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WORKING PAPER No. 3
NEW ZEALAND IN THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
A COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF ALIGNMENT

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With Foreword by
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ABSTRACT:

New Zealand's election to the United Nations Security Council seems an opportune time to explore New Zealand's record in other areas of the UN. This paper examines New Zealand's voting behaviour in the General Assembly with particular reference to the 47th session, coincidental to New Zealand's election to the Security Council. It establishes the relative position of New Zealand in terms of its alignment with the rest of the world, and how each member state's voting behaviour measures up against the UNGA majority. New Zealand's voting patterns are compared with those of Australia and the United States over a twelve year period, with special attention to disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS:

Adrian Wills graduated with a BA in Political Studies and History, and an MA in Politics from the University of Auckland. He has eschewed academia and is pursuing a research related career in London.

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FOREWORD

by

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This research brings together and compares our voting pattern in the General Assembly of the United Nations over a decade, filling a significant gap in our data base and providing a base line for further research on our foreign policy alignments in the United Nations. It gives us a starting point from which to monitor the evolution of our policy and examine and assess the different influences.

Adrian Wills assumed that New Zealand's political alignments, as manifested in its voting record on UN General Assembly resolutions, would be influenced by its position on disarmament, and its campaign for a seat on the UN, which culminated in 1991. The high percentage of disarmament resolutions coming before the General Assembly justified the pre-eminence of this issue as a litmus test of New Zealand's alignments. The nature of the General Assembly vote, as a public statement, of national policy, in the spotlight of the international arena, meant the voting record provided a valid and useful source of data for examining this assumption. The focus on resolutions put to a vote provided a means of assessing the degree of convergence on specific issues.

The selection of disarmament as the critical issue, and the decision to focus on a comparison of the voting pattern of New Zealand and its ex-ANZUS allies, the United States in particular, gives primacy to the degree of convergence between New Zealand and the United States on disarmament resolutions within the General Assembly. It was anticipated that there would be a marked divergence between New Zealand and the United States between 1984, when differences over disarmament and the nuclear policy became critical, and 1991 when New Zealand was actively campaigning for a seat on the Security Council. The divergence between Australia and New Zealand was expected to be less marked.

An analysis of the overall degree of convergence between New Zealand and other UN members in the General Assembly voting record provided the framework for the comparison between New Zealand and the United States. As an additional test of the findings the voting pattern of New Zealand and the United States on the disarmament issue was considered in relation to the annual number of UN resolutions on disarmament during this period. In order to isolate the influence of disarmament on the degree of alignment the pattern of convergence between the two countries in voting on other major issues, in the General Assembly, was examined.

This careful analysis throws up fascinating patterns of alignments which raise interesting questions about the processes through which policy positions are developed and the different factors, including the procedures of the United Nations, which have an impact on it. These broader dimensions constitute the framework within which foreign policy evolves but, given the specific focus of this study, the author was not able to address them. The work has three limitations in particular which prevent a fuller understanding of this process.

The first derives from the initial assumptions about the salience of the disarmament issue and its role as the dominant influence on foreign policy and foreign policy alignments. Secondly a high weighting is given to the degree of United States/New Zealand convergence in the General Assembly voting, as a measure of policy alignment. Thirdly the complexity of the voting system in the UN, and the multitude of factors that influence it, are not given detailed consideration. Taken together these mean that a quantitative analysis of the voting does not allow us to achieve a very full understanding of the meaning or significance of the interesting patterns this research has established.

In fact the actual emphasis in this study is on the voting records of ex-ANZUS partners on disarmament, rather than on comparison of foreign policy alignment. This assumes that disarmament, and therefore a single issue, can be the critical determinant of foreign policy. It

also assumes that voting in the General Assembly is an important index of foreign policy positions and will reflect the concerns and policy interests of a super—power, the USA, as well as New Zealand. These assumptions are all open to question. Indeed the findings of the analysis, which do not support the initial assumptions, tend to reinforce this comment.

Adrian Wills' research suggests that the United States is in fact the country most out of step with the majority decisions of the General Assembly. The divergence between New Zealand and the United States is a reflection of its generally deviant' position within the General Assembly which is dominated, as the author points out, by states from the Third World. This raises several questions.

One relates to the power differential within the United Nations. The decisions of the Security Council, unlike the resolutions of the General Assembly, are binding. Within the Security Council the permanent members have the power of veto. This unequal power structure means that the permanent members, such as the United States, can pursue and advance their foreign policy interests more effectively through the Security Council. The debates and votes in the General Assembly are of less importance for them.

A second and related issue concerns the function of the General Assembly. Does its critical contribution lie in its role in providing a global public space, open equally to all member states, through which issues can be defined as global issues and placed on the international agenda or does it have a more pragmatic role in global realpolitik? As an international forum the General Assembly can serve as a mechanism to facilitate the development of a global consciousness. We have seen this in the evolution of the disarmament and environmental questions. Evidence suggests its power is, primarily, moral rather than material.

Adrian Wills provides us with data establishing the degree of convergence between New Zealand and all other UN members, in General Assembly voting during the 47th session. The tabulation of results gives a fascinating picture of voting convergences, some quite unexpected, which pose a whole series of questions about our foreign policy alignments.

The degree of disjunction between the voting pattern of New Zealand and most of the Asian states is remarkable. It suggests the existence of significant differences between New Zealand and most Asian states in the perception and evaluation of global issues and raises questions about the success of the government's attempt to re—position New Zealand as a member of the Asian region. Our continuing membership of the Western European and Others bloc within the United Nations also contradicts the emphasis, in our foreign policy rhetoric, on common interests and affinities with Asia.

Our campaign for a seat on the Security Council was accompanied by an assertion that we would be a representative of these countries, and small states, during our term on the Council. The voting patterns, although only one measure, do not support this claim. In particular the disjunction between our voting and that of the majority of South Pacific states raises questions about the centrality of disarmament, and the movement for a nuclear free South Pacific, in our foreign policy alignments in our own close region. In general, our voting seems to demonstrate the greatest affinity with Western European countries but it is still surprising that there is an even greater degree of convergence between New Zealand and French voting patterns than between New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Two other dimensions are equally important in an exploration of foreign policy alignments in the United Nations. Firstly there is the need to consider the changing global context and secondly the internal politics and structures of the UN which provide the framework within which the process of negotiation takes place and voting alignments are determined. The changing pattern of the disjunction between the voting record of New Zealand and the USA, and the decline in the number of disarmament resolutions must surely be influenced by the moratorium on nuclear testing, the Salt negotiations, the dismantling of the nuclear arsenal and the end of the Cold War.

The internal politics of the UN is a more complex issue. There is a market in votes which operates within the system as a whole. Support on one issue may be traded for a vote to obtain

a position on another committee, commission or institution, or for support for a particular resolution in the General Assembly or another forum. A complicating factor is the varying degree of control exercised by the bloc to which each state belongs. These blocs in turn develop their own internal politics and market. These two sets of factors, global and internal, provide the context within which alignments, and votes, are determined.

The patterns identified in this study raise important questions that the author could not pursue, given the explicit focus of the paper. They suggest that foreign policy interests, and alignments, are multi—stranded and cannot be explained by one variable. It is important that this has been so clearly established. The study provides a base—line for a more detailed examination of the processes through which policy positions and alignments are developed within the United Nations.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This working paper uses roll-call and recorded votes from the 47th session of the United Nations General Assembly¹ (UNGA) to assess New Zealand's relative foreign policy alignment in terms of the UNGA majority and other selected countries.

The level of convergence with New Zealand's voting pattern is measured for each member of the UNGA, providing a list which ranks nations in order of their relative agreement and disagreement with New Zealand's world view as reflected in resolutions adopted by the UNGA. Once a general alignment has been established, New Zealand's voting pattern since the 36th session in 1981/82 is compared and contrasted with two of its traditional allies, Australia and the United States. This will cover the twelve sessions of the UNGA prior to New Zealand taking its seat on the UN Security Council,² thus providing a contrast from which the 47th session should be viewed, and indicating directions that have developed throughout the 1980s.

Australia and the United States are of special interest to New Zealand because of their economic and cultural links, and the relevance of New Zealand's relationship with each in light of the Anzus rift. This survey establishes that while Australia voted most closely with New Zealand in the 47th session, the United States diverged from New Zealand to a greater extent than any other country, thus providing interesting points of comparison and contrast.

The issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons has been of special relevance to the New Zealand - United States relationship throughout this period, and a close look at voting in different policy areas shows to what extent this issue has affected the bilateral voting alignment of New Zealand and the United States.

A few preliminary comments should be made to put New Zealand's role during the 47th session into its proper perspective. The session took place in the third year of the first term of Jim Bolger's National government. Eight years had passed since New Zealand implemented its nuclear ship visits policy which had so disturbed the defence relationship New Zealand shared with the United States and Australia. It had been 26 years since New Zealand last held a seat on the Security Council, representing the "Western European and Others Group" of countries. New Zealand's most recent election to the Security Council took place on 28 October 1992, during the UNGA's 47th session.

The information presented here is only an empirical survey of New Zealand's voting and it is up to the reader to draw any conclusions regarding the possible influence lobbying for a Security Council seat may have had on the way New Zealand voted.³ The suggestion that to some extent, New Zealand's vote is influenced by the United States falls into the same category.⁴ Still, New Zealand's voting in the UNGA should be looked at in light of its aspirations to and consequent achievement of the greater responsibility involved in a non-permanent seat on the Security Council.⁵

¹ The 47th regular session of the UNGA began on 15 September 1992 and adjourned on 23 December 1992.

² New Zealand's two year term dates from 1 January 1993 to 31 December 1994.

³ The Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon in a speech to the Auckland Branch of the National Party Foreign Affairs Committee on 9 September 1993 said that, "A place on the [Security] Council... would signal that New Zealand was back in the mainstream of world affairs New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Record, Vol.2, No.4, Sept.1993, pp.13-16.

⁴ In an address to the Washington Chamber of Commerce on 23 April 1985 (after the ANZUS rift) New Zealand's then Permanent Representative to the UN, Bryce Hartland, said that New Zealand still voted with the US on eight out of ten key resolutions. New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review, Vol.35, No.2, Apr-Jun.1985, pp.25-30. The suggestion that New Zealand hopes to use the Security Council seat to reingratiate itself with the United States is made in the article "New Zealand and the United States in the UN: Does the US control our vote?", Peacelink, No.102, April 1992, p.12.

⁵ Security Council votes are perceived as being weightier than UNGA votes, because the former are binding on all members of the UN, the 1991 Gulf War resolutions, for example.

There are almost as many methods of analysing UNGA voting behaviour as there are scholars in the field. These include assigning each nation a value relative to the majority “Yes” or “No” and using factorial scores to place a particular country on a scale,⁶ comparing nations’ “most desirable” resolutions,⁷ and distinguishing countries that voted “No” in a minority of less than ten from those that voted “No” in a larger minority.⁸

The methodology used here involves comparison of agreement and disagreement between various international actors including the UNGA majority. The number of times two member states voted oppositely is subtracted from the number of times they voted similarly. Abstentions by one nation but not the other are ignored. This figure is then divided by the total number of resolutions adopted by recorded vote for that session including abstentions. This gives a ratio of agreement of between -1.000 (total disagreement) and +1.000 (total agreement).

The UNGA offers a legitimate and accurate forum for examining the policy positions of nations in comparative perspective because of the number and variety of issues on which votes are recorded and the high degree of participation by nations in those votes. Any examination of politics in the UN requires selection among the various organs, activities and decisions. Because the scope of this working paper is limited, the General Assembly is the chief forum used, and in particular the plenary, because,

All member states are represented in the Assembly, and these states are repeatedly required to take formal positions on almost every issue of importance in the UN.⁹

The roll-call and recorded votes taken in plenary present useful summaries of voting alignments within the UNGA and make up the baseline data from which the information here is gathered. Votes taken in the UNGA put into a global context the views of a variety of nations, which can be measured and compared consistently throughout the spectrum of issues raised. Both superpowers and microstates can be analysed on the same issues since a UNGA vote offers a simple and direct “Yes”, “No”, or “Abstain” from which data can be gathered and nations’ positions can be measured. In contrast to the Security Council where five permanent members have disproportionate influence on binding decisions through their power of veto, a UNGA vote has equal weight for all nations, leaving aside the complexities of backroom lobbying and vote trading.

It should be emphasised that this paper is a quantitative rather than a qualitative analysis. The complexity of the influences on voting behaviour are often very difficult to identify and would require a lengthy and detailed study of the multitude of bilateral, multilateral and global relationships. It must be remembered that a large number of variables contributed to the final quantifiable data used here. However, the UNGA voting outcomes remain a useful and accurate indicator of each nation’s position on the variety of issues covered by UNGA resolutions.

The public character of the choices recorded in roll-calls... considerably enhances their value as data. In particular it narrows somewhat the problem of attaching meaning or intent to the vote. The registered choice is one [the state]... is willing to have... available for whatever use both opponents and supporters wish to make of it.¹⁰

⁶ Alker, Hayward R. and Bruce M. Russett, World Politics in the General Assembly. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven and London, 1965.

⁷ Tikhomirov, Vladislav B. Quantitative Analysis of Voting Behaviour in the General Assembly. Policy and Efficacy Studies No.2, UNITAR Research Dept. New York, 1981.

⁸ Marin-Bosch Miguel, “How Nations Vote in the General Assembly of the United Nations”, International Organization, Vol.41, No.4, Autumn 1987, pp.705-724.

⁹ Alker and Russett, op.cit. Notable exceptions include voting on war with Iraq in 1990, an issue reserved for the Security Council.

¹⁰ Truman, David, The Congressional Party. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1959, p.13.

The proportion of resolutions put to a vote made up 26.9% of all resolutions adopted during the 47th session, the remainder being adopted without vote. It is these 26.9% of all resolutions (on all of which, the majority voted “Yes”) which provide the primary material presented here.

In offering hypotheses, it is fair to speculate that New Zealand’s general alignment in the UNGA would be most akin to the nations with which it shares the closest links, like Australia and Canada. A larger group of countries including non-nuclear western nations should also vote fairly similarly to New Zealand. This group, because it makes up a minority in the Third World dominated UNGA, are likely to vote against the majority more often than its non-aligned counterparts because of the types of resolutions that tend to come up. A large proportion of resolutions deal with disarmament and nuclear weapons, and non-nuclear countries complicit in western international defence arrangements may vote more regularly with their larger nuclear allies like the United States, the United Kingdom and France.

In terms of New Zealand’s voting behaviour in relation to Australia and the United States, it is fair to hypothesise that changes have taken place in both cases throughout the 1980s. We could expect to find a sharp decline in the degree of convergence between New Zealand and the United States after 1984, and perhaps a smaller divergence between New Zealand and Australia.

If disarmament is the key issue on which the differences occur, then fluctuations in voting convergence between New Zealand and its allies should accurately reflect the foreign policy shifts that have taken place over the last decade or so. However, other factors may muddy the equation, such as a changed stance by the United States or New Zealand on other issues such as international peace and security, or the occupied Arab territories.

Any possible convergence between New Zealand and the United States after 1990 may suggest that New Zealand’s or the United States’ foreign policy has undergone a similar convergence, as implied by New Zealand’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Don McKinnon, when he said that New Zealand’s Security Council seat would bring New Zealand, “back into the mainstream of world affairs”.¹¹

This paper should highlight points of diversity and consensus within the UNGA, and will hopefully provide a starting point for further investigation into comparative studies involving member states of the UN. The end of the Cold War signalled the beginning of a changed international order in which the UN has taken a more prominent role as the forum for debate. Having gained increasing acceptance as an international arbiter of disputes, the positions taken by nations in the UN are therefore of vital importance.

¹¹ New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Record, loc.cit.

CHAPTER 2

New Zealand's Context in the United Nations General Assembly

Having outlined why UNGA voting is a legitimate indicator of a country's foreign policy stance, the pattern of voting in the 47th session will now be looked at in order to establish which countries New Zealand falls most closely into line with.

It is reasonable to hypothesize that New Zealand would vote most closely with Australia and other western countries that have a similar economic, cultural and ideological background. However, nuclear allies like the United Kingdom and the United States may not fall into this category because of their position on disarmament resolutions. Similarly, the non-aligned majority may vote differently from New Zealand because of their heightened concern for Third World economic development.

Using the methodology discussed in the introduction, a useful measurement can be made of how closely various countries voted with New Zealand. To demonstrate the technique used in finding the ratio, Table 2:1 shows the relevant figures for the United Kingdom.

Table 2:1

UNGA voting comparison between New Zealand and the United Kingdom (47th session)¹²

New Zealand and the United Kingdom both voted "Yes"	33
New Zealand and the United Kingdom both voted "No"	5
New Zealand and the United Kingdom both voted "Abstain"	13
Total resolutions on which the two agreed	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 51
New Zealand voted "Yes"; the United Kingdom voted "No"	3
New Zealand voted "No"; the United Kingdom voted "Yes"	0
Total resolutions on which the two disagreed	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 3
Agreement (51) - Disagreement (3) =	48
This figure as a proportion of all resolutions adopted by vote (73)	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> + .658

Table 2:2 lists the same ratio for each country in relation to New Zealand in rank order. Those at the top of the list voted the same way as New Zealand most often, while those at the bottom differed to the greatest extent. A ratio of + 1.000 would mean a country voted with New Zealand on every occasion; a ratio of -1.000 would mean a country voted against New Zealand on every occasion.

¹² Votes not accounted for include all those where one country abstained while the other did not.

Table 2:2International Convergence with New Zealand's Pattern of Voting (47th session)¹³

1=	Australia	+932	50	Bolivia	+657
1=	Ireland	+932	51	Malawi	+653
3=	Norway	+918	52	Costa Rica	+648
3=	Sweden	+918	53=	Dominica	+641
5=	Denmark	+904	53=	St. Kitts & Nevis	+641
5=	Iceland	+904	55	Azerbaijan	+636
5=	Portugal	+904	56	Paraguay	+630
8	Liechtenstein	+890	57	Bosnia & Herzegovina	+628
9	Lithuania	+886	58	Dominican Republic	+622
10=	Austria	+877	59	Benin	+616
10=	Canada	+877	60	St. Lucia	+614
10=	Japan	+877	61	Central African Republic	+608
13	Latvia	+871	62	Zaire	+607
14=	Finland	+863	63=	Haiti	+606
14=	Spain	+863	63=	St. Vincent & Grenadines	+606
16=	Argentina	+861	65	Fiji	+604
16=	Hungary	+861	66	Chile	+603
16=	Poland	+861	67	Jamaica	+597
16=	Romania	+861	68	Mozambique	+593
20=	Czechoslovakia	+849	69	Mongolia	+591
20=	Greece	+849	70	Antigua & Barbuda	+588
22	Albania	+842	71	Mauritius	+586
23	Estonia	+841	72	Madagascar	+578
24=	Belgium	+836	73=	Honduras	+577
24=	Italy	+836	73=	Mali	+577
24=	Luxembourg	+836	75=	Barbados	+575
24=	Netherlands	+836	75=	Congo	+575
28	Bulgaria	+833	77	Rwanda	+569
29	Slovenia	+825	78	El Salvador	+567
30	Germany	+822	79=	Nepal	+563
31	San Marino	+818	79=	Swaziland	+563
32	Rep.of Moldova	+814	79=	Venezuela	+563
33	Malta	+806	82=	Brazil	+562
34	Solomon Islands	+783	82=	Ecuador	+562
35	Samoa	+775	82=	Mexico	+562
36	Rep.of Korea	+767	82=	Peru	+562
37	France	+764	82=	Singapore	+562
38	Kazakhstan	+350	82=	Suriname	+562
39	Marshall Islands	+746	88	Cape Verde	+558
40	Ukraine	+740	89=	Guatemala	+556
41	Armenia	+727	89=	Kuwait	+556
42	Belarus	+722	89=	Nicaragua	+556
43	Turkey	+712	92	Morocco	+551
44	Russian Federation	+685	93=	Saudi Arabia	+549
45=	Panama	+671	93=	Vanuatu	+549
45=	Uruguay	+671	95=	Colombia	+548
47=	Croatia	+667	95=	Ghana	+548
47=	Tajikistan	+667	97	Gambia	+545
49	United Kingdom	+658	98=	Bahrain	+544

¹³ Some countries were left out because of the small number of votes in which they participated. Kyrgyzstan, for example voted with New Zealand on 14 of 15 occasions, giving it a disproportionate ratio of +.933. Others not included for the same reason were: Equatorial Guinea, Georgia, Somalia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Table 2:2 continued

98=	Djibouti	+544	134=	Mauritania	+500
98=	Qatar	+544	134=	Nigeria	+500
98=	Sao Tome & Principe	+544	134=	Yemen	+500
102	Gabon	+543	134=	Zambia	+500
103=	Bukina Faso	+542	139=	India	+493
103=	Cameroon	+542	139=	Pakistan	+493
103=	Guyana	+542	141=	Brunei Darussalam	+486
103=	Togo	+542	141=	Jordan	+486
107=	Bhutan	+538	141=	Namibia	+486
107=	Chad	+538	144	Bahamas	+482
109=	Belize	+536	145	Lesotho	+481
109=	Oman	+536	146	Burundi	+480
109=	United Arab Emirates	+536	147=	Bangladesh	+479
112=	Guinea	+535	147=	Indonesia	+479
112=	Guinea-Bissau	+535	147=	Malaysia	+479
114=	Comoros	+534	147=	Philippines	+479
114=	Fed. States of Micronesia	+534	151=	Iran	+472
116=	Egypt	+529	151=	Zimbabwe	+472
116=	Ethiopia	+529	153	Seychelles	+467
116=	Liberia	+529	154=	Sri Lanka	+466
116=	Sierra Leone	+529	154=	United Rep. of Tanzania	+466
116=	Tunisia	+529	156	Grenada	+458
121	Kenya	+527	157=	China	+457
122	Papua New Guinea	+522	157=	Myanmar	+457
123=	Algeria	+521	159	Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	+455
123=	Maldives	+521	160	Viet Nam	+452
123=	Senegal	+521	161=	Lao People's Dem. Republic	+451
123=	Thailand	+521	161=	Libya	+451
123=	Trinidad & Tobago	+521	161=	Syria	+451
128=	Angola	+514	164	Sudan	+429
128=	Botswana	+514	165	Cuba	+425
128=	Niger	+514	166	Uganda	+407
131=	Afghanistan	+507	167	Iraq	+368
131=	Cote d'Ivoire	+507	168	Israel	+342
131=	Lebanon	+507	169	United States	0.000
134=	Cyprus	+500			

Countries shown in bold type are of special interest to New Zealand as points of comparison and contrast. They are highlighted in Figure 2:2.

There are a number of things to note about this table. Most obviously, Australia, as expected, was the country (along with Ireland) which voted most closely with New Zealand.¹⁴ A glance down the table shows that twenty-six of the top thirty countries are European, including ex-communist countries and ex-Soviet republics.

¹⁴ A closer examination shows that of the 73 occasions when both countries voted, New Zealand and Australia agreed 68 times, while one or the other abstained on each of the other five occasions.

At the bottom of the table is the United States with a ratio of 0.000, meaning that it agreed with New Zealand as often as it disagreed.¹⁵ Every other country voted more in line with New Zealand than the United States, which is almost certainly more representative of the obstructionist nature of American voting in the UNGA than the independence of New Zealand's voting in relation to the United States.¹⁶

To show these results in a different perspective, Figure 2:1 shows that a distinct cluster of countries tended to vote more closely to New Zealand than the UNGA majority.

Figure 2:1

Distribution of Member States' Convergence with New Zealand's UNGA Voting (47th session)

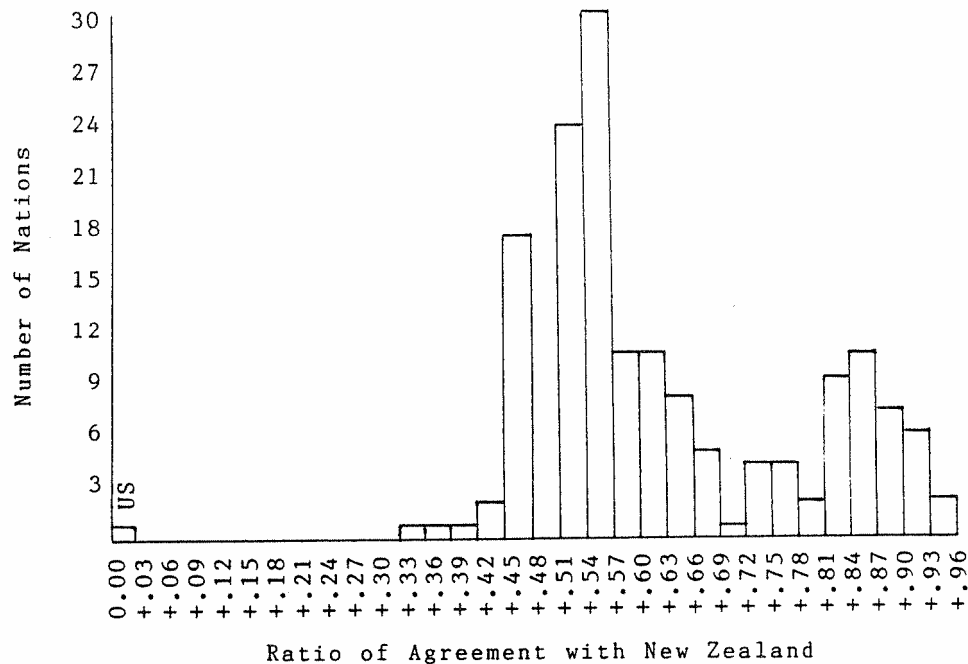


Figure 2:1 shows that the majority of member states have a ratio of between +.450 and +.690 relative to New Zealand. However, there is a group of countries that voted markedly closer to New Zealand than the UNGA majority. These can roughly be accorded ratios of +.810 and upwards and consist of the top thirty mainly European countries shown in Table 2:2. Another point to note from Figure 2:1 is the degree to which the United States voted against New Zealand in contrast to the UNGA majority.

From this overview, it would be fair to conclude that based on voting in the UNGA's 47th session, there exists a general alignment between New Zealand, Australia, the bulk of European nations with notable exceptions, and a small number of other nations (Canada, Japan and Argentina). The alignment bears similarities to the recognised "Western Europe and Others Group" of countries in the General Assembly. The evidence indicates that there may be a degree of ideological convergence between these countries, albeit a generalized one. It is also interesting to note that only Japan (+.877) of New Zealand's Asian trading partners falls within the core group, especially in light of the importance of the Asia-Pacific region for New Zealand's trade.

¹⁵ New Zealand's relationship with the United States will be looked at more closely in chapters four and five.

¹⁶ To demonstrate this point, New Zealand and the United States' voting pattern in relation to the General Assembly majority will be examined in chapter three.

The similarities that exist include a large proportion of market economies, and membership of regional defence and trade alliances: Nato, the EC, Efta and the now defunct Warsaw Pact and Comecon. There are obvious exceptions, like Japan for example, and countries that are members of Nato and the EC but do not fall into this select group. The most notable of these are the United Kingdom and France who, it is fair to assume, deviate from their European counterparts because of their nuclear status and consequent voting on disarmament resolutions.

A closer look at the bilateral convergence between New Zealand and its traditional allies, the nuclear powers, its Pacific island neighbours and the non-aligned movement should offer an interesting comparison and contrast. Figure 2:2 shows the respective ratios of convergence with New Zealand's voting for a selection of countries representative of those groups.

Figure 2:2

Convergence with New Zealand's UNGA Voting (47th session) - Selected Countries

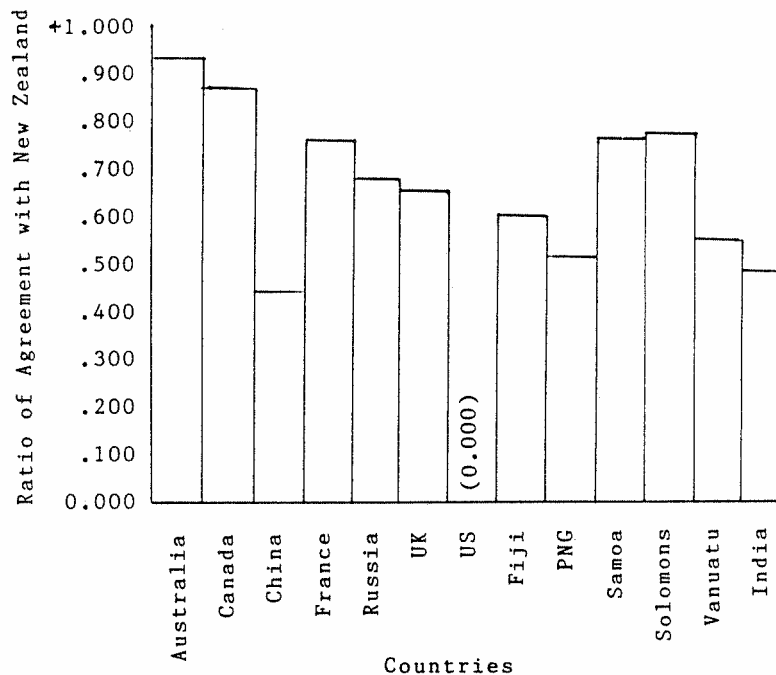


Figure 2:2 contrasts the level of convergence of a traditional ally like the United States (with a ratio of 0.000) with countries New Zealand has relatively little in common with, like China (+.457). It is worth noting that the United Kingdom (+.658), with whom New Zealand has a multitude of historical and cultural links, fell outside that group which voted most often with New Zealand. It is among those at the upper end of the majority of the UNGA in terms of its convergence with New Zealand, along with the Solomon Islands (+.783), Samoa (+.775) and Fiji (+.604).

The Russian Federation (+.685) and France (+.764) also fell into this category, while still voting more closely to New Zealand than the non-aligned movement, as represented by India (+.493). Australia (+.932) and Canada (+.877) are the only countries in this select group which voted on a regular basis with New Zealand. To put these figures into a more general context, each country's stance will be measured against the UNGA majority in the next chapter.

We can conclude from this brief survey of the level at which countries in the UNGA converge with New Zealand's pattern of voting that a core group of about thirty mostly European nations vote more regularly with New Zealand than the majority. The reasons for this convergence are difficult to gauge, but looking at the similarities among the group, one reason could be economic because each, with few exceptions, is a non-nuclear "rich northern nation" or an ex-communist country aspiring to the wealthier ranks.

New Zealand seems firmly aligned with the above bloc, especially when contrasted on a bilateral level with the United States, other nuclear powers and selected non-aligned countries which have been shown to converge to a significantly lesser extent. Regarding assertions that New Zealand's vote is "controlled" by the United States to a greater or lesser extent,¹⁷ these findings also suggest that if there is any influence, it cannot be clearly discerned from an overview of UNGA voting.

¹⁷ Peacelink, op.cit.

CHAPTER 3

Voting patterns in the General Assembly: Independence and Allies

To place the findings of the last chapter into a wider context, a comparison of the way member states voted with the UN majority will now be made. This will provide an overall index of voting behaviour in the context of the international environment. It will show where New Zealand stands in terms of the international community, and should help to explain why, for example, the United States' bilateral convergence with New Zealand was so low in comparison to Europe and the non-aligned nations.

By establishing how closely New Zealand and its European counterparts voted with the UN majority, we may also be able to assess circumstantially the extent to which large allies influence the votes of smaller states. In other words, we may be able to prove or disprove the hypothesis that power alliances override small state concerns. While it is clear that New Zealand, as a sovereign state exercises an independent foreign policy, its alignment, when compared to traditional allies and the UNGA majority, will indicate the degree to which this independence is exercised in the UN context.

The suggestion that the United States wields a disproportionate amount of influence in the General Assembly is not a new one.¹⁸ It has been known to withhold aid on the basis of how a nation votes, and it contributes by far the largest proportion of the UN's budget. However, there is little evidence that American influence is so dominant that it effectively controls the United Nations.¹⁹

The preponderance of small Third World countries in the UNGA means that their interests are more likely to be represented in resolutions adopted by the UN. For example, policy areas perceived as being of concern to small states, like economic development, decolonization, and disarmament and nuclear weapons, are all among the type of resolutions adopted.²⁰ The United States is therefore relatively marginalised in terms of its voting power in the UNGA, being a large western power greatly outnumbered by small non-aligned member states with vastly different foreign policies.

The findings of chapter two suggest that western states, small or otherwise, do not conform to the pattern of voting of small Third World states, hence the differing alignment of the thirty core, mainly European countries identified as voting close to New Zealand. However, the following exercise may show to what extent a country's vote, especially that of a small western state like New Zealand, is swayed by the traditional concerns of small states i.e. the UNGA majority, as opposed to its more powerful allies.²¹

Using the same technique used to measure each country's convergence with New Zealand in chapter two, a table can be drawn up listing each country's convergence with the UNGA majority. The ratios were simpler to measure on this occasion because it only involved subtracting the number of times a country voted "No" from the number of times it voted "Yes" and dividing that figure by the number of votes in which that country participated.

For convenience and ease of reference to the countries of most interest to New Zealand, those at the top of the table are the most obstructionist countries i.e. voted "No" most often, while those at the bottom consistently voted with the majority.

¹⁸ Battersby, John, "David and Goliath: New Zealand and the United Nations," New Zealand International Review, Vol.18, No.6, Nov/Dec 1993, pp.20-22.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.21.

²⁰ Tikhomirov, op.cit.

²¹ Discussion of small state behaviour can be found in East, Maurice A. "Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour: A Test of Two Models", World Politics, XXV, July 1973, pp.556-576, and Plischke, Elmer, Microstates in World Affairs: Policy Problems and Choices. American Enterprise Institute, Washington D.C., 1976.

Table 3:1International Convergence with the (UNGA Majority (47th session))

1	United States	-.397	55	Armenia	+818
2	Israel	-.178	56	St. Vincent & Grenadines	+819
3	United Kingdom	+.233	57	Azerbaijan	+821
4	France	+.347	58	Cuba	+822
5	Fed. States of Micronesia	+.362	59	Panama	+824
6	Croatia	+.394	60	Zaire	+828
7	<i>Germany</i>	+.397	61	China	+829
8=	<i>Belgium</i>	+.411	62	Sudan	+831
8=	<i>Italy</i>	+.411	63=	India	+.836
8=	<i>Luxembourg</i>	+.411	63=	Lesotho	+836
8=	<i>Netherlands</i>	+.411	65=	Myanmar	+845
12	San Marino	+.412	65=	St. Lucia	+845
13	<i>Romania</i>	+.417	67	St. Kitts & Nevis	+846
14	<i>Bulgaria</i>	+.431	68	Viet Nam	+851
15=	Canada	+.452	69	Uganda	+856
15=	<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	+.452	70	Lao People's Dem. Republic	+859
15=	Russian Federation	+.452	71=	Bahamas	+860
18=	<i>Hungary</i>	+.458	71=	Malawi	+860
18=	<i>Poland</i>	+.458	73	Dominica	+862
20	<i>Finland</i>	+.466	74=	Burundi	+863
21=	<i>Denmark</i>	+.479	74=	Cameroon	+863
21=	<i>Iceland</i>	+.479	74=	Togo	+863
23	<i>Portugal</i>	+.486	77	Bolivia	+866
24	<i>Norway</i>	+.493	78	Papua New Guinea	+.870
25	<i>Estonia</i>	+.507	79	Costa Rica	+875
26	<i>Slovenia</i>	+.509	80	Jamaica	+877
27	Rep.of Moldova	+.514	81	Philippines	+878
28	<i>Sweden</i>	+.521	82	Antigua & Barbuda	+884
29	<i>Albania</i>	+.526	83=	Fiji	+.887
30	<i>Liechtenstein</i>	+.527	83=	Namibia	+887
31=	Australia	+.534	85=	Libya	+889
31=	<i>Austria</i>	+.534	85=	Swaziland	+889
31=	<i>Japan</i>	+.534	85=	Syria	+889
34	Marshall Islands	+.535	88=	Paraguay	+890
35	<i>Ireland</i>	+.541	88=	Zimbabwe	+890
36	<i>Latvia</i>	+.543	90=	Sri Lanka	+892
37	<i>Lithuania</i>	+.557	90=	United Rep. of Tanzania	+892
38=	New Zealand	+.575	92	Kenya	+893
38=	<i>Spain</i>	+.575	93	Belize	+900
40	<i>Greece</i>	+.589	94	Ethiopia	+901
41	<i>Argentina</i>	+.630	95=	Brazil	+904
42	Turkey	+.635	95=	Central African Republic	+904
43	Samoa	+.648	95=	Guyana	+904
44	Malta	+.671	95=	Indonesia	+904
45	Solomon Islands	+.696	95=	Peru	+904
46	Rep. of Korea	+.699	100=	Bangladesh	+905
47	Kazakhstan	+.719	100=	Benin	+905
48	Belarus	+.736	100=	Mexico	+905
49	Cote d'Ivoire	+.746	103=	Liberia	+913
50	Dominican Republic	+.778	103=	Zambia	+913
51	Ukraine	+.781	105	Angola	+915
52	Uruguay	+.800	106=	Brunei Darussalam	+918
53	Congo	+.805	106=	Colombia	+918
54	Iraq	+.810	106=	Grenada	+918

Table 3:1 continued

106=	Jordan	+918	140=	Guinea	+958
110=	Barbados	+919	140=	Mauritius	+958
110=	Malaysia	+919	140=	Senegal	+958
110=	Pakistan	+919	140=	Trinidad & Tobago	+958
110=	Thailand	+919	144	Nicaragua	+959
114	Bhutan	+924	145	Comoros	+966
115	Honduras	+930	146	Seychelles	+968
116=	Guatemala	+931	147=	Chad	+970
116=	Venezuela	+931	147=	Haiti	+970
118=	Cyprus	+932	149=	El Salvador	+971
118=	Ecuador	+932	149=	Lebanon	+971
118=	Ghana	+932	149=	Morocco	+971
118=	Mauritania	+932	149=	Sierra Leone	+971
118=	Singapore	+932	153=	Egypt	+972
118=	Suriname	+932	153=	Tunisia	+972
124	Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	+939	155	Burkina Faso	+973
125=	Afghanistan	+944	156	Tajikistan	+974
125=	Gabon	+944	157	Cape Verde	+981
125=	Guinea-Bissau	+944	158	Mozambique	+982
125=	Nigeria	+944	159=	Kuwait	+986
129=	Botswana	+945	159=	Nepal	+986
129=	Chile	+945	159=	Oman	+986
129=	Iran	+945	159=	Qatar	+986
129=	Niger	+945	159=	Sao Tome & Principe	+986
129=	Rwanda	+945	159=	Saudi Arabia	+986
134=	Algeria	+946	159=	Vanuatu	+986
134=	Maldives	+946	166=	Bahrain	1.000
136	Madagascar	+953	166=	Djibouti	1.000
137=	Bosnia & Herzegovina	+955	166=	Gambia	1.000
137=	Mongolia	+955	166=	Mali	1.000
139	Yemen	+957	166=	United Arab Emirates	1.000

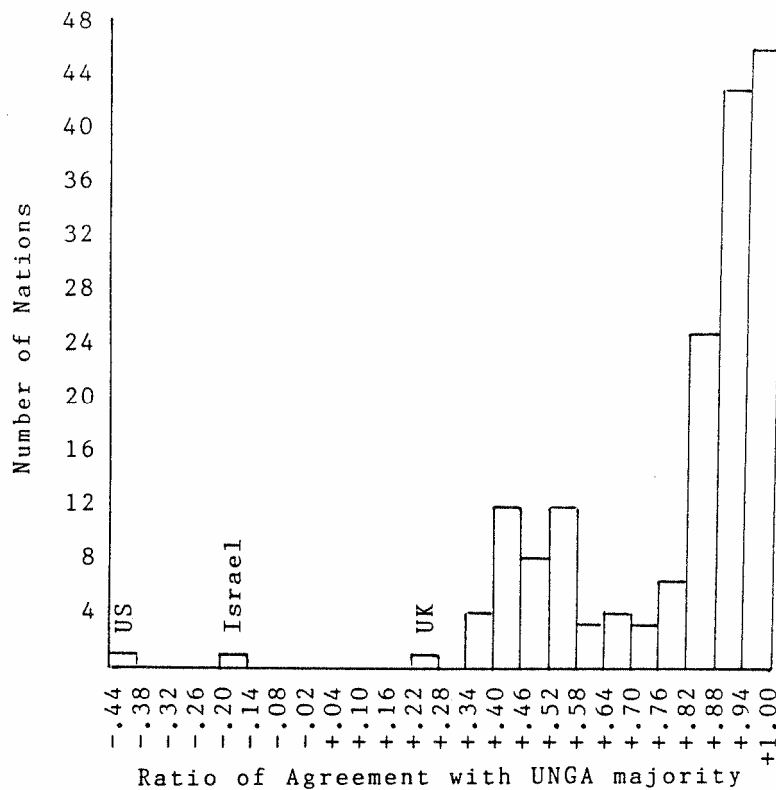
Countries shown in bold type are of special interest to New Zealand as points of comparison and contrast. Those in italics represent the thirty mainly European countries identified as voting closest to New Zealand in Table 2:2.

Consistent with each country's bilateral convergence with New Zealand, Table 3:1 shows that the United States (-.397) is the country which voted against the UNGA majority most often, confirming that it is the most obstructionist member. Combined with the data in Table 2:2, it becomes apparent that the United States voted "No" when New Zealand voted "Yes" far more often than New Zealand voted "No" and the United States "Yes". Looking down the table, it is clear that the thirty core, mainly European countries which voted most often with New Zealand, make up a fair proportion of those countries at the more obstructionist end of the table. New Zealand (+.575) is at the more convergent end of this group, but still quite high up on the table.

If these findings are looked at in terms of distribution, we see that the core group of countries are clustered together with ratios indicating that they voted with the UNGA majority markedly less often than their non-aligned counterparts.

Figure 3:1

Distribution of Member States' Convergence with the UNGA majority (47th session)



Where the majority of countries have a ratio of +.820 and upwards, the group New Zealand voted with most often mostly have ratios of between +.400 and +.580 relative to the UNGA majority, confirming that a distinct, mainly European bloc exists and votes together on a significant number of issues.

It is clear that the United States voted so differently from New Zealand, as shown in chapter two, because of its extreme position in terms of UNGA voting. Closer study of the similarities and differences between small western states and their large allies would have to be made before any solid evidence could be found to suggest that traditional small state concerns override power alliances in influencing their vote.

However, a tentative conclusion, based on these results, might be that ideological convergence is the main factor in the vote of small western states, because any possible influence from powerful allies cannot be measured simply from looking at a nation's alignment. It appears from the findings in this and the previous chapter that the pattern of voting among countries in the mainly European bloc, including New Zealand, indicates that their concerns and interests lie somewhere between the non-aligned UNGA majority and their powerful allies.

To focus more specifically on the nations identified as offering useful comparisons and contrasts to New Zealand, a similar graph to Figure 2:2 should offer a clearer insight into relative alignments, this time with the UNGA majority.

Figure 3:2

Levels of Convergence with the UNGA majority (47th session)

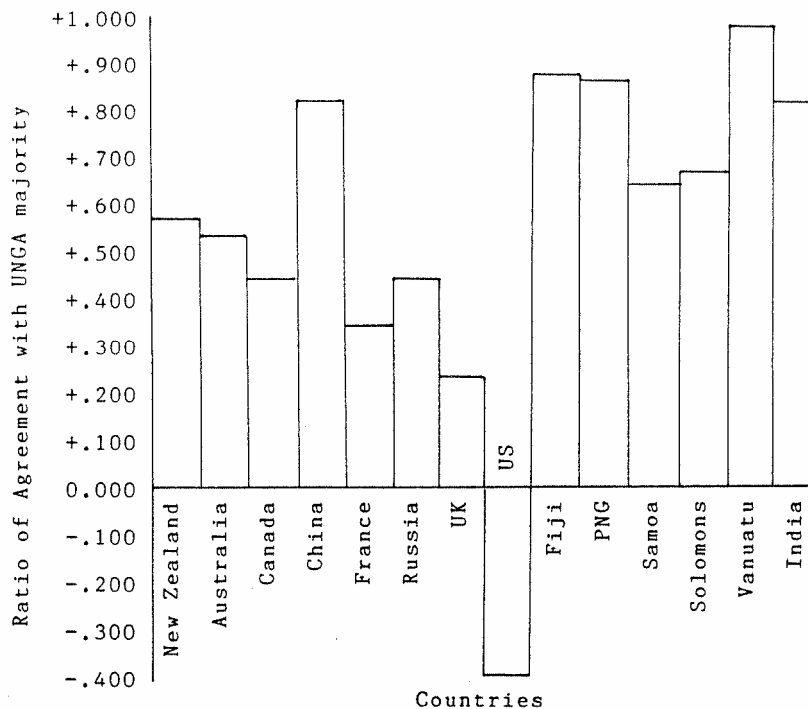


Figure 3:2 shows that New Zealand's Pacific island neighbours voted more or less consistently with the non-aligned majority (between +.648 and +.986). Of the other nations surveyed in Figure 3:2, New Zealand (+.575) voted more often with the UNGA majority than any of its western counterparts. While the nuclear powers, except China (+.829) voted markedly less often with majority, it is worth noting that with the exception of the United States (-.397), all of them voted "Yes" in the 47th session more often than they voted "No".

By comparing how each member state voted in relation to the UNGA majority, the findings of chapter two can be confirmed: that the thirty core, mainly European countries which voted more often with New Zealand have a distinct alignment which differs from the majority to a significant extent. Since that alignment falls between that of the small state non-aligned majority and the more powerful western countries, most notably the United States, we can conclude that rather than small state concerns or power alliances playing a role in influencing the vote of the mainly European bloc, the voting alignment of a country like New Zealand is determined more by ideological convergence.

New Zealand voted slightly more in line with the UNGA majority than others in the European bloc, while still maintaining its alignment within it. This suggests that New Zealand's policy stance on resolutions put before the plenary is more diverse than its European counterparts, and it may mean that small state issues are of greater concern to New Zealand than other countries in the bloc.

An examination of the relationship between New Zealand, Australia and the United States over time will indicate fluctuations in alignment which have taken place over the last decade or so. By looking more closely at the types of resolutions voted upon, the nature of the differences between New Zealand and the United States will show where each nation's priorities lie.

CHAPTER 4

New Zealand, Australia and the United States: Convergence and Divergence

While the 47th session of the UNGA offers a snapshot of a nation's evolving alignment, it does not offer an overview in terms of the changes that may have taken place in a nation's stance.

The last ten years have seen controversial swings in New Zealand's foreign policy in the area of nuclear weapons and disarmament. An examination of New Zealand's pattern of voting over time may reflect these changes and therefore validate UNGA voting as not only a legitimate indicator, but an accurate indicator of foreign policy behaviour.

One method of making a longitudinal analysis is to contrast and compare New Zealand's voting with its closest ally, Australia, and the country with which it most diverges, the United States. Coincidentally, these are the two countries that made up the other two prongs of the now defunct Anzus triad and are therefore the countries most affected by New Zealand's policy on nuclear ship visits.

It would be fair to hypothesize that the voting between New Zealand and Australia, and New Zealand and the United States has undergone some change over the last decade. By looking at Australia's evolving relationship with New Zealand, changes can be assessed in the context of an otherwise harmonious pairing while contrasting New Zealand's wider differences with the United States.

Since the last century New Zealand and Australia have maintained very close ties because of their common historical links with the United Kingdom. Because the two are close geographically, they have developed strong trading ties as the importance of the United Kingdom in the region has diminished. As the world moved towards more regionally centered economic blocs in the last thirty- five years, New Zealand and Australia developed closer links through security (Anzus) and trading arrangements (most notably the Closer Economic Relations agreement of 1983). The only real area of divergence between the two nations was in their respective positions on nuclear ship visits after 1984. Defence cooperation lessened slightly but links between the two remained strong in almost every other respect.

The relationship between New Zealand and the United States has developed considerably since the 1940s when the two countries' security and trade policies converged as the Pacific became more important to each. Various trading agreements and the Anzus alliance were the main features of a steady growing relationship. New Zealand's nuclear ship visits policy had military ramifications with the withdrawal of intelligence sharing and cooperation in military exercises, while the only other tangible evidence that the relationship had changed was the limited access to State Department officials and the ending of White House and Pentagon access,²² a situation that has only recently changed.

When examining the changes in UNGA voting patterns since the early 1980s, it would be reasonable to hypothesize that there has been a discernible divergence in New Zealand - United States relations during the years of the Anzus rift, and that this may have improved since 1990 with the election of the National government. It would also be fair to hypothesize that Australia and New Zealand's relationship has been less volatile over the same period, though a decline in convergence may still be noticeable.

Table 4:1 shows the level of convergence in UNGA voting between New Zealand and Australia, and New Zealand and the United States for each year since 1981/82 (the 36th session).

²² McKinnon, Malcolm, *Independence and Foreign Policy: New Zealand in the World since 1935*. Auckland Univ. Press, 1993, p.283.

Table 4:1

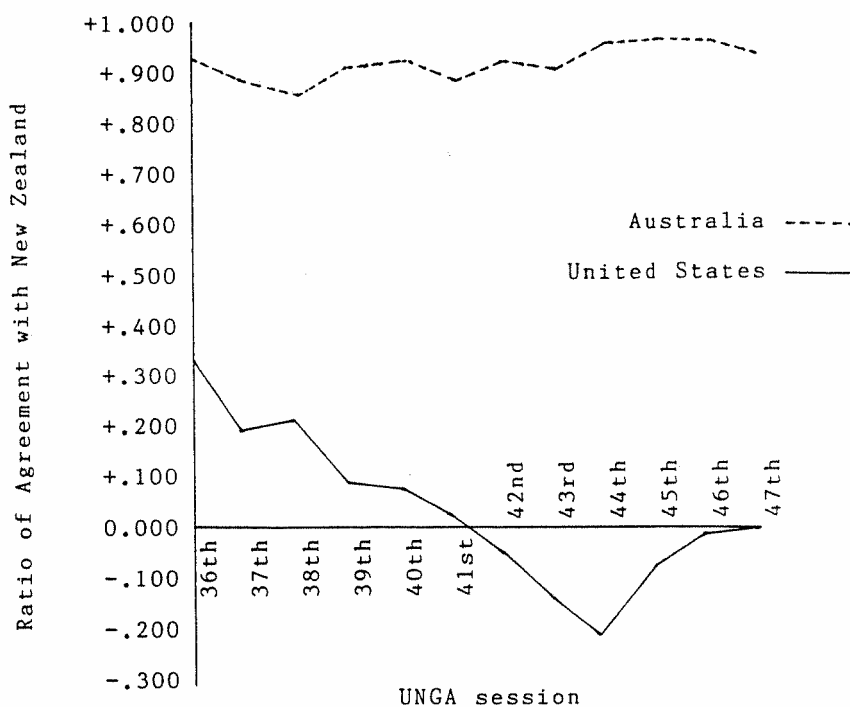
New Zealand UNGA Convergence with Australia and the United States 1981/82 – 1992/93

Year	UNGA session	Australia	United States
1981/82	36th	+917	+321
1982/83	37th	+884	+193
1983/84	38th	+855	+214
1984/85	39th	+905	+088
1985/86	40th	+919	+074
1986/87	41st	+884	+021
1987/88	42nd	+921	-.051
1988/89	43rd	+903	-.143
1989/90	44th	+956	-.211
1990/91	45th	+963	-.086
1991/92	46th	+959	-.014
1992/93	47th	+932	0.000

The yearly fluctuations can be seen more clearly in Figure 4:1.

Figure 4:1

New Zealand UNGA Convergence with Australia and the United States 1981/82 - 1992/93



The clearest trend to notice is the fall in the level of convergence between New Zealand and the United States which occurred fairly consistently throughout the 1980s. Just as noticeable is the sudden rise in the degree to which New Zealand and the United States voted together after the 44th session (1989/90). This neatly coincides with the final year of the last Labour government and the election of the current National government, though some caution is needed if a connection is to be inferred. It is worth noting for example, that the level of convergence has not yet returned to levels reached in the early 1980s.

In comparison, the level of convergence between New Zealand and Australia has been fairly consistent throughout the entire period with no clear trend being discernible. This may indicate that New Zealand's policy on nuclear ship visits did not affect the trans-Tasman relationship in terms of voting in the UNGA. A closer analysis of voting in different policy areas would have to be made before any conclusions could be drawn regarding the direct affect of New Zealand's nuclear policy on either relationship. Such a breakdown is made in chapter five.

However, we may conclude at this point that the pattern of voting between New Zealand and the United States underwent a significant shift throughout the 1980s without it necessarily being due to the changed foreign policy situation between the two countries. It should be pointed out that the trends shown in Figure 4:1 do not take into account shifts in voting in relation to the UNGA majority by either Australia or the United States. To attribute the decline in New Zealand - United States convergence solely to New Zealand's stance on nuclear ship visits would wrongly assume that the United States voted consistently in terms of the UNGA majority throughout the period.

To establish the extent to which discernible shifts are attributable to changes in the stance of one country or another, a comparison should be made between each of New Zealand, Australia and the United States, and the UNGA majority. This should provide an index by which to gauge the relative consistency of each country's voting outside the bilateral relationships.

Table 4:2 shows the degree of convergence between New Zealand, Australia and the United States, and the UNGA majority.

Table 4:2

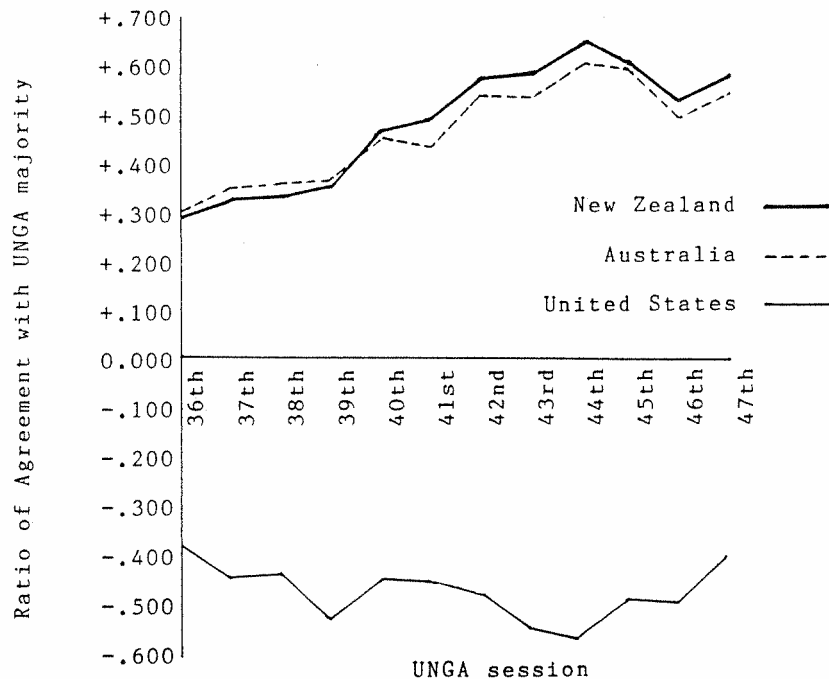
New Zealand, Australia, and the United States' Convergence with the UNGA majority
1981/82- 1992/93

Year	UNGA session	New Zealand	Australia	United States
1981/82	36th	+ .295	+ .303	- .374
1982/83	37th	+ .323	+ .348	- .445
1983/84	38th	+ .331	+ .356	- .432
1984/85	39th	+ .354	+ .367	- .531
1985/86	40th	+ .470	+ .456	- .441
1986/87	41st	+ .493	+ .435	- .449
1987/88	42nd	+ .576	+ .540	- .47 1
1988/89	43rd	+ .582	+ .530	- .541
1989/90	44th	+ .649	+ .605	- .561
1990/9 1	45th	+ .605	+ .593	- .48 1
199 1/92	46th	+ .534	+ .493	- .486
1992/93	47th	+ .575	+ .534	- .397

Figure 4:2 shows the relative trends in graph form.

Figure 4:2

New Zealand, Australia and the United States' Convergence with the UNGA majority
1981/82 - 1992/93



The most obvious point to note from Figure 4:2 is the consistency of voting between New Zealand and Australia. The two shadow each other throughout the entire period confirming the degree of similarity in foreign policy outlook. Both New Zealand and Australia increased their level of convergence with the UNGA majority throughout the 1980s until the 45th session (1990/91), when both fell away slightly, which explains why Australia's graph line in Figure 4:1 is so consistent.

Another point to note from Figure 4:2 is that the United States' voting in relation to the UNGA majority diverged steadily until the 45th session (with the exception of the 39th session (1984/85) where there is a significant dip in the graph). It is fair to speculate that the United States' decline and subsequent rise in convergence may have been due to a hardening foreign policy under the Reagan/Bush Administrations and a less obstructionist line under Clinton, though it is difficult to be certain on the basis of this information.

What is clear is that New Zealand's and the United States' pattern of voting in relation to the UNGA majority diverged significantly throughout the 1980s, most notably since the 39th session (the first session occurring in the term of the fourth Labour government), and converged slightly since the 45th session, coinciding with the election of the current National government. We may conclude that these findings provide evidence that UNGA voting accurately reflects the perceived foreign policy situation between New Zealand and the United States as it developed throughout the 1980s.

However, the findings also raise doubts over a change in government in New Zealand in 1990 being the sole reason for the shift in voting that took place between the United States and New Zealand after 1989/90. Australia did not have a change of government in 1990 yet they follow a similar downward trend to New Zealand after that date. This suggests that each nation's voting reflects the relative "desirability" of UNGA resolutions year by year.²³ For example, the 44th session may have included a large number of resolutions considered "desirable" to the bloc of mainly European countries it was established New Zealand voted with most often in chapters two and three. Similarly, the 45th session may have included fewer "desirable" resolutions. Patterns may be found in the type of resolutions adopted when a breakdown of resolutions by policy area is made in chapter five.

²³ See Tilchomirov, op.cit. on the relative desirability of resolutions.

CHAPTER 5

New Zealand and United States Divergence: Issue Analysis

While a study of the level of convergence between New Zealand, Australia and the United States over the last twelve years provides a broad overview of the general trends in UNGA voting, it does not cover the exact points of difference and pivotal areas of divergence that occurred between the countries during that time. In particular, the relative voting behaviour of the United States and New Zealand has raised some interesting points that need further investigation. To discover the extent the issue of nuclear ship visits has played in the developing New Zealand - United States relationship in terms of UNGA voting, it is necessary to examine the specific types of resolutions adopted and how these, and the relative position of New Zealand and the United States, have changed over the period in question.

To find the policy areas which have been the most notable points of divergence between New Zealand and the United States, a breakdown in the issues covered by resolutions during the last twelve years has to be made. A comparison in the level of convergence in each policy area may then indicate where the chief differences lie.

V.B. Tikhomirov, in a 1981 study of voting in the UNGA, offered a convenient division of issues into a limited number of policy areas.²⁴ They cover all resolutions adopted by the UNGA, and are broad enough to include a growing diversity of issues.²⁵

Table 5:1 shows the distribution of resolutions adopted by vote in each issue area since 1981/82.

Table 5:1

Total Resolutions on which New Zealand voted by Issue 1981/82 - 1992/93

UNGA session	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	Total
Administrative & Budgetary Issues	22	23	16	16	18	11	12	11	1	3	1	2	164
Apartheid, South Africa & Namibia	21	1	17	13	15	15	13	17	11	8	6	5	172
Decolonization	8	10	9	10	11	10	11	10	9	9	8	7	122
Disarmament & Nuclear Weapons	29	41	45	44	46	46	37	39	37	22	17	15	441
Economic Development	3	12	8	12	9	12	15	8	12	3	4	5	107
Humanitarian & Social Issues	14	14	9	11	14	17	17	10	8	6	6	8	145
International Peace & Security	10	9	11	13	9	12	12	13	10	6	5	8	124
Occupied Arab Territories	25	31	31	28	27	24	22	26	26	24	26	23	330
Total	13	155	146	14	49	147	13	13	11	81	73	73	1605

Figure 5:1 shows the fluctuations over time of the three issue areas which make up the largest proportion of resolutions adopted.²⁶

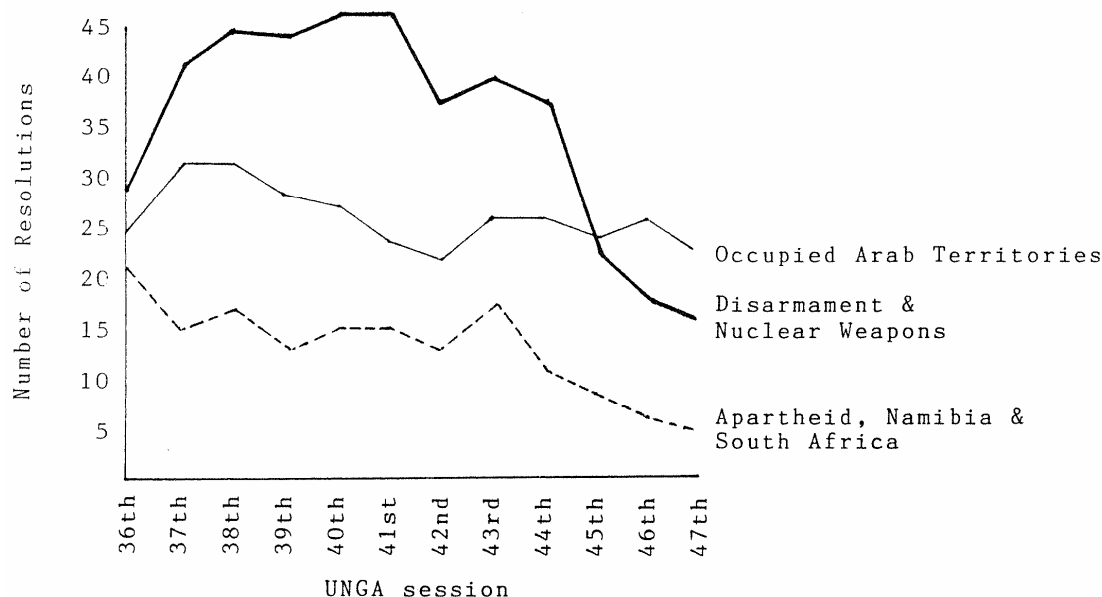
²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ For example, environment issues have been included in Tikhomirov's "economic development" category.

²⁶ For the sake of clarity, only three policy areas are shown. The other five issues all fluctuate around and below the ten to fifteen per year mark. The issue of Apartheid, South Africa and Namibia is fairly representative of the other categories.

Figure 5:1

Resolutions on which New Zealand voted by Issue 1981/82 - 1992/93



From Figure 5:1, it is clear that the issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons made up the largest proportion of resolutions adopted by vote until the 45th session (1990/91) when a significant decline took place. Most other issues have maintained a relatively consistent number of resolutions year after year, with a notable dropping away of the total number adopted by recorded vote since the late 1980s. The issue of the occupied Arab territories made up the second largest proportion of resolutions until the 45th session when disarmament and nuclear weapon resolutions declined.

It should be noted that the decline in the number of disarmament and nuclear weapon resolutions as shown in Figure 5:1 coincided with the sudden convergence in voting between New Zealand and the United States, as shown in chapter four. In terms of UNGA voting, this may indicate that the issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons has been pivotal in the New Zealand * United States relationship.

While we must be careful to note that the relative foreign policy positions of member states is multi-stranded and involves a number of complex variables, the behaviour of a state in different policy areas may offer clues to the most influential or the most conflictual issues among the several voted upon. From the evidence in Figure 5:1, we may hypothesize that the convergence shown in Figure 4:2 may be due to a decline in the more contentious disarmament resolutions (on which New Zealand voted “Yes” and the United States voted “No”), since the policy area of disarmament and nuclear weapons made up the bulk of resolution adopted throughout the period.

To check this hypothesis, the relative fluctuations in voting behaviour between New Zealand and the United States must be looked at for each policy area. Figures 5:2 to 5:9 represent the changing level of divergence between the two countries as a percentage of all resolutions on which the pair voted for each of eight key policy areas.²⁷

²⁷ The graphs are a percentage of all resolutions adopted by recorded vote because the number of resolutions in some policy areas were too few to give a meaningful measurement.

Figure 5:2
Administrative & Budgetary Issues

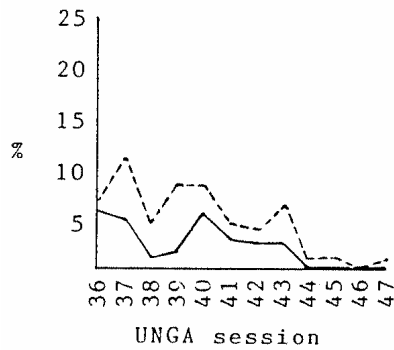


Figure 5:3
Apartheid, South Africa & Namibia

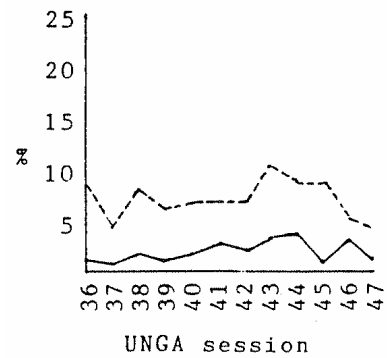


Figure 5:4
Decolonisation

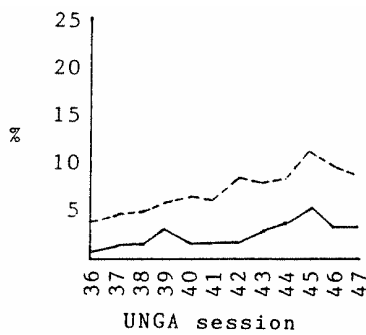


Figure 5:5
Disarmament & Nuclear Weapons

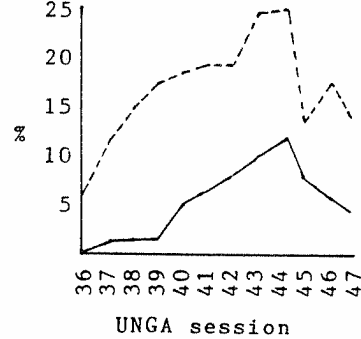


Figure 5:6
Economic Development

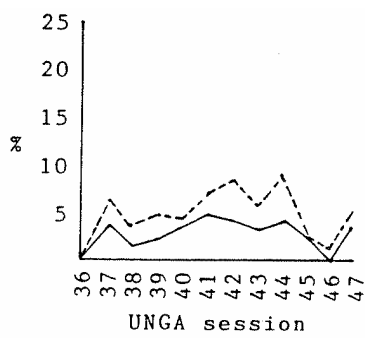


Figure 5:7
Humanitarian & Social Issues

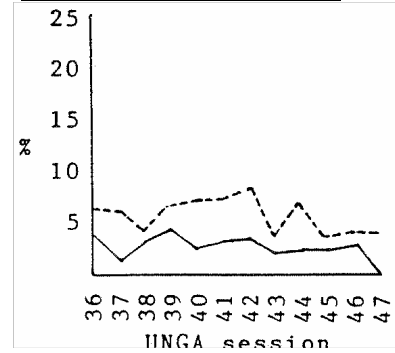


Figure 5:8
International Peace & Security

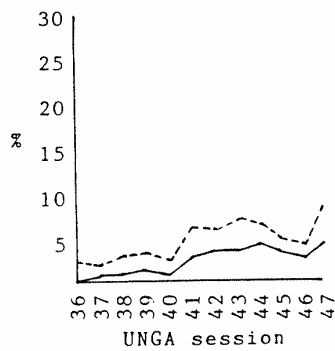
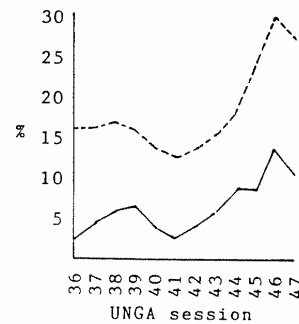


Figure 5:9
Occupied Arab Territories



The two most striking graphs are those on the issues of disarmament and nuclear weapons (Figure 5:5) and the occupied Arab territories (Figure 5:9). Figure 5:5 shows the level of disagreement on disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions peaking in the 44th session (1989/90), followed by a decline in subsequent years. Figure 5:9 shows the level of disagreement between New Zealand and the United States on occupied Arab territories resolutions steadily increasing throughout the 1980s, with a small convergence against the trend in the 47th session.

Many factors need to be considered when speculating why these trends are apparent. For example, in the case of the occupied Arab territories, hardening resolutions against Israel during the Intifadah may have consolidated United States support for Israel against the Third World majority. Alternatively, New Zealand's Middle East trade may have become more important in recent years.

However, if we recall Figure 4:1, it is clear that the overall convergence between New Zealand and the United States since the 45th session coincides with the declining level of disagreement shown in Figure 5:5. No other policy area shows such a significant change coincidental to the 1990/91 convergence as the issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons.

The United States position in Figure 4:1 is compared below with the New Zealand - United States voting pattern on the issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons, as shown in Figure 5:5.

Figure 5:10

New Zealand UNGA Convergence with the United States 1981/82 - 1992/93 (cf. Figure 4:1)

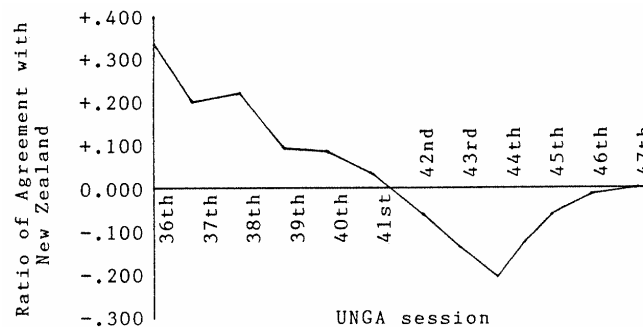
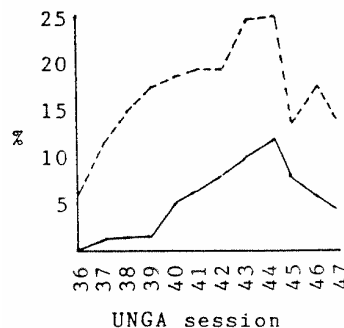


Figure 5:11

New Zealand - United States % Divergence on Disarmament & Nuclear Weapons Resolutions 1981/81- 1992/93 (Figure 5:5)²⁸



²⁸ For the purposes of this working paper, "Disarmament and Nuclear Weapons" covers all resolutions on nuclear test bans; establishment of weapons free zones; conventional disarmament; arms transfers; reductions in military budgets; prohibitions on chemical, biological and radiological weapons; the World Disarmament Campaign; and arms negotiations.

Figure 5:10 and 5:11 demonstrate the overall convergence in voting behaviour between New Zealand and the United States in the 45th session and the way the issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons played a role in that convergence. Given this evidence, it is fair to conclude that the issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons played a key role in altering the voting behaviour of New Zealand and the United States on UNGA resolutions relative to each other and the rest of the world.

It remains to be seen whether or not the convergence i.e. the increased conformity on disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions between New Zealand and the United States is due more to a changed American policy position, a changed New Zealand policy position, or a change in the type and number of resolutions adopted by the UNGA. However, judging from the evidence in Figure 4:2, which showed each country's changing position in relation to the UNGA majority, and Figure 5:1, which showed the decline in the number of disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions adopted by recorded vote, it seems that a combination of all three factors was responsible for New Zealand - United States convergence since the 45th session.

Since it has already been established that a declining number of disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions was partly responsible for New Zealand - United States convergence, a measure of each nation's voting on those resolutions specifically must be made in order to determine the extent to which independent New Zealand and United States voting influenced the convergence.

Using the same method used earlier on to measure the relative agreement and disagreement between various member states and the UNGA majority, Table 5:2 shows the relative ratios for New Zealand and United States voting on disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions since the 36th session (1981/82).

Table 5:2

New Zealand and United States voting on Disarmament & Nuclear Weapons Resolutions
1981/82 -1992/93

Year	UNGA session	New Zealand	United States	No. of Resolutions
1981/82	36th	+ .207	- .241	29
1982/83	37th	+ .244	- .220	41
1983/84	38th	+ .133	- .400	45
1984/85	39th	+ .227	- .409	44
1985/86	40th	+ .348	- .391	46
1986/87	41st	+ .435	- .370	46
1987/88	42nd	+ .514	- .459	37
1988/89	43rd	+ .718	- .436	39
1989/90	44th	+ .811	- .297	37
1990/91	45th	+ .773	- .273	22
1991/92	46th	+ .588	- .294	17
1992/93	47th	+ .667	- .200	15

The trend is clearly seen in Figure 5:12 below.

Figure 5:12

New Zealand and United States voting on Disarmament and Nuclear Weapons Resolutions
1981/82 -1992/93

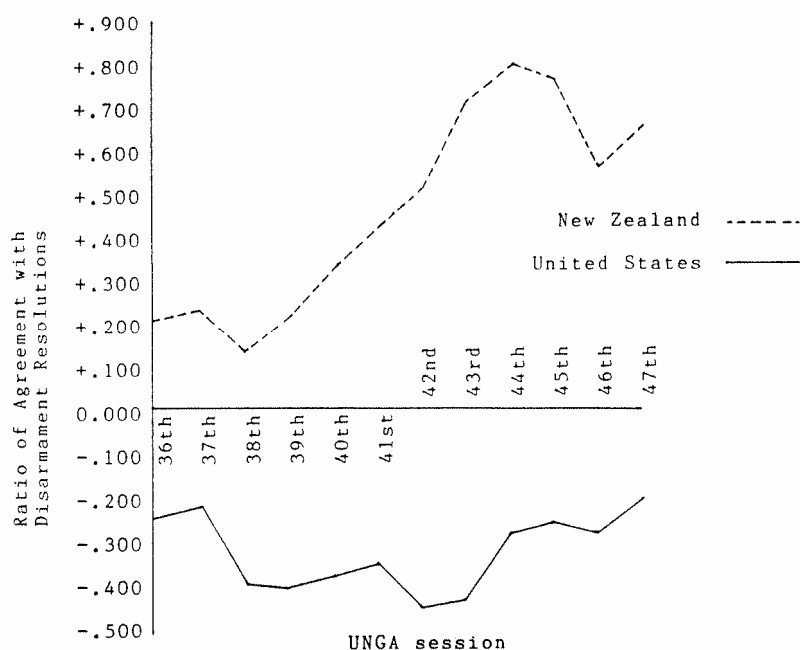


Figure 5:12 shows that the ratio of disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions New Zealand agreed with increased throughout the 1980s and declined when the total number of disarmament resolutions also declined. The United States wavered throughout the 1980s, but their ratio of agreement increased slightly in more recent UNGA sessions.

While it is clear that this pattern confirms the convergence between New Zealand and the United States found in the UNGA as a whole (Figure 5:10) and on the issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons in particular (Figure 5:11), it cannot be discounted that the significant decline in this type of resolution since the 45th session played an important role. Because of the large fluctuation in the number of disarmament resolutions, it is likely that many of the resolutions which have disappeared since the 44th session (1989/90) were those on which New Zealand and the United States differed.

The number of disarmament resolutions adopted without vote remained fairly consistent throughout the 1980s, confirming that the convergence which took place between New Zealand and the United States was due to the decline in the number of resolutions on which each country took an opposing position.²⁹

This goes some way towards explaining New Zealand - United States convergence both in terms of disarmament and the UNGA as a whole, without there necessarily being a change in voting behaviour by either nation. However, it is difficult to conclude from this evidence that no changes in voting behaviour took place. A closer examination of individual resolutions and how they change year by year would have to be made to establish how each country's position on disarmament may have changed.

We can conclude that a major factor in the converging pattern of voting between New Zealand and the United States was the decline in the number of disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions since 1989/90. Factors such as the decline in New Zealand's ratio of agreement with disarmament resolutions and the United States' increased ratio are inconclusive when measured against this decline.

²⁹ This does not mean that on disarmament resolutions the United States began voting "Yes" more often and New Zealand began voting "No" more often, but rather that resolutions with which New Zealand agreed and the United States disagreed came up less often.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions

This paper has covered a variety of relationships and issues involving New Zealand, the UNGA majority, Australia, the United States and other selected countries. New Zealand's general alignment was found by comparing ratios of agreement and disagreement with its UNGA counterparts in the 47th session (1992/93). This was looked at from a different perspective when each nation's voting behaviour was examined in terms of the Third World dominated UNGA majority.

Expanding the focus to a longitudinal analysis of UNGA voting, the relationships between New Zealand and its two closest allies, Australia and the United States were examined since the 36th session (1981/82). Having found interesting points of convergence between New Zealand and the United States, a refocusing on specific types of resolutions was made in order to discover which, if any, were responsible for the changed voting patterns. Summarized below are a number of key findings uncovered throughout the survey.

By comparing the way New Zealand voted in relation to all other member states of the UNGA, it was discovered that the nations whose pattern of voting most closely resembled that of New Zealand were largely European countries, with a few obvious exceptions like Australia and Canada. About thirty nations seemed to form a distinct cluster which voted consistently less often with the majority "Yes" vote than the Third World non-aligned nations. The thirty or so mainly European countries loosely belonged to regional trade blocs and defence alliances, like the EC, Efta and Nato, and were mostly made up of nations with traditional western market economies, and ex-communist countries and ex-Soviet republics attempting to develop market economies of their own.

Nations that notably fell outside this group were larger western allies with nuclear status like the United Kingdom, France and the United States. It was found, for example, that the United States voted less often with New Zealand than any other member state of the UNGA. At this point, it was hypothesized that the behaviour of these countries in particular was due to their nuclear status and consequent stance on resolutions dealing with disarmament and nuclear weapons.

In order to test this hypothesis and the notion that the alignment of smaller western countries complicit in western defence arrangements was influenced by their larger allies, the survey was expanded to look at the voting behaviour of member states in terms of the UNGA majority, as opposed to New Zealand. Here, it was confirmed that there did exist a distinct cluster of about thirty mainly European countries (including New Zealand) that voted together more often than not, suggesting that broad ideological convergence was a chief factor in their similarities. The United States, however, and other western nuclear powers were conspicuously absent from this group of nations. It appears that smaller western nations do not therefore, slavishly follow the voting behaviour of their large allies.

When the voting behaviour of selected countries was specifically compared to the UNGA majority, it was found that the larger powers fell well outside the normal voting parameters of smaller western states, and that the United States was by far the most obstructionist nation in the UNGA. Given that the concerns of small developing states, like economic development and decolonization resolutions usually dominate the UNGA agenda, the alignment of small western states seems to fall somewhere between these largely Third World concerns and those of their larger and more powerful allies, like the United States.

A convenient coincidence in selecting Australia and the United States as the two countries with which to compare New Zealand's voting over the previous twelve years was that they fell at either end of the spectrum in terms of how closely they voted with New Zealand, and that they had made up the other two prongs of the Anzus triad which was so central to developing relations between the countries in the 1980s. It was found that while New Zealand and Australia almost mirrored each other in the fluctuating degree to which they voted with the UNGA majority throughout the period, the United States wavered until the 44th session (1989/90) when they began to slightly converge with the majority.

Throughout the 1980s, and particularly since the Anzus rift, New Zealand had begun voting more often with the UNGA majority, suggesting that the perception of New Zealand having an increasingly independent international stance had grounding in UNGA voting patterns. However, Australia also voted more regularly with the majority during this time, so other reasons such as the type and number of resolutions voted on were more likely to have influenced voting behaviour.

A decline in the degree to which New Zealand voted with the UNGA majority took place from the 44th session onwards, coinciding with the election of the National government in 1990. This decline, together with the United States - UNGA convergence amounted to a sudden and sustained convergence between New Zealand and the United States dating from the 45th session in 1990/91. This convergence was clearly shown to contrast sharply with the consistency in voting manifested in the New Zealand - Australia relationship.

A closer look at the type of resolutions on the UNGA agenda offered an insight into why New Zealand and the United States began voting together more often since the 45th session. It was found that disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions had been prevalent throughout the 1980s, but underwent a decline which coincided with the overall New Zealand - United States convergence. That the issue of disarmament and nuclear weapons played a significant role in this convergence was confirmed when voting comparisons were made on eight different policy areas. It was found that on disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions, New Zealand and the United States had voted the same way more often since the 44th session.

To check whether this was due to a changed New Zealand policy position, a changed American policy position, or a change in the type and number of resolutions coming up in the UNGA, a measure was made of the way in which New Zealand and the United States voted on the issue of disarmament. This provided an index of how positively or negatively each country voted on disarmament resolutions year after year. It was shown that New Zealand voted more often with the UNGA majority on disarmament as the 1980s progressed, however a decline was discernible from the 45th session onwards. The United States began to converge with the majority at around the same time New Zealand began to diverge. This meant that the disarmament resolutions no longer voted upon in the more recent sessions were those on which New Zealand voted "Yes" and the United States "No". It was therefore concluded that the decline in the number of disarmament resolutions was the chief factor in the overall convergence between New Zealand and the United States since the 45th session.

A number of key findings can be drawn from the material discussed. First, while it cannot be ignored that the convoluted internal politics of the UN and evolving global issues often play a "spoiling" role in analysing UNGA voting, it is quite plausible to use the roll-call and recorded votes of the UNGA as a measure of a member state's relative stance to other nations and world opinion. There has been evidence to suggest that voting patterns follow general foreign policy alignments and are therefore a valid indicator of foreign policy behaviour.

Second, as a sovereign state, New Zealand exercises foreign policy independence through its vote in the UNGA. It tends to vote similarly to a bloc of non-nuclear "northern" countries that share a degree of ideological convergence which is distinct from that of the Third World majority. New Zealand votes more often with non-aligned countries than it does with its most powerful ally, the United States. Any question of the United States influencing New Zealand's vote therefore seems highly questionable based on the evidence presented here.

Third, in terms of the Security Council, there is little evidence to support the contention that New Zealand's UNGA voting played a role in lobbying before its election to that body.³⁰ While New Zealand sought the support of as many nations as possible, there is no obvious area where altered voting behaviour may have gained the favour of some member states. The United States supported New Zealand's bid for a Security Council seat, and though a general convergence took place in recent

³⁰ [Peacelink, op.cit.](#)

UNGA sessions, a change in the type and number of resolutions played the most prominent role in this, rather than a notably different stance by New Zealand.

Fourth, given that New Zealand's policy on disarmament and nuclear weapons has not noticeably changed since the 1990 election, other factors must have played a part in the convergence which took place between New Zealand and the United States. It could be argued that the hardline stance of the Reagan/Bush Administrations has softened under Clinton and that this has been reflected in the way the United States has voted in the UNGA. However, it appears that the overriding factor has been the change in the number and type of resolutions voted on in recent sessions. The decline in the number of disarmament and nuclear weapons resolutions which have come up for adoption since the 44th session indicates that the issue, as perceived by the UNGA, has been overtaken by other policy areas and/or has become less significant since the end of the Cold War.

As an independent member state of the UN, New Zealand now has the opportunity to express its position in terms of the more powerful Security Council. An independent study of how New Zealand has voted there would be an interesting point of contrast with how it has voted in the UNGA. As the UN has become more accepted as the forum for international debate and arbiter of international disputes, and the question of reform of the institution arises, New Zealand is now well-placed to put forward its own views, regardless of whether they are reflective of a loose western alignment or of a purely independent sovereign nation.

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