chapter one

SOME ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

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References to crises pervade observations on the contemporary world. On the first two pages of a Sunday edition of the *New York Times*, six of the thirteen news stories mentioned crises.[1] In his memoirs, Dwight Eisenhower related that "since July 25th of 1956, when Nasser announced the nationalization of the Suez, I cannot remember a day that has not brought its major or minor crisis."[2] Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk told a Senate subcommittee that the world experienced forty-seven international political crises in the five and one half years between January 1961 and the middle of 1966.[3] A research biophysicist recently wrote in a scientific journal that the rate of change in the world is creating "a storm of crisis problems from every direction" and that in order for life as we know it to continue we must order these crises in terms of their overall impact on mankind to make certain that adequate resources are mobilized to address the most severe of these dangers.[4]

Although one could readily argue that the word *crisis* has been overused, included in the array of situations to which the term supposedly applies are events with enormous and often shattering consequences for those persons and groups experiencing them. In international politics crises most often involve governments, but in the present age a governmental crisis can quickly engulf whole societies or possibly the entire planet with the capacity to transform or destroy those involved. Given the far-reaching implications of some international crises for the future, it is not surprising that many individuals have expended considerable effort to investigate such events.

PROBLEMS IN ACCUMULATING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CRISES

Policy makers, journalists, and academics all have undertaken descriptions and analyses of international crises. But one remarkable quality about most studies of crises has been their failure to provide cumulative knowledge about the class of events they investigate. Recollections of crises in the autobiographies of statesmen or reconstructions of events by reporters and scholars provide a more or less satisfactory interpretation of a particular crisis, but these analyses prove of limited value in understanding subsequent crises. As a given crisis recedes into

1. *New York Times*, December 8, 1968, pp. 1–2.
2. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, vol. 2, *Waging Peace*, 1956–1961 (New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 226.
3. Statement of Dean Rusk at Hearing before the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 89th Congress, 2nd sess., August 25, 1966.
4. John Platt, "What We Must Do," *Science*, 166 (November 28, 1969), 115.

history, critical attention shifts to the new, current crises. Because the accounts of former crises lack relevance for the most recent situations, new studies are prepared and substituted for the previous ones only to be replaced themselves by accounts of still other events that draw nothing from those already compiled.

At least three reasons can be offered for this state of affairs in the study of crisis. First, the prevailing mode of analysis has been the detailed case history of a single crisis. Despite the satisfaction gained by reading a thorough and well-written case study, this method of analysis makes it unnecessary for the writer to consider how the crisis under examination compares with other situations.[5] Not only is the development of empirically verifiable generalizations by the original author hampered, but the absence of parallel constructions between case studies makes it difficult for the reader of several studies to abstract hypotheses.

A second restriction limiting much of the research is that many individuals who write about crisis seem to believe in the uniqueness of every situation. At least, they find unique the combination of properties necessary to provide a satisfactory explanation of a specific event. For example, in discussing some implications of economic theory for international relations, Aron observes: "It has not yet been proven that 'crisis situations' are all alike. It is possible that each crisis is unique or, if you prefer, has its own particular story."[6] If we foster the conviction that each crisis is totally distinct from those encountered in the past and to be encountered in the future, then it is not surprising that we have little accumulated knowledge about crises.

Finally, only the vaguest common meaning appears attached to the concept of crisis. Since many analysts fail to define crisis at all, the reader is left to infer from the context that the situation concerns some "critical" or "urgent" problem. In the attempt to call attention to every important issue, we suffer from the indiscriminate use of the term *crisis*.

These inhibitions in the study of crises must be overcome if we are to develop any knowledge about crises as a class of events. The kind of knowledge that both policy makers and scholars might reasonably be expected to want about international crises includes the answer to such questions as the following: When do crises lead to war or otherwise drastically alter the system in which they occur? As compared to noncrises do participants in a crisis behave more or less rationally—that is, behave so as to maximize their likelihood of obtaining desired goals? How can crises be averted? Can potential crises be detected in advance? Once a crisis occurs, how can it be managed? When can crises be used as opportunities to gain political, military, or economic advantage? Under what conditions can a crisis be settled peacefully? When, and with what degree of certainty, is one crisis likely to manifest the same features as some previous one? Can the concept of crisis be usefully incorporated into theories accounting for a broad range of human behavior?

5. Insightful statements concerning the problems of case studies can be found in Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), chap. 1; and James N. Rosenau, "Moral Fervor, Systematic Analysis, and Scientific Consciousness in Foreign Policy Research," in Austin Ranney, ed., *Political Science and Public Policy* (Chicago: Markham, 1968), chap. 9.

6. Raymond Aron, "What Is a Theory of International Relations?" *Journal of International Affairs*, 21, no. 2 (1967), 188.

Despite the weaknesses that limit the ability of many crisis studies to provide the beginnings of answers to such questions, there has been a small but growing body of research applying the methods of scientific inquiry to the investigation of international crises. This research involves such activities as delimiting and operationalizing the variables to be examined, identifying empirically testable hypotheses, using various techniques to obtain reproducible evidence that supports or refutes the hypotheses, and searching for more general theories to which specific hypotheses might be fitted. Among those social and behavioral scientists who employ scientific methods in their research and who actively engage in the study of international politics, crisis has received considerable attention. The total number of individuals engaged in the scientific study of crisis, however, remains relatively small and for the most part they have worked in isolation from one another. The Princeton Symposium on International Crises, which ultimately led to this volume, was called to bring some of these scholars—but by no means all of them—together to discuss each other's work and to assess the general state of research and knowledge on crisis.

The discussions at the symposium and the papers that resulted from it have definite implications for the three problems in the study of crisis mentioned earlier. For example, the authors of several chapters address the problem of the isolated case study of crisis. Comparative studies of two or more crises—which oblige the authors to consider the similarities and the differences between different situations—replace single case analyses. Moreover, in chapter after chapter the authors derive explicit hypotheses from their case studies that can be applied to other crises, thus contributing to the accumulation of knowledge.

Although none of the following chapters deals explicitly with the argument that each crisis can be understood only if treated as a unique phenomenon, their common emphasis on the discovery of more general patterns applicable to various crises permits us to infer their position. The authors appear to reject the contention that the only meaningful statements about crisis are those tailored exclusively to one and only one specific situation.

Every situation is novel when all its properties are considered. Even two simple situations—one a carefully executed replication of the other—differ in numerous ways. Between these occurrences, time will have elapsed. The earth and solar system will have moved. Human actors will be older and will have had intervening experiences. Given the novelty of simple, controlled situations, it is clear that countless differences exist between two complex international events such as the Berlin blockade of 1948 and Khrushchev's ultimatum on Berlin in 1958. Man would be unable to cope with his daily existence, however, if he did not treat most new situations as comparable to some situations he has met or learned about in the past. For purposes of evaluation and action, all humans categorize events according to a limited number of properties and ignore the rest. The adequacy of a response to a situation will depend, in part, upon the quality of the classifying categories and our ability to correctly recognize the situation as a member of a class of events. Having established how the present circumstances are related to some already experienced, man can bring the success or failure of past responses to bear on his present action. Of course, explanation and action are not the same; nor are the simple situations of daily living similar to the complex ones of international events. Nevertheless, if we correctly recognize a few critical properties of an international situation which identify it as a member of a general set of situations, we may establish numerous

things about it even without examining many other qualities that make it unique.[7]

DEFINITIONS OF CRISIS

The utility of considering crises as a class of phenomena with some shared properties that have implications for other aspects of those situations depends upon how the concept is defined. Definition brings us to the third problem in the study of crisis mentioned earlier. As the following chapters reveal, the symposium members reached no complete consensus on this issue although they wrestled with it from the first moments of the meeting. The participants recognized that the definition of crisis was intertwined with a number of issues, including the general theoretical perspective and kinds of questions with which any research is concerned. At the first session of the symposium, during the discussion of an earlier version of James Robinson's paper (now Chapter 2), the issue of definition quickly surfaced. The reader will find much of interest in the exchanges on this issue as the participants in their first encounter with one another struggled to describe and clarify positions. For this reason a major portion is reproduced below with minimal editorial correction (and without any subsequent modifications by the participants themselves who may now hold different views or might wish to state them differently). The reproduced section of the extemporaneous dialogue begins with Charles McClelland speaking about the absence of a systemic perspective in the Robinson paper.

> CHARLES A. McCLELLAND: *What I find missing here, of course, is my own preoccupation, that is, a view of crisis as an unusual manifestation of the interflow of activity between the participants. In other words, there is, I believe, a very specific perspective or point of view, that looks at the whole interplay as if it were traffic, which I do. The general idea I want to get over is that at least there are two, if not ten, basic perspectives [on crisis]. One is the viewpoint toward the participant—what he does, how he feels, how he responds to messages, and all that sort of thing. There is another which looks on the whole configuration of parties participating back and forth.*

> JAMES A. ROBINSON: *I think your point is well taken, and I do recognize the important distinction between confining oneself to the perceptions of members of the intra-national unit as contrasted with objective and system considerations. I wonder if we should discuss what differences there are in these approaches to crisis and what implications these differences have for theorizing about crisis.*

> McCLELLAND: *Well, I think first of all, the difference is the difference in the conceptualization of the subject matter. And this is a great big difference. If you think of the work on Korea by [Glenn] Paige concerning the decisions by American policy makers during those days in June 1950, the first question*

7. Of course, policy makers can get into serious trouble by the misclassification of events. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s *The Bitter Heritage* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967). The problem of situation recognition and classification is somewhat different for the art of policy making than it is for the development of a science of politics. In the latter case new situations provide an opportunity for hypothesis testing and refinement of categories, whereas in the former an unfamiliar situation introduces the risk of a policy misfortune.

is: *Is that the entire crisis? And that question introduces at least issues of definitions, preconceptions, and original starting points for the study of crisis. Depending upon your answers, you just simply get different kinds of material involved, it seems to me.*

HOWARD H. LENTNER: *There would not be a crisis for the decision-making unit if there weren't something out there. And so, there must be some relationship between the two [approaches]. I would also suggest that there is, perhaps, even another kind of focus which links the two. That additional perspective has to do with the bargaining process in the crisis. In one sense bargaining brings in decision making and also this systemic business.*

McCLELLAND: *Conceptually, it seems to me that [crisis] interaction is likely to be in terms of [effects on the] stability or equilibrium of the system, or disturbance of the normal run of business conducted between actors. It is quite clear that this systemic-level activity becomes the external input to the decisional group and the link between the approaches is obviously there. But it is a difference, I should think—a very big difference—as to how both ideas and data get organized in the systemic and decision-making approaches to crisis.*

GLENN H. SNYDER: *I was just going to quote Charles McClelland himself where he makes the point that interaction analysis provides the answer to the "what", if you will; whereas, when you are in a decision-making mode of analysis it provides the "why"—why the actors move as they did on specific occasions.*

McCLELLAND: *Well, that's from [Richard C.] Snyder; where he got it, I don't know. I think a lot of "why" questions might well be answered in other than decision-making terms. When you say, for example, "Why won't my car work?" Well, there are all sorts of approximations to the answer of why my car won't work. Some of these tend to be internal and some of them tend to be external.*

DAVID C. SCHWARTZ: *It seems to me that consideration of the difference between the McClelland approach, as I read it, and some of the decision-making studies does not call for defensive statements that seek to establish the legitimacy of each approach but rather for questions about where do we go from here. Specifically, we should be asking which of those inter-actions that constitute an operational definition of crisis in McClelland's terms gets perceived by decision makers and with what effect. Similarly, which of these systemic factors act as constraints irrespective of what the decision maker sees?*

ROBINSON: *Howard's [Lentner] paper is relevant here. It seems to me we have these two situations to investigate. One is what difference does it make if the decision makers call it a crisis or don't call it a crisis. It may be that recognizing it—or labeling it as such—affects their behavior; in which case, of course, it's important to know how they use the term. If they don't use the term, what are the functional substitutes for it? On the other hand—and this is where I plug into Charles' [McClelland] work, and why I think that it's valuable—if you take a functional definition, it doesn't make any difference what they call it at all. What you are concerned about is whether certain characteristics inhere in the situation. If those characteristics are present, then you consider their effect on some dependent variables.*

Thus it would be interesting to me to take the quantitative material that McClelland turns out and say: Here is a situation having a high information loading, changes in traffic volume, or whatever properties you use to identify a crisis. And then ask of these high-load situations: What are the implications of these properties for decision processes or whatever other variables might be of interest? It does seem to me, his [Charles McClelland's] conception of crisis has the merit of avoiding having to know what was in the decision maker's mind. You just take it for granted that you've got a crisis if you meet McClelland's operational definition.

OLE R. HOLSTI: *What criteria would you want to use for identifying the kinds of situations you want to include as crises? That is, presumably there are some events that you would put your bets on right now as the kind of situations you'd want to look at. How would you, in a preliminary way, define these?*

McCLELLAND: *I think the ideal way would be to have for an extended period of time—say, for two centuries—a complete running record of the traffic or interactions between nations. And then, you see, it would be merely a matter of watching the flows and deciding that the sharp fluctuations were crises.*

CHARLES F. HERMANN: *Let me build on that by calling your attention to the definition of crisis by Oran Young, an absent colleague, who takes the systemic perspective in addition to McClelland and others. Young states that "crisis refers to situations which have important implications for the stability for some pattern of interaction, system, or subsystem. Crises are in no sense limited to situations which actively jeopardize the stability of the international system, but they do raise certain considerations concerning stability. To begin with, stability refers here to the ability of a system or pattern of interactions to undergo a disruptive sequence of events without breaking down or suffering qualitative changes of nature."[8] It seems to me that in addition to asking how does crisis affect decision making, or what are its consequences for individuals or groups of policy makers, the question can be asked: What are the consequences for the international system? And maybe we haven't been properly attentive to this.*

ANTHONY J. WIENER: *I'm really very surprised at the suggestion that we focus on the international system, just as I am surprised that Chuck [Hermann] calls our attention to Oran Young's definition. It seems to me we really practically never talk about crisis in the international system, as such. We don't really talk about international crises. We talk about crises in national subsystems of the international system which are brought on by inputs from the international system. And then, once we are talking about a national crisis stemming from international relations, we may talk about the two linked subsystems and their communication. Are we really in a position to discuss the international system, which several times during the last two centuries changed its configuration very radically, and to talk in general terms about crises in that context, or are we really talking primarily about the U.S. national crises and sometimes some other nation?*

LENTNER: *Of course, 1914 is an international crisis system.*

8. This definition of crisis by Oran R. Young appeared in an unpublished working paper. He subsequently revised and expanded his definition in his *The Politics of Force* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 6–15.

WIENER: *We know something about the balance-of-power system and the breakdown of that system, but that is almost a special case. Is it comparable to the others?*

HOLSTI: *The question you are really raising is that if you use this kind of definition, then you only pick presumably those situations which have a visible impact on the configuration of the system. And maybe you are excluding an awful lot.*

WIENER: *And you would exclude most of the cases we have.*

HERMANN: *Well, I gather that what Tony [Wiener] is arguing is that the difference [between systemic and foreign policy crisis definitions] is maybe not as great as definitions like Oran's [Young] suggest. In other words, maybe there is more of a commonality in concerns than if you really were interested in asking what are the consequences for the international system. McClelland is still interested in asking essentially questions about the impact on national actors. But looking at this through interaction data. He's not asking, as I read it, as many questions about the consequences for the international system qua system.*

HOLSTI: [addressing McClelland] *You have a far less restricted definition of crisis because you are presumably interested in situations other than those that have a sharp impact on the system. Right?*

MCCLELLAND: *A crisis can exist for certain relationships within an international system at a given time involving a sharp confrontation, a short, violent interaction—but still not destroy a particular set of relationships existing at a given time. You don't have to insist on an upset in the system every time you have a crisis.*

SCHWARTZ: *If you are concerned with system change, I would suggest that you would be very badly advised to define crises so restrictively as only to look at those cases in which an international crisis, however defined, changes the system, for two reasons. One, you would obviate the possibility of making observations about those changes which are incremental, which occur for nonpolitical reasons over great lengths of time.*

WIENER: *But would they be crises, though?*

SCHWARTZ: *No, but if you are interested in explaining system change, they would be system changes. Second, it would be inappropriate to restrictively define crises because you would be unable to compare such system-changing crises with crises which somehow did not result in major transformations of the rules by which nations interact with one another. And what would be exciting, really, is to know the difference [between system-changing and non-system-changing crises]. We should search for a "transition rule" to distinguish a crisis which profoundly affects nations as against a crisis which does not change the nations' interactions.*

SYSTEMIC AND DECISION-MAKING PERSPECTIVES[9]

The preceding excerpt touched upon a number of important issues—distinctions between crisis defined in terms of the policy makers' perceptions as opposed to

indicators used by independent observers, possible distinctions between the decision-making and systemic definitions of crisis (e.g., the kinds of questions asked and data collected), possible linkages between the two approaches to crisis (e.g., through bargaining or the use of systemic crisis data as inputs for decision makers' crises), whether any analyses are performed on crises affecting the entire international system, and whether such crises must transform the system. The discussions at the symposium led the editor to reflect further on the implications for crisis studies of the systemic and decision-making approaches. Because the distinction runs through this book like a thread, further consideration of some implications of these two perspectives seems appropriate.

We shall stipulate that a system is a set of actors (e.g., nations, international organizations, and so on) interacting with one another in established patterns and through designated structures. In any given international political system, critical variables must be maintained within certain limits or the instability of the system will be greatly increased—perhaps to the point where a new system will be formed. A crisis is a situation which disrupts the system or some part of the system (i.e., a subsystem such as an alliance or an individual actor). More specifically, a crisis is a situation that creates an abrupt or sudden change in one or more of the basic systemic variables.

In the present international system, the existing military relationships depend in part on the relative superiority of the strategic weapon systems of the two superpowers and their deterrence capabilities with respect to each other. A sudden change in one of the superpowers' ability to deter the other would constitute a crisis for the system. The deterrence crisis might not transform the system or the subsystem comprised of the Soviet Union and the United States, but it has the potential to do so.

The characterization of crisis from the systemic approach suggests the relationship of the concept to such terms as *change* and *conflict*. Because crises engage one or more of the critical variables necessary to maintain the existing pattern of relationships between actors, they necessarily can effect significant changes in the international system. Whether or not a crisis actually produces significant change depends on a number of factors such as the nature of the modified variables, the existing destabilizing factors, and the available techniques for crisis management. Thus, in the editor's view, the suggestion that systemic crises must involve transformation of the system is misleading. What is required is that the crisis have the potential of system change. Just as not all crises lead to important changes, not all significant changes are crises. A gradual shift in the rate of exchange between nations could ultimately have a profound effect on the system, despite only small increments of change at any given point in time. The association of crisis with abrupt change also bears on its relationship to conflict. A conflict between parties that continues at a relatively constant level of intensity would not constitute a crisis, but a sudden shift in the level of hostilities—most notably from peace to war—would be a crisis at least for the subsystem comprised of the combatants.

Although the proposed systemic definition of crisis has been an arbitrary one, it is consistent with much of the writing about crisis from a systemic perspective. Thus crisis has been described as "intensive inputs to the international system . . . unbalancing stabilities,"[10] or as "some kind of boundary or

10. Jan F. Triska and David D. Finley, *Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 317.

turning point,"[11] or as "involving significant actual or potential international conflict in either a novel form or at an abruptly changing level."[12] One of the more complete systemic definitions of crisis is offered by Young: "An international crisis, then, is a set of rapidly unfolding events which raises the impact of destabilizing forces in the general international system or any of its subsystems substantially above 'normal' (i.e., average) levels and increases the likelihood of violence occurring in the system."[13] An abrupt increase in the likelihood of international violence or war is the most common systemic definition of crisis in the remainder of this volume.

If a class of crisis situations can be operationally defined from the guidelines discussed above, what contribution might this variable make to the analysis of international political systems? The structures and processes that maintain an international system may be more or less subject to the sudden stresses imposed by crisis. The question then arises as to what structures and processes are most "sensitive" to crisis situations. Sensitivity can vary in several ways, including the tendency for some parts of the system to be more frequently exposed to crises. For example, interactions between actors who seek alterations in their international status are more prone to crises than interactions between actors who have accepted their status positions. Sensitivity also develops because some elements of a system can vary less than others without exceeding critical thresholds. For example, a system may be able to withstand considerably greater variation in the degree of conflict between smaller states than it can between major states. Essentially, these questions concern the effect of crisis on system stability and transformation.

Because international systems differ, the impact of crisis can be expected to vary according to the type of system. This observation leads to such research questions as: Does the nature of the international system influence the frequency with which crises occur? Are certain systems better structured to allow policy makers to cope with crises without destroying the system? According to Waltz, one "distinguishing factor in the bipolar balance, as we thus far know it, is the nearly constant presence of pressure and the recurrence of crises."[14] In addition to finding crises more frequent in a bipolar system than in a multipolar system, Waltz also contends that in a multipolar world a nation's policy makers can create a crisis to further their objectives with the hope that opponents of the change will not coalesce in opposition. In a bipolar system the permanency of opposing polar powers greatly increases the probability that any move to initiate a crisis will be countered.[15] Thus two relevant hypotheses from the Waltz study are that the type of international system influences (1) the rate with which

11. Kenneth E. Boulding, *Conflict and Defense* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), Torchbook edition, p. 250.

12. Anthony J. Wiener and Herman Kahn, eds., *Crisis and Arms Control*, Hudson Institute, Advanced Research Projects Agency Contract no. SD-105, October 9, 1962, p. 12.

13. Oran R. Young, *The Intermediaries: Third Parties in International Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 10.

14. Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World," *Daedalus*, 93, no. 3 (1964), p. 883.

15. It is interesting to note in this context that one of the polar powers in the present system, the United States, was directly or indirectly involved in one-third of the forty-eight crises mentioned by Secretary Rusk. See footnote 3.

crises occur, and (2) the probability of direct confrontations between actors when any actor attempts to abruptly change significant systemic variables.

Conflicting hypotheses exist concerning the systemic consequences of numerous crises. Wright contends that the probability of war in a given period of time increases with the frequency of crises.[16] McClelland and Waltz make the counter-hypothesis although they use different arguments.[17] The nature of a given international system may be introduced as a mediating variable to resolve this apparent contradiction. In some inherently unstable systems the appearance of a single crisis might trigger war. In other systems with effective regulatory mechanisms, crises might be repeatedly managed without resort to war. The availability to both the Soviet Union and the United States of a tremendous destructive capability that can be applied even after absorbing an initial nuclear attack may serve as such a regulator of crisis effects in the present international system.

These questions and hypotheses are only a few that might be examined using crisis as a systemic variable. As the symposium discussion suggested, however, few empirical studies have been designed to investigate issues of this type which concern the entire international system. Authors with commitment to the systemic framework tend to examine the interaction of a subsystem in a single crisis.[18] The inspection of subsystem interaction or even a single national actor, treated as a system component, undoubtedly can yield important insights into the nature of crisis. But the effect of crisis on the relations within an alliance or between two adversaries may be quite different from the effect of that same crisis on the overall system. A specific crisis may drastically alter a subsystem without having any destabilizing consequences for the total international system.

An alternative perspective to the systems approach for conceptualizing crisis is decision making. As the name suggests, central to the decision-making approach is the process by which decisions are made on questions of policy. Also basic to this organizing framework are the persons who, as individuals or in some collective form, constitute the authoritative decision makers. The decision makers behave according to their interpretation of the situation, not according to its "objective" character as viewed by some theoretical omnipotent

16. Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 1272.

17. Charles McClelland proposes that experience is gained with the management of each crisis; therefore, policy makers cope more successfully with subsequent crises. See his "The Acute International Crisis," *World Politics*, 14, no. 1 (1961), 187–188. Kenneth Waltz suggests that if continuing hostility exists between two parties, crises may become a substitute for war ("Stability of Bipolar World," p. 884). Raymond Aron notes a "trend toward the diminution of the force used" in direct crises between the Soviet Union and the United States, but he does not speculate that this pattern could be generalized to all parties experiencing repeated crises. See his *Peace and War*, translated by R. Howard and A. B. Fox (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), p. 565.

18. Examples of subsystem crisis studies are William P. Davison, *The Berlin Blockade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958); Charles A. McClelland, "Decisional Opportunity and Political Controversy: The Quemoy Case," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 6, no. 3 (1962), 201–213. Albert Wohlstetter and Roberta Wohlstetter, *Controlling the Risks in Cuba*, Adelphi Paper no. 17, Institute for Strategic Studies (London), April 1965.

observer.[19] Therefore, in attempting to explain how different kinds of situations influence the type of choice that is made, the analyst must interpret the situation as it is perceived by the decision makers.

The use of crisis as a situational variable which increases the likelihood of a certain kind of decision by the policy makers is not unlike the stimulus-response model familiar to psychologists. Crisis acts as a stimulus; the decision represents a response. In the usual experimental application of this model, the researcher varies an event or condition which is used to account for any observed variation in the respondent's behavior. Applying this model to the interaction between policy makers of two nation-states, several political scientists expanded the paradigm to include (1) the stimulus or actual policy of the initiating state, (2) the perception of that stimulus by the decision makers in the recipient state, (3) the response or actual reply of the recipient state, and (4) the perception of that response by the decision makers in the initiating state.[20] As in this modification of the stimulus-response model, the definition of crisis required by the decision-making approach must take into account the screening processes of human perceptions.

Those analysts who have studied crisis using the decision-making framework display no more agreement regarding the definition of crisis than do their counterparts who have applied the systemic approach. As before, we stipulate a definition which delimits a class of situations and contains some of the properties frequently associated with crisis. Specifically, a crisis is a situation that (1) threatens high-priority goals of the decision-making unit, (2) restricts the amount of time available for response before the decision is transformed, and (3) surprises the members of the decision-making unit by its occurrence. Threat, time, and surprise all have been cited as traits of crisis,[21] although until recently all three properties have not been combined. Underlying the proposed definition is the hypothesis that if all three traits are present then the decision process will be substantially different than if only one or two of the characteristics appear. Contained in the set of events specified by this definition are many that observers commonly refer to as crises for American policy makers—for example, the 1950 decision to defend South Korea, the 1962 Cuban missile episode, and the 1965 decision to send marines to the Dominican Republic. But other situations would not be considered crises for policy makers in the United States—the 1958 ultimatum on Berlin, the extended Greek–Turkish–Cypriot dispute, and the mission in 1964 to rescue Europeans in Stanleyville (Congo) are illustrative in this regard. The exclusion of these and other situations that do not contain at least one of the three traits does not deny the importance of these situations or the significant consequences of the resulting decisions. The classification of them as noncrises simply indicates that these situations may be different with respect to the decision process in some systematic ways from those included in the crisis set.

19. Harold and Margaret Sprout are among those who have carefully explicated this point. See their *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), especially pp. 28–30.

20. Ole R. Holsti, Richard A. Brody, and Robert C. North, "Affect and Action in International Reaction Models," *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 3–4 (1964), 170–190.

21. See the review of these traits in Charles F. Hermann, "Some Consequences of Crisis Which Limit the Viability of Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 8, no. 1 (1963), 61–82, and Charles F. Hermann, *Crises in Foreign Policy: A Simulation Analysis* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969).

Because situations differ in their degree of threat, in their duration through time, and in their amount of surprise, each of the three traits that define a crisis can be conceived as one extreme on a dimension with scale positions for every possible quantity of each property. When taken together at right angles, these
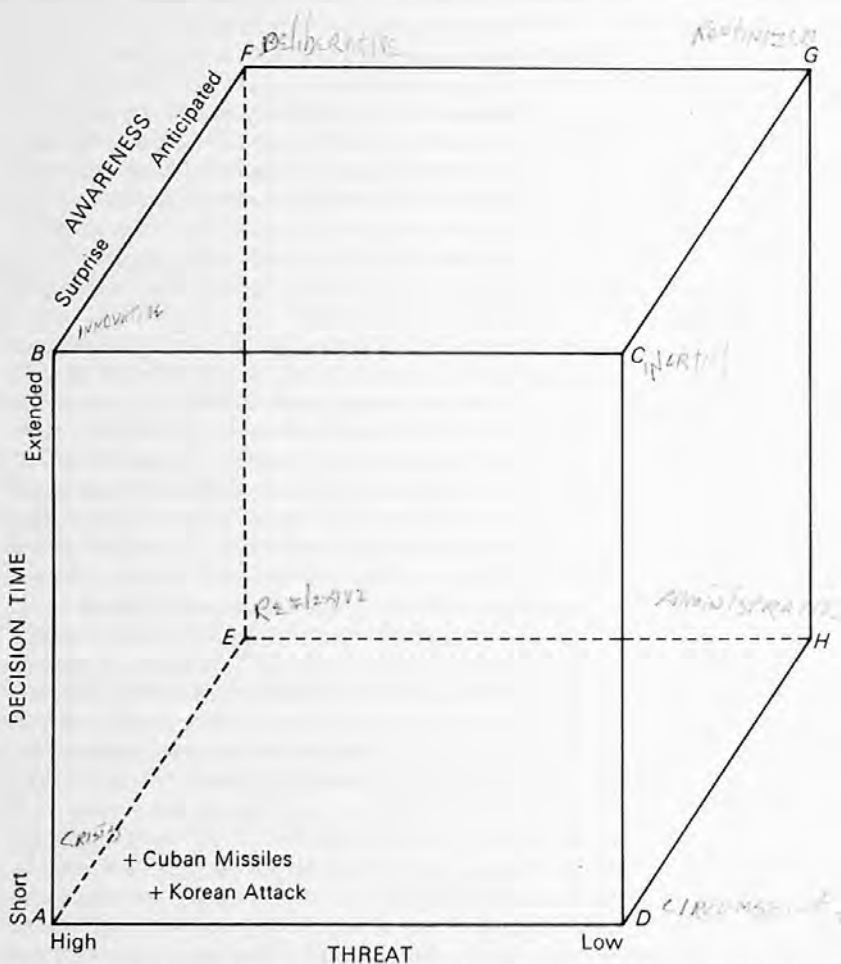
FIGURE 1. A situational cube representing the three dimensions of threat, decision time, and awareness with illustrative situations from the perspective of American decision makers. (*Note*: The representation of a three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional diagram makes it difficult to interpret the locations of the situations; their positions should not be considered exact in any case.)

A. Crisis Situation
   High Threat/Short Time/Surprise
B. Innovative Situation
   High Threat/Extended Time/Surprise
C. Inertial Situation
   Low Threat/Extended Time/Surprise
D. Circumstantial Situation
   Low Threat/Short Time/Surprise

E. Reflexive Situation
   High Threat/Short Time/Anticipated
F. Deliberative Situation
   High Threat/Extended Time/Anticipated
G. Routinized Situation
   Low Threat/Extended Time/Anticipated
H. Administrative Situation
   Low Threat/Short Time /Anticipated

three scales form a three-dimensional space in which all situations can be located according to their degree of threat, time, and awareness (surprise).[22] In Figure 1 this space has been closed to form a cube, the eight corners of which represent all possible combinations of the extreme values of the three dimensions. Thus the corners of the cube represent ideal types of situations with respect to threat, time, and awareness. Few, if any, actual situations can be considered to correspond to these ideal types, but as the location in the cube of a specific situation approaches one of the corners, that situation can be treated as influencing decision making in a manner similar to the ideal type.

To illustrate the location of a situation along a dimension, consider the element of decision time in both the Korean crisis of 1950 and the Cuban crisis of 1962. As the South Korean army crumbled before the North Korean advance, the initial optimism of American decision makers changed to a realization that unless the United States intervened quickly the invaders would control the entire peninsula. The first meeting with the President to discuss the Korean situation occurred on Sunday evening, June 25. After a series of steps taken in the next several days to support the faltering South Korean army, President Truman decided early Friday morning, June 30, to commit American ground forces. Although Truman and his advisers considered the time available to them to be extremely short, other situations such as the response to be made upon detection of a launched ballistic missile attack could offer even less time for decision. Thus on the time dimension the Korean decision would be located near the short time end of the scale, but not at the most extreme point. The Cuban missile crisis also presented short decision time because, as the American policy makers observed, once the missiles were operational they would be extremely difficult to remove without the possibility that some of them would be launched in retaliation. With missiles prepared for firing, the situation facing the leaders of the United States would be drastically altered. The first presidential session on that crisis occurred on the morning of Tuesday, October 26; the following Tuesday, President Kennedy issued the "Proclamation of the Interdiction of Offensive Weapons" ordering the blockade to begin the next morning. In actual time the decision in the missile crisis was more extended than that in the Korean crisis. If the decision makers' perceptions of available time are used, some evidence indicates that the Korean crisis as compared to the Cuban crisis involved even less time than estimates based on clock or calendar. Despite these differences, the perceived time for both decisions puts them near the extreme of short time and both decision processes could be expected to bear resemblance to ideal type situations involving short decision time.

The effects of a crisis on decision making can be compared with the hypothesized consequences of situations that approach the ideal types represented by the other seven corners of the cube in Figure 1. Examples of the eight kinds of situations—crisis, innovative, inertial, circumstantial, reflexive, deliberative, routinized, and administrative situations—have been presented elsewhere together with propositions about the implications of each situation for the decision

22. We shall use surprise as one extreme on an awareness dimension in order to permit a construction parallel to that for threat and time. Thus the complete absence of awareness is surprise; the other extreme is anticipation. Because awareness refers to a condition of the decision maker (i.e., his perception), the term is less satisfactory when one deals with the observers' estimation of the properties present in the situation.

process.[23] Other aspects of the decision-making perspective as it applies to crisis are examined by James Robinson in Chapter 2.

THE NATURE OF THIS BOOK

This book continues the examination of the issues originally considered at the symposium. Here, as at the Princeton symposium, the purpose is to bring together in one place representatives of the advanced research on the study of international crisis disposed to the application of the methods of science. We looked for shared problems, areas in need of further inquiry, implications for our own work that may exist in what others have done, and an assessment of the present status of knowledge on international crisis that may be of use to others. Some chapters in this volume restate and extend previously reported inquiries of the authors; others represent totally new undertakings. The editor felt that all were necessary to present an overview of current research.

Admittedly, the scientific analysis of crisis has only begun, as the authors of this book would readily admit. More attention is paid to concept formation, simple empirical mapping, and hypothesis generation than to hypothesis testing and theory development. Methodologically, the techniques employed in this volume reflect considerable variation both in terms of the extent to which the methods have been developed and the length of experience of the author with the technique he applies. Taken as a whole, the state of the methodological advance found in crisis research, such as reported here, depends on one's perspective. Looking back, it appears that we have come some considerable way; looking ahead, it is evident that a long road remains ahead of us in increasing our methodological skills and in improving the fit between methodologies and substance.

In reading through the chapters in this volume, one discovers certain recurrent issues or themes—sometimes stated or approached in different ways that may momentarily hide the underlying commonality of concern. Among these issues is the question of the definition of crisis which we have already discussed. Another issue, related to the question of definition, is the differentiation of crisis from noncrisis. How can you detect a crisis? How does it differ from other situations? An extension of that concern manifests itself in the effort to differentiate stages or phases of a crisis. For example, one might discover that there are periods when escalation is most rapid or when bargaining meets with more likelihood of success. Various authors examine the relationship of crisis to other international phenomena such as war, conflict, and threat. Others seek to explore the linkage between crisis and concepts—such as individual stress—for which considerable data exists in other fields. The conditions precipitating crises and the consequences that follow from them occupy attention in a number of chapters. As Robinson notes at the end of Chapter 2, one form of the debate on the consequences of crisis is whether they promote pathological or beneficial effects. Among the beneficial effects of crisis that have been noted are its tendency to serve as a substitute for war, to promote innovation and collaboration, to foster decision, to increase group cohesion, and to attract the attention and interest of the most able actors to previously ignored problems. The other side of the coin sees crisis as increasing the probability of war, making conservative
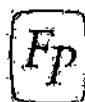
23. See Charles F. Hermann, "International Crisis as a Situational Variable."

behavior more likely, producing system disorder and instability, and increasing nonrational and affective behavior that reduces the ability of men to make wise decisions.

This book is organized into six parts. This chapter, together with the following one, provides an introduction and an overview to the contemporary study of international crises. In the second section, three chapters report comparative case studies of selected crises. Part III contains two chapters that consider crisis from the perspective of the policy makers—one of the issues we have touched upon in this introduction. The authors of Chapters 8 and 9 in Part IV apply a widely used technique for studying crises—games and simulations. In Part V the authors deal with means of coping with crises and thus provide chapters that may be of particular interest to those who face such situations. In the concluding section of the book (Part VI), we abstract hypotheses from all the preceding chapters and attempt to suggest some models of crisis into which the propositions may be fitted. Of course, a number of alternative ways of organizing this book are possible which would give emphasis to other similarities or differences between the contributions. In an effort to highlight some of these other features and to underscore the distinctive contribution of each chapter to the larger mosaic, the editor has written an introduction to each subsequent chapter other than the concluding one.

INTERNATIONAL CRISES: Insights from Behavioral Research

Edited by
Charles F. Hermann

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