Strategy Research Project

THE IMPACT OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM ON BUILDING FUTURE COALITIONS

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HENRI C. LAMBERT
United States Air Force

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE IMPACT OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM ON BUILDING FUTURE COALITIONS

by

Lieutenant Colonel Henri C. Lambert
United States Air Force

Colonel Roderick C. Zastrow
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

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Following years of conflict in Iraq, the initial "Coalition of the Willing" is dwindling. The U.S. methods in conducting Operation Iraqi Freedom, including the preemptive war for WMD, third country renditions, and torture have inflicted possibly irreparable damage which may affect the U.S.'s ability to generate coalition support in the future. Fighting effectively in the future will require effective coalition building strategies that must begin well before the conflict ever starts. In order to build coalition support in the future, the U.S. should enhance its pre-conflict engagement strategy so that coalition support may be easily built during contingencies. When kinetic response is required, U.S. strategy should ensure legitimate action within the confines of international law and work to change international law with respect to pre-emption of WMD and terrorism. The U.S. should take into account the second and third order effects of any proposed action and court the support of regional powers, where possible, to ensure long term stability and increase legitimacy. In the very least, the U.S. should work to be seen as a benevolent world power. Finally, the U.S. should focus strategic communications on pre-conflict engagement strategies in order to encourage future international support.

THE IMPACT OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM ON BUILDING FUTURE COALITIONS

On March 20, 2003, the United States initiated Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) with a goal of overthrowing the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein and securing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The operation began with the support of over 47 nations who signed U.S.-Concurrent Resolution 30. This support represented a large coalition but fell far short of the diplomatic objective of a United Nations (UN) mandate for preemptive action.[1] The decision to proceed without a mandate was not supported by the population of Britain, Australia, and other coalition partners. Yet, their Prime Ministers chose to support OIF in the face of popular discord. This polarized many non-coalition U.S. partners and other nations who initially strongly supported the U.S. in the concept of a Global War on Terrorism following the brutal terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11).[2]

Following 3 years of conflict in Iraq, the initial "Coalition of the Willing" has dwindled with the loss of Spain, Britain (in Iraq), and Italy among others. U.S. foreign relations stand on shaky ground. Many nations feel the inertia of support for the U.S. following 9/11 was squandered on Iraq and that it could have been used for greater victories against international terrorism.[3] Other nations feel the U.S. damaged its pre-9/11 image as a global benefactor. As a result of OIF, they perceive the U.S. as a hyperpower that pursues self-interest with little regard for the priorities of the European Union (EU), NATO, and arguably the rest of the world. Finally, the U.S. methods in conducting OIF including third country renditions, perceived illegitimate pre-emptive war, and torture have inflicted significant damage. This damage will most likely affect

the U.S.'s ability to generate coalition support in the future. In fact, one German government official relayed that we may have lost the support of an entire generation of the young worldwide who have grown up during this conflict.[4]

An increasingly interconnected world will require even stronger future coalition building efforts. According to our National Military Strategy, coalitions will be critical to providing access to future conflict areas, global security, deterring aggression, and ultimately for setting the conditions for success.[5]

The purpose of this paper is to conduct a thorough review of international concerns regarding coalition support for OIF and address how the U.S. might open the door to more robust coalition participation in the future. This paper will strive to reveal the perspective of the international community in order to offer U.S. security strategy approaches that will most likely garner wider coalition support in times of future need.

Coalitions: Difficult yet Necessary

In order to chart a path toward developing effective future coalition strategies, it is important to determine the U.S. view on its role in the international community, its strategy to exercise that role, the will to commit resources, and its ability to achieve its goals unilaterally. When the U.S. can not achieve it's goals unilaterally, we must understand its views on alliances, coalitions, and multi-lateral activity. Then, we can begin to discuss the strategically important approach to building better coalitions.

Effective coalition operations require the U.S. act as a member of a team and to balance self-interest in pursuit of national aims with the needs of the coalition as a whole. This is difficult for the U.S. as most coalition operations have required the U.S.

to foot a significant portion of the bill in order to get other nations equipped and sustained throughout the operation.

Coalition timelines are more lengthy than unilateral efforts. Coalitions require nations that have common interests, a common enemy, and a common strategy of how to address the common enemy. This is difficult, at best, to attain. The U.S. traditionally supports alliances when they conform to U.S. interests and strategy. However, few nations are capable of generating military capacity fast enough to coincide with U.S. desired timelines. Many coalition partners require time and support in order to "get into the fight." This is inconvenient for the U.S. and traditionally, the U.S. will attempt to go it alone. However, the U.S. needs coalitions in order to achieve its interests. For example, diplomatic efforts and sanctions require broad based cooperation. Additionally, military operations require over flight permission and basing rights.

Coalition operations require a level of consensus from the committed nations commensurate with the level of support they are providing. The U.S. has historically been reluctant to gain international approval to act. Eisenhower angered the British, French, and Israelis when they planned to conduct an invasion of the Suez and he withheld support.[6] Kennedy angered Turkey when he failed to consult the Turkish government prior to agreeing to take missiles out of Turkey in exchange for an end to the Cuban missile crisis in 1961. Reagan angered the Israelis when he negotiated a missile trade with Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages and when he failed to let Prime Minister Thatcher know that the U.S. was planning an invasion of Grenada, a British possession.

Recently, the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) took over operations in Afghanistan following the request of Germany and the Netherlands. The deployment was unanimously approved by all 19 NATO ambassadors and is historic as it is the first time NATO has deployed a force outside its area of responsibility. This effort has been underfunded by NATO and has generated considerable U.S. criticism overall.[7] Although this criticism has been well founded, it is unfortunate as it is important to encourage more operations where the international community shares the responsibility for international action. Wide international involvement ensures everyone has a stake in winning and has a shared responsibility for failure, should it occur.

A recent success has been the U.S. lead Proliferation Security Initiative[8] which is a multinational group dedicated to reducing the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The group has made great strides and is widely accepted by the UN as a successful and laudable U.S. effort. The U.S. should capitalize on these types of cooperative multi-national initiatives in order to gain credibility as a democratic nation that uses force as a last resort.

International Report Card

The U.S. has an important role to play in encouraging coalitions in the future. Increased coalition efforts will educate the international community on the difficulty of conducting global operations and they will encourage a shared learning environment with which countries may plan more effective future coalition operations. There will be stumbles and failures. However, the long term will generate a better prepared and trained international community with a global view. Since coalitions are vital, it is important to understand where the U.S. stands following years of OIF efforts.

United Nations (UN)

Arguably, the United Nations plays a pivotal role in generating legitimacy via international support for coalition operations. In 2003, the United States entered OIF with the support of only 47 of the current 192 member nations, less than 25 percent support. It is important to look in retrospect at the core concerns of the UN. The UN represents the lens of the world and it is important to look through this lens to understand why the U.S. failed to gain wider UN support during OIF.

In 2003 and today in 2008, the UN is focused not on the interest of a single nation, but on the collective needs of the member nations. U.S. priorities may not always coincide with UN member nation priorities as the U.S. is faced with the challenge of working towards common goals versus serving as a global leader. It is important for coalition approaches to take into account these priorities in order to justify why a particular coalition effort may outweigh current UN priorities; especially those that will suffer as a result of funding that may be diverted to support coalition operations. Today, the UN's collective interests are best stated by a review of their millennium goals that nations wish to achieve by 2015 which include: [9]

- Eliminate hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability

- Develop a global partnership for development

These broad and difficult goals are UN member nation collective goals and represent where nations will target their non-UN Security Council related efforts. The UN Security Council, however, determines the path of security efforts.

The UN Security Council concerns are the "maintenance of international peace and security." Their current priority areas include prevention and resolution of the many worldwide conflicts and disputes. A majority of current UN Security Council meetings, chaired in 2007 by the U.S. representative, are focused on the African continent, non-proliferation in Iran, and the Middle East, specifically the Palestinian situation.[10] The UN goals and the actions of the Security Council directly relate to where UN funds and focus will be channeled through 2015. Wherever U.S. interests fall outside these priorities, U.S. initiatives could be seen as drawing resources away from the UN's stated goals and current missions.

In the eyes of the UN member nations, especially France, the U.S. lowered the relevance of the UN when it acted unilaterally. In 1998, prior to 9/11, the U.S. Congress passed the Iraqi Liberation Act that ordered the removal of Saddam Hussein from power, telegraphing to the UN that the U.S. might act independent of the UN member nations. This act specifically addressed the concern that Saddam Hussein did not comply with 16 UN resolutions between 1991 and 1998 concerning WMD production. The act was followed by UN Resolution 1441 on 8 Nov 02 which upheld the previous resolutions.[11] On 27 Jan 03, the UN Security Council was briefed that inspections resumed with multiple independent teams. These teams found no evidence that Iraq was pursuing a nuclear program.[12] Subsequent Security Council meetings immediately

prior to the invasion of Iraq revealed the concern for the second and third order effects that a conflict in Iraq would create.[13] And, as late as the 12 Mar 03, numerous nations expressed concern to the Security Council that any effort in Iraq would divert resources from UN priority areas.[14]

Therefore, when the U.S. initiated OIF, the majority of UN members saw it as an illegitimate act of U.S. self-interest that would exacerbate rather than improve security in the region. These concerns have come to fruition with the revelation that Saddam Hussein possessed little WMD capability. In the eyes of the UN today, the U.S.-lead action in Iraq stands as an example of what can happen when a nation acts alone in its own self-interest and ignores the concerns and needs of the world as a whole.

The importance of UN-provided legitimacy can not be overstated. UN resolutions of support provide shared purpose and a shared role in success or defeat. Absent that support, warranted or otherwise, U.S. efforts stand at risk.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Under the leadership of Secretary General Lord Robertson, NATO's collective opinion prior to OIF was that NATO did not "go out looking for problems to solve." However, it is an important factor when approaching NATO for support. Prior to 2003, U.S. requests for action against Iraq could not have come at a worse time. These requests showed clearly that the interests of U.S. and European allies were out of step. Granted, NATO must be flexible enough to act in the event of any emergency. However, pre-emptive action in Iraq was far from being considered vital interests by NATO allies. NATO was in the middle of bringing most of eastern Europe's security apparatus into its structure. They had just brought in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and

Poland in 1999 and were in the middle of gaining Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, who officially entered in 2004. These efforts were tenuous as Russia was unhappy about NATO expanding so closely to its borders and NATO leaders were busy attempting to assuage these concerns.[15]

More importantly, in the eyes of NATO and the European community, the expansion of NATO was a very important step toward regional and global security. NATO involvement in OIF, especially the concept of pre-emption, might cause dissent among the nations who were pending entry. Any efforts to subordinate expansion at this critical time made OIF seem as an act of self-interest versus an operation to increase peace and security. Finally, several key NATO players such as Germany had constitutional limitations on support they can provide outside the NATO area of responsibility.

Subsequently, NATO developed a construct that opened the door for pre-emption in the future. This construct agrees that terrorists should not be allowed to base, train, plan, stage, and execute operations and that this may justify the need to act to prevent countries from harboring terrorists and to act against the terrorists themselves before they attack NATO nations.[16]

Overall, NATO support could have been broader if the U.S. had more carefully considered timing as a factor in building the coalition. Selling the coalition could have been more successful had the U.S. communicated the importance of expanding NATO. The U.S. could have couched the Iraq situation in the broader sense of eliminating a large drain on U.S. and allied resources that had been enforcing the no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq since the early ‘90s. The NATO effort did not appear to be

achieving the goals of protecting the Kurds and forcing Saddam Hussein to give up his WMD efforts. As discovered most recently, Saddam's efforts to conceal his nonexistent WMD program were an attempt to mislead Iran into thinking Iraq was still a regional power with the ability to bite back should Iran decide to reinvigorate the Iran/Iraq war. His efforts misled U.S. leadership and Iran in a manner that backfired on coalition sustainment once the world found out about the lack of WMD, the basis for the pre-emptive invasion to liberate Iraq. This combined with the timing of OIF to produce a tipping point for European public opinion. In turn, that eventually helped lead to reduced coalition support from Britain, Italy, and Spain.[17]

European Union (EU)

The European Union was also in the midst of bringing in the ten new member states from Eastern Europe at the initiation of OIF with the same concerns of NATO. Following March 2003, support for the war fractured between those in support including the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark, the Czech Republic, and Hungary; and those in dissent including France, Germany, and Belgium. The addition of the East European nations to the EU in 2004 generated additional support from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.[18]

A multi-national survey was recently conducted of EU citizens regarding the war of which 68 percent felt military action in Iraq was not justified. Major players in NATO individually ranked higher levels of dissent (UK 51%, Germany 72%, Spain 79%, France 81%). Eighty-one percent ranked involvement in the Middle East (Palestinian/Israeli) peace process as more important to reducing terrorism than action in Iraq. More

importantly, over 48 percent felt the world was a more dangerous place as a result of U.S. action. National leaders shouldn't use polls as the primary determinate of national efforts. However, these statistics are important to note when contemplating action in the future.[19]

OIF also had a direct effect on the potential for basing rights in several of the new Eastern European states. In Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland, 83 percent of the citizens would not support U.S. basing rights in future operations as a direct result of OIF.[20] Basing rights are critical to the ability to conduct operations and this statistic shows the secondary effect of choosing to act unilaterally.

With regards to the future, EU members are willing to form a consensus view on pre-emption but disagree on the standards that should be applied. In nearly every case, EU members prefer multilateral action rather than a unilateral approach to world politics, especially in light of the second and third order of regional and international effects that result from unilateral action. Many of the EU members are highly receptive to taking increased roles provided they have a UN mandate. The importance of a UN mandate becomes a common thread when determining support for coalition operations.[21]

Russia, France, and Germany: The Counter-Balance

Russia was initially shoulder to shoulder with the U.S. following 9/11 forming the NATO-Russian Council in 2002. Although they were concerned about NATO expansion, Russia initially ignored the U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. However, U.S. action in Iraq set U.S.-Russian relations plummeting. Iraq owed Russia over 10 billion dollars in oil and trade debt which Russia wished to recoup via oil support from Iraq. The U.S. decision to act unilaterally disrupted the flow of oil was

seen as a direct threat to Russian autonomy, and also neutralized Russia's role within the UN.[22] The U.S. damaged a close relationship with an up and coming ally who formed a coalition of their own with Germany and France to counter what they saw as the danger of a single nation (U.S.) dictating the policy of the world.

Recent surveys in Russia show that 88 percent feel the U.S. had no right to violate international law and the UN charter to invade Iraq. The same percentage felt the U.S. pushed for a military solution versus a peaceful solution. And, 64 percent felt the war was conducted to show the U.S. is the leader of the world and to control oil by overthrowing Saddam Hussein and installing a U.S. puppet regime. A more disturbing figure is that 54 percent believe the second and third order effects of OIF could unleash another world war. At the very least, 29 percent feel it is the start of a new Cold War between the U.S. and Russia.[23]

France has long shared concern over the unbalancing effect that the fall of the Berlin Wall has had with the U.S. now being the global superpower. France has consistently acted to counterbalance the effects of its perception of U.S. hegemony. During the first Gulf War, however, France readily laid aside self-interest to support a UN mandate.[24] Initially after 9/11, then President Jacques Chirac led France in support of the Global War on Terrorism. However, Chirac felt it was important to get a UN mandate and to allow the UN inspection process to work. Once he found out the U.S. planned to act without giving the recently renewed inspection process a chance, he threatened to veto any UN resolution to invade Iraq and partnered with Germany and Russia. Fundamentally, France was very concerned over the need for balance in world affairs and unilateral actions are seen as a threat, especially those by the U.S.[25]

Under President Sarkozy, France seems to be warming to the U.S. However, Sarkozy initially reinforced Chirac's policy of non-support for the war. Additionally, he is supportive of the concept of pre-emption in light of Teheran's growing nuclear threat.[26]

Germany's constitution is interpreted to forbid military action outside the scope of NATO though Germany did provide 9 billion dollars in financial and technical aid during the first Gulf War.[27] Germany allied with France and Russia against U.S. unilateral action in Iraq. Operation Iraqi Freedom, especially the effect of third country rendition and torture, has moved Germans from an attitude of not truly needing U.S. help for defense to Germany not wanting U.S. help.[28]

Overall, there is a great fear among the European states, Russia, and even China that another rapid victory will further cement the position of the U.S. as the global superpower without peer. These powers believe they are helping to create a balancing effect within the world as they greatly fear a world where the U.S. dictates world affairs without any check or balance. Future efforts at coalition building with these partners will require the U.S. to treat Russia and China at least partially as peers in order to prevent them from using their regional power to encourage other nations to counter U.S. efforts at coalition building.[29]

Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada

Britain has long been a bridging power between Europe and the U.S. and it would be tough to establish a coalition without the support of the U.S.' strongest ally. Britain is no longer solely dependent on the U.S. for credit or military support and stands firm financially in the world. Then-Prime Minister Tony Blair was ready to support the U.S. in conducting OIF without a UN mandate and without the support of the British people.

The British government has a fond near term memory of then-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger providing immediate assistance to British forces conducting the Falkland Islands campaign prior to support becoming official U.S. policy. Britain and the U.S. along with Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have been close intelligence partners following an agreement signed in 1948. As a result, intelligence sharing is so close that it has virtually no seams. [30]

Blair worked hard to attempt to convince President Bush to obtain UN authorization to use force before initiating OIF, yet he continued to support a coalition effort. In the face of Blair's backing, 39 percent of the British population opposed supporting OIF with troops.[31] By 2004, Prime Minister Blair's continued support for Iraq resulted in the largest upset in Parliament in over 120 years. Over a million people took to the streets. As a result, Blair lost support and is no longer his nation's Prime Minister. All this came about despite a major attack on their homeland during the "Tube" bombings. Now, surveys show that a majority of the British people see the U.S. as the greatest threat to world peace.[32] Between 2003 and 2004, support for the war sank from 61 percent to 43 percent, a significant drop.[33] Though Blair felt gaining world support through the UN was an important precursor to the use of force, he stuck with the U.S. and paid for it by losing the British people and his place as Prime Minister.

Australia invoked the 1951 ANZUS (Australian, New Zealand, and U.S.) treaty for the first time following 9/11 which in essence meant that Australia considered the attacks a direct attack on Australia. This effort was reinforced by the deaths of 88 Australians in bombings in Bali in 2002. Initially, 72 percent of Australians supported action and saw the U.S. alliance as important. This alliance was further strengthened

when their embassy was bombed in Jakarta in 2004. However, the primary support for continuing troop deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq comes from Australia's Prime Minister Howard. He has been losing ground due to failing efforts in Iraq. He is also receiving continued criticism for deploying troops without a UN mandate.[34] This concern is compounded with the strain caused by Australia's conflicting interests. Australia has a very warm trade relationship with China in an effort to maintain a stable region in Asia. Australia is rapidly distancing itself from hard line U.S. policies against China as Australia values proactive diplomacy in the region. Furthermore, Howard is up for reelection in the coming year and his position is in jeopardy. If he loses, it might be due to his support for OIF and the U.S. His replacement would be less likely to support U.S. coalition efforts without a UN mandate or a clear linkage between U.S. and Australian interest if public support levels remain at or near the current level. At the very least, Howard has reassured his Asian partners that Australia would not take any action in the region without consulting with them.[35]

Canada and New Zealand remain strong U.S. partners. However, both national leaders are receiving increased domestic political pressure in light of the continuing situation in Iraq. Canadians have a history of working in direct partnership with the U.S. However, the U.S. should be wary of straining these close ties.

Asia

A July 2006 survey of Asians showed a significant increase in distrust of America across Indonesia, Malaysia, China, India, Australia, and South Korea. All believe that the war in Iraq increased the threat of terrorism rather than having reduced it because Iraq has become a perceived breeding ground for Al Qaeda to recruit from. They also

feel that the root cause of terrorism is inequality and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this area they mirror the concerns of the European community. The U.S. war in Iraq is specifically seen as taking focus off of the threat of China and North Korea, allowing both to act more freely in the region while U.S. attention is focused on Iraq.[36] One major plus for future coalition action is that China stands ready to support joint operations to fight terrorism but prefers to have a UN mandate first.[37]

Coalition of the Willing: A Mistaken Identity?

The coalition of the willing is a concept founded on the idea that by creating a coalition from those that are willing to help, the U.S. will be able to respond more quickly for short term operations.[38] This concept worked well recently during the mobilization of the Regional Core Group that conducted tsunami relief in Sri Lanka in 2004 because it was primarily a humanitarian mission. However, the coalition assembled for Operation Iraqi Freedom was more conspicuous for the nations that failed to support it than for those that went along in order to preserve U.S. relations or to obtain favorable concessions at the conclusion of the conflict.

The United States can't necessarily mistake the participation of the coalition of the willing as a full vote of support. Some of the nations that are supporting the U.S. may be doing so for sheer self-interest, commonly termed as "bandwagoning" or siding with the most powerful with the long term goal of sharing in the benefits of victory. A portion of the supplemental U.S. spending bill for OIF and OEF included millions in foreign aid to nations that supported coalition efforts. Poland, though initially financially unable to provide military support, received $250 million in compensation for sending 2,300 troops to man a Polish sector. At the conclusion of combat operations, ministers from Hungary

and the Czech Republic stated that their role was to ensure their countries' ability to obtain reconstruction contracts. One must maintain a sense of reality as these nations need an economic boost and wish to obtain a seat on the world stage. A majority may be acting with a genuine effort to become key players of the EU and NATO. These examples do underscore the fact that although the initially large coalition of the willing may initially look effective, this beauty may only be "skin deep" for some nations.[39]

In Asia, Japan and South Korea deployed troops in support of U.S. in order to maintain their alliance with the U.S., despite disapproval of their public. Asia cooperated largely in order to ensure U.S. support for aid in future humanitarian relief efforts and regional security efforts.[40]

In Turkey, the U.S. experienced what can happen when the national interests of two allied countries diverge. Turkey's parliament voted on 1 Mar 03 to prevent the U.S. from using Turkey as a staging base for the OIF offensive. Turkey's leadership knew OIF could result in a resurgence of violence from the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) terrorist group operating out of Kurdish areas of Iraq and Southern Turkey.[41] This fear came to fruition and is currently causing stress with U.S.-Turkish relations as the Turks are conducting offensive operations into northern Iraq.

Others nations such as Britain may be "bridging" or attempting to maintain coalition support as a bridge between the U.S. and non-supporting states in order to encourage cooperation between them. They fear being isolated by supporting either side exclusively as this may prevent them from maintaining economic and diplomatic support in their region. Meanwhile, they fear being marginalized by the U.S. because

this could also have a dramatic negative effect in the long run on their economy and future military cooperation.[42]

The United States should not take coalition support for granted and must cultivate international relationships prior to contingency operations in earnest in order to open the door for coalition operations in the future. The current coalition of the willing included only 24 percent of UN member nations and, with effort, could be much broader in the future. In similar circumstances in the future, the U.S. may choose to proceed in combined operations with only a fraction of the world in support. The U.S. accepts significant risk in these situations as the long term negative effects may overshadow the short-term operational gains. Effective international diplomacy work, prior to conflict, will help significantly. The addition of new NATO and EU members provides evidence of great opportunity for cooperation in the future. This cooperation should not be squandered with disregard for the collective needs of the entire world team. The expansion of NATO and the EU also underscores the growing capacity for these organizations to act together to counter or advance U.S. interests. In the future, these nations will inevitably provide a wider market for U.S. companies and it will become ever more important to encourage cooperation and build cooperative relationships with respect for each other's international concerns.

Preemption, Renditon, and Torture: The Three Polarizers

The international "report card" reveals a consistent view regarding three of the most controversial areas that have affected the world view about coalition support and these factors may affect coalition operations in the future. These concerns are preemption, third country rendition, and torture.

Pre-emption Versus Prevention

In 2003, the world was polarized over the concept of the U.S. conducting a pre-emptive strike on a nation with the premise that the end (pre-empting a clear and present threat) would justify the means (conducting an attack without being attacked directly). A majority of the world did not see Iraq as a clear and present danger to the world, their nations, and much less the local region in light of Iraq's defeat during the first Gulf War. Many saw OIF as a preventive war or a war that is undertaken because one feels another state could become a threat in the future. Pre-emptive war is predicated on the fact that an adversary is an imminent threat.

As of 2004, a significant number of nations, including many of those not represented in the coalition of the willing, support the idea that there may be situations, especially those involving weapons of mass destruction, where pre-emption would be preferable to waiting for an actual attack. Attacks on Bali, Madrid, London, and other attacks strengthen resolve for nations to intervene in situations where state sponsors or terrorists groups avow to use such devices and tactics; and that there is compelling evidence that they possess (or will possess) the capability with the intent to use it. However, most also advocate modifying international laws.[43]

Modifying international law is an important first step toward any future attempts to attack a sovereign nation pre-emptively. Framing such law would require the important aspect to ensure an international body validated the fact that preemption was necessary. Otherwise, pre-emption could open the door for India to attack Pakistan, or China to absorb Taiwan. Pre-emption is a slippery slope that could allow any nation to attack any other nation preemptively if not framed appropriately. Canadian foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy put it best when he said; "Any time you set a precedence for

unilateral intervention, you're giving a license for everyone to do the same." Recently, the UN Report from the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change recognized that there were situations that justified the use of preventive force before threats became imminent in nature. This includes proliferation or possible use of nuclear weapons. They further stipulated that the criteria should follow Just War Theory methodology.[44]

Third Country Rendition and Torture

In 2004, Human Rights Watch began reporting that terrorist suspects were being rendered to third country intelligence agencies for the purpose of interrogation. Investigative reports then revealed that as many as 400 of these rendition flights were transitioning through British airports. This caused a huge stir when then Prime Minister Blair claimed no knowledge of the flights. Further investigation revealed that subjects were being held in unknown locations and being tortured. These facts came out in the media and were responded to by Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice who was quoted in *The Figaro* as saying, "It is up to the European governments to take their responsibilities if they work with us. It is also up to them to decide what they make public."[45] This statement essentially abrogated any remaining position the U.S. had in the international view as a benevolent nation with a history of following our Constitution and acting for the greater good of others. The intent was to ensure that terrorist subjects with perishable, vital knowledge were rapidly interrogated, preferably by interrogators who spoke the same language. Unfortunately, these third country interrogation techniques might include harsh interrogation or torture. The U.S. was seen as knowingly sponsoring torture of captured subjects. Since then, several

European nations have come forward claiming that there might be certain circumstances where torture may be required in order to prevent a great catastrophe such as if police captured a terrorist who knew the location of a nuclear device that was programmed to detonate in New York City in 12 hours. History has shown that torture has not been a successful strategy. The blow back of such a strategy is normally tactically successful yet carries strategic implications that far outweigh the minor and disputed tactical benefits.[46]

Third country rendition and especially torture are pressing issues which most free nations react to as a violation of international law. If there are circumstances that justify rendition that might lead to torture, they need to be rooted in international law. Furthermore, the U.S. received a considerable black eye from the lack of international strategic communication regarding the secret practice. This failure allowed U.S. critics to gain the upper hand. If the U.S. considers using such a practice in the future, it will be important to lay out the reasoning to the American people and the world in order proactively justify why and more realistically indicate what the implications would be if the U.S. failed to take this action.

Lessons from OIF

Based on the international report card from OIF, what are the lessons that will help determine a better path to coalition building in the future?

The fundamental lessons of OIF are:

- Future preemptive action will require significant justification in order to gain broad coalition support. The U.S. did not build a convincing case for invading

Iraq pre-emptively. As a result, the international community labeled the war an illegitimate act.

- Coalition participation can be much broader if it can be linked to the goals of the coalition member nations. The international community, especially the UN, NATO, and EU view OIF as a significant distraction in effort and resources.
- Broadening coalition participation will ensure coalition partners are vested in the solutions and potential failures of coalition action. The U.S. policy of unilateral preemptive action, using a coalition of the willing, polarized world opinion. The international community was not invested in the outcome in Iraq, therefore, unilateral action resulted in failures in Iraq equating to U.S. failures rather than international or coalition failures.
- Revising international law with regard to pre-emption may increase coalition participation. Many nations see a need for international law that supports the use of preemption in specific cases provided International Law is revised.
- Coalitions may be further broadened if the U.S. ensures actions are in accordance with international law. U.S. use of third country rendition resulting in torture has gravely affected international opinion.

Plan for Future Coalition Success

Based on the lessons from OIF, what can be done to build better coalitions in the future? The following are some recommendations that may help.

Increasing Pre-Conflict Engagement

The U.S. can easily begin overcoming the scars of OIF and regain its place in the international community by reinforcing its role in increasing peace and security throughout the world. The effort is best obtained by increasing its pre-conflict engagement strategy. The U.S. can easily build up a repository of good will and leadership by stabilizing faltering nations before they become failed states and require ever more costly intervention. The UN Millennium Goals and engagement plans, flawed though they may be, provide an initial concept for success. Many of the target nations in Africa and the Middle East reflect the potential to achieve stability, peace and security, expanded global markets, and broader access to natural resources. Many of these potential target nations present an important or peripheral interest to the United States. If they fail, they could destabilize the region or become a seed ground for international terrorism. Presently, OIF has committed a majority of the U.S. resources that could be used eventually to meet these goals. Progress in Iraq, while still slow, is showing promise. The U.S. should strive to meet a goal of international interaction (resources and personnel interaction) being significantly more constructive than kinetic. What this means is that during times of relative peace, U.S. sponsored International Joint Interagency Task Forces (IJIATFs) could be employed in an effort to build a repository of international good will and cooperation so that the international community is more likely to support kinetic action, when needed. Task forces should include interagency and non-governmental organization (NGO) membership as most multi-national issues involve all elements of U.S. government interaction. These efforts need not conflict with the goals of the Global War on Terrorism. In fact, many of the initiatives could simultaneously strengthen other nations, refute the negative allegations of

terrorist groups about the U.S., and reduce the pool of passive and active terrorism supporters. IJIATFs, including NGO representation, can be employed constructively to perform some of the following missions:

- Regional Engagement Task Forces. Combatant Commander sponsored task forces to enhance engagement, peace, and security within their regions. Many of these task forces are pre-existing. However interagency and international membership is limited and should be increased. Also, cooperation with NGOs is currently sporadic, reducing the potential for success. Finally, the existing groups are U.S. lead organizations that might be better led cooperatively.
- UN Millennium Goal Task Force. Earnestly attempt to meet the UN goals for 2015. This effort will assist in meeting peace and stability operation goals.
- Middle East (Palestinian/Israeli) Task Force. Cooperatively engage the region, including the EU/NATO, Arab nations, and Russia to develop and execute a resolution to the Palestinian/Israeli situation. This would be no small task. However, effort will demonstrate U.S. resolve to remain a world leader in this region.
- Foreign Exchange Program Task Force. Increase cultural awareness of both U.S. and foreign military personnel through enhanced interaction. This would include cooperative training and enhanced foreign exchange officer programs that imbed U.S. personnel in foreign units and foreign personnel in U.S. units.
- Medical Task Force. This task force would conduct operations similar to Doctors without Borders using ships like the U.S.NS Mercy and U.S.NS

Comfort, M/V African Mercy, Spanish ship Esparanza del Mar, and others. The task force could also work to prevent pandemics and diseases.

These IJIATFs would require a significant investment in manpower and resources. However, initial investment may attract follow-on expanded investment and cooperation by other nations, especially nations with an economic interest. Moreover, previous support and reconstruction efforts in Kosovo and East Timor illustrate the need to get involved early in the shaping phase of potential crisis when nations begin to falter. Intervention under the banner of a UN Charter is much less costly in the long term if proactive efforts are applied before situations become volatile and require force or costly stabilization and reconstruction.

An additional factor that will build international community is to remain a world leader while avoiding the perception of being the global hegemon. This is very difficult as the U.S. is the world's only remaining superpower and should protects its vital interests where necessary. Many of these IJAITFs could be partially financed or supported by the U.S. while being lead by other regional powers as a partnership. This concept would allow the U.S. to be seen as a global partner while allowing regional leaders to have a stake in the success of the operation. At a minimum, representation of regional powers such as China and Russia should be sought wherever possible to achieve multi-polar interaction and decrease the potential for tension. In some cases, the U.S. may need to sacrifice some level of leadership in these efforts in order to gain broader international voice and cooperation.[47] The best examples for these operations are ones that are of low importance or peripheral interest. In these cases, the U.S. can afford and even desire that a regional partner assume the leadership role. Non-U.S.

lead operations would potentially be slower due to the decreased ability of other nations to provide resources and personnel. They would also involve increased risk as the outcomes might be less sure. However, in the long run, outsourcing will increase the number of nations who are qualified to lead coalition operations, increasing world's stability and global teamwork. One could argue that there are but two nations today that can effectively lead coalitions, the U.S. and UK, due to past experiences during conflict and mobility. With increased effort, this could change.

In other cases, the U.S. should rightfully retain leadership where U.S. interests are important or vital. The sum total of these efforts would be increased stability worldwide and quite possibly a reduced potential for the use of force. The use of IJIATFs would ensure the involved nations are invested in solutions and conflict avoidance. Finally, IJIATFS provide a ready coalition with which to build upon if conflict should occur.

Diplomacy, Legitimacy, and the Use of Force.

The U.S. must focus more effort to JIATF-style diplomacy. In many cases, diplomacy is measured in State Department or Combatant Commander engagement programs that are under funded, under resourced, or under represented in international terms.

Diplomatic efforts should also avoid establishing lines in the sand that unnecessarily drive perceived or actual timelines for the use of force. Following Operation Desert Storm, the U.S. initiated Operation Provide Comfort followed by Operation Northern Watch as U.S. European Command Combined Task Force efforts to defend the Kurds who were being targeted by Saddam Hussein after the First Gulf

War. The U.S. also took the lead to address Iraq's failure to comply with the UN inspections rather than allowing Iraqi noncompliance to reflect on the UN alone. The U.S. allowed itself to be seen as the lead enforcer of UN policy instead of stepping back and allowing the UN member nations to take the collective responsibility for the lack of enforcement of peace treaties.

The U.S. must recognize that the UN process is arduous but important, reinforcing the need to increased focus work through IJIATFs. The U.S. should do everything in its power to achieve UN support for diplomatic efforts, and if necessary, the use of force. The U.S. should set a high standard for the use of force to ensure that it is only used when important or vital interests are truly at stake and then with full consideration for the potential second and third order effects.

When force is necessary, the U.S. should work to achieve UN member nation support as a prerequisite unless there is a direct and immediate threat to U.S. interests. UN support provides a significant level of international legitimacy. When force is required, the U.S. should also attempt to obtain an allied forces relationship similar to that used during World War II (WWII) between the U.S., Britain, France, and Russia in order to ensure the effort being seen as an allied effort versus a U.S. lead effort with all other nations in a supporting role. Where less important or peripheral interests are at stake, the U.S. should allow other nations to lead the effort with the U.S. in a mutually supporting role in order to increase number of allies with the global capacity for coalition operations in the future. This may require financial, equipment, and training support. Currently only two nations are truly capable of leading coalition operations, the U.S. and Britain. During WWII, the allies had a greater capacity for leading coalition efforts and

with few exceptions, the allies shared collective responsibility for achievement and failure.

Revise the UN Charter to Support Pre-emption.

Numerous UN member nations have expressed a desire to revise the UN Charter to allow for the limited use of pre-emption.[48] It is important for the U.S. to work with the UN member nations to develop a legal framework for the future. The current UN Charter does not provide for pre-emption and therefore, any future pre-emptive action will be seen as illegitimate. Article 51 of the current Charter reads:

> Nothing in the Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.[49]

Amending the Charter could have far reaching implications regarding the potential for other nations to take preventive action unless it is framed in such a way as to prevent a nation from initiating conflict by self-interest alone. The addition of the following proposed pre-emption clause may allow the UN member nations to take effective action, yet prevent overt aggression:

> The charter shall also not impair the right of individual or collective self-defense if a member of the United Nations is directly threatened to a point where limited pre-emptive attack is required to mitigate an imminent impending threat of mass destruction in order to maintain international peace and security. In these instances, the nation or nations of concern will show cause and obtain a UN resolution supporting such action.

In the case of pre-emption, immediate action is rarely required as the threat grows gradually until the offending nation's actions reach a point where others perceive a direct and impending threat. The provision for a UN resolution ensures the proposed

pre-emptive action undergoes a review to ensure it meets the spirit and intent of the pre-emptive clause.

Anticipate Second and Third Order Effects of U.S. Action.

In order to increase the effectiveness of international interaction, the U.S. must take into account the second and third order effects of action as they relate to the region and international community of concern. In some cases, international interest may trump U.S. interest if the damage caused by pursuing U.S. interest unilaterally creates more damage than benefit to U.S. In the case of OIF, the second and third order effects were communicated by concerned nations during UN Security Council meetings prior to the invasion. These effects included regional destabilization, and widening of the conflict through the involvement of insurgents from neighboring Iran and Syria. These predictions were well founded and came to fruition. When second and third order effects present a significant issue, the U.S. may wish to consider alternative actions, such as a more limited attack. Or, work with regional nations to take effective action by their own right and in smaller groups. In the case of OIF, the U.S. might have conducted direct attacks on Saddam Hussein and on the suspected sites of chemical and biological agents while holding back an invasion force.

Another important factor in building coalitions is for the U.S. to recognize and appreciate the interest of other nations in the region of concern, especially regional powers like Russia and China. The U.S. ultimately does not wish to appear weak in the eyes of the world. However, U.S. policy often overcompensates and looks inadvertently aggressive to Russia and China. This upsets the great progress that has been made in the past decade with regard to diplomatic relations between these two nations. The

U.S. can remain the dominant global power without the need to appear as an aggressor. This fine balance requires careful diplomatic relations. An important factor is to solicit the membership of regional nations on IJIATFs and regional groups. This effort does not cede power from the U.S., it gains legitimacy for the task force or region group that is meeting. Certainly, it is better to get regional concerns out in the open as they will only be vetted behind closed doors if these important regional powers are left out. Cooperation strengthens international security. In many instances, it is important to have these countries in the lead, or at least as partners in their own regions, where appropriate. In some cases, the U.S. must be willing to make some concessions in order to gain regional cooperation. [50] In any case, the U.S. should strive to be seen in its historical role as a consensus builder that takes the needs of other nations into account before making decisions which become the interest of all. The U.S. has been historically viewed as a moderate and almost isolationist nation (with regard to the use of force) that serves as the force that maintains international peace.[51] The U.S. should seek to regain and maintain this status in the eyes of the world.

Strategic Communications

The glue that holds foreign policy together is strategic communications. The U.S. is often seen by the world as a poor communicator. The first story, right or wrong, is the one that will often be the most remembered. Most certainly, it becomes the anchor point from which future stories respond. Therefore, it is important for U.S. strategic communications to be conveyed not as the U.S. bending the world to its will but rather the U.S. acting as the capable leader, acting to help guide the rest of the world toward peace, cooperation, and security. Strategic messages must reflect effective statecraft

that is formed with coordination with other nations and more often with shared delivery. Very early after 9/11, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair delivered joint messages to the media demonstrating clearly that the U.S. and Britain were united and clearly on the same page. These messages show a shared sense of purpose and also showed the U.S. and Britain on equal footing as allies. During World War II, Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt were often photographed together and conducted joint conferences which in the very least made it appear as if the allies were acting in unison. Each had their own differences and great concerns. However, the allied nations and more importantly, the axis powers perceived the allies as a united front. The media is an excellent forum for showcasing solidarity. Unfortunately, the U.S. is often seen as casting a shadow on the rest of the world. Turning this tide is an important factor for increasing coalition cooperation.

It is important for the U.S. to communicate to the world how it is working to support the goals of the international community, especially the UN member nation regional and Millennium Goals. The U.S. should work actively to advertise its successes in multinational efforts. Strategic communications should be provided in the languages of potential coalition allies via their media in order to ensure positive reception by coalition populations. This information campaign is extremely important as it sets the world stage for coalition cooperation and illustrates accurate U.S. goals of promoting a more free and democratic world.

U.S. policy often surprises allies, partly because the U.S. is concerned with the secrecy of particular initiatives. However, these surprises sometimes demonstrate to the surprised ally that they are not trusted, and that their concerns do not matter. U.S.

leadership can not be surprised when the same thing happens as the U.S. is in turn surprised by the policy of an ally. If one wishes to build effective coalitions, trust becomes the foundation. If trust is squandered by the ally, then the U.S. should tactfully call the ally to task diplomatically.

It is important to remember the old saying; “Anything done in the dark will eventually be seen in the light.” This clearly applied to the policy of third country rendition and torture. If there is a morally defensible reason to do it, then it is important to justify it first in the eyes of the world. If it is not, then the U.S. should not do it or should have an effective and proactive strategy of strategic communications for when it comes to light. Third country rendition and torture have been Al Qaeda’s strategic communication weapon of mass destruction for the U.S. The only credible justification for torture in the eyes of the free world is the classic case where a terrorist knows where a weapon of mass destruction is and it is about to go off, killing hundreds, perhaps thousands. These situations rarely, if ever, happen in the real world. If they do, then it is important to justify it first, ex post facto.

There will always be occasions when the U.S. must act unilaterally in the future due to an important or vital interest. There may be occasions when time is a critical factor, or other nations are unwilling or unable to take effective action. These instances should be few in number. In these few cases, an effective strategy would be to attempt to exhaustively gain a UN resolution of support, or at least the support of the majority nations for the cause. Clearly lay out the case for action in terms that resonate with the international community. This effort must be one that involves considerable time and effort to craft messages that strike a chord with every nation targeted for coalition

support. The message should be generated in a way that identifies the impact of inaction with relation to each region and every major nation. In this manner, it is possible to ensure every nation knows the dangers in terms they understand. During this consensus building phase, it is extremely important for the U.S. not to appear as if it will go to war regardless of international action. If it does, then the U.S. is on a course to war without the ability to back down without looking weak. When the U.S. is unable to achieve support, leadership is forced to determine whether the cause is truly worth going it alone, or abandoning if the cause is not related to survival or other enduring interests.

One can not overstate the important role that a strategic pause can have at this point to fully evaluate the situation while weighing its operational and strategic risks. U.S. interests may be affected. However, the situation may not require immediate action. It may be time to continue diplomacy and communicate to the world that the danger may have grave impact in the future if it is not neutralized. If the international community is willing to accept the risk, then U.S. actions should be taken to protect itself and those in support in a defensive role.

This defensive phase may involve some limited defensive action that targets enemy offensive capability. An example is the Israeli strike on Iraq's Osirak nuclear facility. During this phase, strategic communications should clearly spell out the intent of the defensive action, immediately ex post facto so the international community can understand why the action took place, and know that the action did not spell the beginning of unilateral action.

The U.S. has twice demonstrated that unilateral action with a minority coalition in support ultimately places the U.S. in a negative international light; especially if the U.S. is bogged down over an extended period of time. The Vietnam War and the current conflict in Iraq demonstrate examples of the dangers of going it principally alone. If unilateral action is still required, it is important to ensure the support of the American public. The strategic message should clearly articulate the reasons for impending conflict in terms that can withstand the test of time. Pre-OIF strategic communication cited the reason for conflict was that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) constituted an immediate threat. When WMD was not found, it de-legitimized the conflict. Strategic communications would have been more effective had they communicated that: Saddam Hussein had ignored 16 UN resolutions since 1991. He was providing $50,000 to the family of any suicide bomber who died in the cause of Palestine, and that his lack of cooperation with UN WMD inspection teams made it impossible to determine whether he was developing additional stockpiles with the intent to use them against free nations. Saddam had targeted his own people with WMD and there was significant concern that his belligerent behavior would lead to him targeting U.S. and other forces in the region. And, it would have been better if the message came via a joint US-GCC communiqué that he need only comply in earnest to prevent the overthrow of his regime.[52]

One can not overstate the importance of strategic communications. In a globalized world, the media has the ability to gain and maintain international support as we saw following the attacks of 9/11. They also have the ability to turn public support against the U.S. as we have seen with the current situation in OIF. It is important to

build a bow wave of popular support internationally prior to the U.S. ever requesting coalition support for an operation. During operations, strategic communications is important to consistently point the international community toward the conflict's goals as they relate to each nation supporting or considering support for coalition operations. Ultimately, nations will act in their own self-interest. It is important to align their interests with the coalition effort by demonstrating how inaction will affect their long-term interests.

Conclusions

The conduct of Operation Iraqi Freedom significantly damaged U.S. relations with the international community and the potential for broad multi-national coalition support in the future. This damage is not irreparable but it will take significant effort to fix. A potential strategy to encourage broad based coalition support in the future follows:

The U.S. needs to enhance it's pre-conflict engagement strategy with other nations with the goal of interaction that is more constructive than kinetic. This interaction should attempt to meet UN member nation goals and show that the U.S. is an honest broker that cares for the collective needs of the international community.

Unless there is a clear and present danger to the U.S. or the international community, as defined and understood by the international community, the U.S. should look to diplomatic, global solutions to issues rather than kinetic solutions.

The U.S. should ensure it acts within the confines of international law. Where international law needs to be revised in the U.S. view, the U.S. should work actively to revise it. Until then, the U.S. should operate within the confines of international law.

The U.S. should take into account the second and third order effects of actions as they relate to the region and international community. This is best done through international cooperation and coalition efforts. These international efforts should also include the diplomatic through kinetic stages of international affairs.

The U.S. should continue to effectively identify and weigh competing international interests and regional relations in different regions of the world such as with Europe, Russia, and China. At times, this may mean allowing these nations key, sometimes lead roles in the planning and executing coalition operations in order to preserve regional stability and avoid the U.S. being seen as a global hegemon.[53]

The U.S. should act to obtain legitimacy for its actions. Legitimacy is best obtained through a UN member nation resolution of support or other broad multi-lateral institutional support.

Finally, the U.S. should recognize the importance of strategic communications in order to justify its actions and clearly and proactively recognize the strategic ramifications when world opinion differs from U.S. policy.

Ultimately, there will be occasions when the U.S. will choose to act unilaterally. On these occasions, a proactive approach to strategy will determine the second and third order of effects, weigh the advantages and disadvantages, and then determine whether it is better to work more patiently and more effective to achieve consensus before acting. Or, the U.S. may choose to act unilaterally knowing that the cost/benefit will outweigh the short term reality of lack of coalition support. More often than not, however, coalition support or at the very least, multi-nationally accepted legitimacy will allow the U.S. to be all the more successful in future operations.

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