

Symposium: new directions for international institutions

Editor's note

Early last summer I wrote to several eminent students and practitioners of international organization, asking for 5,000 word statements on what American policy should be toward international organizations. These requests were sent to people of varying political persuasions, ranging from relatively conservative to fairly radical; two were sent to citizens of countries other than the United States. The intention was to promote debate about American policy, during a period in which international organizations, and particularly the United Nations, have become increasingly controversial in this country, and in which negotiations on the "new international economic order" demanded by the Group of 77 would be taking place.

Although seven affirmative responses to the invitation were received, in only three cases were manuscripts received before the journal's publication deadline. The essay by Branislav Gosovic and John Gerard Ruggie does not propose policy recommendations, but rather provides essential background by describing not only the negotiations at the recent Seventh Special Session of the United Nations, in September 1975, but also some of the events leading to those negotiations. The essays by C. Fred Bergsten and Seymour Maxwell Finger do make policy recommendations for the United States.

The range of views presented in this symposium is not as wide as I had hoped, although in my judgment the quality of the contributions is high. This set of essays, however, is not intended to be self-contained, but rather to stir up disagreement and controversy, and specifically to stimulate readers to submit manuscripts of similar size presenting their well-argued opinions on this important topic. The pages of this journal will remain open to brief and coherent statements of policy advocacy pertaining to international organizations. I look forward to receiving stimulating, original, and trenchant manuscripts!