Multilateral U.S. Military Operations in the Post-Cold War Era

A Tool for American Strategic Interests

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Introduction

More than ten years after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the United States finds itself on the fringes of a confrontation with Iraq only one year subsequent to inducing a regime change in Afghanistan. The U.S. has justified its leadership against Afghanistan and Iraq under the umbrella of the “War on Terrorism,” but it is clear that a large portion of the international community would prefer wide multilateral measures, if any, to a confrontation with Iraq. In the wake of September 11, the U.S. government struggles to make its citizens feel safe from terrorism, while other sovereign nations are searching for safety in the post-Cold War Era where the U.S. is the only superpower. While the end of the Cold War reduced the possibility of a global nuclear war, it also created a decidedly more volatile global security environment and unleashed a number of destabilizing factors that had previously been checked by the East-West conflict. As a result, creating wide multilateral policies in today’s world is considerably more difficult, although multilateralism is now essential to regional conflict management by great powers (Goldstein 515). A purely unilateral operation, in which the U.S. acts alone, is not a viable option, particularly in such volatile and internationally important regions such as the Middle East, but trends in past post-Cold War military operations provide some foresight into the degree of multilateral character a future U.S. operation in Iraq might have.
The type of multilateralism that the U.S. will pursue in a future conflict with Iraq possibly could be predicted from trends patterned from previous cases in post-Cold War, large-scale, American military intervention. This study examines eight factors that have affected the degree of multilateralism used in six major post-Cold War direct military operations (see Table 1):

1. Decisiveness. Is there a visible end to the operation that accomplishes a specific goal?
2. Responsiveness. How quickly can the U.S. act following provocation?
3. Total incremental cost of the operation, including military force, aid, peacekeeping and reconstruction for all that apply.
4. Legal/international acceptability. Does the action have wide international approval, as exemplified by, i.e., authorization by the U.N. Security Council?
5. Coalition-building value. Will alliances developed throughout the course of the operation be longstanding and useful for future operations?
6. Effect on U.S. command and control needs. Will U.S. forces and influence expand into regions previously inaccessible to them?
7. Degree of threat to U.S. homeland security.
8. Regional volatility.

This study divides multilateralism into four different categories, listed below from lowest to highest degree of multilateral character, and maps trends in relationships between the above factors and the type of multilateralism used in each operation. For example, how did these factors influence a decision to act through NATO in the Balkan crises rather than through some other means, such as a European or U.S.-led ad hoc coalition? Note: these relationships are not quantified, but are the products of a preliminary investigation.

1. Separate bilateral agreements between the U.S. and key strategic allies, such as the defense cooperative agreements between the U.S. and several Gulf states. This method improves responsiveness and builds long-term alliances by allowing the U.S. to negotiate on a separate basis with each signatory. These agreements are usually not oriented towards specific ends from the outset, but are aimed at expanding the US sphere of command and control in strategic areas.
2. Small, US led coalitions, such as the US-led Operation Northern Watch. This method is also quite responsive and fosters alliances aimed at a specific goal. Coalitions explicitly authorized under the U.N. Security Council are more credible than implicit ones, or those without authorization.

3. Narrow multilateral organizations, specifically NATO, whose members are regionally and ideologically similar. NATO has less worldwide credibility than the U.N., which embraces a broad spectrum of nations and ideologies, and is an excellent coalition-builder. Costs of an operation are diffused amongst members.

4. Wide multilateral organizations, specifically the U.N., whose members are diverse in terms of ideology and geography. Costs for the U.S. are minimized due to funds and resources donated by other U.N. members, although the U.S. pays 22% of U.N. budgets.

In all degrees of multilateralism, consideration of present and past military operations as alliance-builders play a key role in terms of thinking about resources and the success of future operations. In past post-Cold War direct military operations, the U.S. has aimed for the highest possible degree of multilateralism that would have allowed it to achieve its case-specific goals set for the eight factors mentioned above. The U.S. does this because it seeks maximum acceptability under international law in order to detract from a US hegemonic perception, while further fostering alliances that are useful in terms of expanding the region of US command and control.

These trends, examined in further detail throughout this paper, provide some foresight on the degree of multilateral character that could be utilized in a future conflict with Iraq. If the U.S. cooperates with the U.N., as it did in the Gulf War, it will possibly dilute its control over the fate of Iraq in exchange for international credibility and soft power while possibly strengthening their international alliances. If a military operation occurs, the region of U.S. command and control will be enlarged causing new defense partnerships to emerge that may be useful in the present and future. An Iraqi regime change, in addition to the 2001 regime change in Afghanistan, would require sustained,
careful involvement, particularly in such an unstable, complex region; a multilateral operation ensures that U.S. forces are not spread too thin, and, should something go wrong, that the U.S. will not be held solely responsible. It thus reduces the United States’ share of total incremental costs.

In a collaborative world, where multilateral agreements across all areas have proven to be beneficial to the U.S., this route will ultimately be the most advantageous to U.S. national interests because it will build U.S. credibility and trust from the international community. This is valuable to future agreements, whether they are military or nonmilitary in nature. Additionally, if the U.S. finds UN actions unsatisfactory, there is an escape: the parameters of UN authorizations are often so hazy that the U.S. could exploit caveats in international law should it decide to invade Iraq with a coalition of US partners (NATO members or those tied into separate US defense bilaterals). This invasion, then, would be at least partially supported by international law, detracting from the hegemonic appearance of the U.S., as was done in Operation Desert Fox in 1998. This route, however, is contingent on the fact that the US intelligence community does not perceive Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) as an immediate threat.

If WMD in Iraq are perceived as an immediate threat to US national security, the U.S. will undoubtedly employ direct military force against Iraq in the near future. This will cause them to sacrifice the benefits of wide multilateralism for a higher degree of responsiveness. In this case, longstanding US allies in NATO and strategic Arab nations in need of U.S. support will cooperate in an operation against Iraq via separate bilateral agreements. Utilizing separate bilateral and/or coalitions for strategic purposes could
project the appearance of multilateralism, and therefore buffering some, but not all, criticism from the international community.

The most important military support in terms of a large-scale, US-led operation in Iraq would come from Western Europe, Australia, Turkey, and Arab nations with a history of friendly military relations. Military support from these nations against Iraq could either be delivered under the guise of the United Nations, or through separate, non-U.N., bi- or multilateral agreements with the United States. However, the United States and its allies have their respective national interests to consider when it comes to the decision to employ or not to employ military force. Nevertheless, the nature of past post-Cold War direct military operations patterned visible trends in the defense policies of the U.S. and its allies. The U.S. has sustained large-scale direct military intervention in two primary regions in the post-Cold War Era: the Balkans and the Middle East. The Balkans remain of chief interest to the U.S., Russia, and Western Europe, whereas the latter region, interests all of the allies mentioned above (including more, such as oil-producing Mexico).

Assumptions of this Study

Drawing generalizations from previous post-Cold War military operations, and using them to predict the multilateral nature of a future conflict in Iraq, several assumptions must be made. Initially, a note should be made about the selection of the cases themselves. Cases were selected as large-scale, direct, and forceful U.S. military actions. These were not purely unilateral because it is likely that these characteristics will also be spotlighted in a future conflict with Iraq. Thus, Haiti was excluded because it
was too small and Panama because it was purely unilateral. Operations aimed directly at peacekeeping or providing aid, i.e. Somalia, were also excluded because the US interests in Iraq are not compatible with operations purely of this sort.

This study draws case studies from the Republican George H.W. Bush administration (1988-1992), the Democratic William Jefferson Clinton administration (1992-2000), and the Republican George W. Bush administration (2001-present). Although the challenges to US foreign policy have changed throughout these administrations, this study notes that the three post-Cold War administrations have held a common approach in decisions regarding the use of uni-, bi-, and multilateralism. All executives consider the degree of: responsiveness; decisiveness; costs; legal and international acceptability; coalition-building value; the threat the conflict presents to homeland security, and the effects upon US command and control needs to advance US interests (see Table 1). Ultimately, this study will draw generalizations from past post-Cold War administrations and apply them to the impending conflict in Iraq.

It is also assumed that efforts to build multilateral coalitions and to support international bodies that will benefit the U.S. will not be overturned with the inauguration of a new executive; bilateral and multilateral treaties transcend administrative change. In the post-Cold War Era, all executive administrations prior to that of George W. Bush have set a precedent for the construction of successful multilateral or bilateral agreements, such as the WTO, NAFTA, science and technology bilaterals, defense cooperative agreements, etc. The U.S. has established a model of post-Cold War global progress through military, economic, scientific, and diplomatic agreements with a wide variety of nations, from G-8 to G-77. This progress will not be overturned by a simple
change in the executive. Although some high-level officials in the Bush administration perceive multilateral agreements to not be in the best interest of the United States, the principle of moving towards multilateralism has been bred in many US citizens and non-elected government officials that have served across different administrations. These individuals understand the value of global cooperation in terms of acquiring hard and soft power. Thus, this protects the US national interest, where some components remain relatively consistent over time: trade, security, balance of power, and regional stability. This is reflected in the 2002 National Security Doctrine released by the White House; it recognizes the fact that the U.S. has unmatched world power and therefore must “shape the international order (Diehl 1).” The goal is to maintain regional power balances in favor of the U.S., while simultaneously encouraging development, democracy, and free markets abroad (Diehl 1). These objectives have remained relatively constant in the post-Cold War Era.

In addition, one must consider the idea that the post-Cold War Era ended the moment American Airlines Flight 11 hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:45 a.m. EDT on September 11, 2001. One of the United States’ primary nemeses today, al-Qaeda, is not a rational or state actor, whereas the actors involved in the cases from which this paper generalizes were rational nation-states. How, then, can generalized trends in the post-Cold War US military actions be used to predict the nature of US defense policy in this new era? Although this new era will eventually develop its own character, we can still assume that the components of the US national interest remain constant, and that, regardless of the characteristics of our enemies, international support will always be crucial to those interests. Thus, at this point, the U.S. will still continue to
rely upon lessons and precedents in bi- and multilateralism from the post-Cold War era as it shapes its policy for the future.

IRAQ: 1990-1991

*Figure 1. Map of Iraqi No-Fly Zones (“Iraq Map”)*

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new security environment emerged worldwide. These new conditions were particularly prevalent in the Middle East, a region that had previously been treated as a microcosm of the Cold War. Soviet allies such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Palestinian factions were left dangling, and the Arab rejectionist front opposed peace with Israel was left without a foothold (Shlaim 104). As Oxford Professor Avi Shlaim writes, “Without Soviet arms and diplomatic backing, Arab radicals could do little except sulk in their tents (105).” Without Soviet support aimed at countering US presence in the Middle East, some Arab states would have to seek other resources previously supplied to them from the Soviets to guard their national securities. Now, they could join the United States in exchange for American support against hostile nations in the region (i.e. Iraq), or they could seek them out through other means.

Since the early 1980s, the U.S. had previously balanced power in the region by aggravating tensions between Iran and Iraq, preoccupying and ultimately draining them
of resources, while maintaining an Israeli stronghold. In 1990, it found itself in need of a new policy, exemplified by Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait (Hajjar 8). When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the elder Bush Administration took advantage of the new post-Cold War security environment and internationally unwelcomed Iraqi aggression to gain broad multilateral consensus for direct use of military force (“Threats” 1). Due to the lack of an opposing superpower, the U.S. became dominant in the region by extracting Saddam Hussein from Kuwait and repelling him from Saudi Arabia, achieving several secondary goals:

1. Rallying Arab states liberated from Soviet influence, such as Egypt and Syria, behind it. Aligning behind the U.S. had increasing appeal, and the U.S. would need these strategic bilateral alliances to extend its sphere of influence in the region.
2. Securing oil.
3. Providing the U.S. with the momentum to facilitate the Arab-Israeli peace process.
4. Increasing the credibility of U.S. actions under international law by acting through the U.N.

Wide military multilateralism such as those used in Operation Desert Storm that received pledges of cooperation from nearly forty nations. This proved useful in changing the regional balance of power and securing resources valuable to US interests while also appealing to the international community. It was fortunate that US interests also happened to coincide with the principles of UN collective security at the time. Not only did the U.N. legitimize Desert Storm and precipitate new alliances, but it also provided a broad umbrella of ambiguous resolutions under which US involvement could be sustained in Iraq for years to come. Although the U.S. led-coalition was UN Security Council-authorized, it is debatable whether the perception of the U.S. after Desert Storm was that of a superpower which had dutifully consulted the international community, or
that of a unilateral hegemon with awesome technological and military power (Cleveland 481).

Alliances forged at the conclusion of the Cold War assisted in Operation Desert Storm. Several of these helped enforce American endeavors of dual containment of Iran and Iraq, via sanctioning and military patrol, throughout the Clinton Administration (although most Arab nations did so covertly). Allies in the region have either collaborated with US forces or have acted as strategic states to which U.S. military support can flow, maintaining US military influence in the Middle East. The role of these allies grew more important to the U.S. during the Clinton presidency because enforcing dual containment and UN sanctions on Iraq required more U.S. military presence, and therefore, more landing rights and prepositioned military assets. The total incremental cost of Operation Desert Storm is estimated at $61 billion for deployment, construction, and operations. Of this amount, other coalition members offset $54 billion: Gulf allies contributed $36 billion, while Germany and Japan contributed eight billion. These payments were received in the form of financial assets and logistics/operations support (i.e. sealift and airlift). Overall, the Gulf War cost the U.S. a mere seven billion dollars (“How Much”).

Due to their strategic locations and strong operational support, Middle Eastern allies had a large effect on US foreign policy and the extent of US-led military operations during the Gulf War. Although US public opinion supported the removal of Saddam Hussein, it was determined that Hussein’s removal would not be in favor of long-term US interests (Boren 149). The U.S., the U.N., and US coalition partners had endorsed measures to remove Hussein from Kuwait, not from power. The U.S. knew it would sacrifice many of its allies were it to send ground troops into Baghdad to depose the Iraqi
leader. A plan for Iraq after Hussein would have been removed did not exist: would the U.S. conquer the rest of the country and install a puppet regime, resulting in extreme anti-U.S. backlash from the Islamic community? Would it allow Iraq to split in two, with a northern Kurdistan and a southern Shia state? The Middle East would have been thrown into turmoil and many new allies would have been lost (Boren 150). Instead, the U.S. left Hussein in power and embarked on the policy of dual containment of Iran and Iraq, a policy formulated by Dr. Martin Indyk before the Clinton administration that involved sanctioning and military containment. The allies that the U.S. retained by not toppling Hussein have contributed to this effort both covertly and overtly.

Although they have not engaged in sustained, direct military collaboration with the U.S., one cannot ignore the importance of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to the United States in terms of Iraq. Not only do they represent the benefits of coalition-building operations from the Gulf War, the alliances that the U.S. has developed with each state will provide yet another alternative for multilateralism in the present-day Iraqi conflict. The Gulf Cooperation Council, comprising the Gulf nations of Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE, was formed in 1981 to facilitate coordination and integration in the areas of economy, finance, trade, customs, tourism, and legislation. The GCC states possess a common set of Islamic values and, in general, possess very large oil reserves. The GCC states are building upon these bases to counter the threats of neighboring Gulf states such as Iraq, Iran, and Yemen (“Introduction”). It is in the national interest of the GCC to contain Iran and Iraq, which is also compatible with the interests of the United States.
According to A National Security Strategy for a Global Age (NSS), the U.S.

“remains focused on deterring threats to regional stability and energy security, countering threats posed by WMD, and protecting the security of our regional partners, particularly from the threats posed by Iraq and Iran. We will continue to encourage members of the Gulf Cooperation Council to work closely on collective defense and security arrangements, help individual GCC states meet their defense requirements, and maintain our bilateral defense relationships” (Hajjar 4).

The GCC states, which have no current hope in maintaining forces strong enough to counter regional challenges without superpower support, have a quid pro quo relationship with the United States. In exchange for US military support, such as military presence, arms, and technology, the GCC states allow the U.S. certain military privileges, expanding the US sphere of command (these relationships began during and after the Gulf War). Accordingly, the U.S. has separate defense cooperative agreements (DCAs) with Oman (1990), Saudi Arabia (1990), Bahrain (1990), Kuwait (1991), Qatar (1992), and the UAE (1994). The agreements, which remain classified to protect the GCC signatories, define U.S. access to local facilities, uses of the facilities, costs involved in maintenance and operations, status of American personnel, and other administrative issues (Hajjar 20).

Most GCC states attempt to disguise their relationship with the U.S., a non-Muslim state and Israel’s closest ally, so to not anger anti-U.S., anti-Western Islamic constituent groups. Overt US presence induces hostile reactions from many GCC constituents, and often US opinions on political and security issues in the Middle East differ from those of the GCC. The GCC states have made attempts to reduce dependence on the U.S. by buying arms from France and Britain, and often relying upon help from the latter for military force modernization. However, the U.S. is the only nation with the
power projection capabilities that can sufficiently defend the GCC from the threats of Iraq and Iran. The U.S. and the GCC have been forging a coalition in anticipation of these threats for the past decade. The GCC states realize that for U.S. protection to be effective, they must allow U.S. prepositioning and influence within the GCC before. This protects the GCC and extends the US sphere of command in the Gulf (Cordesman 6-7).

The DCAs solidify the nature of bilateral cooperative security between the U.S. and each of the signatory nations (Hajjar 20). U.S. Central Command’s (CENTCOM) largest prepositioned assets are housed in Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait (Henderson, “GCC” 2). Kuwait is the firmest U.S. ally in the GCC, and the most Iraq-phobic. It has purchased six billion dollars worth of US military equipment in the past ten years, and in addition, permits air strikes against Iraq (i.e. 1998’s Operation Desert Fox) from Camp Doha, which houses US personnel. Saudi Arabia is the most powerful of GCC allies, yet has the most ambiguous DCA; the U.S. must take it as it is in order to maintain influence in the region (Hajjar 42). Saudi Arabia faces threats from Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, and its percentage of imports that are of arms account for more than that of any other Gulf state at 40.4 percent (Cordesman 74). The UAE, the most Iran-phobic state (due to territorial disputes), will undoubtedly hesitate to provide direct military assistance in an operation against Iraq for fear of the balance of power shifting to Iran. Bahrain houses the only permanent US naval base in the Middle East. Qatar continues to covertly seek more US military presence, although it, like all GCC states, emphasizes the temporary nature of the US presence (Henderson, “War” 2).

However, a U.S. withdrawal is doubtful given the persistent threat of Iran and Iraq to the GCC. US military support is very important to the national securities of the oil-rich
GCC states and regional balance of power in the Gulf. Although Yemen is not a GCC member on several occasions has worked with U.S. forces in attacking al-Qaeda from within its borders, such as in the November 2002 CIA operation that resulted in the slaying of six alleged al-Qaeda operatives with a US Hellfire missile (“No Holds Barred”).

The bilateral DCAs that the U.S. holds with each of the GCC states are invaluable in terms of U.S. influence and military capabilities in the Gulf, and will allow the U.S. to act expediently when multilateralism is not feasible. Whether the U.S. acts alone against Iraq or is able to form a U.N.-authorized coalition, the GCC states could be useful in terms of allowing the U.S. to utilize its DCAs with the individual states (i.e. using GCC nations as bases for U.S. forces, GCC intelligence, or GCC financial assets). However, GCC states play a constant balancing act between protecting their security with U.S. aid and fending off anti-Western popular sentiment from their own constituencies. Although GCC states have helped the U.S. by buying weapons to even out the regional balance of power and counter Iraq and Iran, this type of help can be given covertly.

Should US forces become ever more present on the soil of the GCC states, GCC leaders may have a difficult choice to make: providing direct military assistance to U.S. to contribute to the defeat of Iraq or appeasing the anti-American sentiment. Qatar, the most American-friendly GCC state, appears to have already made its decision: the U.S. military is currently installing a new command center at a base in Qatar that could serve as U.S. headquarters for an attack on Iraq. Patrick N. Theros, former U.S. Ambassador to Qatar, says, "The Qataris have decided that their future lies in having the closest possible ties with the United States. They are more likely to support a U.S. military action than
some of their neighbors in order to maintain this relationship (“U.S. Is Preparing”).”
Although Qatar has made its decision, it is unclear if the rest of the GCC would openly
support a major US military operation in Iraq even if the U.S. were to justify the
operation under UN law.

Currently, the United States supports two combined military task forces in Iraqi
containment although the UN Security Council explicitly authorizes neither. One-third of
these forces come from Western European nations. Operation Northern Watch (ONW),
which enforces the UN-mandated no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in Iraq, consists of
British, American, and Turkish forces. It is housed at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, and is co-
commanded by both American and Turkish officers. The Turkish government initially
mandated a six-month operation and has continued to extend its participation, but
indicated that Turkish presence within ONW is not permanent. In December 1998, ONW
forces supported U.S. and British aircraft in Operation Desert Fox, a four-day military
response prompted by the release of a report summarizing a continued history of
noncompliance with U.N. weapons of mass destruction (WMD) requirements (FAS
“Operation Northern Watch”). This specific operation was supported militarily by a
diverse array of U.N. members, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, Germany, Spain,
Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Kuwait allowed air strikes to initiate from Camp
Doha (Wedgwood 727). Following Desert Fox, Iraqi opposition began firing on coalition
aircraft; the ONW task force now routinely strikes the Iraqi integrated defense system
(FAS “Operation Northern Watch”).

Turkey’s participation within ONW is key in terms of present and future
operations in Iraq, and the US alliance with this country is an important coalition-
building byproduct of both NATO-strengthening operations and UN mandated coalitions, i.e. ONW and OSW. Although Turkey’s western territories make it a Balkan nation, it has NATO membership and it also aspires to join the European Union. Turkey is a “Middle Eastern country whose security as well as stability and prosperity have become tied up with developments in the Middle East (Kirisci 1).” The main threat to Turkish interests is the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK), whose primary goal is to secede from Turkey as an independent Kurdish state. The PKK, which controls a large portion of northern Iraq, has used Iraq as a base for offensive operations in Turkey; as a result, Turkey has attempted to destroy Iraqi Kurdish camps.

A weak Iraq would result in a greater Kurdish threat to Turkey; on the other hand, an Iraqi regime change could lead the UN to reprieve sanctions that have isolated the Turkish economy from the lucrative Iraqi market and constructed barriers to Turkish trade to the Middle East. Additionally, participation in ONW ensures that the West will not forget Turkey in the wake of the Cold War. By supporting the U.S., Turkey can gain more influence in NATO and in Europe through the favor of NATO’s two most powerful members: the U.S. and Britain. Turkey’s NATO membership may indeed be “the most powerful deterrent facing Saddam Hussein (Kirisci 13).” Turkey serves as an excellent example of why coalition building is beneficial in the long run: Turkey’s NATO membership has ensured its participation in ONW while securing a strategic position for the U.S. in the Middle East.

Operation Southern Watch consists of American, British, and Saudi forces (and French, until 1998), and patrols the no-fly zone south of the 33rd parallel, implicitly enforcing U.N. Security Council Resolutions 687, 688, and 949. The commander of Joint
Task Force Southwest Asia (JTF-SWA), which administers the patrol, reports solely to the Commander in Chief of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). US European Command (EUCOM), providing logistic support and forces in times of need, occasionally supports OSW; in addition, EUCOM and U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) aircraft routinely deploy to the operation (FAS “Operation Southern Watch” 1-5).

The tasks performed by OSW and ONW are better pursued through separate bilateral agreements or small coalitions because they do not support a specific objective that is widely accepted within the U.N., such as unseating a specific dictator or restoring traditional boundaries. They exist, rather, to demonstrate US presence to Iraq and the greater Middle East and to enforce the largely US/UK-supported policy of dual containment; there are however no foreseeable ends to these operations. Additionally, because an objective of OSW and ONW is the maintenance of US influence over Iraq. This idea is unacceptable to many nations. Multilateral measures would be hard-won, and the decisiveness and responsiveness key to the operational success of ONW and OSW would be sacrificed. However, due to the oft-implicit nature of UN authorization, ONW and OSW coalition members claim implicit UN authorization under previous resolutions. A large number of coalition partners are not necessary for either of these two operations: strategic military bases have been secured for each and both operations are relatively low-cost. From 1997 to 2001, ONW cost a mere $574.4 million while OSW cost $3.86 billion (due to increased efforts to protect the Saudi and Kuwaiti borders). Both operations tend to use relatively inexpensive, multi-use aircraft, such as the F-16 fighter jet.
It should be noted that although Turkish and Saudi forces have helped patrol the no-fly zones under joint task forces largely controlled by the US, both have denied the U.S. the ability to use aircraft based in their territories to attack Iraq in the past. For example, when the dispute between the Iran-supported Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdish Democratic Party resulted in intervention by Saddam Hussein in 1996, the U.S. had to use Guam-based aircraft to push Saddam back south. The Turks and the Saudis simply did not feel that Hussein’s actions merited their opposition particularly because neither nation bears much sympathy for the Kurds (Byman 12). In addition, France withdrew from OSW operations in 1998 to protest Operation Desert Fox; only the United Kingdom appears to be a concrete ally.

**Operation Enduring Freedom and the War on Terrorism**

Subsequent to the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) with tremendous multilateral support from the international community. As the Americans and British conducted routine bombing raids on Afghanistan to kill al-Qaeda operatives and unseat the Taliban, Russia, China, and India provided intelligence. Australia invoked Article IV of the ANZUS treaty and all nineteen NATO members invoked Article V, declaring an attack on one as an attack on all (a point of irony, considering that the framers of both treaties did not anticipate an attack on the U.S., but on less powerful signatories). Landing rights were granted to the U.S. by twenty-seven nations, and the U.S. received forty-six multilateral declarations of support. The U.N. passed a binding resolution requiring all member states to pursue terrorists within their own borders.
(“Operation Enduring Freedom”). OEF demonstrated that the U.S. could receive a high degree of international support for fighting terrorism in the Middle East and abroad, from NATO to the U.N. to Arab states. Although this support was essential given the high threats to U.S. homeland security, it also provided the impetus for U.S. accusations against Iraq in terms of its WMD capabilities.

By acting multilaterally through the U.N. in Operation Enduring Freedom, the U.S. put itself in an advantageous position. Enduring Freedom has the potential to be a very costly war in terms of long-term engagement, military positioning, and technology for sequestering al-Qaeda in mountainous terrain. It is estimated that OEF costs one billion dollars per month; this, of course, excludes reconstruction costs after the conclusion of the operation, which will be quite high. By using the U.N., the U.S. acquired financial and military contributions from other UN members. If the U.N. can successfully rebuild Afghanistan, it will be both to its advantage and that of the United States. U.N. credibility would rise, and the U.S. could leave long-term engagement in Afghanistan to U.N. peacekeeping troops, focusing its own military on the broader War on Terrorism or a war with Iraq.

A revitalized NATO will certainly be of use in fighting the broader War on Terrorism, despite the skepticism of U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. At the December 18, 2001 meeting, NATO defense ministers agreed to perform a reassessment of NATO defense plans to encompass the war against terrorism (Valasek 1). In September 2002, the U.S. applied pressure to NATO to create a permanent rapid reaction force to train NATO troops for combating terrorists. A retired general acquainted with NATO claims, “There is a clear confluence of interests. Bush needs allies. NATO needs
to show its relevance” (“U.S. Pressing”). NATO will show its relevance, through non-NATO agreements between members, if nothing else. For example, given the October 2002 attack on the French tanker, the Limburg, and French connections with former colonies in the region such as Djibouti (“No Holds Barred”), France could be a useful ally.

In general, the international community has shown its willingness to aid the U.S. in the War on Terrorism. However, support dramatically drops, even within NATO, where it is perceived that the US’s true motives lie not in defeating terrorism, but in other interests such as oil or “unfinished business” (from the 1991 Gulf War). European allies also worry about spreading their small military capacities too thin between direct military operations (for example, in Iraq) and reconstruction/humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. Europe construes the latter as necessary to fighting the broader war on terrorism by appealing to popular Arab sentiment (Valasek 2). German president Gerhard Schröder has reiterated on several occasions that a new war against Iraq must not detract from the reconstruction aid and protection that the U.S. owes to Afghanistan and Afghan president Hamid Karzai.

Overt support also drops amongst Arab allies; they cannot sustain overt support of a War on Terrorism without certain US concessions towards Palestinian suffering. An expansion of the war on terrorism to encompass nations such as Iraq would only result in claims from Arab states that the U.S. should also reprove Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians. The failure of the U.S. to reprimand Israel for its summer 2002 attacks on Palestinian territories severely undermined previous efforts at Palestinian support (Hajjar 50). Furthermore, the American justification for deposing Saddam Hussein in Iraq on the
basis of WMD capabilities has enraged the Arab community, which points to Israeli possession of WMD. Although many Arab nations have supported the War on Terrorism, sequestering al-Qaeda operatives within their own nations and participating in U.S. operations, support will be limited in light of the above. Unfortunately, the degree to which the U.S. should reprimand Israel will be extremely difficult to judge; many of the Israeli actions toward the Palestinians can be justified by Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israel during the Second Intifada. However, much of the military force directed towards the Palestinians under the Sharon regime is not undertaken because of Israeli suffering, but because of the Israeli Prime Minister’s all encompassing rage against all things Palestinian. Prime Minister Sharon’s consistent efforts at annexing Palestinian territories to be managed by Israel as a de facto colonial power are quite clear. The Bush policy is seriously limited by its inability to distinguish between Israeli retaliation against acts of terrorism and Israeli government actions that are simply in place to assure that no viable Palestinian state will emerge for decades.

Lessons Learned

There are some clear relationships between the eight factors and the type of multilateralism utilized in the sample cases:

1. The U.S. has chosen to invoke separate bilateral agreements with nations strategic to US objectives when the U.S. desires to negotiate only with pertinent actors on a separate, often secret, basis, increasing responsiveness. For example, the DCAs that the U.S. has with the GCC states and other Gulf States have allowed the U.S. to track down and kill terrorists using controversial methods that would not only be internationally rejected, but could not even be approved in time for effective action due to constant movement of targets. Due to the smaller pool of funds, these operations tend to be relatively low cost. Separate bilateral agreements could also be exercised
collectively, projecting the facade of multilateralism or mutual agreement amongst a group of nations.

2. The U.S. may build a small coalition of strategic nations, bearing the brunt of costs, but improving responsiveness due to collaboration with nations sharing many of the same interests (i.e. containing Saddam Hussein). Specifically, coalitions formed under UN authorization have been sustained or reintroduced under the implicit nature of UN resolutions, with the powerful U.S. in command. Examples are Operation Northern and Southern Watches and Operation Desert Fox. These small, US-led coalitions are arguably legitimate under international law, and may occasionally receive more outside support for larger operations (i.e. Desert Fox).

3. When the outcome of wide multilateralism does not correspond to American interests, but the U.S. still requires international support (i.e., for strategic reasons in terms of military positioning), the U.S. works with narrow multilateral organizations, such as NATO. These organizations provide many of the same strategic and resource-sharing benefits that wider organizations do, and some can be more easily persuaded to act in U.S. interests because their members are regionally and ideologically similar. For example, NATO, as a mostly Western collective security agency, is more likely to support U.S. interests than a larger organization such as the U.N., and is largely US/UK controlled. This relative homogeneity of ideology can also lead to increased responsiveness, as it did in Kosovo in 1999. NATO alliances are also useful in non-NATO business, such as OSW and ONW, which contain NATO members Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. These non-NATO alliances are particularly common in regions lying outside of historic NATO authority (i.e. the Middle East). However, the narrower scope of NATO relative to that of the U.N. also detracts from a non-UN-authorized NATO operation’s legitimacy under international law.

5. This study has found that wide military multilateralism (i.e. United Nations authorization) is used primarily to achieve a specific objective (i.e. overthrowing the Taliban) while increasing US soft power and international credibility in operations that require sustained, costly military and diplomatic involvement. In the past, UN authorization has resulted in a large expansion of US command and control needs, useful in volatile, complex areas such as the Middle East (consider the array of alliances formed during the Gulf War). In addition, wide multilateralism is often a good measure to use in more volatile regions to buffer anti-US sentiment (i.e. the Middle East), even though the U.S. may largely be in charge of the operation. For example, within the U.N., short-term military coalitions are formed to fulfill the wishes of the acting multilateral body, and due to the open-ended nature of U.N. authorization, these coalitions can be terminated or reintroduced under US leadership. In building a UN coalition, the U.S. can draw upon relationships established by any of the above types of agreements (i.e. DCAs or NATO), as well as receive
resources from other U.N. nations with whom the U.S. has not engaged in sustained alliances (i.e. South American nations).

**Iraq: 2001-2002**

It is clear that the next US target in the “axis of evil” is Iraq; however, U.S. motives for attacking Iraq remain unclear to the international community. Does the U.S. wish to dethrone Saddam Hussein for his excessive violation of U.N. resolutions or for harboring and supporting terrorism? Or maybe because Iraq constitutes a threat to regional and world stability and/or U.S. interests? Perhaps it is a bit of all of these things, but the international community would rather be assured that the U.S. is not acting simply on its own interests, but for the greater good of fighting terrorism worldwide. To provide this assurance, a number of NATO members and other US allies worldwide refused to commit forces unless the U.S. acquired a UN resolution, over which the fifteen-member UN Security Council has control. If the U.N. can prove that Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction present a threat, and if pertinent Arab alliances are stronger than they were in 1991, the U.S. may have the momentum to depose President Hussein that it lacked during the Gulf War.

Although President Bush initially threatened to act unilaterally if the United Nations failed to enforce the UN resolutions violated by Saddam Hussein, the U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 1441 unanimously after two months of debate. Original Anglo-American language that other Security Council members felt could provide the legal basis for an immediate attack of Iraq (i.e. citing Iraq “in material breach” of the 1991 Gulf War cease-fire pact) was compromised. France, Russia, and Mexico had insisted that the “material breach” clause be included in a second resolution
should a more diplomatic first resolution fail. Mexico also reported that the modified resolution would give the UN Security Council the power to determine Iraq’s fate if WMD are found or Saddam Hussein refuses to comply with the new resolution, referring to the resolution as a last chance for diplomacy (“Mexico”). Resolution 1441 contains a compromised material breach clause, and contains text that orders Iraq to “not take or threaten hostile acts” against any personnel of any UN member state who is “taking action to uphold” any Security Council resolution. Some argue this is a trigger clause, and that the U.S. may try to apply the resolution to Iraqi fire on OSW and ONW aircraft. Others argue that there is no trigger clause, as these operations are not explicitly mandated by the U.N.

Because the U.S. has already voted in Resolution 1441 with the fourteen other members of the Security Council, it will need to perform some elegant maneuvers with international law if it decides to break with the resolution. This break is indeed foreseeable, as the U.S. has complained in recent years about the UN’s lack of fortitude in enforcing Iraq’s repeated UN violations at the end of the Gulf War. If the U.N. does not fulfill US expectations, the U.S. may very well try to bypass Resolution 1441. The “trigger clause” tactics mentioned in the previous paragraph are possible means of achieving this, as is justifying unilateral or coalition measures under previous UN resolutions. For example, the Clinton Administration justified Operation Desert Fox under Resolution 687 of 1990, which empowered the U.S. and other nations to use force against Iraq.

Indeed, the U.S. was given the authority to use military force in the Gulf War; the U.N. has always empowered individual states to use military force, as Article 43 of the
UN charter prohibits arms being made available to the Security Council. It acts solely as an authorizing body, with no central control over military operations (Lobel 126). Smaller UN members have often protested this traditional practice, claiming that it gives the most powerful member states the ability to control most of the conflict, including when to end or reinitiate it (as much U.N. authorization is not explicit). For example, the Gulf War ceasefire was not introduced by UNSC, but by the coalition of UN member states that had been authorized to use military force against Iraqi aggression. Therefore, in 1997-1998, the U.S. could claim Iraq to be in violation of the ceasefire when accounts of its weapons programs were published, and Operation Desert Fox was (arguably) a legitimate measure under international law.

Herein lie the benefits of the United Nations to the U.S.: the U.S. can use UN resolutions to gain legal credibility and some short-term operational allies, and it can subsequently proceed to control the means and ends of UN-mandated military operations by working with a small, UN-mandated (explicit or implicit) coalition. The U.S. has the ability to be very decisive and very responsive. The U.S has protested any modification of Article 43, and has been unwilling to relinquish control over its own forces to anything above superficial UN supervision. If the U.S. can find Iraq in breach of UN resolutions, and can claim that all peaceful attempts at reconciliation have failed (i.e. if it is dissatisfied with the U.N. weapons inspectors), it can also claim to attack Iraq under international law. Because UN authorization is so ambiguous and sometimes interpreted as implicit, the organization can easily be manipulated to justify US actions (Lobel 131). This, we can see, has been done in Kosovo, Operation Northern and Southern Watches, and Operation Desert Fox.
An attack Iraq would undoubtedly threaten regional stability in the extremely volatile Middle East. A disordered Iraq, as it would be without Saddam Hussein and his Baa’th Party, would shift the balance of power towards Iran, which still has diplomatic rifts with both the United States and several of its allies in the region (particularly the UAE). A unilateral attack on Iraq, whether justified under the umbrella of the War on Terrorism or not, would likely result in increased unilateral pressure on Palestinians from Israel under justification of the War on Terrorism. This would result in Arab popular sentiment turning against U.S. allies in the region, and could possibly compel more angry young men to enlist in terrorist activity.

By focusing the Iraq issue around a multilateral coalition against terrorism, such as one authorized by the U.N., the U.S. can mollify the above consequences, as well as justify its actions under international law like it did in Afghanistan. It can also remove the sole determination of the Iraqi fate from US power in what could potentially be a very complicated, costly, and sustained military operation expanding to other parts of the Middle East. Responsiveness may be sacrificed, but sources of military and financial support will expand beyond the short list of traditional US allies while diluting the common perception of US hegemony.

So what will the United States do? Will it challenge Iraq through the United Nations, or will it use the bilateral allies it can muster and attack Iraq and/or remove Saddam Hussein without a UN mandate? If the U.S. goes it alone, likely with Britain, Australia, some needy GCC states, and Turkey in tow, it will have established a dominant presence in the region, as well as secured Iraqi oil. However, its presence could become hated worldwide, by Arabs and non-Arabs alike, and would do nothing to prevent the
dissemination of WMD or to buffer the anger to use them. A lot of soft power would be lost, and internal feuding between the U.S. and Britain and Germany and France could weaken NATO. The United Nations as an institution of international law and the legitimate voice of the international community would be extremely undermined.

The U.S. must weigh the magnitude and immediacy of the Iraqi threat against its credibility within the international community, the strategic/financial feasibility of an attack, and the demands of the post-war environment, many of which are unpredictable and beyond US control. In the post-Cold War Era, the United States has strengthened relations with allies worldwide, from the G-8 to the G-77 to NATO to the U.N., via multilateral military operations and non-military multilateral agreements in areas such as trade. If the U.S. acts without UN authority (particularly if its motives do not primarily lie in counter-terrorism, but in trade or “unfinished business”), it risks smashing or overriding the multilateral, global progression that has been made in the past decade. This may further weaken relationships with our European and Arab allies, whose help we will need in sequestering terrorists hiding within their borders. Such an action would destabilize regions into which the U.S. has poured billions of dollars in military aid to maintain the balance of power. Thus, if the Iraqi threat is not immediate, and US interests in Iraq center mostly around terrorism and WMD, it is likely the United States will work with the international community and the UN Security Council. It will take advantage of the terrorism-shaken world to build international support for the future and secure the interests of itself and its strategic allies, as it did in the Balkans and previous operations in the Middle East. The U.S. will not risk the agreements, alliances, and stability it has so carefully crafted through diplomacy and multilateral military operations if the Iraqi threat
does not merit it, particularly in a time when alliances are useful in combating international terrorism.

If the US works with the U.N., it will have legal justification for forcefully removing Saddam Hussein if he is found in material breach of UN resolutions. Legal justification via UNSC authorization proved useful in the same volatile region in the 1991 Gulf War, winning the US worldwide support. The U.S., with help of UN allies, will have easily accessible military force in the region in terms of military (i.e. landing rights and bases) and financial support; in other words, removing Hussein will be less costly than if the U.S. were to act unilaterally or with a narrower coalition. In addition, after deposing Hussein, the U.S. alone will not have to bear the brunt of wartime and reconstruction costs (which, from previous cases, we can see are typically quite large) nor will it alone be held accountable for any grievances from the Arab community. It may even gain some more willing allies in the region, expanding its sphere of military command and control. US willingness to act multilaterally in the past has clearly been influenced by the prospect of these benefits and will continue to be so in the future.

In terms of allies, the US currently has one benefit that was not entirely present before the Gulf War: good relationships and previously defined defense cooperative agreements with all six GCC states. If these nations openly assist the U.S. in invading Iraq, under UNSC authorization or not, they may help buffer anti-American popular sentiment in the region. A strong US presence so close to Iraq may make reconstruction efforts easier and defer Iran from moving into Iraqi boundaries. In addition, the U.S. can exploit the open-ended authorizations of the UN Security Council to build coalitions that at face value are formed to enforce explicit or implicit UN authorizations, but are actually
rooted in precedents set by historic separate bilateral agreements with the United States. This gives the U.S. the power to negotiate with each of these nations on a separate basis, increasing responsiveness, and also allows the U.S. to determine the time parameters of the authorization (as was done in Operation Desert Fox, and continues to be done in ONW and OSW).

However, one factor not wholly present in the decision making for pre-9/11 US military operations is the very real possibility of an immediate attack on US soil that would result in high casualties. September 11 increased sensitivity and awareness to this possibility, and public angst is high, as reflected in numerous public opinion polls since the attacks. If the U.S. is certain that Iraqi WMD could be used against it in the near future, the benefits of past efforts in multilateralism will become extraneous compared to US security risks, and the U.S. and Britain will be forced to act alone with the allies they can gather from a previous history of loyalty and/or bilateral agreements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Date, Location</th>
<th>Degree of Multilateral Character</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operation Desert Storm</td>
<td>1990, Iraq/Kuwait</td>
<td>Widely Multilateral: UNSC resolution supporting strong US forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Allied Force</td>
<td>1999, Kosovo</td>
<td>Narrow Multilateral: NATO action, no UNSC resolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Enduring Freedom</td>
<td>2001 Afghanistan</td>
<td>Multilateral (UNSC) supporting strong US/UK forces.</td>
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Table 1
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<tr>
<th>Responsiveness</th>
<th>Responsive.</th>
<th>Somewhat responsive, but UNPROFOR was allowed to fail before NATO took military action.</th>
<th>Responsive (More so than Bosnia 1995).</th>
<th>Very responsive. Iraqi fire or noncompliance usually met with responsive OSW fire.</th>
<th>Very responsive. Iraqi fire or noncompliance usually met with responsive ONW fire.</th>
<th>Very responsive.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Costs          | Total incremental cost: 61 billion USD. 54 billion USD offset by coalition members (36 billion by Gulf States, 8 by Germany and Japan). Total U.S. Cost: 7 billion USD | Total incremental cost: 11.99 billion USD from 1992-2001. | Total incremental cost: 50 billion USD  
War: 4.1 bill  
Aid: 4.0 bill  
Peace: 9.5  
Reconstr: 32  
U.S. 2.5 bill  
UK 300 mill  
Germ 322 mill  
Frc 173 mill  
(1GBP=1.56 USD) | Total incremental cost: 3.86 billion USD from 1997-2001 Desert Fox: 92.9 million USD | Total incremental cost: 574.4 million USD from 1997-2001 Desert Fox: 92.9 million USD | OEF is estimated to cost 1 billion USD per month of engagement. This does not include costs of reconstruction, which will undoubtedly be very high. |
| Legal/International Acceptability | Medium. UN mandated, but it is perceived that Bush intended to act anyway. Much protest in Arab world. | High. UN-mandated operation conducted by NATO. Incorporated Russia was well. | Medium. Controversial use of only air forces. High civilian casualties. NATO forces, but operation not under UN mandate. | Medium-low. Some allies think raids, i.e. Desert Fox, have been too heavy. Linked to dual containment, a point of international dispute. | Medium-low. Neither ONW nor OSW are specifically mandated by UNSC, although they purport to be enforcing specific UN resolutions. | High. The War in Afghanistan as a component of the War on Terrorism was UN-mandated, NATO and ANZUS backed. The broader War on Terrorism remains controversial. |
| Coalition-building value | High. Arab states newly free from Soviet influence could rally behind US in exchange for protection from Iraq. Leads to separate bilateral DCAs. | High. Retrieved NATO from an uncertain future, and was decisive where the UN had failed. Also built upon relations with Russia through Balkan peacekeeping. | High. Retrieved NATO from an uncertain future, and was decisive where the UN had failed. Also built upon relations with Russia through Balkan peacekeeping. | Medium. Consists mainly of historic US allies. | Medium. Consists mainly of historic US allies. | High. Although US/UK forces performed the majority of direct operations, it was UN-mandated, and peacekeeping/reconstruction will require a broad international effort. |
| Effect on US Command and Control Needs | High. Led to bilateral DCAs with GCC states, as well as coalitions conducting sustained operations (OSW and ONW). | Medium. US in no need of more military assets in this area, but US control was indirectly expanded by strengthening NATO. | Medium. US in no need of more military assets in this area, but US control was indirectly expanded by strengthening NATO. | Medium-high. Incirlik Base in Turkey opened to US forces. Key position for exerting US influence in Middle East. | High. Legitimacy and success of operation in Afghanistan, combined with previous DCAs/agreements encouraged further cooperation from GCC states. US military influence in Afghanistan. |
| Degree of threat to U.S. homeland security | Medium-low. It was known that a U.S.-led attack on Iraq would cause Arab animosity. | Low. | Low. | Medium-low. It was known that a U.S.-led attack on Iraq would cause Arab animosity. | Medium-low. It was known that a U.S.-led attack on Iraq would cause Arab animosity. | High. It was known that the Afghani Taliban regime was harboring the terrorist group responsible for 9/11 (al-Qaeda). |
Works Cited


