TWO A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF POLITICS AND THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SYSTEM

International politics and domestic politics are usually thought of as rather separate fields of political science, if not completely separate disciplines. Nevertheless, we have found it useful to view the two "fields" as concerned with essentially the same phenomena: namely, conflict and the political system framework of institutional structures and behavioral norms within which the conflict takes place and is resolved. We have attempted to develop a single general model of politics and the political system which clarifies the relationship between the study of international relations and the study of domestic politics. It can be applied for comparative purposes to past, present, and future political systems, both at the international level and at all levels below it. We have found this "structural-cultural" model of politics and the political system useful not only in teaching but also in generating hypotheses about political systems and the behavior of individuals and subunits within these systems.

In the analysis that follows we have tried to make a clear, analytical distinction between the political process (politics) and the political system context of institutional structures (government) and behavioral norms (laws). It is our contention that there has been much

unnecessary confusion between politics and the political system framework (government, laws, norms) within which the political process takes place. One of the major sources of the confusion has been the use of the adjective, "political," to refer to both the political process and to the framework of government and laws. It is almost impossible to avoid the use of the term "political," so we have tried to clarify the meaning of the term when it is used to refer to processes and to institutions and norms. We have found it useful to think of politics as a phenomenon that implies the existence of conflict between two or more social units.

POLITICS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Without conflict there can be no politics. No politics is involved, for example, in a family or tribe or kingdom where no one disputes the authority of the father, chieftain, or king and everyone *automatically* obeys orders when a disputed issue is decided or a decision is initiated. (Government is involved in such cases, but not politics—at least not beyond the point that all parties recognize that the issue is one properly subject to the authority of the relevant institution.) Politics should not be confused with the related concepts of government, political institution, or ruler. Politics often takes place within government or political institutions, and governments or rulers may engage in politics; but governments, rulers, and political institutions also perform functions other than those relating to conflict resolution. To govern or to rule suggests the maintenance of law and order and the making of collective decisions for a society, but politics (defined as conflict) may or may not be involved in such activity. It is not involved, for example, if the authority of the ruler or government is high and decisions are obeyed unquestioningly. Moreover, the political process (conflict resolution) often takes place outside of the formal channels of government (e.g., political conventions, election campaigns) or beyond the reach of rulers. Nevertheless, governments very much affect the nature of the political process in society, just as the political process, in turn, affects the nature of the govern-

ment. They are closely related, but analytically separable phenomena.

We can define politics as the process by which individuals and/or groups consciously attempt to achieve their objectives when confronted with the opposition or potential opposition of other individuals and/or groups under circumstances where the parties to the dispute do not agree on the facts, rules, or authorities that could automatically resolve the conflict.

The means that may be used by the parties to a conflict vary widely according to the nature of the conflict, the capabilities of those involved, and the nature of the political system. The conflict resolution may involve the use of existing formal institutional channels for resolving conflict or attempts to create new ones (e.g., ad hoc negotiating conferences). On the other hand, the action taken by each side may fall entirely outside such formal channels. Individual units may struggle for victory by themselves or they may form coalitions or in other ways cooperate with other units to increase their chances of success against the opposition. The means available to each side also include negotiation and attempts to use existing social institutions and norms or to create new ones to strengthen one's position in a conflict; the promise of rewards (military, economic, or political); and coercion or threats of coercion (military force, economic sanctions, and hostile propaganda). It is important to remember that the means of resolving conflicts are not limited to those designed to achieve total victory by one side over another. They also include means designed to achieve compromise or even active and mutually beneficial cooperation to eliminate the sources of existing conflict, to prevent new conflicts from arising, and to achieve peaceful solutions to conflicts when they do occur.

Politics, in other words, is the interaction of individual and collective social units in conflict, each consciously making some attempt to resolve the conflict to its own satisfaction by whatever means or capabilities it has at its disposal and believes to be effective—though always within the limits set by voluntarily accepted norms or by norms forced on them by others (e.g., by the

government or by individuals or other units of the system. The study of politics, then, basically involves the study of conflict, its origins, and the manner and means of its resolution or settlement. International politics, in turn, means the study of conflict at the international level.

It is important to emphasize, however, that not everything that involves conflict (or disagreement) between two or more parties falls into the category of politics. Politics is rather a special case of conflict. Politics involves conflict in which the existing rules, information, and/or authorities are insufficient (or awareness or acceptance of them are insufficient) to insure, when a dispute arises, that mutual consultation of the rules and the facts alone (either by the parties themselves or through an intermediary adjudicative institution such as an arbiter or court) will result in a conflict-resolving decision acceptable to all parties to the dispute. Politics, in other words, involves procedural or substantive conflict that rules, facts, and/or mutually acceptable adjudicative institutions cannot resolve to the satisfaction of all parties. A resolution of the conflict requires the establishment of new rules or new interpretations of the rules by the parties to the conflict. The outcome consequently depends on the capabilities each side can muster to win his case. (In most political systems there are accepted rules which limit the violence of the conflict and determine what capabilities are acceptable.) Court proceedings do not normally involve politics (though the selection of the court, the appointment of judges, and the making of decisions may often involve politics) because the parties usually accept the binding authority of the court. Where the parties do not accept the decision of the court or try to change the court or the rules, then the judicial proceeding involves politics. Likewise, when the law is not clear and the judges depart from the established rules or create new ones, then politics is involved. Neither are administrative decisions politics when they involve no more than the application of accepted rules. Nor are disagreements over the spelling of words, the location of places on a map, the correct answers to mathematical problems, or other such conflicts which can be resolved through ready reference to dictionaries, atlases, mathematical tables or other accepted au-

thorities or empirical evidence. Politics, in short, is involved only when there is no agreement about the rules, facts or authorities competent to decide the issue when rules and facts are disputed by the parties in conflict.

Economic systems deserve some attention at this point. The marketplace is clearly a very important mechanism for resolving certain differences that arise in regard to the allocation of resources. Supply and demand affect the prices of goods and services and the rate of interest. This in turn affects people's decision to borrow and save, or to buy and sell. According to the classical free market theory, in the event that more people want to buy than there are goods available for purchase, sellers increase prices to maximize profits and this reduces the number of buyers. At the same time, the increased profitability of the production and sale of scarce goods induces new producers, distributors and sellers to enter the market, thereby increasing the supply of goods and eventually lowering the price. An analagous process takes place, in theory, with the availability of savings and interest rates. The fluctuations in the labor supply and wages are similarly explained.

Politics is not involved in the operation of the free market as long as the buyers and sellers accept the rules of the game (i.e., the principle of the free market) as just or inevitable. In practice, however, the actual operation of the free market is more complicated than the simplistic theory outlined. Politics is very much a part of the process of allocating resources. First of all, neither buyers nor sellers are always willing to accept the dictates of the market. They try to interfere with its operation by unilateral action, through cooperation with other buyers and sellers, or by action designed to induce governmental intervention.

When prices of commodities (land, industrial raw materials, food, machinery, etc.) are falling, sellers try to keep prices artificially high. Advertising is one method. Sometimes collective action such as attempts to gain monopolistic control of the market, pricing agreements, or the establishment of marketing territories is utilized. In other instances individual firms may resort to sabotage of the competition and pressures on government to pass fair trade laws, establish import quotas and tariffs, or increase government

purchases. In all of these instances, this action is taken at the expense of the buyer and usually over his active opposition.

When commodity prices are rising, buyers try to keep prices artificially low. Protests, boycotts, threats, sabotage of those raising prices or attempts to influence government to control prices and dump strategic stockpiles of goods on the market are commonplace. Sometimes buyers may pressure for special government programs and services (such as the construction of low-cost housing or public power), for increased subsidies, or even for the nationalization of industry.

Lenders and borrowers similarly try to affect interest rates through pressures for government intervention. Finally, it is no secret that employers and employees do everything possible to keep wages low on the one hand, or high on the other, despite market conditions. Employees, for example, establish labor unions and promote collective bargaining procedures. They seek clauses in contracts that protect their wages and jobs regardless of market conditions. Employers, in turn, fight against such developments and try to create alternate sources of labor by lowering barriers to immigration or through the importation of temporary workers from other regions or from abroad. They may try to get government subsidies for job-training, transportation, housing, health care, nursery schools, or pensions. These are all factors that could affect labor supply and wage costs. If the government assists, it means that these benefits will increase real wages, yet without significant cost for the employer.

Businesses also compete with one another in noneconomic ways: Production secrets may be stolen, patents infringed, operations sabotaged, key personnel enticed away, sources of credit squeezed, suppliers of raw materials or distributors of finished goods taken away. Businesses may also work on the government to impose selective taxation, or production quotas, to make legal restrictions on the operations of their competitors. They may attempt to gain government contracts through bribery, kickbacks, or through promises of support for candidates at election time. Labor unions also compete for control of factories or industries, both inside and outside established channels.

In short, much of the "economic" activity of societies involves processes that are political in nature. That is, they involve attempts to intervene unilaterally in the operation of the free market or to utilize superior social institutions to intervene on their behalf. The competition between buyers and sellers and between producers involves more than the free play of market forces. Hard work, greater savings and investment, increased efficiency of operations, product improvement, or the exploitation of new sources of raw materials, labor, and technology, although sometimes useful in increasing a competitive between buyers and sellers involves attempts to change the rules of the game. But even within newly established rules that modify the original free market system, competitive activities go on that involve conflict that cannot be resolved simply by consulting existing authorities or increasing the understanding of the rules by the participants. Politics is clearly involved. The relative capabilities and effectiveness of the strategies of the competitors are fundamental for resolving the conflicts.

Politics (implying conflict), of course, does not take place in a vacuum. Politics originates in a context of some sort of political system, and the context itself may serve to regulate the conflict and eventually to resolve it. Analytically, a political system has two major components: First, there is what we have called the superior decision-making, conflict-resolving and norm-enforcing institutions or, for short, *superior social institution(s).* By this term we mean the formal institutional structures of the system that function to make decisions collectively for the system, to coordinate the activities of the member units, to resolve conflict arising between them, and to enforce the norms of the system.[1] Second, there are the norms that regulate the behavior of the component

[1] The term "authoritative decision-making institutions" is not used because the concept of authority implies voluntary or automatic obedience and many governments or superior social institutions achieve compliance only because of the continual threat of coercion. Political systems include both legitimate superior social institutions (where compliance is largely voluntary) and illegitimate ones (where compliance rests largely on coercion). We have also chosen not to use the term "centralized," as it is possible for a superior social institution to be decentralized, yet superior in authority or coercive capabilities to any one unit in the system.

units of the system and define the role of the superior social institution(s). The term "political system," as well as the concepts of superior social institution and norms are, of course, only analytical abstractions from the actual or possible behavior of collectivities of men. Norms are abstractions from what men believe about how they should behave. Social institutions are abstractions from how people actually behave over time, and refer to the pattern and/or structure of such collective behavior. There is, of course, a close relationship between norms and institutions.

Political systems differ, of course, in the degree to which such superior social institutions and norms have developed. Some political systems constitute little more than the interaction of two or more units in conflict over a period of time, with no development of superior social institutions or conflict-regulating norms. Still others have developed elaborate and highly specialized institutions and norms for collective decision-making and conflict resolution.

The political system context of superior social institutions and norms is more commonly referred to as government and law, or, on the international level, as international government (or world government) and international law. The concept of political system (with its component concepts of superior social institutions and norms), however, seems preferable for our purposes for a number of reasons. First of all, as noted, not all political systems have well-developed centralized superior social institutions governing the relationships and resolving conflicts between the units. Yet after relatively few contacts between social units encountering one another for the first time, or coming into conflict for the first time, a definite pattern or structure usually develops in their relationships, and ad hoc negotiations and a set of formal or tacit norms may emerge, performing many of the same functions as a superior social institution would if it existed. The concept of politics is broad enough to include these more anarchic systems with their decentralized and incompletely developed institutions (or structures) and norms. It should be noted that most current definitions of political systems would exclude such decentralized conflict systems. See Figure 1. It is our contention, however, that such definitions are too narrow and that it is useful to include such anarchic

Norms for Settling Disputes	SUPERIOR DECISION-MAKING INSTITUTIONS			
	None	*Decentralized*	*Centralized*	
			VOLUNTARY	COERCED
None	Chaos			Conquering Invaders
			Secretary-General of United Nations	
		Italian City-State System Greek City-State System		
Few	Bipolar System			
		United Nations	Developing States	
			Catholic Church	
Many (narrow scope)	Balance of Power—18th c. System	Confederations		Colonial Empires
			Bureaucracies	Authoritarian States
		Federal Systems—United States		
Many (broad scope)	Utopian Anarchy		Unitary States—United Kingdom	
		Federal Systems—W. Germany		
				Totalitarian States

FIGURE 1
A Typology of Political Systems

systems for comparative purposes. Moreover, contrary to most definitions of political system, there is nevertheless a tendency at the international level to refer to such anarchic systems as political systems. For purposes of comparative study it is useful to develop a typology of political systems organized according to the degree to which they have developed centralized or superior institutions and norms for the regulation of conflict.

Second, not all developed and centralized political systems are known as governments. Bureaucracies (both those of governments and of private enterprises), universities, clubs, and even families are also to some extent political systems. Moreover, government seldom encompasses all of the social institutions that are involved in conflict resolution or regulation, collective decision-making and norm enforcement in a society.

Third, governments perform many functions other than those of collective decision-making, coordination, regulation, conflict resolution, and norm enforcement. Many functions are simply those of a service nature, such as road-building, operating public utilities, running social insurance systems, or other activities that could be carried out by nongovernmental agencies and have no direct bearing on collective decision-making or conflict resolution.

Fourth, not all norms are formal laws, as shown in Figure 2. Many, if not most norms of a society are unwritten, informal rules or precedents, yet still as important as, if not more important than, formal laws in regulating the behavior of individuals and groups.

In addition to the political system (of superior social institutions and norms), the context of politics also includes the broader physical and social environment of the political system, encompassing such things as geography and climate, the size and characteristics of the population, the nature of the economic system and the degree of economic development, knowledge, skills, and general values of society.

Political systems obviously differ greatly both in terms of their social and physical environments and in the nature and degree of development or completeness. They also differ in terms of legitimacy and stability. The influence of these differences on the way in which the political process operates is very great and, consequently

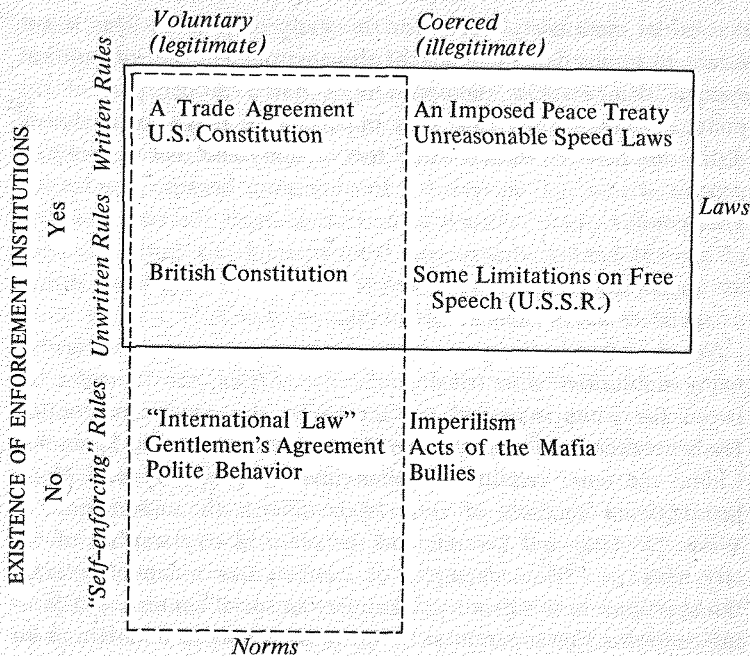

FIGURE 2
Typology of Law and Norms

it is impossible to ignore the context of politics if one is to understand the political process. In fact, those involved in the study of "developed" political systems frequently spend more time examining the context within which the political process takes place than they do the political process itself. They often study government and law rather than politics. On the other hand, students of "underdeveloped" political systems in recent years have often concentrated primarily on the environment and the structure of the political system rather than on the political process. Often they have been concerned primarily with correlating characteristics of the physical and social environment with the characteristics of the political system or its "outputs" or policies, ignoring the political process.

Nevertheless, it is our contention that it is conflict, rather than either the political system or the physical and social environment,

that is the most useful focus for the study of politics. This is not meant to imply that the study of the environment and of political systems themselves is unimportant or not a proper part of the political science, only that it is important to make an analytical distinction between these various foci of study and that the political process should not be ignored. Furthermore, because politics implies conflict, there is much to be learned from the reexamination of general conflict theory and from attempts to further develop the theory by comparative study of conflict within a wide variety of social contexts at all levels of human society.

When viewed in this way, contemporary international politics has many similarities with tribal warfare in Africa; the struggles between the white man and the Indian on the American frontier; feuds between mountain clans in Kentucky; civil wars in Spain and China; the tense relations between juvenile gangs in New York; jurisdictional conflicts of rival labor unions; the urban riots of Watts, Newark, and Detroit; and the often bloody warfare of big city mobsters. These examples of conflict, like much of international politics in this century, take place in social contexts (1) lacking centralized or superior social institutions able to maintain order either by force or by virtue of their legitimacy (i.e., authority accepted as binding by the parties to the conflict) and (2) lacking consensus, not only over the issues which give rise to the conflict, but also over the norms or rules for the peaceful settlements of disputes and even over the legitimacy of superior social institutions themselves.

While much of contemporary international politics occurs outside the framework of any superior social institution and in absence of any real degree of consensus about norms, it would be a mistake to conclude that international political systems have always been characterized by these rather anarchic conditions. Historically there have been periods and areas of the world in which international politics has been carried on within rather well-developed institutional frameworks and according to rather widely accepted rules. In China during the Chou dynasty (1122–221 B.C.), there were several different international systems; the feudal or Western Chou period (1122–771 B.C.) was characterized by the existence of su-

perior institutions and widespread consensus on norms. In Europe during the Middle Ages, individual feudal domains were subservient to the superior institution of the monarchy. Similarly, the papacy was at times regarded as the supreme arbiter of disputes. The centralization of papal authority and ecclesiastical organization made it possible at times, especially under Innocent III, for the Church not only to claim obedience from all men in the spiritual realm, but also to order relations in the temporal realm between rulers and their subjects and between the various rulers themselves. Even today, political relations among the states of the Western European Common Market are conducted, at least in part, according to specified rules of behavior and within relatively well-developed superior institutions. There are several other contemporary examples of such well-developed international subsystems (e.g., the Nordic Council composed of the Scandinavian states).

Despite these historical exceptions, the study of international politics in the twentieth century is essentially the study of conflict between states within a context of "incompletely formed" and relatively unstable political systems. In fact, the "incompletely formed" nature of the international political system is largely responsible for disguising the basic similarity between international and domestic politics. In both cases the relationships between the member units are at least partially structured and limits to their behavior are set, no matter how "primitive" or unstable the relationships and how incomplete the norms may be. Moreover, in both cases there is conflict between the member units of the political system. Further, political systems, whether on the international or domestic level, are not static, they are constantly undergoing change. Much of the conflict in a given political system in fact involves attempts to create new institutions and norms which competing member units perceive as most beneficial to themselves. These similarities cannot, of course, obliterate the differences in the contexts in which conflict takes place or between the various types of conflict themselves.

Now we will consider in more detail the major elements of our model: (1) the political system framework of superior social institutions and norms; (2) the goals of the system members; (3) the

relative capabilities of the system members and the superior social institutions; and (4) the process of conflict development and resolution and the origins of conflict, the choice of strategy, tactics and instruments, and the determinants of the outcome of conflict.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

There is considerable variation in the political system context within which the conflict-resolving process may occur. These variations can be ranged along a scale from highly structured to completely unstructured (or from hierarchy to anarchy). Such a scale would have to include at least two primary dimensions, one measuring the degree of development of social institutions superior to the individual units of the system and the other measuring the scope of established norms and the degree of consensus over them (including norms prescribing the legitimacy of the superior social institutions).

Superior Social Institutions. Political systems differ widely both in the degree to which superior social institutions have been developed and in the variety of such institutions. In some cases, a king or emperor may act as a final arbiter to resolve or settle conflict or to enforce an existing set of norms. In other cases a well-developed bureaucracy may regulate conflict through the application of an established set of rules. In other settings conflict among protagonists may be resolved through channels such as a representative body, a court, or through third-party mediation. Or there may be a variety of such institutions. In some instances no formal institutions may exist, or those that do may function imperfectly. Where there are no centralized institutions there may nevertheless exist well-established relationships and norms governing the interaction between the units. In such cases conflict may be settled peacefully through established channels of negotiation. Where neither centralized institutions nor established relationships and norms exist, parties in conflict may have to work out a settlement on an *ad hoc* basis, by negotiation or violence.

Superior social institutions may consist of individual rulers such

as kings, emperors, or judges; or they may be collective bodies such as tribal councils, arbitration panels, or parliaments. They may be self-appointed, co-opted, succeed by inheritance, or be selected by the people of the society they serve or by the units in the system in a direct or indirect way. The superior institutions may be distinct from the units coordinated, as in the case of the United Nations and its member nations; or they may be a part of one of the units of the system, as in the case of the Soviet Union in relation to the member states of the international communist system.

Superior institutions also differ in the scope of their jurisdiction to resolve or settle conflict. For example, a tribal council or an emperor may have a broadly defined jurisdiction. Conversely, in a bureaucracy or a highly differentiated national political system or in the international system, the jurisdiction of the superior institutions is likely to be narrowly circumscribed.

Superior institutions vary in the degree to which they are viewed as legitimate, in the degree to which they control capabilities for the use of force, and in the degree to which their decisions are obeyed. There are several important aspects of the question of legitimacy: Are the decisions of the superior institution willingly obeyed even in cases of disagreement? (In other words, how absolute is the authority of the superior institution?) Is the right of the superior institution to act in any area or to intervene in all kinds of disputes recognized? (In other words, how great is the scope of the legitimacy?) Is the right of the superior institution to use force to insure compliance with its decisions recognized?

The mere existence of a superior institution, even if it has adequate capabilities to enforce its decisions, does not insure that it is considered legitimate. The less the legitimacy of the superior institution—i.e., the less the consensus over the existence and nature of the superior institution, its proper role or the scope of its jurisdiction—the more its existence and ability to secure compliance must rest on force and coercion. On the other hand, overwhelming force in the hands of the superior institution may make it possible under certain circumstances for legitimacy to be acquired in the long run.

Even when a superior social institution is legitimate in the eyes

of most of the population there may still be significant subgroups which reject its legitimacy. Juvenile gangs and mobsters may reject the legitimacy of the police and pacifists may reject the legitimacy of the government with respect to decisions to use violence, just as revolutionary movements in the nineteenth century rejected the legitimacy of the Holy Alliance and Cuba rejects the legitimacy of the Organization of American States. Every superior institution depends on both legitimacy and force to maintain its existence and to perform its function but the mix at any given time is important.

Compliance with decisions may be due primarily to the legitimacy of the superior institution, but it may also be due to the possession by the superior institution of greater capabilities for the use of force or to some combination of the two. While legitimacy and capability for the use of force usually reinforce one another and are often found together, this is not necessarily so. There are many political systems where the superior social institutions are legitimate, yet lack direct control over the means to enforce compliance. The papacy, for example, has a fairly high degree of legitimacy within its jurisdiction, yet does not command significant economic or military capabilities to enforce decisions. The Supreme Court of the United States is another example of a superior institution with high legitimacy and low control over significant capabilities to enforce obedience. On the other hand, in some political systems, such as the Soviet system in the years immediately following the Bolshevik victory, order is maintained primarily through the use of coercion. The communist-ruled governments of Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic States in the decade after World War II are other examples. In general, the less legitimate the superior social institution, the greater the force required to insure compliance. In order to achieve the same level of compliance enjoyed by the Swiss government, for example, the less legitimate East German government must control far more capabilities of force than are needed by the Swiss government.

Low legitimacy, however, by no means implies control over great capabilities for the use of force. In fact, at least some legitimacy among at least a part of the population is necessary to mobilize capabilities for the use of force in the first place. Superior

social institutions with low legitimacy or a narrow scope of jurisdiction are often simply characterized by low compliance. Outside its rather narrow sphere of legitimacy, for example, the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly or its secretary-general usually go unheeded unless enough states can be persuaded of the legitimacy of the given decision and are willing to contribute capabilities to enforce compliance. The United Nations is also an example of a superior institution that has enormous legitimacy as a symbol and as a forum for the expression of divergent views, but which has almost no independent legitimacy when it comes to making or enforcing decisions affecting the member states. The secretary-general has legitimacy when it comes to mediating or persuading, but almost none when it comes to making decisions which resolve conflicts between member states.

Superior social institutions also differ greatly in the nature and range of their activities and functions. Our primary concern in this book is with the role that such institutions play in the conflict-resolving process in society. This role may take several forms. First, there is the part that such superior institutions play as original parties to conflicts in the socicty, where subordinate social units oppose the superior social institution. This is particularly common in cases where the superior social institution is not legitimate and must struggle to impose its decisions. Second, there is the part that such superior social institutions play in the conflicts between two or more subordinate units by taking sides or arbitrating disputes. Third, there is the role of enforcer of norms in the society against deviants (which is really only a special case of the second kind of role just discussed, where the superior social institution takes sides against the deviate). Fourth, there is the role of providing a more or less passive channel to be used by subordinate social units in conflict with one another, where the role of the superior social institution is primarily one of furnishing an arena, facilities, and umpire service for the parties to the conflict.

There is a second major set of roles that superior social institutions may play that is analytically distinct from the conflict-resolving role, but which is nevertheless closely related to it. This is the set of roles that are of a collective decision-making, general man-

agement and administrative, adjudicative, planning, and leadership nature. These involve the performance of functions that can be carried out only by a superior social institution by virtue of its superior or centralized position and which are very important, if not always essential, for the survival and well-being of the system and for the system's ability to achieve its collective goals (if any). These functions are also very important for the reduction of conflict between social unit members and for the avoidance of future conflict by working out plans for the coordination of the activities of the member units to minimize conflict. More specifically, these functions include the clarification of goals and the relationship between goals and means, informing the population of the facts necessary for rational decision-making, the working out of alternative plans for optimum resource development and utilization, maximizing individual and collective goal attainment, stimulating the unit members to undertake certain projects or adopt certain goals, warning against internal or external dangers to the social unit, and planning the defense of the social unit. Another role that probably properly belongs in this category is that of rule interpreter, the function that is performed by the courts or administrative tribunals in developed Western societies. Normally such rule adjudication falls outside the realm of politics because the conflict between the parties can be handled by the rules of the game as they exist, as all parties agree to the legitimacy of the court's interpretation, and it is only necessary for the court to hear the case and make its decision for the conflict to be resolved. (In cases where the jurisdiction of the court is in dispute, where simultaneous legislative or extralegal activity is engaged in by the parties, then the dispute is a political one.) In any case, all the roles in this category performed by the superior social institutions are normally noncontroversial (i.e., nonpolitical) and are usually within the scope of the superior institutions' legitimate jurisdiction, especially when they have been specifically delegated to the superior social institutions by the subordinate units. (The scope of the legitimate jurisdiction of a superior social institution, of course, will vary from society to society.) Many of the plans or proposals that the superior social institution may put forward (a noncontroversial function) may,

of course, generate considerable conflict within the society over whether the proposals should be adopted or over how they should be implemented. Such conflicts are then within the realm of politics, though because of the central importance of these functions to the maintenance of the system, their great influence on the mitigation and prevention of conflict in society, and the fact that they are most often performed by the same institutions that are concerned with conflict resolution, it seems appropriate to include them within the scope of our definition of a superior social institution. It seems useful, however, to make the analytical distinction between these functions and those that are directly related to conflict resolution.

There are many other functions often performed by superior social institutions (governments) that are less directly related to the conflict-resolving process and are primarily of a service nature and are consequently not included in our definition of a superior social institution. These functions, too, may be necessary for the survival or well-being of the system, but they are not primarily political in nature. They differ from the leadership, management or collective-leadership functions described earlier in that they do not involve decisions initiated by the superior social unit, but rather actions carried out in response to the expressed needs of the subunits. For example, the United States government prints money, finances research on a variety of subjects, collects statistics and takes the census, constructs roads, delivers mail, and operates the social security system, to name but a few of its nonpolitical functions. Similarly, state and local governments in the American context or other "political" institutions on any level and in any area of the world engage in such service functions. On the international level, most of the specialized agencies of the United Nations are engaged primarily in providing noncontroversial services for their member units, not in making collective decisions or in resolving conflict—though from time to time policy issues of a relatively narrow scope may be decided by the agencies.

The range of activities in the nonpolitical sector may have important effects on conflict settlement or resolution. Through the performance of desirable services for the system as a whole, support for conflict-resolving organs of the system may be increased.

Similarly, nonpolitical activities may even remove possible sources of conflict. Upon occasion, conflicts may be transferred to nonpolitical institutions for settlement according to bureaucratic rules and practices. In such instances, it is often suggested that the dispute is really amenable to technical resolution or that it is simply a matter of discovering the facts. On the other hand, normally nonpolitical activities can themselves become points of conflict thus increasing the load on conflict-resolving mechanisms. Under such circumstances, formerly nonpolitical agencies may become the foci of conflict and may find themselves arenas for the settlement or resolution of conflict. Nonpolitical functions can become political, to be used as weapons in the settlement of conflict arising elsewhere. The papacy could utilize its religious functions as a weapon in its conflict with the Italian state. The United States or the Soviet Union, as leaders of opposing blocs, have used a wide variety of cultural and economic activities as political instruments designed to win support from neutrals and to insure the compliance of their associates.

Many superior social institutions, particularly those in nondemocratic settings, may function less as channels for the resolution of conflict or enforcers of widely held norms than as independent initiators and enforcers of policy. Often these policies are for the exclusive benefit of the rulers themselves. In such a context, specialized conflict-resolving institutions, such as courts or parliaments, may have little importance. The rulers alone set the standards of behavior and direct all affairs in the society. While the rulers of such societies may also intervene to resolve disputes between various individuals and groups, especially between the most important segments of society, such conflict resolution often amounts to little more than suppression. The conflicting interests of the various units of society are seldom viewed by nondemocratic rulers as normal and legitimate demands to be adjusted. Such leaders are not likely to view the purpose of superior social institutions as channels for adjusting conflicts of interest within society or facilitating the adaptation of the society to inevitable changes. Instead, they are likely to see the purpose of superior social institutions as the restoration of law and order necessary for the preservation of tra-

dition, the efficient operation of the economy, or the power, position, and other interests of the ruler. Under such circumstances, the ruler or superior social institution is less a channel for conflict resolution within the society than the victorious party to conflict between ruler and ruled.

All superior social institutions, of course, are to some extent involved as parties to conflict in society. This is especially true of illegitimate governments, but even where the superior social institutions are accepted as legitimate, at least some groups in society will be working in opposition to government policies and actions, through both legal and illegal channels (especially the latter where the system does not provide legal channels of opposition with some hope of changing the system). In any case, as we have noted, the government can be very important in the determination of the outcome of any conflict. It has the ability to enforce the laws or norms regulating the conflict or to wink at the law in the interests of one group over another. It can also act in other ways to increase or decrease the power of one or more of the parties involved in the struggle. The superior social institution is almost never only a passive channel through which conflict is resolved, but an active participant in the conflict—especially where there is a high degree of development of superior social institutions. This explains why competing groups in society seek control over the government even when the major issue dividing them is economic or religious rather than one involving the political system itself.

Norms. The rules of the game, or norms, prescribing proper behavior for all participants, occasions, and circumstances exist to some degree in all systems; however, they differ from one another in terms of the extent to which all participants, occasions, and circumstances are covered by the existing rules. Systems also differ from one another in the context of the norms and in the extent that existing norms are voluntarily obeyed.

It should be noted that all rules of the game are not necessarily norms, as norms are mutually shared expectations of behavior and must be shared by enough people in a given society to be at least in large part self-enforcing in order to be considered norms.

Where strong, superior social institutions or subunits exist, they may succeed in imposing rules of the game on the rest of the members of the system. These rules do not become norms until a significant number of people accept them as legitimate and expect conformity to the rules by themselves and others. Norms, like other rules of the game, are not all-or-nothing phenomena. There is a continuum of support for and opposition to them. The degree of consensus over the norms or other rules of the game differs both in terms of the number of people accepting them and the intensity with which they are accepted (i.e., the degree to which the acceptance is conditional or unconditional). We will have more to say about this in a later chapter.

No political system, not even a bureaucracy severely limited in jurisdiction over events in the outside world, can come close to having rules (norms) to cover all contingencies. Even here there may be room for doubt or dispute about the proper course of action or behavior in a given conflict situation. The norms of a nation-state are considerably less complete than those of an individual bureaucracy and the system of norms found at the contemporary international level is even less complete. However, even that system of norms is considerably more developed than that governing the relationships of juvenile gangs encountering each other for the first time.

It is hardly necessary to emphasize that the content of the rules of the game differ from system to system. The means of conflict resolution or settlement countenanced by the rules may range from peaceful to violent. The rules of most national political systems forbid violence except in self-defense or as an exclusive weapon of the superior social institutions against those who break the rules or against external enemies of the system. Even in the United States, vestiges of privately permitted violence such as dueling remained into this century. Although violence is discouraged by the norms of the contemporary international system, it is not forbidden in all circumstances. When violence does erupt, however, legally or illegally, other norms regulating its use come into play. For example, even parties settling conflict through violence tend to observe rules

against dumdum bullets, gas warfare, genocide, or the killing of prisoners of war.

The degree of consensus over the norms, however completely or incompletely they cover the range of possible conflict situations, may differ from one system to the next. There may be rather high consensus over a relatively few norms which have emerged in a given political system. The core of rules of international law stipulating the right and duties of states in relation to each other would be an example of this. Norms worked out by the members of the political system themselves over a long interval on the basis of mutual advantage to all the participants or formally accepted by a high proportion of the members in a representative assembly would have high consensus. Conversely, rules imposed by a nondemocratic ruler acting in his own interests would be likely to evoke rather low consensus. However, consensus over rules so imposed might develop over time if such rules proved to be mutually beneficial or if the ruler adequately controlled the process of political socialization in the society.

A superior or centralized social institution and consensus over rules for settling disputes, while often existing together, may exist separately. Under a king or dictator, for example, there may be a very strong superior social institution, yet no consensus on the rules of the game. Where there is no consensus on these rules, order can be maintained only by superior social institutions ruling by force. Where such institutions must rely primarily upon force to settle disputes there is not only an absence of consensus about the rules of the game but most often a lack of consensus over the proper role of the institutions themselves.

There are also instances where no formal superior social institutions exist for the resolution of conflict, yet considerable consensus on rules for the peaceful settlement of disputes exists. Political relations among European states in the nineteenth century were governed largely by a set of shared norms. The Great Powers, acting as the Concert of Europe, acted in an ad hoc fashion to mediate conflict or enforce norms.

Obviously, in any given context there is likely to be more or

less consensus over the rules of the game rather than either total consensus or total absence of consensus. Moreover, there may be high consensus on some rules and low consensus on others. Looking at international systems, one can discern high consensus on most of the rules by many states, but low consensus on the part of others. The international political system in the interwar period reflected this condition: The Western victors in World War I, Great Britain, France, and the United States, generally accepted the system and its norms; while the losers, Germany and its allies, did not. The new government of the Soviet Union, with its revolutionary ideology, rejected the system and its rules even more openly and thoroughly. A similar circumstance has existed since World War II: North Korea and China completely rejected the rules of the game and the U.S.S.R. only partially accepted them. There are likely to be deviates in any society, national or international. Black Power advocates or Latin American guerrillas have their counterparts in the international system. When conflict arises in such an environment, the institutions of authority, primitive or not, may be mobilized to take sides against the deviate.

It is also worth noting that individuals or groups at the national level or states at the international level often strongly profess adherence to the rules of the game as long as their own interests are not threatened. However, if the occasion arises when violation appears congruent with self-interest, particularly when no sanctions seem likely, the international rules are broken. There are usually concurrent efforts to disguise the violations through reinterpretation of the rules. The intervention by the United States in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic serve as illustrations of this point.

THE GOALS OF SYSTEM MEMBERS

A study of the goals held by members of a given political system is important for understanding the origin of conflicts as well as for tracing the lines of cleavage within the system and for estimating the potential stability of the system. Not only the goals themselves

but the manner and degree of commitment to them is important for suggesting how a conflict is likely to be resolved.

Some goals such as unconditional surrender of the enemy, or goals implicit in a world-embracing ideology are nearly impossible to compromise. Irreconcilable conflict is implicit when key members of a political system hold such goals. Goals such as complete independence for a colonial dependency or exclusive control over strategic border areas or crucial waterways are less inclusive, but by their very nature, such goals are difficult to compromise. Other goals, such as those of greater representation in the United Nations, lower tariffs against exports, or a favorable settlement of a nonstrategic boundary running through desert wasteland, are far more easily resolved. In short, the degree to which the goals of the members are shared or incompatible will help determine whether conflict can be resolved within the confines of the political system or whether system-disrupting violence will occur. The pattern of compatibility or incompatibility of goals held by members will help determine the potential for alliances, the possibilities for compromise or cooperation as a substitute for total victory or stalemate.

The intensity of commitment to goals and the extent to which a given goal conflicts with other goals held by the same unit will also be important. The intensity of commitment influences the risk or price members are willing to pay to achieve their goal. Moreover, this factor helps to determine the relative power of each side in the dispute and the likelihood of acquiescence or compromise. We will discuss the origin of a state's goals in a later chapter.

THE RELATIVE POWER OF THE SYSTEM MEMBERS

We have already suggested that systems differ according to the relative power of the superior social institution in relation to the individual members of the political system. To understand how conflict is likely to be resolved in a system it is also necessary to consider the power of the system members in relation to one another. Power is a very elusive concept and a detailed consideration

is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, it is necessary to make some observations concerning its place in our framework.

First, power implies an ability to influence behavior; more particularly, it suggests the inducement of one unit by another to act in a way it would not ordinarily act. Power thus implies a relationship between two or more social units. The power of a unit can consequently be measured only in relation to another unit.

Second, power is not an all or nothing relationship. It is more useful to think of power in terms of degrees of influence rather than in terms of absolute control. Moreover, the influence exercised is seldom one way. Even though one unit may "submit" to the "will" of another unit, the loser may in fact have forced the winner to compromise his original plans or even to give the loser something in return. If there is any kind of a struggle between the two units, the loser also influences the winner in his allocation of resources and choice of instruments and may in fact inflict heavy losses on the winner, profoundly affecting his future development. The loser may also infect the winner with his culture after defeat and effect significant changes in the social unit of the winner as in the case of the Romans and their defeat of the Greeks.

Third, it is useful to distinguish the concept of power from the concept of capability. While power can be measured only as a relationship between units, "capability" is used to refer to the attributes of a unit that are likely to determine the unit's power in relation to other units. These attributes can be quantified and are referred to as the unit's capabilities or sometimes as elements of power. Capability, in other words, is a rough measure of the resources available for potential translation into power The capabilities or elements of power include such tangible things as population, natural resources, and geographic location as well as more intangible items such as levels of technology, organizational skill, leadership, unity of the population, and authority of the superior social unit. The extent to which capabilities are translated into power depends upon the conflict situation as well as upon the parties involved.

Fourth, it is important to remember that capabilities are neither static nor independent of one another. This, of course, implies that

the power relationship between units is also in flux. Capabilities change over time as a unit uses some kinds of capabilities such as organizational skill or technology to transform still other capabilities, population and natural resources, into capabilities more effective in conflict situation; namely, well-trained armies and modern weapons.

Fifth, it is difficult, if not impossible, to compare the effectiveness of one kind of capability with another, even another within the same general category. For example, does an advantage in population size equalize an advantage in military weapons? Does a strategic location advantage equalize one in technology? Even within the same general category of weapons, an advantage in tanks cannot be compared to an advantage in naval forces with any meaningful result. In short, the effectiveness of capabilities depends very much on the objective to which they are applied. Nuclear weapons are useless in guerrilla warfare; the most powerful army in the world is useless if it cannot be transported to the part of the world where the action is. No weapons will intimidate a fanatic who prefers death to compromise. Moreover, capabilities which increase a unit's power in some situations may actually reduce it in others. Population dispersion may increase immunity to nuclear attack but make it more difficult to produce modern weapons. A highly advanced industrial civilization may produce powerful military weapons but make it vulnerable to defeat with atomic weapons. It may also produce a standard of living expectation which reduces the willingness to take risks or make sacrifices; this, in turn, increases logistical burdens and decreases the flexibility of armed forces as they demand more "comforts" on the battlefield. The relative capabilities relevant to a given conflict situation will be important considerations in determining the outcome of the conflict.

Sixth, the power of a unit (in relation to another unit or group of units) can be measured only in relation to the objective in question. This is true because every type of capability is not equally effective in attaining every kind of objective. The state with the most powerful submarine force will be much more powerful in wars where merchant shipping is an important factor

in the outcome than in a war in which contiguous states are fighting land battles. China's land army may be a very potent weapon against the United States in a dispute with the United States in Korea or Vietnam, but will be of little influence in any disagreemen with the United States in Latin America.

CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We have suggested that conflict and conflict resolution are the essence of politics, domestic or international, and that the political system context of superior social institutions and norms within which the conflict takes place exerts an important influence on the way in which the conflict is resolved. The pattern of values and goals held by the various member units of the system are important in determining what kind of conflicts will arise, their intensity, and the difficulty in resolving them. The pattern of capabilities of power within the system will also be an important determinant of the way in which the conflicts are resolved, influencing both the means and probable victor. The social and physical environment of the political system and of the individual units of the system will, in turn, largely determine both the pattern of goals and the pattern of capabilities within the system. National-state units, for example, that are poorly endowed with natural resources, isolated from other states, and behind the rest of the world in the level of technological know-how are not as likely to exercise as much influence in conflict situations as are those states that are well-endowed with natural resources, strategic locations, and technological knowledge. Moreover, such poorly endowed states are likely to adopt the goals of establishing international norms to protect weak states from strong or increasing their power by economic development or alliances with other weak states or with a powerful protector state.

There are three major questions with which we have not yet dealt so far in our analysis: First, why does conflict arise in the first place and why does it take the form it does? Second, what determines the choice of strategy and tactics and instruments which social units will adopt in pursuit of their objectives? Third, what

are the ways in which conflict can be resolved and what are the determinants of the outcome? We will deal only briefly with these questions in this chapter and will treat them more fully in later chapters.

Sources of Conflict. To begin with, some observations about conflict are in order. First, conflict is a normal and almost inevitable phenomenon at all levels of human society, although social systems do differ greatly in the degree to which internal conflict threatens the efficient operation or survival of the system, the specific objects or areas of conflict, the number of areas of conflict (and the number of areas of agreement), the intensity of the conflicts, and the pattern of cleavages formed by the conflicts (and whether the separate objects or areas of conflict involve the same or different cleavage lines). Nevertheless, even the most integrated societies experience a certain degree of internal conflict almost continuously. Second, while the degree of consensus in society is an important consideration in the study of conflict, equally important is the nature of the institutions and norms that have been developed for preventing and resolving conflict short of violence. Social systems also differ greatly in the nature and degree of development of such institutions and norms (i.e., the political system, broadly defined); and the existence and operation of these institutions and norms affect not only the resolution of conflict, but the degree to which it arises in the first place and the form which it takes.

Third, there is no simple, single source explanation of why conflict arises in a social system. Moreover, there are significant differences in the reasons for conflict from one social system to another. Rather than going into a detailed analysis of any of numerous theories about the origin of conflict (e.g., those of Aristotle, Madison, or Marx emphasizing differences in wealth, property, and economic ownership), we will simply list a few general categories which we have found useful in analyzing the origins of conflict:

1. The degree of the scarcity of objects that are valued by members of a social system (e.g., land, money, position, status,

franchises, security, etc.). Note that what is valued in a particular society is only in part based on basic human need and is often in large part based on what is considered valuable by the specific culture, or what is made valuable by the requirements of the economic system or physical environment. Whether conflict actually arises is determined by whether the demand outruns the supply or threatens to do so. (Some culturally determined values, such as achieving the top position, or *total* control, or absolute security, or uniformity of cultural values or ethnic homogeneity, are automatically scarce given any demand for them.)

2. The degree to which there is a possibility of creating an expanded supply of the scarce objects valued by the society. (The intensity of conflict is likely to be greater, where there is no such possibility, where there are few other valued objects which could serve as alternative compensation for the losers, and where achievement or possession of the object in question must take place immediately and be exclusive and permanent, thereby making impossible the solution of taking turns or sharing.) Here again cultural factors rather than basic human needs play an important determining role, as does the wealth of the physical environment, which in part determines the number of competitors and the ability of the social system to create more of the objects valued.
3. Ethnic, language, and cultural differences, which in most cultures contribute to fear, suspicion, lack of understanding, a sense of the unknown and unpredictability.
4. Basic human nature or tendencies arising from the human condition, such as, greed; possessiveness; self-centeredness; the preference for immediate gratification; lack of foresight and the inability to see all the consequences of what one does; the ability to be angry, to hate, to bear grudges, and to seek revenge; inability to tolerate uncertainty; and a tendency to fear the unknown or what is different are also sources of conflict.
5. The development by one or more parties of a degree of dogmatism, intolerance, universal and uncompromising aspirations, a sense of mission or missionary zeal, self-centeredness and inability to empathize, inability to admit errors, a sense of self-righteousness, and/or paranoia.
6. The existence of structural problems in which one party cannot

achieve its goals without restricting the goals or normal activities of other parties, e.g., neither the United States nor the U.S.S.R. can achieve military security for itself against the other without making the other feel even more insecure; e.g., there seems to be no way of stopping inflation, which hurts the old and the poor, without creating either unemployment, which hurts the marginally unemployed and the businessmen who sell to them, or price and wage control, which hurts business and labor.

7. Simple disagreement over ends or goals, or even priorities, i.e., over what is good or best, or over what should be done or achieved first.
8. Disagreement over the means to achieve ends; and this in turn may depend on differences in facts, or in theories (reflecting experience), or simply differences in hunches and guesses as to what will achieve success in the absence of sufficient facts or theories.
9. Differences in the perception of situations or the definition of the situation, misreading of rules, or differing interpretations of previous agreements.
10. Misperception of the aims or position of others.
11. Inability of one or more parties to cooperate effectively in taking advantages of possibilities for substituting cooperative efforts to achieve common goals rather than fighting over possession of a temporarily scarce object which could be made plentiful through cooperation (e.g., a quarrel over possession of a clearing in the forest too small for a good farm, while through cooperation the quarreling parties could cut enough trees to make two good-sized farms). The sources of such inability to cooperate include lack of vision as to possibilities for creative and mutually beneficial cooperation, lack of foresight, mistrust and suspicion, paranoia, and other human weaknesses already described.

Choice of Strategy and Instrument. By a strategy we mean a general plan of action aimed at the achievement of one's goals. This would include some idea of the approach to be taken and the means to be used. At the most general level of planning in international politics there is the question of the degree of contact with

other units and the goal to be served by such contacts. A state may adopt a strategy of complete social, economic, and political isolation; minimum contact with other units (e.g., engaging only in trade of the most essential commodities); limited contact (e.g., trade and diplomatic relations with only a few states); or active involvement with other states.

Strategies, however, cannot be decided without a consideration both of one's own goals and of the nature of the international system and the existent conflicts. Given an active conflict situation, a state may adopt a strategy of isolation; neutrality (trying to carry on business as usual with all parties to the conflict, but ignoring the conflict); nonalignment (not taking sides in the conflict, but trying to mediate the conflict); trying to take advantage of the conflict for one's own purposes by playing both sides off against one another (e.g., getting aid from both sides, achieving a greater measure of independence); or active involvement (either by joining one of the sides in the conflict, participating as a new and independent party to the conflict, or forming a new coalition to resolve the conflict differently than intended by the originally involved parties).

More specifically, there is also the strategic question of whether to accept the existing political system or to try to change it in hopes of creating a system in which one's goals will be more easily attainable. If one decides to try to change the international system, there is the choice of trying to create a balance of power system, a narrow regional alliance system, a worldwide collective security system, or a world government system. Does one put the emphasis on economic cooperation, cultural exchange, relations between political organizations, or military preparedness? Does one try to promote complete disarmament or arms control or increase the armaments of some weaker states to create a better balance? If one accepts the existing international political system, does one try to change one's own place in it (through territorial expansion, increased economic and military power, or greater prestige) or does one try to maintain the status quo?

There are a number of other questions of strategy which a state

has to answer for itself: Does it try to go it alone in the world or attempt to form alliances? Does it play the role of an active participant, innovator and pusher, or that of a passive participant? Does one moralize, mediate, promise, threaten, bluff, or take decisive action? Does one openly acknowledge differences with others or try to disguise them? Does one demand everything in negotiation in hopes of getting something or does one ask only for what one hopes to get? Does one negotiate, threaten, concede, or ask for mediation, arbitration, or a court decision? Here the choice of strategy will depend on the nature of the international system and one's place in it, one's self-image, aspirations, experience, and world view.

A closely related question is that of the specific instruments to be used in the achievement of one's goals once a strategy has been decided on: Does one use diplomatic bargaining, propaganda, economic policies (trade or embargo, loans, grants, technical assistance), political action (diplomatic isolation or recognition, formation of alliances, support or opposition in the United Nations, giving support in elections, logrolling, open praise or condemnation, diplomatic honor or a diplomatic snub, attempts to bring changes in the rules of the game), military action (clandestine operations, military maneuvers and show of force, threat of military action, limited military action, full-scale war), or resort to institutionalized channels of conflict resolution (courts, kings, parliaments, arbitration and mediation panels, calling the police)? Here the choice of instruments will depend on one's specific objectives and on the nature of the international political system.

Modes of Conflict Resolution. In general terms, conflict may be resolved in a number of ways:

1. Where neither side wins, i.e., by stalemate (either with eventual resolution or with a voluntary agreement by both sides to drop the issue completely or with such a decision forced on them by superior institutions)
2. Where both sides lose (through mutual destruction in war or economic or political disintegration resulting from their conflict

or through the intervention of a third party taking advantage of the conflict or through a superior social institution acting to punish the parties for their behavior)
3. Where some compromise is reached with each side achieving part of its objectives
4. Where one side concedes to the other voluntarily or under pressure, by leaving the field, by capitulating, or by being destroyed
5. Where both sides win as a result of agreeing to cooperate in joint action to provide ways of obtaining their mutual objectives.

This latter mode of conflict resolution requires some sort of restructuring of the conflict situation so that it is perceived by both sides not as a conflict, but as an opportunity for mutually beneficial cooperation. More will be said about this point later.

Many conflicts are not resolved for a very long time, but persist for years as long as the parties involved are interested and able to perpetuate the stalemate (e.g., ethnic or religious conflict, conflict between protagonists of equal strength). Sooner or later, however, most conflicts are resolved. In cases of persistent conflict, one or more parties may leave the field. Individuals and organizations may move the location of their activities or engage in different ones; states may be absorbed by other states, disintegrate politically and economically or be destroyed in war—thereby conceding victory to the other party. Often the source of conflict itself may disappear or the issue in question may recede from view as new problems or goals appear or as new issues arise to take the place of the old. In short, the conflict may become so unimportant in relation to other problems for one or more of the parties that it is forgotten completely or quietly resolved.

Most conflicts, however, are resolved in a shorter period of time through the operation of the various strategies and instruments of policy used by the parties to the conflict (diplomatic negotiation; propaganda; economic, political, and military action; voluntary arbitration or mediation). Other units of equal status or superior social institutions also may actively intervene to impose a settlement or to force arbitration, a court settlement, or a negotiated agreement. The resolution of a conflict may be permanent, or it may break out again in time—either over the same or a different

issue. The speed with which a conflict is resolved, the mode of resolution, the method of resolution, and the permanence of the solution will also depend on the nature of the political system, the goals and relative capabilities of the parties to the conflict, and the specific issues involved.