manifest more dramatically.²⁴ Nevertheless, the United States refrained from criticizing the Soviet contacts with the Arabs. U.S. officials were reported to have said that under the circumstances the Soviets "could not have been expected to do less than lend the strongest possible political support to the Egyptian and Syrian call for a United Arab front against Israel. 'If they had been silent they would have been finished off in the Middle East,' one official stated" (Gwertzman 1973d, 20).

²⁴ It is also possible that they were intended to balance any U.S. initiatives with the other Arab States, such as King Hussein of Jordan and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, whom Kissinger contacted almost immediately on hearing news of the impending Arab attack.

The public pledge of Soviet support for the Arab cause was repeated on October 15 in a joint communiqué on meetings between Brezhnev and the President of Algeria. The communiqué promised that the Soviets would "'assist in every way' the Arab effort to recapture territory seized by Israel in 1967 . . ." (Smith 1973c, 1). This statement, coming as it did in the wake of the Soviet airlift of supplies to Syria beginning on October 10, the U.S. airlift of supplies to Israel which began on the 13th, and Egyptian counter-offensive of October 14, had a different significance than the assurances made public on October 9. It can be interpreted to mean that the Soviets were prepared to support Syria and Egypt even in the face of significant U.S. efforts to assist Israel in winning the war. Under the circumstances, it can be viewed as a more significant warning to the United States than were earlier pledges of support for the Arabs, especially as Kissinger had begun to voice public doubts about the real motives and intentions of the Soviets (Smith 1973c, 17).

Kosygin's pointed speech on October 15 about the "opponents of détente" can be seen as an attempt to reenforce the message conveyed in the Soviet-Algerian communiqué. Significantly, however, the United States was not mentioned by name in the address. More significantly, the speech was given the day before Kosygin flew to Cairo in an attempt to get President Sadat to accept a cease fire. The trip, which, as was noted above, Kissinger was made aware of almost immediately after it had begun, suggested that the Kosygin's remarks were again made in the hope of preserving some political credibility with the Arab states.

The toughest public Soviet pronouncements about U.S. involvement in the war came only after the Soviets had backed off their threat to

intervene unilaterally in the conflict. In a speech on October 26, before the Soviet sponsored World Peace Conference in Moscow, Brezhnev "accused the United States of artificially fanning tensions over the Middle East with 'fantastic rumors' of Soviet plans for unilateral military intervention" (Smith 1973h, 1). Yet Brezhnev's remarks came after the crisis had abated and after his private message to Nixon on the 25th. The overall tone of the speech was moderate on U.S. involvement in the war. In keeping with previous Soviet statements Brezhnev placed blame for the conflict on Israel and its "expansionist" and "aggressive" policies. He expressed Soviet sympathy with the Arabs as victims of Israeli aggression. However, Brezhnev also emphasized the role of U.S.-Soviet cooperation in ending the war:

From the start of military actions in the Middle East . . . the Soviet Union, maintaining constant contact with friendly Arab state, undertook everything required of it. It took political measures to promote the end of the war and the creations of conditions under which peace in the Middle East could be genuine and stable for all sides.

As is known, on October 22 and 23 through the proposals of the Soviet Union and the United States, the United Nations Security Council twice took decisions which provided for an immediate cease-fire. Both times the Israelis, declaring they would abide by the Council decision, in practice perfidiously violated them, continued aggressive action against Egypt, occupied new territories of this country (Brezhnev 1973, 10).

The foregoing passage from Brezhnev's speech serves as a good summary of the tone and content of a great number of Soviet public comments on the war during the October crisis. The Soviets consistently blamed Israel for beginning the war, expressing solidarity with the Arab states, and yet did not mention the United States by name or characterize U.S. involvement in the war vis-a-vis Israel. In short, Soviet public characterizations of the war were moderate with respect to the United States,

just as U.S. officials remarked at the time. Because they were moderate, because they avoided invoking the Soviet Cold War images of the United States, they can be seen as adhering to and expressive of the rhetoric of conciliation. Maintaining as they did the Soviet willingness to do "everything required of it" to bring hostilities to an end, they also signaled Soviet adherence to and invoked the U.S.-Soviet "understandings" of détente--that the Powers should work to avoid open confrontation.

U.S. Public Communications. As noted above, the United States made more official public statements than the Soviet Union did. Two in particular stand out in their significance: Secretary of State Kissinger's news conferences of October 12 and 25.

Kissinger's news conference on October 12 was the first time a top-level administration official articulated the U.S. position on the war and interpreted events in the Middle East. It was therefore a significant occasion. As is evident from the timing, order and content of Kissinger's remarks, the news conference was intended to carry several messages to the Soviet leadership.

The news conference was held six days after the beginning of the war, a delay which might have suggested that the United States wished to convey that it did not regard the war as much of a crisis. The choice of a news conference by the Secretary of State as the forum for the public presentation of the U.S. position also worked to convey the impression of calm, if not routine, in that news conferences lack the urgency or formality of a Presidential speech or news conference.

The order of Kissinger's remarks also reenforced the impression of routine. He opened the news conference not with a statement on the war situation, but with a report on personnel changes in the State Department. This was in part a deception because, as is obvious from the account of the crisis, the war was of great concern to the United States from its beginning and occupied most of Kissinger's time for some twenty days. By the time of the news conference, the United States had learned that Israel had suffered unexpected losses and was considering seriously Israel's request for resupply. Nevertheless, there appears to have been a conscious effort to convey the impression that the United States was not absorbed by the war. The routine tone of the news conference was also intended to demonstrate a moderate stance by the United States vis-a-vis Soviet involvement in the war. Above all, as he recalls in his memoirs, Kissinger wanted not to provoke the Soviet Union:

My remarks were the subject of criticism because I refused to bury détente even while warning the Soviets that they were approaching its outer limits. But a verbal assault on Moscow would have accelerated events when it was our purpose to slow them down; it could have forced a confrontation while the military situation did not yet favor our strategy. This is why I spoke in carefully measured terms. (Kissinger 1982, 507)

Kissinger, in other words, well understood the need for his remarks to be couched in the rhetoric of conciliation on which détente in part relied. He also went to some lengths, as will be seen, to invoke the "understandings" of détente and to suggest why some U.S. actions might have seemed inconsistent with them.

Kissinger's statement on the war elaborated, if implicitly, the ways U.S. actions since the onset of hostilities could be interpreted as being consistent with the understandings of détente. Kissinger's statement can be

seen as conveying at least five different messages in this regard. First, he suggested that the United States received no message about or indication of the impending Egyptian and Syrian attack well in advance of the assault.

The war came as a surprise to the United States:

In the week prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the United States was aware that there were additional concentrations of Syrian forces and that the Egyptian forces were engaged in what was interpreted by both our intelligence, as well as by Israeli intelligence, as their regular fall maneuvers.

We asked our own intelligence, as well as Israeli intelligence, on three separate occasions during the week prior to the outbreak of hostilities to give us their assessment of what might happen. There was the unanimous view that hostilities were unlikely to the point of their being no chance of its happening. (Kissinger 1973b, 534)

Second, Kissinger suggested that because the United States was surprised it could not have warned Israel that war was imminent in time for the warning to do any good or to use restraint once fighting began:

In the circumstance, the United States had no occasion to warn any country of engaging in preemptive action. The United States, therefore, in the week prior to the outbreak of hostilities gave no advice with respect to a contingency that we had unanimously been assured was like not to happen—in fact was certain not to happen. (Kissinger 1973b, 534)

These two points taken together suggest that Kissinger and others in the government realized very soon after the outbreak of war that the Soviets may have acted to warn the United States on the possibility and immanence of war. These signals are discussed by Kissinger in his memoirs in the course of his explanation of why the United States had been surprised by the Arab attack. "Brezhnev and Gromyko warned of the danger [of war in the Middle East] in meetings with them in Zavidovo in early May and at the Summit with Nixon in June" (Kissinger 1982, 461). Kissinger also recalled waking on October 5 "to the astonishing news that for twenty-four hours the Soviets

had been airlifting all its dependents out of Egypt and Syria. Technical and military advisors seemed to be staying, however. It is inexplicable how that development was misinterpreted" (Kissinger 1982, 465).

If Kissinger realized after receiving news of the attack (and there is no evidence to suggest that he did not make the realization at this time) that the Soviet warnings had indeed been warnings, then his pointed statements that the U.S. had been surprised and thus had "no occasion" to warn any country about engaging in preemptive action can be seen as a message to the Soviets that the U.S. had missed the Soviet warnings.²⁵ In effect, this observation argued that the Soviets should not be surprised if the the United States had appeared to act in a way inconsistent with the Basic Principles and other détente understandings. U.S. failure to warn Israeli may have been interpreted by the Soviets as just such behavior.²⁶ The presence of the message in the news conference may have been intended to demonstrate U.S. desire to maintain détente.

²⁵ There is some indication that Kissinger had by October 12 realized that the Soviets may have tried to warn the U.S. about the impending war. In response to a question about why the U.S. had been surprised by the Arab attack, Kissinger pointed out that:

Nobody made any mistakes about the facts. There are always two aspects to intelligence. One is a determination of facts; the other is the interpretation of these facts. And there is the tendency of most intelligence services—and indeed of most senior officials and indeed of some newspapermen—to fit the the facts into existing preconceptions and to make them consistent with what is anticipated. . . . (Kissinger 1973, 537).

In other words, Kissinger apparently had considered what had gone wrong in the intelligence agencies to account for the lack of warning. If he had made such considerations, he may also have reflected that Soviet actions may have been intended as warnings. Interestingly, he presents the same case from the October 12 news conference in his memoirs in connection with his observations about possible Soviet warnings (1982, 459-67).

²⁶ In such circumstances Kissinger's call to Dobrynin to pass the Israeli message just prior to hostilities might have been interpreted by Dobrynin as he suggested, that is, as a U.S.-Israeli ploy of some kind. If Dobrynin imagined that the U.S. had received warning of the war, Kissinger's behavior may have seemed odd indeed.

The third message that can be read in Kissinger's news conference is that the United States had attempted to communicate with Moscow just as soon as it had been informed that hostilities were imminent. Fourth, the statement suggested, as well, that the United States had, as far as it was concerned, acted in a way that would facilitate containment of the crisis to the Middle East:

After hostilities broke out, the United States set itself two principal objectives. One, to end the hostilities as quickly as possible. Secondly to end the hostilities in a manner that they would contribute to the maximum extent possible to the promotion of a more permanent, more lasting solution in the Middle East. (Kissinger 1973b, 534)

Kissinger's statement can also be seen as conveying another message, the fifth, that the United States had acted in a manner intended not to exacerbate the crisis and that it intended to help bring a peaceful conclusion to the crisis as soon as possible.

Kissinger's statement on the war, "the situation in the Middle East" as he put it, also systematically invoked the rhetoric of conciliation. This is first indicated by what he chose not to say about the Soviet Union that might have been said in harsh terms. He might well have argued that Soviet failure to warn the U.S. about the war and its resupply of the Arabs constituted explicit violations of the Basic Principles and other détente understandings. This he did not do, choosing instead to emphasize those Soviet actions that could be interpreted as being consistent with détente. The choice of this tone for his remarks and responses to questions was undoubtedly designed to reenforce private indications to the Soviets that the United States wanted no major confrontation about the war.

Kissinger did not address the issue of Soviet involvement in the war until he was asked specifically about the Soviet airlift, as he must have known he would be. His answer was carefully measured:

We did not consider the Soviet statement to the President of Algeria helpful. We do not consider the airlift of military equipment helpful. We also do not consider Soviet actions as of now constitute the irresponsibility that on Monday evening I pointed out would threaten détente. . . . at this moment we are still attempting to moderate the conflict. As of this moment we have to weigh the actions of which we disapprove—and quite strongly—the relative restraint that has been shown in the public media in the Soviet Union and the conduct of their representatives in the Security Council. (Kissinger 1973b, 535-6)

When asked whether the U.S. would give aid to Israel in response to the Soviet airlift, Kissinger refrained from characterizing the Soviet efforts as “massive”—the characterization he had made to Dobrynin: “The Soviet airlift, at this moment is moderate. It’s more than light. It’s a fairly substantial airlift” (Kissinger 1973b, 537).

Kissinger’s remarks, nevertheless, contained warnings to the Soviet Union not to veer from their relatively moderate course. He warned that if Soviet behavior became irresponsible at some point “we will in this case, as we have in other crisis, not hesitate to take a firm stand” (Kissinger 1973b, 535). It was a warning that Kissinger very explicitly reiterated: “I want to repeat: When we make the judgement that actions have reached the point of irresponsibility, we will be very firm in making this clear” (Kissinger 1973b, 536). He stopped short, however, of spelling out of what Soviet irresponsibility in the context of the situation might consist of. Later on, as the crisis moved into its third phase, the U.S. made it clear that the threat of Soviet unilateral military intervention was “irresponsible” behavior. The meaning of these warnings, as were the meanings of the warnings conveyed by private diplomatic communications from the U.S., were expressive and

demonstrated adherence to the rhetoric of collaborative competition. The message they conveyed was that competition of a certain magnitude was acceptable but had limits to be spelled out by the United States if they were exceeded by Soviet action.

The moderate tone of Kissinger's news conference of October 12 was an extension of the moderate tone of earlier U.S. public statements about the war. The initial U.S. news conferences given by State Department spokesmen had been equally measured. In that Kissinger gave explicit instructions about how the press was to be handled almost immediately after hearing of the outbreak of hostilities, it is likely that their content was cleared by Kissinger.²⁷ The news conference held on October 6, for example, carefully conveyed the message that the U.S. would be restrained in its response and that the other parties ought to demonstrate similar restraint. It made public Kissinger's early communications with the Arabs, the U.N., and the Soviets. Not only did making the fact of the communications public suggest that the U.S. had acted and was acting to bring the war to a quick end, it was also a signal of U.S. good faith, reenforced Kissinger's promise to Dobrynin that the U.S. would play no games and would keep the Soviets informed of U.S. communications with the parties.

The U.S. statements also did not immediately suggest who had started the fighting. The signal conveyed was not lost on the *New York Times* reporter who surmised that: "The Administration, as part of its effort to persuade the parties to end the fighting, has not so far publicly taken sides on who started the hostilities" (Gwertzman 1973f, 15). The Soviets may well

²⁷ Although, it must be noted, he did not comment about press policy in detail in his memoirs.

have drawn the same conclusions. Nevertheless, a “well-placed Administration official” was available to say that the U.S. was inclined to support Israel's version of events. When, in the news conference of October 7, the United States publicly and officially blamed the Arabs for beginning the war, the State Department spokesperson was careful to add that the U.S. wasn't interested in passing judgement, only in resolving the crisis. The U.S. was reluctant, in other words, to directly attack the Soviet clients— a further indication of U.S. restraint vis-a-vis Soviet involvement.²⁸

Specific attention was also given in the initial news conferences to the cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union since the onset of the crisis. The press was duly apprised of the communications between Nixon and Brezhnev. On October 9 the *New York Times* reported on the “general consensus” that had developed between the United States and the Soviet Union “not to let the conflict seriously damage relations between Moscow and Washington,” a consensus with which U.S. officials were reportedly well satisfied (Gwertzman 1973c, 1). The intent in admitting to and characterizing the effect of U.S.-Soviet communications was, at least in part, to reenforce private representations by the U.S. about its good faith and intention to end the war without confrontation between the superpowers.

Kissinger's news conference of October 25 is of interest because it came at a time when the crisis was just easing and because it was clearly an attempt to explain and justify U.S. actions taken late on the 24th and early in the morning of the 25th. Kissinger's opening statement was essentially a narrative of the events of the crisis as interpreted by the United States. It

²⁸ Of course it is also likely that the United States wanted to say nothing that would prevent the development of U.S. negotiations with Egypt or Syria.

summarized the general purposes and intent of U.S. policy on the war, emphasizing U.S. efforts to communicate with the parties, including the Soviet Union, and to use its good offices to bring the war to a quick end.

Kissinger then turned to an explanation of the U.S. global alert of the night before and other actions. He recalled that there had been "a proposal" (not specifying its origin) for the U.S. and Soviet Union to send a joint military force to the Middle East "to bring about an observance of the cease-fire." Such an action, he said, was not acceptable to the United States:

It is inconceivable that the forces of the great powers should be introduced in the numbers that would be necessary to overpower both of the participants. It is inconceivable that we should transplant the great-power rivalry into the Middle East or, alternatively, that we should impose a military condominium by the United States and the Soviet Union. The United States is even more opposed to the unilateral introduction by any great power, especially by a nuclear power, of military forces into the Middle East in whatever guise those forces should be introduced (Kissinger 1973c, 587).

Kissinger then obliquely characterized the threat of Soviet unilateral action:

... it is the ambiguity of some of the actions and communications and certain readiness measures that were observed that caused the President at a special meeting of the National Security Council last night, at 3 a.m., to order certain precautionary measures to be taken by the United States. (Kissinger 1973c, 587)

Precautionary they may have been, but they were also clearly intended as a signal to the Soviets to back off. Yet this passage can also be interpreted as intending to suggest that the alert was necessitated by ambiguous Soviet signals. Under the circumstances, with no certain knowledge of Soviet intentions, the U.S. was *forced* to hedge its bets and prepare for any possible military developments. It is true that there was little literal ambiguity in Brezhnev's note, but it had come as something of a surprise after Dobrynin's conciliatory discussion with Kissinger on the afternoon of the 24th: in the

ambiguity lay the surprise. The rules of détente might have been interpreted to mean that the U.S. required clearer statements of Soviet intent than it had received. The alert signaled this message as well.

When asked by a reporter to describe in more detail "the Soviet threat that caused the alerting of Soviet military elements" Kissinger, noting that he would not discuss specific U.S.-Soviet communications, said that the United States had "been aware of the alerting of certain Soviet units and puzzled by the behavior of some Soviet representative. . . ." Kissinger then added: "We do not consider ourselves in a confrontation with the Soviet Union. We do not believe that it is necessary, at this moment, to have a confrontation. In fact, we are prepared to work cooperatively toward the realization of the objectives which we have set ourselves" (Kissinger 1973c, 588). In part this remark can be seen as an expression of the assumption that the crisis was by then over. While Kissinger did not say that the U.S. and the Soviet Union had not been in a confrontation in the days before, the remark might also have been intended to refer to the October Crisis. From this interpretation it might have suggested to the Soviets that the United States did not consider the events of the previous days to have been a confrontation of the kind that détente sought to avoid, a message that would significantly moderate the meaning of the events.²⁹

Kissinger was also asked whether the actions of the Soviet Union in the preceding days had departed from U.S.-Soviet agreements to an extent that threatened "exploitation of détente to an adverse extent" (Kissinger

²⁹ Kissinger, as is apparent from the the account presented above, did consider the events a significant "confrontation" and "showdown" (Kissinger 1982, 520; 576; 581). Even so, it would not have hurt in resolving the crisis for the Soviets to wonder whether the U.S. had taken only "precautionary" measures.

1973c, 588). Kissinger replied that it was too soon for the United States to draw such a conclusion. The alert of U.S. forces was simply a "precautionary" measure undertaken "because we thought that there might be a possibility that events might go beyond the limits which I have described." He added that the U.S. was not yet prepared to say that matters had gone beyond such limits (Kissinger 1973c, 589). The United States would wait and see what the Soviet Union would do in the longer term, in other words. Yet, the tone of Kissinger's skepticism was moderate, suggesting that the worst might have happened, but didn't, and that what had happened might not have really been a confrontation of a serious nature at all.³⁰ Read in the context of détente, this remark would imply that while the conflict between the U.S. and the Soviet Union precipitated by the October war had been serious, it, nevertheless, did not overstep the absolute limits of conflict set out by the détente understandings, even if it had come close. Kissinger, after all, had said in the Pacem-in-Terris speech that the Soviets would be explicitly informed when the U.S. believed that their behavior had reached the level of "irresponsibility."

³⁰ A notion that was suggested again in the following exchange during the interview:

Q: Dr. Kissinger, it may seem obvious, but I would just like to ask you—is the purpose of the alert which is now going on to tell the Soviet Union that if they send forces into the Middle East we will do the same?

Secretary Kissinger: I don't want to speculate about what the President may decide to do in circumstances which we fervently hope will not arise. It would seem to us that to threaten all that has been achieved in the search for peace by unilateral action would be a step of irresponsibility that we do not believe is likely (Kissinger 1973, 589-90).

The implication here is that only Soviet unilateral action would bring the powers into conflict of a kind that détente sought to avoid.

In many respects this view was consistent with the general characterization of U.S.-Soviet relations that Kissinger had offered in his opening statement:

Let me say a word here about our relationship with the Soviet Union throughout this crisis and what we have attempted to achieve. The United States and the Soviet Union are, of course, ideological and, to some extent, political adversaries. But the United States and the Soviet Union also have a very special responsibility. We possess—each of us—nuclear arsenals capable of annihilating humanity. We—both of us—have a special duty to see to it that confrontations are kept within bounds that do not threaten civilized life. Both of us, sooner or later, will have to come to realize that the issues that divide the world today, and foreseeable issues, do not justify the unparalleled catastrophe that a nuclear war would represent. And therefore, in all our dealings with the Soviet Union, we have attempted to keep that in mind and we have attempted to move them to a position in which this overriding interest that humanity shares with us is never lost sight of.

In a speech—*Pacem in Terris*—I pointed out that there are limits beyond which we cannot go. I stated that we will oppose the attempt by any country to achieve a position of predominance, either globally or regionally; that we would resist any attempt to exploit a policy of détente to weaken our alliances; and that we would react if the relaxations of tensions were used as a cover to exacerbate conflicts in international trouble spots. We have followed these principles in the current situation. (Kissinger 1973c, 585-6)

In other words, the U.S. had played by the rules of détente at it understood them and the rules had help to bring the crisis to a peaceful conclusion.

The U.S. understanding of détente articulated by Kissinger on the 25th is consistent with the reservations publicly expressed in U.S.

characterizations of the Basic Principles after the 1972 summit and discussed in the last chapter. In its invocation of the threat of nuclear war and the continuing adversarial relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, it made use of the rhetorics of conciliation and collaborative confrontation, giving expression to and demonstrating adherence to them. Moreover, the statement recognized that détente was understood, as has been argued here, to allow conflicts like the October Crisis. It recognized, as well, that nuclear war was the primary exigence between the superpowers

and that conflict of the kind that détente allowed as permissible only if it did not bring the powers into the kind of direct confrontation that might lead to nuclear war. Kissinger expressed this contradictory nature of détente aptly when he said in response to a question that the U.S. and the Soviet Union were "at one and the same time adversaries and partners in the preservation of peace" (Kissinger 1973c, 589). The constitutive common meaning of 'peace' is used here by Kissinger in its détente sense of 'the absence of nuclear war.'

Movement of U.S. and Soviet Armed Forces, the Airlifts, and the Alert

Both the United States and the Soviet Union took various actions during the crisis to demonstrate support for their allies during the war and to signal to one another of their intention to do so. In the third phase of the crisis, the United States took actions that were intended principally to warn and threaten the Soviet Union directly. Even the meaning of these ultimate signals of national-political wills were in part shaped by expectations conveyed under the rhetorical regime of détente.

To recall, on October 5, Soviet naval units left Egyptian ports and sailed west into the Mediterranean, away from the impending fighting and demonstrating, in Kissinger's interpretation, "noninvolvement while retaining the capacity for rapid action" (Kissinger 1982, 475). On October 6 the United States decided to move the Sixth Fleet into the Eastern Mediterranean. The American move was less a military one than a demonstration of *political* support for the Israelis, which was intended to convey much the same message as the Soviet naval maneuvers (Kissinger

1982, 475).³¹ On October 10 the Soviet airlift of supplies to Syria began in response to the Israeli offensive, and they soon began supplying Egypt as well. Kissinger notes that the supplies provided to the Arabs at that stage of the crisis "seemed confined to consumables . . ." and did not include new or replacement weapons. The U.S. began airlifting similar supplies to the Israelis on October 13 and soon exceeded the Soviet effort (Kissinger 1982, 497; 525).

The initial U.S. and Soviet naval movements and resupply efforts, although the latter were clearly a potential escalation, can be interpreted as acts of political support for their respective allies and as strong signals that neither superpower would let either side gain such a decisive advantage that it would be in a position to dictate the terms of a cease-fire. In the absence of Arab or Israeli willingness to agree to a cease fire, attrition was one way to convince both sides that a negotiated settlement might not be a bad idea. Clearly, both the United States and the Soviet Union also had political goals in the region and their prestige in mind when decisions were taken to resupply their allies. The Soviet intent seems to have been in part to demonstrate, both to the U.S. and to the Arabs, its resolve to support its Arab allies beyond public proclamations of support. The United States could not fail to react to what could be seen as Soviet pressure or to support its ally Israel. Although the resupply efforts raised the level of confrontation, they

³¹ As Cohen (1981, 45-7) notes all movements of military forces are not military acts and the nature of them often convey political nuances: "Circumstances and timing; the make up of the . . . force taking part in the demonstration (including age, size, capability, even name); and the power relations between the initiating actor and the object of his attention, call all effect the precise meaning of the signal" (1981, 45).

were not necessarily ruled out by détente. In fact, they can be seen as consistent with collaborative competition.

The actions taken by both sides late on October 24 and early on the 25th, however, were clearly of a different character because they risked a direct confrontation between the superpowers on the ground in the Middle East and perhaps elsewhere. Even so, it was the context of détente that in part defined what was at stake in the potential conflict: détente itself. "Irresponsible" behavior, which the U.S. unilaterally defined as the intervention of Soviet forces in the conflict, was a danger and to be avoided because it would end détente. To end détente would be to renege on the common values the U.S. and the Soviets had attempted to set out after the Moscow Summit in 1972, and in subsequent negotiations, on a host of issues. To end détente would be to return in some fashion to a Cold War relationship where conflict by miscalculation, as distinct from collaborative competition, might be more likely, with the possibility of such conflict leading to nuclear war. Nixon's reply to Brezhnev's ultimatum of October 24 made this point explicitly when it warned that the U.S.

... could in no event accept unilateral action. This would be a violation of our understandings, of the agreed Principles we signed in Moscow in 1972 and Article II of the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War. As I have stated above, such action would produce incalculable consequences which would be in the interest of neither of our countries and which would end all that we have striven so hard to achieve. (Kissinger 1982, 591)

The U.S. alert was calculated as a very strong demonstration of intent to adhere to and act consistently with this view. Citation of the Agreement for the Prevention of Nuclear War suggested just what the potential

consequences to the old order of the relationship might be. Détente was the context within which the American alert could have the meaning that it did.

THE DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE OF THE OCTOBER CRISIS AND THE RHETORIC OF DÉTENTE

Clearly, the October war marked an exigence in the U.S.-Soviet détente relationship. It might have led to a direct confrontation between the superpowers in the Middle East, an outcome that the diplomacy of détente had attempted explicitly to avoid. Both the United States and the Soviet Union, as has been seen above, created a variety of discourses in their attempts to mitigate the exigence of the war. Indeed, the "atmosphere" or context of détente and the understandings implicit in the Basic Principles bound the two Powers to avoid conflict as a consequence of the war and this duty in turn required communication.

To a significant extent, the U.S. and Soviet efforts at communication and cooperation were successful. It must not be forgotten that U.S.-Soviet negotiations, and their concurrent negotiations with Israel and the Arabs, did lead to the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 338 and its acceptance by all parties. The most dangerous phase of the crisis was the result of the breakdown of the cease-fire and not of U.S. and Soviet failure to take actions to end the hostilities and to resolve what was initially only a potential exigence in the détente relationship.

To be sure, the United States and the Soviet Union, even while working to bring an end to the war, maneuvered for political advantage both for themselves in the region and for their allies. As was argued in Chapter Six, the understanding of détente as articulated by U.S. and Soviet public interpretations of the Basic Principles and of the détente relationship more

generally, did not rule out such collaborative competition. There were limits to détente, although not ones clearly or systematically articulated, set out by the continued adversarial relationship between the superpowers. It was not to be expected that the limits to détente should have been clearly articulated because to do so would have been to unnecessarily foreclose potential future courses of action. As Kissinger said in Kiev in 1972, the Basic Principles and the understandings they gave expression to were not a "cookbook" applicable in any situation. Limits to détente were understood to exist and part of the significance of the October Crisis was that it was an occasion which led to a clearer definition of what they might be.

Because collaborative competition was to have been expected, the potential misunderstanding of U.S. and Soviet actions by the other (such as the resupply airlifts which in a different context might have been interpreted as demonstrative of intent to intervene) could be contained. Each side's support of the combatants would remain acceptable to the other as long as, in the words of the Basic Principles, there were "no efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other." As Kissinger warned the Israeli Ambassador at one point, the United States was not going to allow Brezhnev to be made a fool of (Kissinger 1982, 576). There were limits beyond which U.S. support for Israel would not go, limits largely imposed by détente.

The understandings of détente were not always explicitly invoked by the United States and the Soviet Union in their communications during the crisis. Their failure to do also has been taken as evidence that détente had little effect on the outcome of the crisis or that the U.S. had almost been taken advantage of. Yet, the détente understandings were not explicitly invoked because they need not have been; they were implicitly expressed in

the rhetorical form of U.S.-Soviet communications. By the time of the October Crisis there had developed an institutional discourse of U.S.-Soviet relations ordered by the rhetorical regime of *détente*—the juxtaposition of the rhetorics of conciliation and collaborative competition. The crisis communications invoked the understandings of *détente* by being consistent with and invoking the rhetoric of *détente*.

The ways in which the rhetorical regime was invoked in U.S.-Soviet Communications, as suggested above, during the crisis can be summarized as follows:

1. The fact of U.S.-Soviet communications, that is, the fact that the Powers consulted each other about the war and their activities with respect to it at all, was expressive of conciliation and so invoked the rhetoric of conciliation because conciliation was thought to be required for such cooperative communication. Part of the conciliatory meaning of the communications was, in other words, that they were occurring at all.
2. That U.S.-Soviet private communications containing information about each side's knowledge and interpretation of events, as well as an intended course of diplomatic action with respect to the war, also invoked the rhetoric of conciliation. Because conciliation and cooperation required suspension of mistrust of the other, the sharing of information, because it removed a basis of mistrust, was conciliatory.
3. The substance of U.S.-Soviet private diplomatic communications—the negotiation of a cease-fire proposal acceptable to all sides in order to prevent the conflict from getting out of hand—invoked the rhetoric of conciliation because the negotiations were an explicit attempt to live up to a duty implicit in the Basic Principles.
4. The moderate tone of U.S.-Soviet communications, evidenced by the fact that neither side officially blamed the other for fostering the conflict or accused the other of violating *détente*, invoked the rhetoric of conciliation because such moderation was an attempt not to aggravate the relationship, another duty given expression in the Basic Principles.

5. That U.S.-Soviet communications during the crisis contained warnings invoked the rhetoric of collaborative competition. Because they suggested the limits of acceptable behavior with respect to the war under détente, the warnings were in effect an extension of the limits and reservations about détente expressed in the rhetoric of collaborative competition.

The invocation of the rhetorics of conciliation and collaborative competition were, in effect, implicit arguments reminding both sides of their interpretation of the common values that underlay détente.

There were, it must be recalled, occasions on which the understandings of détente and the expectations they set out for the conduct of U.S.-Soviet behavior were more explicitly invoked: notably, in Kissinger's news conference on the 12th, in Brezhnev's ultimatum to Nixon on the evening of the 24, and in Nixon's reply. In these cases, as suggested above, the understandings of détente were invoked to define what was at stake in the crisis, thereby defining the crisis as not simply a crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations but as a crisis in détente as well.

This chapter has attempted to suggest how the rhetorical regime of détente shaped the effective political meaning of U.S.-Soviet diplomatic communications during the October Crisis. It has shown that these communications invoked the understandings of détente by invoking the rhetorics of conciliation and collaborative competition, as well as by explicitly making reference to the understandings of détente conveyed by U.S. and Soviet interpretations of the détente accords in the wake of the 1972 Moscow Summit and which constituted the rhetorical practice of détente.

This chapter has, then, undertaken the second and third demonstrations required to reveal the operation of a rhetorical regime set out at the end of Chapter Five: that (1) the rhetorical practice of détente has been used in discourse that has successfully worked to mitigate various exigencies in the context of U.S.-Soviet relations; and (2) that, within the context of U.S.-Soviet relations attempts to justify or motivate action with political discourse relied for its effect on the rhetorical practice of détente.

CHAPTER VIII

RHETORICAL REGIME AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER:
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The argument of the previous chapters has ranged rather widely over a variety of topics and so it is appropriate in this, the final chapter of this essay, to offer a summary of the argument as it bears on the problem of international order. This chapter will also briefly consider the implications of the argument for the study of international politics, with particular attention to the second dimension of the problem of international order mentioned in Chapter One: what it means to explain international political order.

RHETORICAL REGIME AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER: SUMMARY AND
CONCLUSION

To summarize the argument of the first four chapters, this essay began with the assertion that political discourse between states was a mechanism of international political order. It was argued that international political discourse works as a mechanism of international order because it comes to be characterized by recurrent rhetorical practices, *rhetorical regimes*, that serve as solutions for the problem of uncertainty in international politics. Rhetorical regimes serve as a solution to the problem of uncertainty because they organize the institutional discourse of inter-state relationships in much the same way that a rhetoric of common values and institutional purposes organizes the institutional discourse of domestic political communities. The

rhetorical practices which comprise rhetorical regimes are expressive of the common interests, or common values, that states agree to hold in common in the course of their relations. As bodies of rhetorical practice, rhetorical regimes constrain the invention of political discourse intended to justify or motivate state action in the face of a particular exigence, thereby indicating the range of possible actions that might fall within the scope of particular common interests. It is because rhetorical regimes imply a range of potential state actions that they reduce uncertainty in international politics.

It was argued in Chapter Five that it is possible to identify a rhetorical regime and its operation if it can be shown:

1. That in the context of a specific inter-state relationship political discourse attempting to justify or motivate action employs rhetorical practice and is more or less unique to it. On the definition of rhetorical regime offered above, it is obviously necessary to demonstrate this kind of continuity in the construction of international political discourse;
2. That the rhetorical practices have been used in discourse that has successfully worked to mitigate various exigencies in the context of a specific inter-state relationship. Not only must there be a continuity in the use of various rhetorical practice, they must come to be identified with the successful management of a relationship;
3. That, within the context of a specific inter-state relationship over time, as a matter of course, attempts to justify or motivate action of the other(s) with political discourse rely for their effect on the rhetorical practices as defined above;
4. That, within the context of a specific inter-state relationship, failure to employ the rhetorical regime practiced above leads to or suggests a change in the character of the relationship.

Chapter Six argued that "détente," the period in U.S.-Soviet relations founded at the 1972 Moscow Summit, was a working, if often strained,

rhetorical regime. The rhetorical regime of détente was constituted by a rhetoric of conciliation and a rhetoric of collaborative competition, the former appealing principally to the fear of nuclear war, the latter to suspicion of the other side given expression in the Cold War images of the United States and the Soviet Union. Through the interpretation of the meaning of the détente accords, agreed upon by the two Powers, in particular the Basic Principles of Relations, the rhetoric of détente gave expression to and became expressive of at least four important expectations about U.S.-Soviet relations under détente:

1. Nuclear war was to be avoided, if not ruled out completely as a viable military option;
2. The risk of nuclear war was to be reduced by continuing negotiations on arms control issues;
3. Political and military conflict was to continue and could continue outside the context of U.S.-Soviet relations defined by their bilateral strategic relationship;
4. The continuation of conflict in third areas was not to escalate to the point where it might lead the powers into nuclear war.

Not only, then, did the rhetorical regime of détente become associated with specific expectations about the conduct of U.S.-Soviet relations, suggesting how it served to order U.S.-Soviet relations, it was also unique to the context of U.S.-Soviet relations and, thus, meets the first test set out in Chapter Five.

The last chapter demonstrated that the rhetorical regime of détente was a factor in the resolution of at least one significant exigence in U.S.-Soviet relations under détente, the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, shaping the effective political meaning of U.S.-Soviet communications during the

crisis, indicating that détente meets the second and third tests of a rhetorical regime listed in Chapter Five. Taken together, Chapters Six and Seven serve to illustrate the plausibility of the idea that rhetorical regimes do indeed serve as mechanisms of international political order by establishing reliable expectations for future state behavior.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The argument developed in this essay about the role of international political discourse in the maintenance of international political order has at least seven major implications for the study of international politics. First, the essay suggests a theoretical basis and need for more detailed studies on the role of political discourse in international politics. As was noted in Chapter One, traditional theories of international politics have been cynical about the role of political discourse in international politics. The real subject of international politics, even in some multi-centric views of world politics, has traditionally been 'power' described in an objective sense. Much of the argument presented in this essay implies that power may be less an "objective" element of international politics than a meaning constructed in the context of specific inter-state relationships. 'Power,' in other words, may only be what states are persuaded that it is and/or what states might determine that it will be through argument about how power might be defined by values they agree to hold in common. In that such argument is political discourse, political discourse may be a very important subject of study indeed.

Second, this essay suggests the need for greater attention to the nature and role of values in international politics. If the foregoing argument about

the role of values in the institutionalization of inter-state relationships is accepted, then values clearly have a larger role in determining the character of international politics than scholars principally concerned with power have suggested. Indeed, power may be a value in itself.

Third, this essay suggests another way to conceptualize and analyze the operation of international institutions and organizations. If the argument of Chapters Three and Four, about the nature of political institutions and the institutionalization of international politics, is accepted, then international politics may be more thoroughly institutionalized than many traditional theories of international politics presume, especially theories in the realist mold. In general, the argument presented here suggests the need for greater attention to the nature and process of international institutions and institutionalization.

Fourth, closely following on the previous point, this essay has suggested that the differences between international and domestic politics may not be of the kind that they are often asserted to be: the difference between anarchy and social order. If international politics is institutionalized along the lines discussed above, then the differences between domestic and international politics are to be characterized more as differences in the nature and scope of values that constitute international and domestic political orders than of order defined by the presence or absence of social institutionalization.

Fifth, this essay's emphasis on the role of rhetoric in international politics suggests another way of dealing with the problem of rationality in international politics. The extensive literature of foreign policy decision-making and bureaucratic politics has to a large extent undermined the realist

assumption that states can be conceived of as rational actors. While these critiques have brought into question the rationality of state action, they have relied on a narrow conception of rationality which has implications for the way in which "irrational" decisions are defined and analyzed.¹ The rhetorical approach employed but not fully developed in this essay is one that brings more of the activity of policy and decision makers within the scope of "rational" activity by its definition of rationality and reason. The rhetorical view proceeds from Chiam Perelman's observation that:

. . . it is undeniable that formal logic is a separate discipline which lends itself, like mathematics, to operation and calculation; it is also undeniable that we reason even when we do not calculate—in private deliberation or public discussions, giving arguments for and against a thesis, in offering or refuting a criticism. In all these cases we do not demonstrate, as we do in mathematics, but we argue. If we conceive of logic as the study of reasoning in all its forms, it is natural that the theory of demonstration as developed in formal logic should be accompanied by a theory of argumentation. . . . (Perelman 1982, 4)

The departure point of many decision-making studies is a conception of reason which regards it almost exclusively as a kind of mathematical demonstration that if only properly employed would lead to correct decisions. The rhetorical view, on the other hand, suggests the necessity of defining reason to include argumentation and reasoning about values which, as argued above, have a critical role in institutionalized politics.

Sixth, the argument presented in this essay has implications for the choice of the most appropriate methodology to be employed in the study of international politics. The traditional explanations of international order and the theories of international politics associated with them reviewed in Chapter One, to a greater or lesser extent, have been proffered from the

¹ For a good summary of the problem see Kinder and Weiss (1978).

assumption that to explain a condition is to offer a *theory* of how it obtains. On this view the notion of theory means something like the systematic specification of cause and effect relationships in the world in terms of scientific laws, that is, in terms of "universal generalizations about how things happen" (Searle 1984, 71).

As Mervyn Frost has observed, there is what he calls a *positivist bias* to international relations theory, a bias present in both "classical" (i.e. the pre-behavioral revolution approach to explanation discussed in Knorr and Rosenau (1966) and "scientific" approaches to the explanation of international politics, in spite of their apparent differences:

Both the classical and the scientific approaches stress some or all of the following related things: their methods, it is claimed, are in the final instance objective, they seek to verify their conclusions by reference to "the facts," which are in some sense "hard" and are there for all to see (i.e. ascertaining the facts does not require an interpretive effort on the part of the investigator and the facts are attainable by the investigator without his having previously adopted any particular theory), and the links between conclusion and evidence (or hypothesis and verifying data) are intersubjectively verifiable. Both stress that the results of their studies do not derive from subjective, relative or conventional judgements. Such judgements are in sharp contrast to value judgements which are held to be subjective, relative or conventional. In short, common to both approaches is a radical distinction between the status accorded to factual judgements, to which the discipline of international relations should aspire, and that accorded to value judgements. Facts are given epistemological priority. This forms the core of the positivist assumption underlying both the traditional and scientific approaches to the study of international relations. (Frost 1986, 15)²

² The bias may even be detected in a scholar so opposed to scientific accounts of politics as Hans J. Morganthau. While he railed against scientific explanations of politics in his *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (1957), he nevertheless wrote in his highly influential *Politics Among Nations*:

Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature. . . .

Realism, believing as it does in the objectivity of the laws of politics must also believe in developing a rational theory of politics that reflects, however imperfectly or one-sidedly, these objective laws. It believes, then, in the possibility of distinguishing in politics between truth and opinion—between what is true objectively and rationally, supplanted by evidence and illuminated by reason, and what is only subjective judgement divorced from the facts as they are and inferred by prejudice and wishful thinking (Morganthau 1966, 4).

continued

It is the positivist conception of theory, influenced by the success of natural science (although often heavily qualified in this regard), which has arguably become the dominant conception of theory in the contemporary discipline of international relations.³

As Frost implies, for many scholars the positivist conception of theory requires use of the "scientific method," *the* method for checking or verifying propositions, or hypotheses, which are suggested by a theory. One popular text on international relations theory defines the method in some detail. An hypothesis suggested by theory "must be validated by testing. This demands the construction of a verifying experiment or the gathering of data by other means. . . . The results of the data gathering effort are carefully observed, recorded, and analyzed, after which the hypothesis is discarded, modified, reformulated or confirmed" (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 1980, 29). If verified, a particular hypothesis contributes to the confirmation of the theory. The ultimate purpose of theory confirmation is, in this view, "to produce a body of knowledge which would explain and perhaps even predict patterns of interaction among political variables" (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 1980, 563).⁴

The author acknowledges thanks to Dr. Vernon Iredell for drawing his attention to this point.

³ There is a lot of hedging on the issue of the association of theory and science. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraf, for example, in the most comprehensive survey of international relations theory (1981) note that "science" can be defined very broadly. "Whatever satisfies intelligent human beings in any age," they write, "as the optimum means of enlarging their intellectual frontiers will pass muster as 'scientific.'" (1981, 29). This definition would include theology, poetry, and cranology. That it is the positivist conception of theory and science which dominates in the field is suggested by their following discussion of the scientific method (1981 29-30).

⁴ It should be pointed out that the scientific method really does not dictate quantitative methods in many circumstances, but rather a general systematic approach of investigation which has been identified as the "most rational" road to knowledge.

The meaning that the explanations of international order derive from this positivist conception of theory is that they are, or at least are intended to be, *strong explanations*; that is, they are intended to be the most rational or reasonable accounts of international order and/or international politics possible. In our culture the only real option for giving expression to such intentions is to employ a positivist conception of theory. This is because the forms of 'verification' sanctioned by positivism "are forms which have been *institutionalized* by modern society. What can be 'verified' in the positivist sense can be verified to be correct . . . , or to be probably correct, or to be highly successful science, as the case may be; and the public recognition of the correctness, or the probable correctness, or the 'highly successful scientific theory' status, exemplifies, celebrates, and reinforces images of knowledge and norms of reasonableness maintained by our culture" (Putnam 1981, 106; emphasis in original). The strength and appeal of positivist explanations of international politics derive, in other words, from the status of science in our culture.

There is a sense in which the criticisms of the various explanations of international order and the assumptions on which they are based are reasonable or valid criticisms because they point out, or seem to point out, the failure of the explanation or assumption to live up to the positivist conception of theory and science. The hard core assumptions of realism, for example, were criticized on the basis of not really being empirically based: they didn't describe the reality of post-war international politics after the 1950s. Contemporary realists have made their own empirically based arguments against interdependence (Waltz [1970] 1982). Debate about the precision or appropriate definition of analytic concepts like 'power', can also

be seen as the result of concern about living up to positivism. Criticism of the notions of international law or international regimes as failing to be "necessary or sufficient causes" of world order can be seen in the same light. From the positivist view, the whole point of this kind of criticism is to develop a theory which will serve as a source of verifiable hypotheses.

The proponents of many formulations of international relations theory freely admit that there are problems with the "scientific" status of theory. The problems they generally point to, however, are not rooted in the problem that a positivist conception of theory is not an appropriate one for the social sciences, but rather that international relations theory is not yet "mature." The problems pointed out in the criticisms of explanations or approaches are not ones which are realized as indicating a problem with the positivist approach, but rather problems of not yet getting the theory right. Even the hard sciences, it is often suggested, have their problems with vagueness, contradiction and ambiguity.

As Dougherty and Pfalzgraff put it, for example, the application of the scientific method ". . . during the past 250 years has produced some very impressive results in the physical sciences in the form of generalized laws. In physics, astrophysics, chemistry, biology and certain areas of psychology a high degree of predictability has been achieved. But even the 'exact' sciences, with all their powerful methodologies, reach limits about what can be known at any given moment" (1981, 30). So there is hope, the implication is, for social science and a *theory* of international relations.⁵ It is because the

⁵ This hope is given expression in a number of interesting ways. A common move by political scientists concerned with the scientific status of theory is to invoke the philosophy of science to explain why theories are scientific and yet haven't been as successful as science yet. If it is possible to point to what looks like a "paradigm," for example, then political science must be

positivist conception of theory has been institutionalized in modern society that this hope can be maintained and is necessary. If political phenomenon aren't to be explained with positivist theory, the assumption seems to run, how else would it be possible to offer an explanation which would count as a strong explanation?

There is another way, however, to look at the explanatory status of general theories of international politics, explanations of international order, and the analytic concepts which give expression to them. In brief, it is to suggest that what it is to *explain* is to offer an *interpretation* of phenomenon rather than a theory on a positivist model of natural science. The explanation of international order offered in this essay is more an interpretation than a theory in the positivist sense, because it takes as its central object of study the intersubjective meanings among states in international politics created through political discourse which are not "objectively" identified. The analysis of the rhetorical regime of détente presented here relied principally on an interpretation of what the most significant aspects of the rhetorical practice of détente were. The methodological approach that has been taken in this study, then, to the extent that it can be considered to have allowed an account of international order, suggests the potential utility of an "interpretive" approach to the study of international relations.⁶ Such an interpretive approach assumes that in

the human sciences both the object of investigation—the web of language, symbol, and institutions that constituted signification—and the tools by which the investigation

science because science has paradigms Keohane (1983, 505-6). Lakatos' "scientific research programme" in a similar fashion.

⁶ For a good overview of the application of interpretive methods in other areas in the social sciences, see Rabinow and Sullivan (1988).

is carried out share inescapably the same the same pervasive context that is the human world. . . . interpretation begins from the postulate that the web of meaning constitutes human existence to such an extent that it cannot ever be meaningfully reduced to constitutively prior speech acts, dyadic relations, or any predefined elements. Intentionality and empathy are rather seen as dependent on the prior existence of the shared world of meaning within which the subjects of human discourse constitute themselves. It is in this literal sense that interpretive social science can be called a return to the objective world, seeing that world as in the first instance the circle of meaning within which we find ourselves and that we can never fully surpass. (Rabinow and Sullivan 1987, 6-7)

The analysis of international political order presented in the preceding chapters has attempted understand this condition by focusing on rhetorical practice in politics.

An interpretive approach to international relations theory and its explanatory status bears thinking about for a number of reasons. One reason is that there is a number of compelling contemporary arguments that suggest that attempts to construct a social *science* on the model of the natural sciences are highly improbable, if not impossible, or likely to produce explanations of dubious significance.⁷ If these arguments are even partly correct, there is a need to sort out, in general philosophical sense, what the explanatory status of present theories of international politics is.

Another reason to consider an "interpretive" approach to the theory of international relations, one more closely related to the specific study of international politics, is that such an approach has the potential to settle an

⁷ This is no place to launch into a review of them, but see Putnam (1978; 1981), Searle (1984), Taylor (1985). There has been in recent years a toward accepting this position in theoretical work. As Quentin Skinner (1985, 6) has observed, there has been

widespread reaction against the assumption that the natural sciences offer an adequate or even relevant model for the practice of the social disciplines. The clearest reflection of this growing doubt has been the revival of the suggestion that explanation of human behavior and the explanation of natural events are logically distinct undertakings, and thus the positivist contention that all successful explanations must conform to the same deductive model is fundamentally misconceived.

old problem of international relations theory. The problem is: how does, or how should, international relations theory be related to the practice of international relations and foreign policy? To put it in another way, "does the theory of international relations have any implications for practice?" (Keohane 1985, 2).

There has traditionally been a degree of skepticism, among statesmen more than academic analysts, about whether international relations theory explains anything about international politics well enough to be at all "useful" to "practitioners." Caution is most often the watchword on this issue. One writer advises that: "it is necessary for any practitioner using international relations theory to remain skeptical; indeed the more seriously the maxims [of international relations theory] are taken, the more important is the task of critical analysis" (Keohane 1985, 3). Such theories as there are might only apply in certain circumstances, or they simply might be wrong. That this skepticism of theory is well accepted among practitioners is manifested by the fact that "commentators on international relations avoid explicit discussions of theories of world politics" (Keohane 1985, 3). Part of the reason for this skepticism, also frequently expressed, is that the world of the policymaker and the world of the academic are not coextensive; both tend to make sense of international relations in very different ways.

The interpretive approach to explanation and theory can serve to clarify the disjunction of statesman and scholar because it suggests a relationship of practice to theory different from that suggested by a positivist conception of theory. The problem with the positivist conception in this regard is that it tends to exclude particular objects of study as being irrelevant or unimportant to explanation or theorizing. Part of what the positivist

approach excludes (and I think it is the reason that practitioners have such trouble with some theory) is an account of the way in which statesmen make sense of international politics in terms of the meanings politics has for them. In other words, the positivist model of theory and explanation tends to exclude just this "consideration of social reality as being characterized by inter-subjective and common meanings" (Taylor [1971] 1985, 40-3). The essay has implicitly suggested that the sense that international politics has for statesmen is conveyed and constructed through political discourse, an objective of study that an interpretive approach admits.

Yet another, and perhaps the most important, reason for taking an interpretive approach is that once assumed it reveals that present theories of international politics are really more interpretations than theories in the positivist sense (even aspiring ones), as is often implied. Moreover, it reveals that they are not particularly *strong interpretations* because they have been constructed with the idea that certain objects of study must be excluded, objects which, as just noted, may be the most important to a strong interpretive theory. The realist account of international relations, for example, might only be considered an interpretation of international politics in which power, as interpreted by scholars of international relations, received primary attention.

This last point leads to the seventh significant implication that this essay has for the study of international politics and which will mark its end. On the view of the role of political discourse advanced above, theories of international politics advanced by scholars of international relations themselves comprise a part of the institutional discourse of international politics. To explain why international politics takes the form that it does and

to give an account of the causes and consequences of international political events is to provide statesmen with potential good reasons for state action in international politics. No less than any other international political discourse, the scribblings of international relations' theorists constitute, in part, the nature of international politics, a fact that may impose upon them particular responsibilities.

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