
PUTTING ACUNS TOGETHER – GENE M. LYONS

The Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) was founded in June, 1987, at a conference at Dartmouth College. The purpose was to create a new organization to stimulate and support research and teaching on the role of the United Nations system in international relations. The planning for the conference had actually started more than a year earlier, in January, 1986, when the Dickey Center at Dartmouth and the New York office of the United Nations University (UNU) convened a small group of primarily UN officials to talk about the gap between the UN and academic scholars who were working on the problems of international cooperation. It was Elise Boulding who took the first step.

Elise had retired as Professor of Sociology at Dartmouth, but continued to be active in the Dickey Center. She had just completed a tour on the UNU Board and as an adviser to the program on international social and economic affairs. She came out of that experience with a haunting feeling that activities at the UNU and, for that matter, throughout the UN system, simply were not connecting with research and teaching taking place in outside universities and research centers. International social science organizations had a connection with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) since many were funded, and some had been created, by UNESCO. But research on international peace and security and on social and economic development, subjects that were at the center of UN activities, seemed to have little impact on what was actually going on (at UNESCO as much as elsewhere) and there appeared to be a continued decline in research on the UN itself and on the institutions of the UN system.

Actually the disconnect was not new. Some years earlier, in 1970, Stanley Hoffman had begun his article on "International Organization and the International System" by observing that there was a "decline of interest among students and foundations in the study of the United Nations system."ⁱ Since then, the decline had continued and was probably attributable to a number of factors. By the late 1960's, after the Korean War and a decade of success in mounting peacekeeping operations, the UN seemed increasingly irrelevant to the major issues of international security that were caught up in the U.S.-Soviet conflict. In the largest sense, the cold war seemed to give credence to the basic principles of classical realism that the world was indeed anarchical, that states were the fundamental units of analysis and that international politics was essentially a struggle for power. The real action was in studying the nature of nuclear deterrence, arms control negotiations between the super-powers and the organization of NATO and the Warsaw Pact in Europe. By the 1970's, moreover, the UN also became marginal to problems of international political economy. The processes of decolonization into which the UN had been closely drawn, were virtually completed and new members from the developing

world began to create their own agenda that emphasized redistributive policies and threatened the interests of the more powerful western states.

The UN became stymied in a north-south struggle over a 'new international economic order' while significant problems of an increasingly inter-connected world economy were being played out in a system of international relations that was created outside the UN. This alternative system was centered in conferences among the major economic powers (that were institutionalized as the G-7 by the mid-1970's), in the operations of transnational corporations and in the work of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which, while technically part of the UN system, deliberately kept their distance from the politics of the UN. The experiments with economic and political integration in Western Europe, which became a prime focus for research, also were part of this alternative system. The UN became little more than a secondary field of action, far out of the major fields of play.

The decline in interest in the UN was especially evident in the United States which, for better or for worse, was the country where foundations, universities and research centers were providing substantial support to advance the field of international studies, much of it the starting point for research and teaching in other countries (or, at minimum, the subject of their critique). Nevertheless, by 1983, when he prepared a new preface to the fourth (and final) edition of his outstanding textbook, *Swords into Plowshares*, Inis Claude wrote:

My generation, whose adulthood began almost simultaneously with the establishment of the United Nations, tended to consider that event a fascinating experiment. For today's young adults, however, the United Nations is old hat, a part of the international system's equipment that they have never know the world to be without. The earlier expectation of American leadership in international bodies had given way to concern about how the United States will and should react to indignities heaped upon by unfriendly majorities. The enthusiasts of a Brave New World are seldom preoccupied now with the United Nations.ⁱⁱ

What was happening in the universities was accompanied by a UN "bashing" in American politics. A kind of disgruntlement had already started some years earlier when, first, one American representative warned about a 'tyranny of the majority' when the United States began to be out-voted in UN assemblies and another spoke of the UN as "a dangerous place".ⁱⁱⁱ In the 1980's the United States began the disastrous practice not only of holding back on paying its dues in order to put pressure on the UN to cut back its activities, but also unilaterally reducing its share of the UN budget as a protest against programs which had been voted by a majority of members against its disapproval. The UN was admittedly vulnerable, over-committed, over-staffed and top-heavy, with an increasing number of members besides the United States calling for restructuring and "reform." But the United States, the major contributor to the UN budget, followed a dangerous road in abrogating its treaty obligation to meet its assessment and the U.S. debt, combined with the continuing arrears of other countries, left the UN in a crippled

state of financial crisis and the international staff in a serious state of demoralization.

The meeting at the UNU offices that January was brief, but positive. The UN participants, including the Under-Secretaries-General for Public Information and International Economic and Social Affairs, saw the proposed organization as a new way to strengthen relations with the academic community that had lost touch and to begin to draw advanced research into the development of their programs. They and others also encouraged any effort that would increase interest in studying the UN and the entire system of multilateral relations. But, for different reasons, they were cautious in insisting that the organization had to be set up outside the UN. For one thing the UNU already existed within the UN system with overlapping, if not similar, functions. They also emphasized that any academic enterprise had to be free of political and bureaucratic influences that ran aplenty in the UN system. Nor were UN officials about to make any commitment for financial support, working, as they were, under pressures to reduce expenditures. All in all, they were positive but left the proposition to the academic community.

In effect, Elise Boulding had to move the operation forward if anything was to be done. Here, however, she had the resources of the Dickey Center, which were particularly responsive to projects that involved the UN. The Center had been set up only four years earlier to commemorate the twelfth president of Dartmouth College, John Sloan Dickey, who had stepped down in 1970 after twenty-five years in office. Serving with the State Department during World War II, he had joined the American delegation at the UN- founding conference in San Francisco in 1945, acting as the link between the delegation and both the press and a series of non-governmental organizations that attend the conference, largely on Dickey's initiative, to encourage grass roots support for Senate confirmation of the UN Charter.^{iv} Dickey suffered a crippling stroke in 1982 and, sadly, was not able to participate in the work of the Center when it was created that same year. But it was almost a given that the United Nations and the broader field of multilateralism would play a major role in its activities. The opportunity was also encouraged by the financial support that was being made available to the Center by a graduate of the College, Edward Lamb. At the very time that the Boulding Project was taking shape, Lamb's financial contribution enabled the Center to back-stop a project on UN restructuring initiated by Maurice Strong and the Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan.^v

Strong and Sadruddin were major UN figures, Strong having organized the UN conference on the human environment in 1972 and served as the first Executive Director of the UN Environment Program, and Saddrudin as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. They were both interested in setting up a private study group that would shadow the Committee of Eighteen high-level experts, created by the General Assembly to review the administrative and financial operations of the UN, largely in response to the criticisms of the United States and the malaise in which the UN found itself. They commissioned a special report on N financing by George Davidson, a Canadian who had retired from the UN where he had served as Assistant Secretary-General for administration, and convened a working group to review the Davidson report, which included veteran UN actors, including several

participants in the official eighteen member GA panel. The ultimate aim was to try to inject into their deliberations, more active recommendations than might otherwise emerge from an official UN body that, however constituted by “experts”, would still be constrained by diverse and often conflicting positions of different member states.

Strong and Sadruddin had already gone public in recommending that a cap of ten percent be put on contributions to the UN assessed budget, in effect reducing the American contribution which was at a level of twenty-five percent and gave the United States special leverage in UN affairs. At the same time, the Davidson report recommended a severe reduction in UN staffing, as well as the transfer of a number of items of expenditure from the regular UN budget to the budgets of the UN Development Program (UNDP), UNICEF and other agencies that relied on “voluntary” contributions from states that wanted to support their activities. The effect of both sets of recommendations would have been to reduce heavy reliance on the assessed contribution of the United States while reducing the UN budget, but also encouraging a higher level of “voluntary” contributions to operating programs.

The report of the Committee of Eighteen, issued later that year, did not include the major Strong-Sadruddin-Davidson recommendations, though it called for a severe reduction and consolidation of UN activities, a process that the Secretary-General had already started as a response to the financial deficiencies that he faced. But the report also recommended that UN budgets be approved by consensus in the Committee on Program and Coordination, thus giving the United States a virtual veto. The veto, of course, applied to all other members of the committee, but it responded to American criticism, especially from members of the Congress, that major contributors were financing activities which they opposed (ignoring that they had been approved by a majority of member states). It was a minor adjustment, in many ways, but provided a way of meeting American objections without opening the door to larger questions that were raised by the Strong- Sadruddin suggestion to limit contributions or the Davidson idea of shifting expenditures from the assessed to the “voluntary” budgets. But the policy problem that Strong and Sadruddin had confronted was one that few academic scholars had tackled in recent years, marking, in many respects, the ever greater distance that separated the research community from UN practitioners. It only reinforced the need to find a new way to mobilize academics to study issues that the UN faced.

At the same time, the grant from Lamb also financed the early stages of the Boulding project. Taking the suggestions of the January meeting into account, Boulding made contact with Benjamin Rivlin who, as Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), was able to provide an academic setting for a follow-up session. Rivlin had worked with Bunche in the early days of the UN and spent most of his academic career as a member of the CUNY faculty. The CUNY Institute, following the lines of Bunche’s outstanding service with the UN, principally sponsored research on UN matters by faculty and graduate students in the City University system. Most important for the project, however, CUNY’s proximity to the UN in New York gave it a special advantage as a meeting place between academic researchers and not only the UN

secretariat, but also the delegations of member states, many of whom had been drawn into the programs of the Institute through regular seminar series.

From that moment, the Bunche Institute became a co-sponsor of the project with the Dickey Center and Rivlin and Boulding jointly issued invitations for the next meeting to be held at CUNY in June. Unlike the January session which had been exploratory, the June meeting was action-oriented. The letter of invitation established a five-point agenda: "1) to review the desirability of an Academic Council on the UN; 2) to formulate purpose, structure and mode of functioning; 3) to plan time and place... to launch the Council: 4) to constitute... an 'inviting committee' for that meeting; and 5) to develop the most complete possible list of persons and / or institutions ...". Several UN officials were invited, but the sponsors now reached out more fully to the academic community and the foundations. The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations sent representatives, as did the Stanley Foundation. Brian Urquhart, a senior fellow at the Ford Foundation after retiring from the UN where he had been a long-time colleague of Ralph Bunche, also attended. Some dozen scholars participated and a number of others, unable to come to New York for the day, indicated strong support for the project.

The one-day June meeting could not possibly complete the full agenda but established a set of guidelines to give direction to subsequent planning. It was agreed that the new Council should focus on "the United Nations system" since limiting the focus to the "United Nations" was too narrow, while extending it to "multilateralism" too broad.

There was a clear intent to renew interest in the UN, but within the framework of the spread of agencies that had grown out of the Charter and the recognition of how international relations had changed over the years. Much academic research had already advanced beyond the limits of narrow organizational studies and many scholars were asking not about the organizations themselves, but about their role in an increasingly interdependent world. The real problem was to maintain attention on the organizations and not lose sight of their internal problems in the quest for greater understanding of the requirements of international cooperation.

There was also considerable discussion on the nuts and bolts of creating and administering a new organization. There was a strong consensus that participation in the Council be extended beyond the United States and, initially to invite academics from Canada and Mexico to join as a first step in creating an organization that was international in reach.

The North American region offered a convenient geographic area within which to begin work, involving three countries that politically took quite different approaches to UN problems. There could be much to be learned in studying why there were these differences and what they meant for how the UN functioned. It was also agreed that the Council should encourage research and teaching at the university level, but establish working relations with other groups that work with secondary schools and adult education. Finally, the Dickey Center offered to host a founding conference at Dartmouth in cooperation with the Bunche Institute and Boulding and Rivlin agreed to serve on a steering committee, together with Gene Lyons from

Dartmouth, John Fobes, former Deputy Director-General of UNESCO and Pat Sewell from Brock University in Canada.

Since Boulding had retired from her position at Dartmouth and was living in Boulder, Colorado, Gene Lyons took on a more active role in providing leadership for the steering committee. Preparing for a founding conference meant developing an agenda and covering all the administrative arrangements for bringing some forty people together for several days of discussion. But most important, it meant bringing the right people together and finding a way of insuring that the new Council had the broad support and credibility to make it work from the beginning. There was a deliberate effort to be inclusive, not only by drawing in colleagues from Canada and Mexico and developing new links between UN practitioners and academic scholars, but also by including those who, over the years, had followed different directions in international organization research.

The Dickey Center had contacts in Canada and Mexico that made it possible to invite John Holmes and Victor Urquidi to join the steering committee. Holmes had been a senior member of the Canadian foreign service before taking on a faculty position at the University of Toronto and a leading role in the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. A former adviser to Lester Pearson, Holmes had a hand in 'inventing' the concept of UN peacekeeping at the time of the Suez crisis in 1956, as well as the idea of Canada as a "middle power." As a scholar, he had published a series of books on the history of Canadian diplomacy and on Canadian relations with the United States, helping others understand how a "middle power" could live with a "superpower" on its border and not only survive, but also lead an independent foreign policy that involved a heavy emphasis on multilateral diplomacy. Urquidi had participated in the Bretton Woods conference and had early UN experience as an economist, working with Raoul Prebish in the secretariat of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America. More recently, he had served as president of the Colegio de Mexico, the leading institute of higher education in Mexico.

Holmes and Urquidi were not only helpful in spreading word about the project in Canada and Mexico, but they were also, in their own right, both scholars and international practitioners, thus connecting the two worlds that the proposed council wanted to join.

John Fobes more fully represented the "real world" of international administration, in his case of development assistance. Fobes had spent years with the American aid program, eventually as chief of operations in India before joining the UN as Deputy Director-General of UNESCO. Lyons also had international experience, having served with the International Refugee Organization and the UN Korean Reconstruction Agency before joining the Dartmouth faculty and while on leave from Dartmouth in the early 1970's, two years as director of the UNESCO social science program. Working in New York, Rivlin had strong ties with the UN secretariat and was key in working with the international staff.

Just about that time, Oran Young started his association with the Dickey Center and accepted an invitation to join the steering committee. Young had been among the younger members of the board of editors, in the early 1970s, who began to change the editorial direction of *International Organization*, the leading journal in the field. Many new approaches in international organization research had already been published in *International Organization*, which was founded by scholars who had served on the secretariat or delegations at the UN conference at San Francisco and who, initially, followed the traditional pattern of historical and legal studies. But, over the years, articles had expanded into studies of functionalism and regional integration and, increasingly, into problem areas like social and economic development and environmental protection. These changes were reflected in the collection of articles the Leland M. Goodrich and David A. Kay who had served as editors over the first twenty-five years, published in 1976.^{vi}

The new editors who took over in the early 1970's tended to go farther and focus on the processes of interdependence with a heavy concentration on international economic relations, a strong theoretical orientation and an interest in examining the determinants of effective international cooperation with or without organizational arrangements.^{vii} Young participated in many of these developments, including the special issue in the spring of 1982 that introduced the concept of "international regimes". He thus helped in connecting the project to those who were less interested in international organizations qua organizations but mainly on developing cumulative knowledge about cooperation in international relations. In doing so, their approach tended at times to discount the role of organizations and weaken the earlier ties that scholars had had with UN staff. It also underplayed the links between international regimes and traditional international law and gave priority to relations among the highly industrialized states, muting the problems of development and north-south relations that were center stage at the UN.

In many respects, the ACUNS project had largely been developed by academics who had spent time as practitioners in the UN system and considered international political economy too narrow a perspective from which to study international organizations. To broaden the base they provided, in addition to the contacts Holmes was making in Canada and Urquidí in Mexico, Lyons carried out a series of consultations to bring on board a range of U.S. scholars who had contributed importantly to the ideas of functionalism and regional integration; Inis Claude whose textbook was the most widely used in international organization courses; Leon Gordenker who had written widely on the role of the Secretary General; Donald Puchala who had edited the annual report on the general Assembly agenda for the United Nations Association for a number of years; Robert Keohane who had taken over as editor of *International Organization* in 1975; and Stephen Krasner who had served as editor for the special issue on international regimes.

The larger steering committee first met in October of 1986 and agreed that a founding meeting be held the following June. A major task was to develop a statement to establish an Academic Council on the UN System (ACUNS) that could be presented to the founding meeting and a list of those who would be invited to attend. In the main, the committee followed the lines of the discussion that had

taken place in New York in June. But the issue that mainly divided the group was the extent to which the council should support the UN and its agencies, especially at time when the UN was under severe criticism. In many respects, the fact that the council had the "UN system" in its title already was a sign of support. The intent was clearly not to destroy or weaken the UN. At the same time, the central aim of what was to be an academic council was not to support the organization per se, but rather the study of the UN system and the teaching of international organization at the university level.

The steering committee was united in agreeing that the Council could not lock researchers into any particular position on the UN or act, in any way, as an advocacy group. While most who participated in its programs would probably support a strong role for international organizations, they could profit from confronting others who were either politically or ideologically opposed to the UN system, or sharply, and perhaps even destructively, critical of UN activities. The idea of establishing ACUNS rested in the reality that international organization was now a fact of international relations, a process that had considerable momentum and could not be reversed. At the same time, as Inis Claude put it in the introduction to his textbook, "international organizations are representative aspects of the phase of the process which has been reached at a given time."^{viii} In these terms, the organizations of the UN system were major representations of the arrangements that had thus far been made to give structure to relations among states. As organizations, they would undoubtedly change, disappear or take another shape. But the process of international organization would continue. In the complex world of interdependence, it was also extending beyond relations among states to include relations among economic institutions and social movements between such non-state actors and national governments.

In many respects, the controversy was not so much about whether or not to support the UN or other organizations. It was rather about the policies of member states and the programs of international organizations. ACUNS was being established at a time of great divisions between the older western states and the newly independent states that were trying to design an independent position in world politics to redress the iniquities that they ensured during the years of imperialism. The UN was a central arena for this north-south confrontation in which the southern states had the votes in the General Assembly but the north, and especially the United States, held the purse strings. In one respect, the north-south division frustrated the UN, especially when it was already aggravated by the east-west conflict, and minimized the impact of its programs. In another, what was going on was what Donald Puchala called "a great debate" about "the foundations of the 21st century world order" that he rightly anticipated would "continue for many more decades."^{ix} In truth, the debate has continued even now after the east-west conflict had fallen apart and the economies of many states in the south have grown rapidly and now take part in the global economy of the post-cold war years.

For the moment, the problem was resolved by agreeing that the central purpose of ACUNS was "to encourage and support new initiatives in teaching and research that

are designed to increase our understanding of the role of the United Nations system in international relations." This gave the Council the broadest kind of umbrella while recognizing that the UN system was what history had given us and should be built on, but not necessarily preserved in its existing form. But the reasons for creating a new academic council were more than to fill a gap in professional associations and give new attention to institutions that were being neglected. It was also to recognize that international organizations were taking on new operations and changing the structures of international relations. The world conference on the human environment had opened the way for a new set of organizational issues, as had the persistence – and increase – of refugees in the world, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the tragedies of starvation and suffering in poor countries, and gross violations of human rights, let alone the need to regulate the expansion of world trade and production. The issues raised a whole series of theoretical and policy questions about international organizations that needed to be researched and analyzed.

By the time the founding conference convened in June, most of the major issues had been talked through in the discussions of the steering committee and the consultations that had continued through the spring of 1987. It was no longer a question whether or not to create a new professional organization. That had been settled. The more immediate issue was what the organization should do. The conference agenda thus focused on three kinds of programs: information and documentation services; research; and teaching. The conference also adopted a final statement that supported the establishment of ACUNS and asked the steering committee to continue to serve for another year and, during that time, to prepare a set of by-laws, serve as a nominating committee for a new governing body and begin to develop funding sources and operating projects, all to be presented to the first annual conference in a year's time. Unanimously agreed at the first conference, the final statement was also circulated to scholars and policy makers who had been unable to attend the conference, but who joined in endorsing the creation and purpose of ACUNS.^x

The founding conference was not exactly a meeting of "elders," but there were fewer younger colleagues than seasoned veterans among participants. Most of the academics had been teaching and writing for a number of years and practitioners who attended had had substantial service in the UN system or the foreign policy agencies of their governments. Most were still active, but they were concerned about the next generation of scholars. For example, there was general testimony from those at research universities that few doctoral students were choosing to write dissertations about the UN system, continuing the decline in interest that Hoffmann had observed in 1970. Over time, this would have serious implications not only for scholarly investigations of the UN but also for university teaching. There was thus a strong conviction among participants that "the ultimate aim is to encourage a new generation of scholars, teachers and practitioners to give new and critical attention to the role of international organizations in world affairs."

Courses on international organization posed a series of problems that would only be exacerbated by a lack of well-trained and prepared teachers. Some of these

problems were raised in the conference report. "How do we avoid advocacy since teaching about international organizations focuses attention on multilateral cooperation in foreign policy-making and thus may be construed as downgrading more traditional bilateral approaches? How do we maintain objectivity and critical perspective when students have expectations about pro-UN preferences, say, in enrolling in courses about international organizations? Or as an integral part of other courses in order to underscore the role of institutions in dealing with international problems?... Should the field be approached from the vantage point of the institutions? The problems that they seek to resolve? Or the political processes in which they are involved and through which states decide to cooperate or not?"

These, of course, are the kinds of questions that teachers of international relations face quite regularly. They came up in the conference as part of the discussion of finding ways of drawing younger people into the field and strengthening their preparation. Along these lines, there was special interest in organizing workshops for college and university teachers. The purposes "would mainly be two-fold: to permit teachers to exchange views and experiences on how to deal with international organizations and the problems of multilateral diplomacy in their courses; and to work with them in reviewing the state of scholarly research, the development of course syllabi and the availability of texts and primary source materials in teaching." Workshops, it was maintained, could raise the level of teaching and strengthen professional networks, not only among younger faculty members but also between academics and UN staff members and, in doing so, would serve as another means of closing the gap between those who thought about IO and those who practice.

There was also brief discussion of the need for a major program in graduate and post-doctoral fellowships in international organization studies, not unlike the program that several foundations were supporting to bring new thinking into the field of peace and security studies. Any such program would require a sizeable commitment from foundations and would probably take time to develop. In the meanwhile, the creation of ACUNS by itself would give new value to the field by providing a place for an exchange of research findings and by making it easier for researchers to have access to documentation, as well the policy processes in the UN system. For some, moreover, creating ACUNS opened up new opportunities to be more ambitious and ask whether, and how, the process of international organization was gnawing away at the state-centric system that remained at the heart of most teaching about international relations. Are states really the prime actors in all matters that we need to study and understand? Has the role of the state changed under pressures of interdependence? How does engagement in international organization affect the perception of national interests? Or, as one person asked: why do we assume that we still live in a Westphalian world?

The year that followed the founding meeting was devoted to working out the administrative and financial arrangements for setting up a new organization and making contacts with other associations, with the UN and with universities throughout North America, and beyond. ACUNS was made a special project of the Dickey Center, a status which brought it under the umbrella of Dartmouth College

for financial purposes while otherwise retaining autonomy in how it was organized and the programs that were adopted. The provisional committee met several times during the year with Oran Young in the chair, Holmes and Urquidi as vice-chairs and Lyons as executive director. A set of by-laws was prepared to present to the annual meeting, sub-committees were organized on teaching, research and documentation services and, working closely with the Bunche Institute at CUNY, plans were made for the annual meeting to be held in New York with sessions at both City University Graduate Center and the United Nations. The work of the committee was initially made possible by support from the Dickey Center in the amount of \$50,000, which was followed in early 1988 by a planning grant of another \$50,000 from the Ford Foundation, the first of a continuing series of grants from Ford that provided the stability that the new association needed.

The first annual meeting met in June 1988, and went through the process of approving the draft by-laws and electing a permanent executive committee with Leon Gordenker as chair and Rodolfo Stavenhagen of the Colegio de Mexico and John Trent of Ottawa University as vice chairs. In developing close ties with the UN, a major part of the program was held at the UN building with the participation of Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Administrative Management and James Jonah, Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the new Office of Research and Collection of Information. Robert Rosenstock, Counselor of the U.S. Permanent Mission of the UN, spoke at CUNY on American policies, Brian Urquhart on the international civil service at a luncheon meeting at the Ford Foundation and the Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar met with participants at the UN. John Homes had also prepared an opening address which, sadly, because of his terminal illness, had to be read on his behalf. Holmes died several months later but his address, *Looking Backwards and Forwards*, was published in the fall, the first in the series of reports and papers distributed by ACUNS and the first in the annual lecture series presented since then to honor Holmes.

The most critical discussion of the UN centered on a report on "the state of the United Nations" prepared by Donald Puchala and Roger Coate.^{xi} Puchala and Coate had followed the General Assembly and conducted a broad range of interviews with scholars and policymakers. Summing up their findings, they concluded that "at few times in the history of the United Nations has the future loomed so dark and so uncertain, yet held such promise." The uncertainties emerged not only from the dire financial situation that the UN continued to suffer, but also "by a general lack of interest and attention" so that "the new UN agenda [on] global issues such as environmental pollution, impending resource scarcities, financial indebtedness and disarmament... has largely undeveloped." Nevertheless, the UN had managed to bring about a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war, begin the process of independence for Namibia and help negotiate a settlement in Afghanistan. There has also been a reduction of ideological bickering in General Assembly debates, a clear change in the attitudes and policies of the Soviet Union, now under control of the Gorbachev regime, and a moderation in the position taken by the United States with approval of the report on "reform" by the GA Committee of Eighteen. All to the good. But the future was still problematic and what was needed, according to Puchala and Coate,

was “a clearly defined and articulated ‘identity’,” a sense of political agreement and understanding on the role of the UN that member states continued to resist.

More than ten years have passed since that first annual meeting but the search for ‘identity’ has continued. The years have not, however, been without progress, not necessarily in clarifying a role for the UN, but more in terms of a growing multilateralism in the foreign policies of many countries. Middle powers such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Scandinavian countries have made multilateralism, with major emphasis on the United Nations, a central element in their foreign policies, identifying their own interests with those of the larger world community. Japan and Germany, with the memory of the Second World War hanging over their heads, also tend toward policies of multilateralism in order to dispel any fears that they are returning to self-centered policies of aggression. There are indications that rapidly industrializing countries such as those in Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) may be drawing closer to a ‘middle power’ position as their economic development is increasingly dependent on stability and cooperation. The end of the cold war also brought about an early unity of purpose, however fragile, among the permanent five members of the Security Council, especially in confronting the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and expanding the scope of UN peacekeeping operations.

But what were perceived as failures in Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda almost brought a halt to UN peacekeeping and aggravated divisions within the Security Council by the mid- 1990’s. China became increasingly reluctant to accept UN intervention into what might otherwise be considered matters of ‘domestic jurisdiction.’ Russia, sitting in the permanent seat of the former Soviet Union, claimed the right to conduct peacekeeping operations in those now independent republics that had formerly been part of the USSR. Britain and France continued to resist any proposals for Security Council reform that would threaten their participation as permanent members. The United States backed down from contributing to UN peacekeeping, especially after the operation in Somalia, and, under severe congressional pressures, persisted in withholding payment of its contributions to both the regular and the peacekeeping budgets, keeping the UN in an almost constant state of financial penury.

The ‘new agenda’ that Puchala and Coate had spoken about, the issues of environmental protection, economic stability and disarmament, have nevertheless continued to grow in importance but also not without controversy. The world conference on the environment in Brazil in 1992 and the climate change conference in Kyoto, Japan, led to agreements to counter the effects of ‘global warming’ but with strong conflicts on the level of international standards and their impact on economic developments. The IMF and the World Bank became the instruments of the international community to moderate the effects of national economic failures on stability in the global economy, but with increasing resistance by developing countries to the conditions for the assistance and increasing apprehension, especially in the United States, to the independence of the Fund and the Bank, The UN also provided a useful setting for negotiating treaties to halt the testing of nuclear weapons, the ban the production and distribution of chemical weapons and

clean up the spread of land mines and forbid their further use. Nevertheless, India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, the United States refused to sign the land mine treaty and Iraq continually obstructed the mission of UN inspectors to ferret out their sources of weapons of mass destruction.

It had often been said that agreement on the role of the UN system would effectively mean agreement on rules for governing the international system and, if this were so, the UN itself might no longer be needed. This may be, but there is no agreement as yet and we can assume that the UN system is still needed and thus worthy of study and reflection – which is why ACUNS was created. In the address that he had prepared for the first annual meeting, John Holmes wrote: "...it is important to look critically at what's wrong with the UN or rather the way we are using it, but even more important is to identify what is not wrong with it, what is working reasonably well, what we can build on." Holmes was not entirely objective. He was partial to the UN but not without criticism and not without reason, urging that we try to "discover what we can build on and where not to venture, how we can use the growing threat to the globe itself to create the will for international self-discipline, which is what international institutions are all about." I suspect that, except for those who reject any notion of a normative approach to scholarship, most of us who helped set up ACUNS feel the same way.

This is no place to review the recent history of the UN system or to evaluate whether or not ACUNS has fulfilled the aspirations and goals that we had for it. It is probably too early for that, anyway. For that matter, most of us probably had a different set of priorities even if we shared the same goals. But it might be worthwhile to reflect on several issues that most concerned us in the beginning: stable financing; making ACUNS international; renewing ties with the UN; and drawing in the next generation of scholars and practitioners.

For one, ACUNS has had substantial foundation support, which has not only been crucial to its operations but has also indicated some very hard-headed approval about how the organization has gone about its business. Foundations have to make difficult choices on how to allocate their funds and have to rely heavily on professional judgments about competing projects. ACUNS has done well in this process. The early planning grant from the Ford Foundation was followed by a major three-year grant in 1989 that has been renewed regularly. Ford also funded the first three summer workshops which, initially at the suggestion of the Foundation, have been conducted jointly with the American Society of International Law (ASIL), renewing contacts between international relations specialists and international lawyers which had been lost over the years. Since then, the summer workshops were funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts in 1994 and 1995 and, most recently, by the MacArthur Foundation which also supported a series of research conferences that led to book-length publications. ACUNS has also had effective support from the universities that provided a home for its activities, Dartmouth College, Brown University and now Yale University and the City University of New York, the site of the liaison office at Bunche Institute.

Secondly, ACUNS has grown into a more international organization from its early North American roots. Going 'international' was not an easy task. The question was whether a North American organization in which the largest number of members were from the United States, could expand internationally without it being looked at as a kind of 'cultural imperialism.' Quite deliberately, annual meetings were held progressively in Ottawa in 1989, Mexico City in 1991 and Washington, D.C. in 1992 – the three capitals in North America – while maintaining the regularity of a meeting in New York in 1990 to draw on UN participation. The executive committee also held a series of consultations with European scholars at the joint conference of the British and American International Studies Associations in London in 1989 and discussed the possibility of 'internationalization' at a retreat in Cape Code in the fall of 1990 with visiting scholars, including A.J.R. Groom from Britain, Nico Schrijver from the Netherlands and Y. Sakamoto from Japan. Earlier that year, in January, ACUNS had also co-sponsored with the ISA, the International Political Science Association and the International Peace Research Association, an international conference in Ottawa on the UN policies of a series of member states with participants from around the world.^{xii}

The general response in all of these consultations was that there was no inherent obstacle in going ahead to expand ACUNS into an international organization beyond North America. It was recognized that the United States was the single largest research community and that American foundations and universities were major sources for financing and supporting such enterprises. All of this compared with the European research community, east and west, which remains large but fragmented and where there is only the beginnings of a philanthropic spirit to support advanced research and teaching. The real issue was not to enmesh others in what was essentially a North American or perceived more narrowly, a U.S. operation, but to reach out, not only to encourage broader participation, but also to involve everyone in a common enterprise that needed a variety of approaches and perspectives to be successful. For that matter, Canadian and Mexican scholars and practitioners had already added importantly to the quality and variety of ACUNS activities. 'Internationalization' thus became a clear objective. In the years that have followed, membership in ACUNS has widely expanded in Europe, Asia and Africa, annual meetings have been held in the Netherlands, Italy and Costa Rica, scholars from around the world have been invited to attend the summer workshops and the annual meeting and, in early 1998, the board of directors included colleagues from Belgium, Switzerland, Britain, Japan and France, as well as Canada, Mexico and the United States.

On the third issue, the links with the organizations of the UN system have multiplied over the years, continuing the process of rebuilding the professional ties that had existed when the UN was created just after the Second World War. The first annual meeting, for example, set a precedent for including UN officials in the program. In 1989, Kofi Annan, then Assistant Secretary-General for human resources, spoke on the international civil services and again in 1995 when he was Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping; in 1990, in New York, the Secretary-General, Javier Pérez De Cuéllar, agreed to an extensive interview and in 1992, the meeting in Washington, D.C. was held at the IMF with an opening address by the

Managing Director, Michel Camdessus; the 1993 annual meeting was held in Montreal at the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); the 1995 meeting in The Hague included a special session at the International Court of Justice; and the 1996 meeting was held at the training center of the International Labor Office in Turin, Italy, and the 1998 meeting at the Canadian-sponsored Pearson Peacekeeping Center in Nova Scotia.

Furthermore, for several years, ACUNS and the UN conducted a joint sabbatical program in which UN officials spent a year as visiting fellows at universities arranged through ACUNS. ACUNS also ran a series of round table discussions for UN staff at New York headquarters and almost from the beginning, UN staff members have participated in the ACUNS/ASIL summer workshops. Indeed, one of the major aims of the workshops has been to “build working relations between university-based scholars, members of the secretariats of international organizations, and staff of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).” Most recently, Charlotte Ku, executive director of the ASIL, and Thomas Weiss, executive director of ACUNS from 1992 to 1998, prepared a review of the workshops with a list of the more than two hundred participants since 1991, including secretariat members throughout the UN system.^{xiii} UN staff members have also published articles in *Global Governance*, a journal which was launched by ACUNS in 1995 in cooperation with the United Nations University, initially edited by Roger Coate of the University of South Carolina and Craig Murphy of Wellesley College, *Global Governance* was recognized in 1997 by the American Publishing Association as the outstanding new publication in the social sciences. All in all, UN staff members are increasingly involved in the professional networks that ACUNS has developed. For the, ACUNS meetings and workshops are periods for reflection on the work that they have been doing and the organization that they represent. At the same time, they provide scholars with direct connections into the agencies of the UN system and a way of sharing experiences in dealing with regimes of international cooperation.

Finally, the strong concern at the founding conference “to encourage a new generation” in international organization studies, seems to be coming a reality. The summer workshops have been a major element since they are especially designed for younger members, both scholars and practitioners. Many graduates of the workshops are now presenting papers at the annual meeting, publishing articles in *Global Governance*, and taking their place on the ACUNS board of directors. They are also more and more looking at the UN system within the conceptual framework that has been called ‘global governance.’ ‘Global governance’ projects a highly decentralized and pluralistic, non-hierarchical picture in the world. It brings together a number of intellectual orientations and has the capacity to draw together scholars from different disciplines. ACUNS is still largely dominated by international relations specialists of the political science variety. But they are working increasingly with international lawyers, UN practitioners bring their experience to bear, often as not embedded in a background in economics or sociology and the international spread of membership provides cultural and historical diversity to the work that gets done.

Ten years, of course, is only a beginning. But, at least at this stage, there is a general feeling that what was started when ACUNS was first put together will go on as "a new generation" takes over.

Notes

ⁱ Stanley Hoffmann, "International Organization and the International System," *International Organization*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1970, p. 389.

ⁱⁱ Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares*, fourth edition, 1984, New York, Random House, p. vii.

ⁱⁱⁱ It was John Scali who spoke of the "tyranny of the majority" and Daniel Patrick Moynihan who wrote about his experience as the U.S. representative to the UN in his book, *A Dangerous Place*.

^{iv} Dickey was a Dartmouth graduate who had gone to Harvard Law School and a career that found him, for most of those years, serving in the Department of State. His first assignment had been to follow the passages through the Congress, of what came to be the Trade Agreements Act of 1934 that gave the President authority to negotiate a reciprocal reduction of tariffs in international trade. From that point on, he monitored the renewal of the Act in 1937, 1940 and 1943 when it became the basis for the American position in negotiating, first, the abortive World Trade Organization and, subsequently, the alternative that became the GATT. See Gene M. Lyons, *The World's Troubles: John Sloan Dickey on American Foreign Policy*, the Dickey Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., 1988.

^v Lamb was a successful lawyer in Toledo, Ohio, with something of a zeal for the United Nations, having been a major contributor to the Business Council for the United Nations. When initially approached, Lamb showed no enthusiasm for helping build up the original endowment of the Dickey Center, but was fully prepared to support projects that were specifically aimed at strengthening the UN. A strong UN was what he had in mind but he was quite ready to support less committed research that might have uncovered the warts as well as the benefits of international organizations.

^{vi} Leland M. Goodrich and David A. Kay (eds.) *International Organization: Politics and Process*, 1973, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press

^{vii} See Robert O. Keohane, "International Organization and the Crisis of Interdependence," *International Organization*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 1975.

^{viii} Claude, op. cit. p. 4.

^{ix} Donald Puchala, preface, *Issues before the 39th General Assembly of the United Nations*, New York, the United Nations Association of the USA, 1984.

^x The final statement of the founding conference and a summary of the discussion, can be found in Gene M. Lyons, with the assistance of Peter MacDonald and Edward Nelson, *Strengthening the Study of International Organizations*, Report of the founding conference of the Academic Council on the United Nations System, June 1987. The quotations that will follow in the text are excerpted from that report.

^{xi} Donald J. Puchala and Roger A. Coate *The State of the United Nations*, 1988, ACUNS, Reports and Papers, 1988-2

^{xii} Papers presented at the conference, were published by the United Nations University in C. Alger, G.M. Lyons, J. Trent, *The United Nations System: the Policies of Member States*, Tokyo, the UNU Press, 1995

^{xiii} Charlotte Ku and Thomas G. Weiss, eds, *Toward Understanding Global Governance: the International Law and International Relations Toolbox*, ACUNS Reports and Papers, 1998.

Appendix I

Chronology of Annual Meetings

Year	Location	Theme
1988	New York, New York	N/A
1989	Ottawa, Ontario	N/A
1990	New York, New York	N/A
1991	Mexico City, Mexico	N/A
1992	Washington, DC	N/A
1993	Montreal, Canada	The United Nations System: North-South Perspective
1994	The Hague, Netherlands	Approaching Fifty: The UN from Europe
1995	New York, New York	The United Nations in a Changing World: Looking to the Next Half Century
1996	Turin, Italy	Promoting Economic and Social Development: Role and Impact of the UN System
1997	San Jose, Costa Rica	Regionalism, Sub-Regionalism, and the UN System
1998	Cornwallis, Nova Scotia	Fifty Years of "Peacekeeping": What Actors, What Roles. What Futures?
1999	New York, New York	Rebuilding Torn Societies

Appendix II

ACUNS Publications List

Year	Title	*Out of Print
*1988	<i>Looking Backwards and Forwards</i> John W. Holmes	
*1988	<i>The State of the United Nations, 1988</i> Donald J. Puchala, Roger A. Coate	
*1988	<i>Teaching About International Organizations</i> Gene M. Lyons	
*1989	<i>ACUNS Membership Directory</i>	
*1989	<i>Administrative and Financial Reform of the United Nations: A Documentary Essay</i> John de Gara	
*1989	<i>New Frontiers of Multilateralism</i> (1989 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture) J. Alan Beesley	
*1989	<i>Teaching About International Organizations II: Selected Syllabi</i>	
*1989	<i>The Challenge of Relevance: The United Nations in a Changing World Environment</i>	

- Donald J. Puchala, Roger A. Coate
 *1990 *The Study of International Organisation: British Experiences*
 A.J.R. Groom, Paul Taylor, Andrew Williams
- *1990 *Strengthening the United Nations Economic and Social Programs: A Documentary Essay*
 Jacques Fomerand
- *1990 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- 1990 *Thinking About the United Nations System 1990 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture*
 Leon Gordenker
- *1990-5 *Changing Global Needs: Expanding Roles for the United Nations System*
 Johan Kaufmann, Nico J. Schrijver, with Dick A. Leurdijk
- 1991 *Directory of the United Nations Documentary and Archival Sources*
 Compiled by Peter I Hajnal with UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library
- *1991 *Can the United Nations System Meet the Challenges of the World Economy?*
 1991 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture
 Victor L. Urquidi
- 1991 *International Environmental Issues: An ACUNS Teaching Text*
 Peter M. Haas
- *1991 *The World in Turmoil: Testing the UN's Capacity*
 Johann Kaufmann, Dick A. Leurdijk, Nico J. Schrijver
- *1991 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- *1992 *United Nations Peacekeeping: An ACUNS Teaching Text*
 Thomas G. Weiss, Jarat Chopra
- *1992 *Globalization, Multilateralism, and Democracy*
 1992 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture
 Robert W. Cox
- 1992 *The State of the United Nations: 1992*
 Albert Legault, Gene M. Lyons, Craig Murphy, W.B. Ofuatey-Kodjoe
- *1993 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- *1993 *The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development: Process and Documentation*
 Shanna Halpern
- *1993 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- *1993 *Differing State Perspectives on the United Nations in the Post-Cold War Era, 1993 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture*
 James O. C. Jonah
- 1993 *The States of the United Nations, 1993: North-South Perspectives*
 Gerald Dirks, Robert O. Matthews, Tariq Rauf, Elizabeth Riddell- Dixon, and Claire Turenne Sjolander
- *1994 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- *1994 *Regional Responsibilities and the United Nations System: Chairmen's Report and Background Papers*
 Luís Guillermo Solís, Donald J. Puchala, S. Neil MacFarlane, Thomas G. Weiss, and Carlos Alberto Sarti Castañeda
- *1994 *ACUNS Membership Directory*

- *1994 *The Evolving United Nations: Principles and Realities*
1994 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture
Johan Kaufmann
- *1994 *Article 2(5) Revisited*
Abiodun Williams, José Alvarez, Ruth Gordon, and W. Andy Knight
- *1995 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- *1995 *More Teaching About International Organization: Selected Syllabi*
ACUNS Secretariat
- 1995 *The Ethics of Globalism*
1995 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture
Donald J. Puchala
- *1996 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- 1997 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- 1997 *Human Development: The World After Copenhagen*
1996 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture
Richard Jolly
- 1997 *The Imperative of Idealism*
1997 John W. Holmes Memorial Lecture
James S. Sutterlin
- 1997 *The Years After Esquipulas: Looking Toward the Future First*
Distinguished World Leader Lecture
H.E. Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez (English and Spanish)
- 1997 *ACUNS Membership Directory*
- 1998 *Toward Understanding Global Governance: The International Law and*
International Relations Toolbox
Edited by Charlotte Ku and Thomas G. Weiss
- 1998 *The Quiet Revolutionary: A biographical Sketch of James S. Sutterlin*
Jean Krasno
- 1998 *United Nations Peacekeeping at Fifty: Looking Back, Looking Forward*
Distinguished World Leader Lecture
H.E. Madame Louise Fréchette
- 1999 *Putting ACUNS Together*
By Gene M. Lyons

Appendix III

Other Publications

Rienner, *NGOs, the UN, and Global Governance*. Edited by Thomas G. Weiss and Leon Gordenker

MacMillan *Beyond UN Subcontracting: Task-Sharing with Regional Security Arrangements and Service-Providing NGOs*. Edited by Thomas G. Weiss