



INTERNATIONAL CRISIS ON CAMPUS

The most unfortunate thing about being a foreign affairs specialist is that it isn't possible to experiment with countries the way a biologist can with monkeys. To alleviate this problem, shortly after World War II, the RAND Corporation worked out some political-military games, using groups of people to play the roles of the various governments involved in an artificial crisis. This month Caltech set up one of the games, as an educational experiment, involving groups of students and faculty in a crisis in Southern Rhodesia.

Groups were formed ahead of time to play the roles of the U.S., the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom, Rhodesia, the Union of South Africa, the moderate African states (Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria), and the militant African states (U.A.R., Ghana, Guinea, Algeria, and Morocco). The participants put in a lot of intensive study on the military, economic, and political characteristics of their respective countries to provide a realistic basis for game actions.

In addition to the national groups, there was a control board to pass on the credibility of all mes-

sages before delivery and to keep track of the game's general progress; observers, sitting in with each national group; and messengers, to handle communications.

At 8:30 a.m. on January 9, the cast assembled and was presented with a scenario of the initial crisis — an outbreak of violence between whites and blacks in Rhodesia with assorted assassination attempts, raids (from Zambia), a flight of rural farmers to Mozambique and South Africa, and other troubles. After reading the scenario, all groups went to their offices to start the actual play. The play was divided into five periods of about three hours duration. At these times the members of the national groups stayed strictly in their rooms to avoid any inadvertent passage of information to another group.

Actual play consisted of sending messages to other groups, and to the control board. To provide a complete record of the game, all messages were in triplicate and one copy was retained by the sender, one by the receiver, and one by the control board. The control board kept the action going by formu-



lating press releases for general distribution, engineering security leaks, and producing additional scenarios between play periods. A few U.N. meetings, presided over by U Thant (David Smith, assistant professor of English), were held between the foreign ministers of the groups. These meetings were broadcast to all parties through a P.A. system.

Contrary to all expectations, the troubles in Rhodesia settled down quickly, since the moderate African group avoided a direct confrontation of Rhodesian military strength and chose instead to invade Mozambique.

This unexpected turn of events illustrates the unpredictability of the game. Even when all the background is known, the actual course of events often follows some path that hadn't been thought of previously. Examination of variant developments of the same crisis, when played by different casts, sheds some light on the alternatives to what has actually happened in the world.

In the case of the Caltech game, the primary function was to learn, according to Dr. Edwin S.

Munger, Caltech's African affairs specialist. Members of the national groups learned about their countries and the operation of international relations. Since they had been admonished not to blab to members of the other national groups during the game, their viewpoint was restricted until the game ended.

Since the game ran through both Saturday and Sunday, the action slowed down for some groups. This resulted in the production of poems by South Africa, and at least one message reading, "Are *you* bored?"

The messengers and observers, not being bound by a vow of silence, had a more general view of the game. They learned something about the things that are involved in international relations — most particularly (1) that there is an incredible amount of footwork involved in the delivery of diplomatic mail (one messenger's estimate was that he had walked 12 miles in the two days) and (2) that a shortage of typists is hell on international relations.

—Rodger F. Whitlock '65