CHAPTER II
Political institutions, as they develop, very often take a form different from the one mapped out for them at the time of their inception. This holds true regarding the United Nations too. Designed ostensibly to promote larger interests of the world community as a whole, viz., maintenance of peace and security, and promotion of general welfare, it has increasingly become an instrument through which its Member States try to safeguard and promote their respective national interests. This phenomenal development has largely emanated from the organizational setting that got evolved over the years around the operational system of the United Nations. Once the United Nations with its headquarters in New York became an operational system, its ever increasing activities led to the establishment of several subsidiary bodies, committees and subcommittees which in turn necessitated the presence of the representatives of Member States concerned. 1 An indication of the load of work that

characterized United Nations functioning right from the beginning could be gauged by recalling that one or more bodies held meetings almost every working day throughout the year.\textsuperscript{2} Preparations for these meetings, preliminary negotiations, and the task of getting acquainted with representatives of other Member States needed constant attention. To meet these requirements, several Member States initially asked their embassies in Washington, D.C. to look after the United Nations work but were to realize soon that they could not cope up with the heavy work in this manner. Therefore, Member States began establishing their "contact" or representational offices in New York which eventually shaped into the "Permanent Missions". The World Press consisting of several hundred accredited correspondents also joined the setting and has become an important element of the diplomatic scene in the United Nations. Again, the continuing conference system as well as the presence of the news media called for open debate of the issues involved which in turn necessitated the streamlining of the "rules of procedure" to govern debate leading to adoption of conclusions generally in the form of

\textsuperscript{2}The growing concern of the United Nations with global matters is evident in the fact that about 911 meetings took place during July 1946-June 1947, while more than 5,600 meetings were held at the United Nations Headquarters during 1930-34. Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization (A/315, 14 July 1947) in General Assembly Official Records (hereinafter in this Chapter cited as GAOR), session 2, supplement 1, p. vii gives relevant information.
resolutions. Soon the participants mastered these rules and learnt the art of subjecting them to manipulation with a view to promote or oppose a particular point of view. Alongside, the Secretariat evolved into a permanent depository of experience and expertise in order to serve the Organization and through it the Member States. Besides, the diversity of issues the United Nations dealt with, the procedural setting, the increasing membership, and continuing presence of delegates/diplomats made some form of regular "caususing" among Member States inevitable. Consequently and over a period of time, several caususing groups emerged —some on regional basis and others on functional and ideological basis. These groups have gradually acquired an increasingly influential role in the deliberations in the United Nations.

An elucidation of each of these elements constituting the milieu in which the United Nations diplomacy operates would be useful for the purpose of the present study.

ELEMENTS OF UN DIPLOMACY

Permanent Missions

The continuing conference system at the United Nations necessitated the presence of a large contingent of personnel representing Member States to look after the
work all through the year. As mentioned earlier, it was found
difficult for the envoys stationed at Washington to attend,
additionally, to the work at New York which was increasingly
becoming heavier in load and complex in nature. As such,
Member States started, beginning 1946, establishing their
"contact" or representational offices in New York. Some of
them were known as "permanent legations", others "permanent
delégations" and yet others simply as "liaison offices".
This initial confusion regarding the nomenclature led to
credentials problem. In an attempt to streamline this
"representational system" and to avoid confusion the General
Assembly by its resolution 257(III) of 3 December 1946
designated all these national offices as "Permanent Missions
to the United Nations" and their heads as "Permanent Repre-
sentatives".

Over the years, the growth of the Permanent Missions
has both reflected and promoted the evolution of the United
Nations into a continuous diplomatic forum. As Dag
Hammarskjöld once noted, these Missions are "pioneers in the
development of international co-operation", and they are the
most important common law development which has taken place
so far within the constitutional framework of the Charter.\(^3\)

In terms of structure and functions, a Mission,
accredited to the United Nations, is somewhat similar to

\(^3\) GAOR, Fourteenth Session, Supplement IA (Doc.
an embassy in a national capital; both of them act to promote and safeguard national interests. However, there are some significant differences. An embassy, in a national capital, has in view primarily the promotion of cordial relations with the country it is accredited to, and is concerned only incidentally with other embassies. On the other hand, a Permanent Mission pays more attention to diplomats in other embassies/missions than to the entity—the Secretariat of the United Nations—to which it is accredited.

In terms of composition of personnel, it is not different from the embassies in national capitals. The Permanent Representative, who generally holds the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, is assisted by a set of diplomatic personnel holding the rank of minister, counsellor, secretary, or attache. The role of each of them is different. Here the emphasis is not merely on traditional diplomacy which, of course, remains a part of the work, but something more.

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Generally there is no major difference in respect of the composition of these Missions except in size. For instance, the United Nations Blue Book (ST/SG/ER.A/243, March 1981) shows that the Mission of the Soviet Union is the largest with 100 personnel, while the missions of Iceland and Seychelles are maintained with only two personnel in each. As of 1991, as many as 151 Member States are maintaining their missions with an average strength of ten personnel.
The principal function of the Permanent Mission—as in the case of an embassy in national capitals—concerns the advancement of national policy aims through the United Nations. The intense activity that constantly surrounds each Mission can be functionally differentiated in terms of its contribution to (a) national policy formulation; (b) design and execution of the tactics of parliamentary diplomacy; (c) collection and reporting of information, and (d) dissemination of propaganda.5

According to Richard Pedersen, the Permanent Missions advise governments on (i) the advantages and the disadvantages of utilizing the United Nations as a diplomatic instrument; (ii) the criteria determining whether and how specific issues might be raised; (iii) the manner in which the State can maximize its gains from its participation in the United Nations political processes.6

The functions of the Permanent Missions could be broadly identified under the areas of negotiation and parliamentary action, formulation of policies and tactics, influencing opinion, information gathering and exchange.


and public relations.  

The activities of the Missions are dominated by negotiation and by parliamentary activity within the established rules to ensure satisfactory voting on a set of resolutions. Negotiation and associated parliamentary activity in the United Nations, while basically analogous to negotiations in traditional diplomacy, have a number of distinctive characteristics stemming from the fundamental institutional character of the Organization. The provisions of the Charter, the rules of procedure in the General Assembly and the Security Council, and other institutional elements create a unique framework within which negotiations and parliamentary manoeuvring take place. These exercises cover participation in debate, drafting/co-sponsoring of draft resolutions, introduction of amendments, negotiation of a compromise text and finally manoeuvres to securing necessary voting support.

The Permanent Missions also play a role—the degree of which varies from one Member State to another—in the process of formulation of policy and tactics. Their role in policy matters is advisory. In some countries, especially the small and newly independent ones, the Missions exert significant influence in the making of national policies.

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7Ibid., p. 256.
It is also said that personnel in the Missions, as they become more experienced, anticipate prospective policy decisions and accordingly review the range of tactics. Tactical considerations include whether an issue should be raised in the United Nations forum, if so, when and how.

Another principal characteristic of diplomacy in the United Nations is the widespread influence of deliberations on world opinion—domestic, foreign, governmental, and nongovernmental. Keeping this in view, the Permanent Missions make efforts to seek United Nations endorsement of respective positions. The chief instrument in this respect is speech. Guiding debate in a desired direction, discouraging unfavourable courses of action, and influencing both negotiating process and voting are also some of the aspects forming part of this function. Again, as an extension of this function, the Mission officials keep in constant touch with the media.

Yet another function of these Missions is to act as liaison office between their respective foreign offices and the United Nations Secretariat, and keep governments posted of the latest developments, both political and non-political. It may be noted that the United Nations is a place where it is easy to elicit reasonably authoritative information on all questions. Contacts among diplomatic personnel are a major source of information. Receptions, dinners, luncheons, and other informal occasions are also
made good use of for this purpose. Direct contact with the public is also integral part of the Mission's functions.8

Thus, the Permanent Missions, engaged in the process of safeguarding national interest, have become an important element in the organizational setting of diplomacy at the United Nations.

World Press

Member States are guided by a number of domestic as well as external considerations while conducting their diplomacy in the United Nations. The question of taking initiatives, or responding to initiatives of other Members is considered after taking due account of not only the net political advantages, but also of the possible propaganda mileage. Member States might raise a particular question to satisfy the domestic public opinion or to improve image in the outside world. To accomplish this objective, Member States make use of the presence of the World Press at the Headquarters. Approximately 300 press and radio correspondents and 110 photographers are permanently accredited to the United Nations. An additional 750 hold temporary accreditation

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at any given time. The number of correspondents holding
temporary accreditations is much more during the General
Assembly sessions.

These reporters have access to the formal meetings
held by various bodies of the United Nations and are provided
with adequate amenities to facilitate their routine reporting
work. It is true that delegates address speeches to the
fellow delegates representing other countries. But, more
often than not, they keep the press galleries in mind on
these occasions so that the Press gives coverage to speeches
in respective national as well as foreign Press. It is also
believed that during the General Debate in the General
Assembly sessions, the delegates of both the United States
and the Soviet Union choose different dates for their parti-
cipation so as to ensure maximum publicity in the World Press
next day.

The press reporters are daily fed with hand-outs,
copies and summaries of deliberations in the meetings of
various bodies, and press releases sent by the Permanent
Missions as well as the Secretariat. Press conferences are

9 Your United Nations: The Official Guidebook

From India, reporters belonging to the Press Trust
of India and Hindustan Times hold permanent accreditation.
Other newspapers like Indian Express, Hindustan Times, The
Hindu, and The Statesman depute their Washington correspondents
to New York as and when necessary.
also held by the Permanent Representatives, leaders of
delегations and the Secretary-General. Besides, these
reporters meet daily a number of diplomats to seek infor-
mation and/or exchange of information.\textsuperscript{10} It is also believed
that these correspondents, at times, are used as channels of
communication between delegations. The role of the World
Press, therefore, in the milieu of diplomacy in the United
Nations has an important place in the organizational setting
of diplomacy in the United Nations,

**Deliberative Bodies : Procedural Setting**

Of the six principal organs, four are politically
"deliberative" in the nature of their functioning. But, for
the purposes of analysing diplomacy in the United Nations,
two are more important among the four,\textsuperscript{11} and they are the

\textsuperscript{10} For a discussion on professional relations
between diplomats and journalists, see Arthur Andrew,
Defence by Other Means : Diplomacy for the Underdog
(Toronto, 1970), pp. 70-73.

\textsuperscript{11} The term "deliberative" is used here as a
function which involves discussion, debate, and exercising
of a discretion after discussing points for and against
to reach a given conclusion.

The other two deliberative organs are the Economic
and Social Council, and the Trusteeship Council. They
function broadly under the guidance of the General Assembly
to which they are required by the Charter to submit annual
reports. Moreover, the trend of deliberations in these two
organs is largely set by the General Assembly debates. Hence,
a separate discussion of the Economic and Social Council, and
the Trusteeship Council is not particularly necessary.
General Assembly and the Security Council.

The General Assembly is the only forum where every Member of the Organization is represented. Its significance can be gauged by the fact that it is often referred to as the "town-hall meeting of the world". And in this forum Member States take part in various stages of interactions seeking enhancement of influence, prestige, political advantage without any discrimination. In view of the principle of sovereign equality, all the Member States are given due hearing and every Member irrespective of size, population, economic and military power has one vote. Therefore, the views of each Member are considered valuable. Meeting regularly once a year (and also in special sessions and emergency special sessions as and when the world situation demands), diplomats review the world situation and take up issues—political, economic, social, cultural—

Among other principal organs, the Secretariat is an organ with the primary task of administration. The Secretary-General in certain situations can play a political role—and may consult his deputies for that purpose—but in the final analysis it is a one man's job to carry out what has been decided by other organs. The International Court of Justice is also deliberative, but is concerned more with legal than political aspects.

which are of concern to the world community. After formalities like electing various officers (for example, the President of the session and chairmen of various main committees) are completed as laid down in the rules of procedure, the Assembly's forum is available for "general debate". 13

General Debate in the Assembly is an important diplomatic occasion, an annual gathering at the summit open to all Members of the United Nations. A large number of heads of state, heads of government, foreign ministers, and other dignitaries take part each year. For instance, during the thirty-sixth session, as many as seven Heads of State, one Crown Prince, four Vice-Presidents, four Prime Ministers, five Deputy Prime Ministers, 103 Foreign Ministers, three Deputy Foreign Ministers took part in the General Debate. 14

General Debate is considered an indicator to show which way the political wind is blowing. It serves the

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objectives of Member States in several ways. It enables governments to indicate priorities in their foreign policy objectives. Members are also able to discuss issues (considered politically inappropriate to raise as separate agenda items). The presence of high dignitaries during the General Debate promotes intensive informal contacts for exchange of views on a variety of subjects.

As the General Debate proceeds, the General Committee considers the list of agenda items to make necessary recommendation for adoption by the Plenary. The composition of the General Committee is considered important insofar as the question of mobilising support or opposition to consideration of a particular item is concerned. Interested Member States make statements in the General Committee.

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15 For instance, although the Assembly decided not to consider the question of representation to People's Republic of China, several Members expressed their views on the question during General Debate every year. Recently, Afghanistan raised Pakistan question to embarrass Pakistan in the context of latter's efforts to seek removal of the Soviet military present from the Afghan territory.

16 The General Committee is generally composed of the President, Vice-Presidents (whose number increased from original seven to, over the years, twenty-one in a phased manner) and the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the Assembly.

17 Rule 43 of the Rules of the Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.10) governs these occasions.
putting forward political, legal and other arguments, and
plead for adoption or non-adoption of a particular item. Since
it is the Plenary which adopts the agenda on the recommendation
of the General Committee, there again Members concerned
reiterate views and renew efforts to seek support to their
point of view.

Once the Assembly adopts the agenda, specific
items are taken up for consideration—some by the Plenary
itself and others by the main committees of the Assembly.\(^\text{13}\)
Issues are debated and resolutions/recommendations formulated
first at the committee level and then, if recommended, at the
Plenary level.\(^\text{19}\) Not only during the sessions, even
afterwards too,\(^\text{20}\) scores of committees—special committees,

\(^{13}\) Initially there were six Main Committees and
they are: Political and Security Committee; Economic and
Financial Committee; Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural
Committee; Trusteeship Committee; Administrative and
Budgetary Committee; and Legal Committee. In order to
relieve the First Committee from heavy work, an Ad Hoc
Committee was created in the second session. This Committee
became permanent and is now called Special Political
Committee.

\(^{19}\) For a study of all the related aspects, see
Sydney D. Bailey, The General Assembly of the United

\(^{20}\) Routine life of a diplomat/representative at
the United Nations is so hectic and so demanding of one's
time and energy as to disrupt one's own family life. See
Gary Lee Best, Diplomacy in the United Nations (a Ph.D.
thesis, North-Western University, Evanston, Illinois, 1960),
p. 104.
sub-committees, and ad hoc committees — meet throughout the year to undertake preparatory work as also follow-up action as directed by the Plenary. During all stages of these deliberations, delegates/diplomats make continuous contact with other delegations at various levels.21

The Security Council, entrusted by the Charter with the primary responsibility of maintenance of international peace and security, is another important organ of the United Nations. The Council, in the exercise of this responsibility, has the authority to take decisions which bind all the Members of the Organization (Articles 25 and 49) and to some extent even non-Members (Article 2(6)) also. Nonetheless, this authority is limited by the rule requiring concurrent votes of all five Permanent Members in the case of non-procedural matters.22 Other matters, which the Council is empowered to act upon, concern recommending admission of new Members, appointment of the Secretary-General etc.

Needless to say, all these involve intense diplomatic interactions in various forms. Being a limited-membership organ, the views expressed by its Members, and the decisions/


recommendations made, assume additional importance. In its meetings, called with less than a few hours' notice at the request of any member of the Organization to discuss any threat to peace, breach of peace etc., long debates go on to allow time for reaching agreement or to share the blame with others for not solving the problems. The Council conducts its business in various forms. At times, a formal open meeting may be necessary. Sometimes, closed-door ones, and sometimes informal meetings are considered useful. Some other times, a mere statement by the President without debate might be agreed upon in advance.

Participation of Council's non-Members in the deliberations, as provided for in the Charter and elaborated in Rules of Procedure, is a usual phenomenon. By taking part, they seek to press their viewpoints, stress the need for immediate action by the Council, criticise their adversaries, and express disappointment over the Council's inability to act as desired by them.

**Secretariat**

Another major component of the United Nations diplomatic scenario is the Secretariat. Its importance

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24 Here the reference is to Articles 31 and 32 in the Charter, and to rules 37 and 38 of Rules of Procedure of the Security Council.
primarily lies in the fact that it is a permanent depository of experience and expertise. The Secretariat—truly international in composition and independent in disposition—provides a valuable link between meetings held year after year. The Secretariat officials have thus gained experience and skill in various aspects of the conduct of conferences on a continuing basis. It makes preparatory arrangements for the meetings of various United Nations bodies and is entrusted with the follow-up of decisions of those bodies.25

The Secretary-General, the chief administrative officer of the Organization, heads the Secretariat. His position is designed for a more prominent and political role in the area of maintenance of international peace and security.26 This responsibility makes him an observer of the political situation in the world and, also, an active participant in the political processes at the United Nations.

The Secretary-General employs a variety of techniques to play his role in the diplomatic interactions—


26 Article 99 empowers the Secretary-General to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security".
informal and formal. The daily consultations he holds with several representatives of Member States provide him the "daily bread" for his role. He presides over the meetings of the Advisory Committees set up on various important questions. He takes part in discussion in these committees and helps participants to reach an agreement. 27

When circumstances are characterized by lack of agreement in the General Assembly/Security Council, the Secretary-General emerges as a more acceptable person to carry out a comprehensive mandate on behalf of the Organization. 28 Sometimes, he may appoint, with the approval of the Security Council, a special representative to promote the possibility of a negotiated settlement between the parties directly concerned with a conflict situation. 29

The Secretary-General or his representative attend the meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council and intervene, if need be, during debates. Moreover, the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, and a number of studies/reports on a


28 Nicholas, n. 1, pp. 130-5.

29 Currently, near the South Asian sub-continent, two special representatives/ envoys of the Secretary-General are engaged: one to help parties concerned to reach a political settlement on the situation in Afghanistan, and the other to help a negotiated settlement and bring an end to the war between Iran and Iraq.
variety of subjects prepared by the staff of the Secretariat serve not merely as a source of information to representatives; they figure in the debates, they are repeatedly referred to and reaffirmed in resolutions. Studies and expert reports, such as the report on "World Social Situation" prepared in 1950s have helped in building up general awareness especially among the small States. Although these studies avoid taking any political position either way, the observations made therein do contain subtle implications on the merits of the question under study. Again, the opinions expressed by expert staff of the Secretariat, like the legal counsel, tend to influence the positions the delegations take on a given question.

Caucusing Groups

As noted earlier, the diversity of issues under discussion at a given time, the procedural setting, the increasing size of membership of the United Nations, and continuing presence of delegates/diplomats made some kind of "causuing" inevitable. This activity covers any group of Member States in the General Assembly which has some degree of formal organization, holds fairly regular meetings, and is concerned with substantive issues and related procedural matters before the sessions of the
The caucusing groups which are operating at the United Nations are informal. These groups meet with the help of facilities provided by the Secretary-General. Although the Charter does not make any specific reference to these groups, the General Assembly distributed in 1963 the posts of Vice-President among the regional groups. The official records of various organs contain statements made by representatives of Member States in their capacity as leader of a given group.

The caucusing groups are formed on the basis of regional, ideological, functional, and other considerations. Some of these groups are: the African, the Asian, the Latin American, the East European, the West European and others (like the United States, Canada, Japan), the "Group of 77", the Non-aligned, the group of EEC (European Economic


31 The Charter carries no reference to these groups except the use of phrases like representation on some bodies on a geographical basis. Some informal groups existed even in the League days but lost importance as the League declined in the late 1930s. Somehow even the United Nations Preparatory Commission did not foresee the potential role of these groups.

32 See Annex to Assembly Res. 1990 (XVIII) of 17 December 1963.
Community) countries. Initially there were the Latin American, East European, West European, Commonwealth and Arab League group of States. By the early 1950s, an informal Afro-Asian group emerged; since early 1960s the African and the Asian groups began to caucus separately although on certain issues the two continue to caucus together. The group of Commonwealth countries which was operating in 1950s is no longer meeting. The Non-Aligned countries started caucusing at the United Nations some time in 1972. The Islamic Conference acquired an observer status in 1974; in the same year the EEC countries, a distinct entity within the West European group, obtained the formal status of an observer. The Group of 77 comprises the developing countries from various regions and is one of the active caucausing groups.

The pressures inherent in the parliamentary diplomacy and frequent voting make these groups meet frequently. In their meetings they discuss any matter which any Member wishes.

\[33\] An "observer" status implies that one becomes a party to the developments both in terms of corridor diplomacy and parliamentary diplomacy but without a right to vote. A more significant aspect is that one is entitled to get one's statement or position paper circulated as United Nations document and also to make statements in the name of the Organization or the State one is representing.

\[34\] The "Group of 77" now comprises 119 Members of the United Nations; it comes nearest to what constitutes the Third World. There are, however, some exceptions. Yugoslavia has been a member of the group. Again, China has not joined the group; indeed China is one of the few countries which is not a member of any caucausing group.
to raise, and attempt to reach an agreement without vote. In the view of an analyst, the functions of the caucusing groups cover the areas of: (a) selection of candidates to limited membership organs/bodies; (b) exchange, and to a varying degree, harmonization of views; (c) initiation and co-ordination of efforts to obtain favourable outcome on issues of special interest. In practice the activities varied from group to group. The Asian group, of late, confines its scope to selection of candidates for the Asian seat in the election to the limited membership organs like the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and several other bodies. On the other hand, the Soviet and East European group attempts to develop common general positions on important agenda items with definite voting commitment.

Participation in the caucusing groups opens up an opportunity to Member States to make use of several diplomatic techniques. A group pursuing a common point of view can cast its Members in different roles in order to explore possible areas of negotiation. It can also benefit from collective


interpretations of factors present in other groups which can often indicate subtleties of cohesion and division that are pertinent to working out acceptable compromises. By projecting a combined voting power, the caucusing groups play a vital role in the negotiations with other groups.

Smaller Member States, which may not count much individually, are likely to acquire better bargaining capacity by virtue of membership in their respective regional group, non-aligned group and group of 77. Moreover, the leadership of these groups, which rotates periodically among the Members in an alphabetical order is used as yet another diplomatic tool especially by smaller States to exercise influence in the General Assembly.

Interactions among the caucusing groups reached such a dimension that these groups vote in a uniform way not only on matters of direct concern to them, but also on other questions with no direct bearing on their interests. Consequently, these groups have contributed to what Sir Carl Berendsen called an "irresponsible bargaining of votes" to the detriment of the purposes of the United Nations. On the other hand, some analysts who studied these aspects

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38Novet, n. 30, pp. 112-15.

defend the vital role of the caucusing groups.  

Thus, the interactions within and among the caucusing groups reveal evolving characteristics of the diplomacy in the United Nations.

Building Complex

The building complex at the United Nations facilitates formal and informal interactions among the participants in the diplomatic setting. The grand design of the "aesthetic and architecturally co-ordinated" group of buildings provides the most efficient working space for both staff and delegates. The four buildings which comprise the Headquarters area: the low domed General Assembly building with its vaulted meeting hall; the 39-storey glass and marble secretariat tower; the low rectangular conference building, and the Dag Hammarskjold Library at the south-west corner of the site.

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40 Cited in Novet, n. 30, p. 143.

41 Novet notes that it is only natural and fitting that like-minded countries should work together. According to him, these groups help voting cohesiveness. Previously, 11.4 per cent of Members used to vote identically and the figure, as of 1960, went up to 35.4 per cent. At the same time, group disharmony in votes also declined from 53.9 to 23.6 per cent. Ibid., p. 87.

The building complex provides facilities, under one roof, that help promote intensive, informal interactions among delegates. The seating arrangements in the conference rooms, corridors, and ante-chambers are structured in a way as to provide full scope for consultations and lobbying among the participants during the formal deliberations. Besides, the easy availability of telecommunication facilities within the building complex enables the representatives to keep in touch with the outside world including their national capitals.

In these interactions, protocol rules are not strictly adhered to. No formal appointments are needed. Diplomatic ranks do not count. Two delegates representing two different countries—one holding the rank of an ambassador and the other of an attache—could interact without any embarrassment.

The above elements of the organizational setting constitute the "raw material" out of which have emerged two

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43 In this connection, it may be mentioned that, according to the established rules of protocol, diplomats of one embassy can contact diplomats of other embassies one rank junior or one rank senior and not beyond.

44 In a survey made, cited in Alger F. Chadwick, "Personal Contact in Intergovernmental Organization," in Gregg and Berkin, ed., n. 11, p. 130, a diplomat is quoted thus:

If an attache and a minister are both concerned with the same program here, they will communicate with each other frequently. They will talk almost as equals....In fact, here very few people even know the ranks of other people with whom they are working. [Whereas in national capitals] you would definitely know the rank of someone before you communicated with him.
related facets of diplomatic interactions at the World Body. These two facets are generally referred to as, for lack of any other appropriate terminology, the "corridor" diplomacy and the "parliamentary" diplomacy. Both these require elaboration.

CORRIDOR DIPLOMACY

The widely held belief that business in the United Nations is conducted in a glass house is only partly true. One can easily visualize the nature of diplomatic interactions in a situation where diplomats representing governments from various parts of the world confer day after day and throughout the year. These contacts are more informal and intense than is the case in national capitals. What goes on in the United Nations is not just debate and discussion for public consumption, or adoption of resolutions by majority of vote; but hard bargaining, arms-twisting, persuasion, and so forth in utter secrecy. Conference rooms, ante-chambers, lounges, bars, and dining areas provide the venue for behind-the-scenes diplomatic interactions. These interactions sometimes make it possible to reach an understanding or compromise that may not entirely correspond to publicly stated positions. Further, some of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations bodies are merely the acknowledgement of agreements reached at backstage negotiations. Now a
crisis situation like the Berlin blockade was resolved beginning with informal diplomatic interactions in the United Nations complex bears this point.\(^{45}\)

The informal diplomatic interactions are also useful to obtain quick and reasonably authoritative information on varied subjects and on a continuing basis. This may be helpful to the delegations to assess and reformulate their strategies and tactics. Casual conversations in lounges and other places yield well-informed opinion on and reaction to various political and non-political events. According to a veteran diplomat and former President of the General Assembly, places like the "delegates lounge" are useful for ascertaining what governments are doing and particularly what great Powers are planning.\(^{46}\) Thus, as an American Ambassador characterized, the United Nations has become the "greatest single diplomatic crossroads in the world".\(^{47}\)


Various tactics of bargaining and arm-twisting are employed in behind-the-scenes interactions, carried out both at member-to-member and group levels. The broad basis of "bargaining" lies in an attitude of: I support you in this matter expecting you to support me in another affecting my interest (i.e. "I.O.U."). The method of bargaining is so widespread that an American writer wanted his government to realize that "we can no longer afford to demand what we want, we must bargain for it." 48

The method of arm-twisting is used in the context of matters affecting vital interests seriously. A former adviser to the United States delegation has thus described this art:

You sit down with the delegate, tell him the United States position, and ask for his support...you...make his life miserable. Then he may say, "I am cabling my government for instructions." You think he's lying so you cable his government; then you may go to him with the cable. You keep after him until he gives in. No actual threats are made - it is just a process of hounding him to death." 49

Social gatherings at the United Nations are an integral part of the diplomatic activity. They are of greater frequency

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48Ruden and Kaufmann, n. 1, pp. 67-68.

and intensity than is the case in national capitals. Important business is carried out in a quiet manner on these occasions.50

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

The day-to-day interactions in the formal meetings of various United Nations bodies are characterized by public debate, a set of rules of procedure subject to tactical manipulation to advance or oppose a particular point of view, and formal conclusions ordinarily expressed in the form of resolutions which are reached by a majority of votes of some description.51

50 Tavares De Sa, The Play Within the Play: The Inside Story of the UN (New York, 1966) narrates how business is quietly carried out on these occasions (p. 115):

Upon arriving at a cocktail party, for example, the seasoned diplomat will first spend a few minutes standing at a point where he can survey the whole gathering. He will single out fellow ambassadors with whom he must discuss a pending matter, extract a piece of information, or drop a hint to be conveyed to higher quarters. Although the smile and the handshake always conform to standard UN warmth, few words are wasted on greetings or social amenities. The item of business is then brought up and as soon as it is disposed of the diplomat excuses himself and sets out in search of the next person on his list.


 Dag Hammarskjold also believed that "parliamentary diplomacy, with its public debates, is in part the reflection of a desire to introduce democratic procedures in the field of international politics". Cited in Sydney D. Bailey, "Parliamentary Diplomacy", Parliamentary Studies (New Delhi), vol. 8, no. 2, February 1964, pp. 10-15.
In this process three interlinked stages are identified: debate on an item, introduction and consideration of draft resolutions, and finally vote. It is pertinent here to elaborate these stages.

Debate is an important component of the parliamentary diplomacy. It enables speakers to put their views on record, to "score points",\textsuperscript{52} to satisfy domestic public opinion, or unburden oneself from the pressures without having any effect on the outcome of the question, sometimes even to aim at influencing the outcome. Though it may look tempting to make speeches with commitments beyond one's capacity, speech-making with no or less preparation is likely to be unproductive and sometimes may become counterproductive. These debates, however "prolonged, boring, discouraging" in the view of some critics,\textsuperscript{53} are a sophisticated device to bring down high tempers, and are less dangerous than the lethal weapons used in the battlefield. As one observer noted, debate has two practical sides to it.

\textsuperscript{52}Rusk notes that "Sometimes you do yourself no good by scoring diplomatic victories over your friends; and you do yourself no good by scoring them over your enemies, if through consideration of prestige and face it becomes difficult for your enemy to withdraw or modify a position." Ibid., p. 132.

\textsuperscript{53}Hadwen and Kaufmann, n. 1, p. 69.
First it lets off steam, sometimes spontaneously and other times with calculated intent. Second, speech-making provides more time for getting on with the real business. Draft resolutions, submitted for consideration on a particular question, may attempt praise or blame appreciation or condemnation of policies/actions of one or a group of Member States. Hence, formulation of draft resolutions has crucial significance. It is important for the interested Member States whether the General Assembly, for instance, "notes" or "approves" a report from a subsidiary body; "reaffirms" a previous resolution or merely "recalls" it; "calls upon" the parties to adjust their differences or "expresses the hope" that they would do so and so on. The delegates need be alert when draft resolutions are discussed and formulated to see that their respective viewpoints are adequately reflected. Sometimes careless use of words may not only defeat the very purpose of a move, but may invite unexpected opposition also. To avoid this, the texts of the resolutions, which were adopted in the past, can usefully be adapted to ensure smooth passage in the sense that they can


55 It is said that a first rough draft is recurred thirty or forty times, as it goes round among various delegations, to accommodate the views of varied sections of Member States. Ibid., p. 65.
avoid unnecessary controversy on the choice of words. Also, it is always useful to have drafts sponsored by several Member States to ensure wider support.

Again, introducing amendments and sub-amendments is a calculated move carrying important political implications. Such proposals may appear to be, sometimes, innocuous, and other times subtle. Sometimes, the objective can be to work on defeating the very purpose of the original proposal (unfavourable to the sponsors of an amendment). Moreover, the very submission of a proposal whether in the form of a draft resolution or an amendment—and whether pressed for vote or not—can perform an important diplomatic function. As an analyst noted, these resolutions may frequently embody either one or two misrepresentations. They may seem, or pretend, to do what they cannot do, or may simply record an agreement which the United Nations itself did not achieve.

After the debate, decisions on draft resolutions are made by means of a prescribed description of vote—

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56 Amendments to a draft resolution essentially aim at deletion, revision or addition of some parts. However, an amendment seeking deletion of a whole of operative part of the original proposal is not admissible under the rules of procedure (in which case an alternative draft resolution will have to be introduced separately).

simple or two thirds majority, or a vote with or without veto.\footnote{For instance, as per Article 15 of the Charter, decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of Members present and voting; and decisions on other questions shall be made by a majority of the Members present and voting. The decisions of the Security Council (Article 27) on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine Members, whereas its decisions on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine Members including the concurring votes of the Permanent Members.} And, whether a question—which does not fall under the categories mentioned in Article 13 of the Charter requiring two-thirds majority for adoption—should be considered important is decided by a simple majority. But invoking this again a significant political action.\footnote{The reference here is to Rule 37 of Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.}

Here it is important to note that vote is only one of the several means by which resolutions are adopted. Sometimes resolutions are adopted without vote by "consensus". The consensus-making in the United Nations bodies aimed bridging gulf between divergent views and to formulate broadly acceptable texts. This method has become a widespread practice, especially since the 1960s. In this context, the role of presiding officer acquires a great deal of relevance. As part of his responsibilities, the presiding
officer ensures smooth conduct of meetings and in the process permits, promotes informal negotiations aimed at reaching an agreement among participants. 61

In mastering the art of the parliamentary diplomacy, tactics play a vital role. Skilful employment of tactics is called for both in respect of introducing a proposal and seeking defeat/postponement of the proposals initiated by opponents. Initiating a proposal in the United Nations is a highly calculated move that requires intense preparation. Generally initiating a proposal is governed by an attitude that "we will present this proposal only if it is likely to get majority support". Sometimes, Member States may choose to raise a matter (in the United Nations bodies), which they are not able to solve by themselves, for political reasons. At times, bilateral matters are raised by weaker parties to pressurise the other side (as Bangladesh did in the case of the Farakka barrage question). On some occasions, a delegation may sponsor a proposal even in the face of impending defeat just to satisfy domestic opinion.

Member States resort to tactics to ask for more than what one expects to achieve, so that ultimately what one achieves in the bargaining process is nearly something that is aimed at.\(^{62}\) To get one's position accepted by others depends much on the "influence"\(^{63}\) of the Member State concerned. Exercise of influence is identified with participation in debates, sponsoring of draft resolutions, and so forth. According to an author, influence is measured in terms of positions which Member States fight for and win, positions they compromise on, those that are fought and abandoned, and positions fought and lost.\(^{64}\)

Sometimes, for tactical reasons, Member States may not wish to state their opposition in clear terms to certain proposals. On these occasions, they make a number of arguments to express their reservations in a subtle manner. They may argue that time is not ripe for a proposed move, that other organs are already dealing with the subject, or that no financial and human resources are available.\(^{65}\) If these

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\(^{63}\) According to Robert Dahl, influence is a "relation of actors in which one actor induces other actors in some way they would not otherwise act". Cited in Kay, n. 5, p. 61.

\(^{64}\) Ibid.

\(^{65}\) Kaufmann, n. 3, p. 159.
arguments do not yield any results and unfavourable proposal is likely to be adopted, various alternatives that are open include introducing a counter-proposal, seeking postponement of consideration of the proposal to a future date. Usually preaching postponement appeals better than action to wavering Members. In case all these tactics fail, delegations may warn that they would abstain from discussion and voting or may threaten that they would withdraw financial support. In an extreme situation, they may also threaten to withdraw from the body/organ concerned. 66

Even if certain proposals are not favourable, it is not politically appropriate to oppose them. Questions concerning apartheid and decolonization fall in this category. It may be recalled how the Soviet Union gained considerable tactical advantage over the West European States in 1960 when it proposed "immediate and complete elimination of the colonial system in all forms and manifestations".

Again, it is pertinent to stress that not only right tactics need be chosen, but at a right

66. This was the tactic which the United States employed in 1977 when it withdrew its membership from the International Labour Organization in protest against the trend of growing "politicization". However, it re-entered the Organization in 1980.
time. There is obviously the time to act, to wait, to negotiate, and the time for conciliation; but the big question is which it is. Thus the foremost duty of a diplomat, as in the case of a politician, is to be in control of occasions. All tactics employed, therefore, have one objective: the proposals ultimately adopted should be as much favourable to one's own interests and policies as possible. Here the question of "collective legitimization" becomes pertinent.

As the United Nations has evolved and its role is adapted to the changing realities of international politics, collective legitimization has emerged as one of its major political functions. This is a function not undertaken by the United Nations but thrust upon it. According to Inis Claude, collective legitimization is an answer to what the

67 One delegate is quoted to have said: "You might think that every one would be for self-determination as you may word your resolution that way. However, you may find India opposing you; they are afraid of establishing a precedent for Kashmir. Pakistan in this case will be found co-operating with the Soviet bloc to get the self-determination clause put in, even though Pakistan usually is opposed to the Soviet bloc". Best, n. 20, p. 172.


69 According to Keith S. Petersen, "The Uses of the United Nations", in Gragg and Barkun, ed., n. 21, the tactics of parliamentary diplomacy are of much greater consequence than the outcome. This is because the result is usually a compromise or even a stand-off, and its results are substantively nil. p. 151.
United Nations can do, but to how it can be used.  

Member States have increasingly regarded the World Body as an agency capable of bestowing politically weighty approval or disapproval of claims, policies, and actions. The General Assembly, and to a lesser degree, the Security Council have been used for this purpose. Debates within and negotiations around these political organs are largely concerned with adoption or rejection of resolutions designed to proclaim legitimacy or illegitimacy of positions or actions taken by Members. The United States' successful attempt to seek endorsement by the World Organization of its policy on Korean crisis in early 'fifties, and the efforts of newly emerged nations to bring about a shift in priorities of the Organization in favour of decolonization and economic/social advancement are the cases in point.

In a way, approval of one's own policies is the objective one may have in mind. If that is not possible, acquiescence with policies is aimed at. But disapproval of policies in question is an outcome that is sought to be averted at all costs. The other way round of collective legitimization is that Member States seek disapproval of policies of adversaries, they prevent acquiescence with

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71Ibid., p. 86.
those policies, and invariably work against the approval of actions of adversaries. 72

The winners view the conclusions the United Nations mechanism has reached as the expression of "world opinion". This view is taken, obviously, to enhance the significance of their diplomatic victories. Although resolutions (except the ones adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter) are merely recommendatory in nature and are not binding on the unwilling Member States, it is not easy for the States to ignore the political advantages or disadvantages that accrue from those resolutions. That is the reason why every Member State makes every effort to claim that its policies/actions are in conformity with the Charter provisions and that of its adversary are not. 73

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that an effective participation in the political processes at the United Nations demands of the participants not merely diplomatic skills in the traditional sense of the term, but something more: Good knowledge of the subject under discussion. 74

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72Ibid., p. 91.

73Padelford and Goodrich, n. 66, p. 37.

74Here, the reference is that the participants, dealing with questions relating to, for instance, law of the sea, nuclear proliferation, should have thorough knowledge of the subject and also the implications involved in various issues under discussion.
debating skill, and mastery over the rules of procedure. It is also necessary that the personnel manning the mechanism of national participation are experienced and skilled in the techniques of "corridor" and "parliamentary" diplomacy. It is in this context, the question of strengthening the mechanism of participation in the United Nations political processes assumes a great deal of relevance. Hence, an examination of this and related aspects, with particular reference to India, is attempted in the next chapter.