American Coalition-Building in the Post-1945 World: Korea, the Persian Gulf, and the War on Terrorism

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American Coalition-Building in the Post-1945 World: Korea, the Persian Gulf, and the War on Terrorism

Abstract
The premise of this paper is that following the Second World War, it has been necessary for the United States to pursue a policy of coalition-building before intervening militarily in instances of aggression against a state outside of the Western Hemisphere. In the cases of the Korean War, the Persian Gulf War, and the current war on terrorism the US was able to successfully act against aggression because it had been given sanction to do so in the court of international public opinion. Failing to build a consensus would have resulted in a backlash against the US that would have seriously hampered its ability to resist aggression. Thus, failed unilateral interventions, such as America's involvement in Vietnam, can be better understood against the backdrop of the Korean War, the Persian Gulf War, and the war on terrorism.

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Abstract

The premise of this paper is that following the Second World War, it has been necessary for the United States to pursue a policy of coalition-building before intervening militarily in instances of aggression against a state outside of the Western Hemisphere. In the cases of the Korean War, the Persian Gulf War, and the current war on terrorism the US was able to successfully act against aggression because it had been given sanction to do so in the court of international public opinion. Failing to build a consensus would have resulted in a backlash against the US that would have seriously hampered its ability to resist aggression. Thus, failed unilateral interventions, such as America’s involvement in Vietnam, can be better understood against the backdrop of the Korean War, the Persian Gulf War, and the war on terrorism.
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Introduction and Thesis

Since 1945, it has been necessary for the United States to form broad coalitions of support in order to take overt steps to successfully respond to aggression outside the Western Hemisphere. While logistics has rarely been the reason for US coalition-building (American military power and reach has been sufficient to respond to most cases of aggression), the necessity of obtaining approval in the international court of public opinion has driven American diplomatic lobbying such instances. Although the nature of these moral mandates, as well as the global political environment, have changed from the Korean War to the Gulf War, their continued importance has been illustrated through the current Bush Administration’s efforts to form and maintain a global coalition to fight terrorism.

It is safe to say that aggression by one state against another runs contrary to the ideals upon which the democracies of the West are based. An ever-increasing number of states have come to embrace this idea since 1945 with the formal establishment of the United Nations. If nothing else, Munich in 1938 taught the nations of the world, especially the United States, a valuable lesson. The American rejection of the League of Nations and its subsequent absence from that organization at the time of Japanese, Italian, and German aggression in the 1930’s was an important reason for the political and military impotence of the League.
At its most basic and theoretical level, America's post-World War Two foreign policy has never strayed far from its collective security roots. The notion of global peace through international cooperation and action to deter or respond to aggression has served as the common thread in American policies since the end of World War II. The establishment of the United Nations was to be a means to this end, and has served this purpose with varying degrees of success.

In addition to the lessons that were learned from the horrors of World War II, US foreign policy has been guided by the desire of the government to uphold the American sense of righteousness on the global stage. Walter A. McDougall addressed this national sense of righteousness on the part of the American government and people when he noted that the US sees itself as a "city upon a hill" — in reference to a statement made by John Winthrop in 1630. Americans do believe themselves to be exceptional and this pride (some would say blindness) certainly colors US foreign policy.¹

The other side of Winthrop's quote was a warning that has often been overlooked, ignored or forgotten by American policy makers. Winthrop cautioned...

...that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world, we shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God and all professors for God's sake; we shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going.²

It is the American sense of exceptionalism that has caused the US the most trouble in the foreign policy arena. Developing nations, in particular, view the United States in neo-colonial terms. Fear of US ulterior motives by other countries has often prevented widespread support for American involvement overseas. In more recent memory, suspicion of American policies has thrown fuel on the fire of Islamic extremism and has given birth to a multitude of organizations—many would qualify as terrorist in nature—determined to bring about the destruction of Western society, particularly through targeting symbols of American global influence.

Thus, if the US is to act overseas, its actions must be perceived to be in the best interest of the global community. Even though the US possesses the military ability to act unilaterally in most parts of the globe, it would not be in the interest of any American president to pursue such a path if he or she hopes to avoid the US being branded an imperialist state.

Coalition-building defined

For the purpose of this paper, coalition-building is defined as the act of seeking support from the international community for a military response to an act of aggression against a state. The support received does not necessarily have to have been military in nature. Nations are considered part of the coalition as long as they verbally back the ultimate goal of the military action. More specifically, in

the cases of the Korean War, the Persian Gulf War and the current war against terrorism, the US actively sought approval for American-led military action against an aggressor state. And in all three cases, the US and coalition forces were (at the very least)able to restore the status quo that had existed before the act of aggression.

The Korean War, the Gulf War and the war on terrorism are the best possible examples of successful US coalition-building efforts in the fifty-seven year time period being dealt with. With both the Korean War and the Gulf War, US involvement was precipitated by an overt act of aggression by one state against another. In both instances, the US immediately turned to the UN as the most feasible and effective means of building an international consensus against the aggressor state. Support for the reinstatement of pre-crisis borders was gained and these goals were achieved.

The war on terrorism differs from the other two in several aspects. First, it was the United States itself and not some country on the other side of the world that was attacked. Second, the UN did not serve as the focal point of coalition-building as it had in the previous two examples. Widespread international sympathy for the US following September 11 made it unnecessary for the Bush Administration to pursue the construction of a coalition through the UN. And finally, the war on terrorism is ongoing and does not afford the observer with much by way of hindsight. Yet, the pattern of response was similar to that of the Korean and Gulf Wars. Rather than resorting to immediate retaliation for the
September 11 attacks, President Bush opened the diplomatic channels to garner support for the American cause among its European allies and the Islamic world. Once enough countries were clearly behind US efforts to eradicate terrorism, airstrikes were launched against Afghanistan’s military and Al-Qaeda terrorist targets a full month after the initial attacks on America. By mid-November the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan had been overthrown by proxy-US forces and the initial goals of the war on terrorism had been achieved.

It is difficult to imagine that the successful prosecution of these responses to aggression could have been accomplished by the US without first gaining sanction from the international community. World War Three could have been a real possibility had the US unilaterally intervened in Korea without first working through the UN. The Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China could have perceived such a move as a purely American challenge to their security.

The Arab backlash that would have accompanied an immediate American unilateral response to Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait is difficult to fathom. The issue of aggression would be lost in the torrent of anti-America rhetoric that would have surely risen from every corner of the Middle East. Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait would seem trivial compared to America’s perceived designs on Arab oil. Furthermore, without the use of Saudi Arabia as a staging area and the contributions of soldiers and equipment made by other countries, the United States could not have prosecuted the nearly flawless military campaign that it did in January and February of 1991.
A similar analysis can be made of the current war on terrorism. While the military options of the US were not checked by the existence of another superpower, immediate actions were limited by the need to garner support from Muslim countries. The Bush Administration did not want to appear to be picking on a smaller Muslim nation. The best way to do this was to enlist the support of other Middle Eastern nations in the war against terrorism.

The military response against Afghanistan for harboring Osama Bin Laden could have also proved more challenging without the support of nations in the region. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan have all allowed the US use of either their airspace, ground bases or both. With Afghanistan being a landlocked country, failure to secure the support of these countries would have meant violating the sovereignty of other countries.

The Korean War, the Persian Gulf War, and the war on terrorism are the three best examples of successful American responses to aggression against a state since 1945 because they are the only ones. American involvement in Vietnam was eerily similar to that of Korea with the exception that the US did not have the firm backing of the international community for its actions against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese attackers. While small contingents of South Korean and Australian forces were also engaged in Vietnam, it would be difficult to call that an international coalition. The Vietnam War also differed from Korea in that the US did not accomplish its goals of preventing the fall of South Vietnam to
communism. Had the US had international support, perhaps the story would have been dramatically different.

More recently the US has been involved with affairs on the Balkan Peninsula in Southeastern Europe. The US-led NATO air war against Serbia and its forces in Kosovo in 1999 had the makings of an American coalition response against aggression. American policymakers were able to convince NATO members that Kosovo did have security implications for the rest of Europe. Furthermore, much of the Islamic world looked on approvingly as NATO attempted to halt Serbian attacks on the Muslim Albanian population of Kosovo.

However, Kosovo’s inclusion in this paper would be problematic. Technically Kosovo is part of Yugoslavia. Similar to Vietnam, the conflict there was internal, akin to a civil war. Issues of sovereignty are not the topic of this paper while instances of American-led coalition responses to aggression against a state are.

**Historiography**

The body of literature addressing the collective security aspects of the Korean War and the Persian Gulf War are not expansive. The bulk of the attention given to the Korean and Persian Gulf Wars by historians has been in the realm of the causes and effects, as well as the sequence of events, of each engagement rather than on the coalition building efforts of the Truman and Bush Administrations. However, historians who have approached these wars from an international perspective do provide the student of international studies with a
picture of the importance coalition building played in the American response to each crisis.

Korea proved to be the first major coalition-building test for the United States in the post World War II world. US foreign policy that called for the containment of communism dictated that America intervene to halt the advance of North Korea into South Korea. However, the US was hamstrung by the desire to avoid the appearance of being the aggressive superpower in this instance. To circumvent this issue, the US chose to utilize the United Nations to build a consensus against aggression on the part of North Korea.⁴

Although US forces shouldered much of the burden of fighting the war, achieving sanction from the UN gave the American cause a sense of legitimacy in the eyes of other nations.⁵ In fact, Denis Stairs suggests that close allies such as Canada were more inclined to support US actions in Korea if UN approval had been sought and gained. Stairs points out that the majority of UN member nations were not opposed to a UN intervention in Korea. In fact,

Canadian decision-makers had been aware from the beginning that any effective measures would have to originate with the United States, since no other non-Communist power was sufficiently well equipped to intervene, and they were pleased that the American decision had made United Nations action possible.⁶

Rosemary Foot points out that initially Britain was inclined to throw its support behind the US-led effort in Korea. British dependence upon American power in a

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Cold War world led the British to contribute over two thousand infantrymen and several naval vessels to the effort, while supporting US efforts in the UN. Additionally, the government of Prime Minister Clement Attlee refrained from attempting to restrict military action in Korea as UN forces surged north of the 38th Parallel in October 1950. However, it is important to note that the British did successfully exert pressure on the United States to prevent the extension of the conflict to China.6

The United States was faced with a similar dilemma in August of 1990 when Iraq invaded its tiny southern neighbor Kuwait. In the eyes of most Western governments Iraq’s invasion was pure, unadulterated aggression. Furthermore, Iraq’s capture of Kuwait gave it control over 10 percent of the world’s oil supply. The United States decided to react against this aggression, as well as the threat to its economic livelihood by once again working through the United Nations.

The UN overwhelmingly condemned the Iraqi invasion and eventually gave approval for the use of force to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait. In the meantime, the US recruited the support of a number of countries around the world, particularly Muslim nations. The US wanted to avoid the appearance of a Western superpower preying upon a weaker Arab state. In fact, the support of prominent Arab states like Egypt and Syria played a pivotal role in the success achieved by the US and the international coalition against Iraq in 1991. In addition to freeing Kuwait from Iraqi control, the Persian Gulf War set the stage

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for the re-emergence of vocal support for the concept of collective security.\textsuperscript{7} With the Cold War at an end, it seemed less likely that the Security Council would consistently find itself paralyzed by the veto power and opposing viewpoints of the US and Soviet Union.

Currently another Bush Administration finds itself busy putting together and maintaining a global coalition against terror. Due to the proximity of this paper to the September 11 attacks, the body of literature is still in its infancy. However, the plethora of news agencies covering the events, as well as the "wired" state of our society, it is not difficult to recognize the coalition-building approach of the current President Bush.

In response to the September 11 attacks, the US decided to pursue terrorists being harbored in the isolated and war-ravaged Afghanistan. The US turned to its Middle Eastern allies, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia and elicited them for, at the least, their tacit approval. Pakistan, a pariah state for several years due to its testing of a nuclear weapon, was suddenly America's best friend due to its strategic location. Norman Podhoretz argues that while, militarily, the US gains little from adding another Muslim country to the "coalition" column, the current Bush Administration does gain a stamp of approval for US actions as a war against terrorism, not a war on Islam.\textsuperscript{8}


Korea

The US, the UN, and coalition-building

Events unfolding on the Korean peninsula in the morning hours of June 25, 1950 thrust the issues of collective security and the containment of communism to the forefront of the minds of President Truman and American decision-makers. North Korean armored and infantry divisions had crossed the 38th Parallel and were steadily advancing towards South Korea’s capital of Seoul. Although the North had invaded under the pretext of self-defense, the majority of United Nations member states, particularly the United States, viewed North Korea as the aggressor in this instance.

The invasion of South Korea by the North had serious security implications that stretched far beyond the Korean Peninsula. The United States was already deeply involved in East Asia. In addition to backing the government in South Korea, American forces were stationed in both Japan and the Philippines and US aid was flowing to the fleeing Chinese Nationalist government that had taken refuge on Taiwan. The People’s Republic of China was viewed as a threat to stability by all Western-aligned countries in the region. Furthermore, the US found itself the recipient of increased responsibilities with regards to the security of European colonial holdings (Indochina among them) in East and Southeast Asia as both France and Britain struggled to rebuild from the devastation incurred during World War II. At the same time, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, and Thailand were all clamoring for firm security commitments from the
US to help ease growing concerns over the perceived communist threat in East and Southeast Asia.\footnote{See Steuck, \textit{The Korean War}, p. 72.}

The events in Korea in June 1950 echoed the tenor of the National Security Council Paper No. 68 (NSC-68) that had been issued earlier that year. Paul Nitze, head of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff and primary author of the NSC-68, presented to President Truman the idea that the world was steadily becoming bi-polar as traditional international powers fell into decline and the US and the Soviet Union assumed opposing roles of leadership.

Whereas the US was content to play the part of a "positive participant in the world community,"\footnote{Thomas G. Paterson and Dennis Merrill, eds., \textit{Major Problems in American Foreign Relations, Volume II: Since 1914} (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1995), p.262.} the Soviet Union was viewed as being driven by a "new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and [seeking] to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world. Conflict has, therefore, become endemic and is waged, on the part of the Soviet Union, by violent or nonviolent methods in accordance with the dictates of expediency".\footnote{See Paterson and Merrill, \textit{Major Problems in American Foreign Relations}, p. 262.} The United States viewed the Korean situation as a product of the Soviet Union’s expansionist policies aimed at spreading the communist doctrine to the various corners of the globe.

To combat Soviet expansionist tendencies, Nitze and other State Department analysts (George Kennan among them) urged the Truman administration to adopt a policy of "containment." To this end, the US would seek

\begin{itemize}
  \item by all means short of war to (1) block further expansion of Soviet power,
  \item (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions,
  \item (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin’s control and influence and
  \item (4) in general, so foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system that the Kremlin is brought at least to
the point of modifying its behavior to conform to generally accepted international standards.\textsuperscript{12}

In light of these policy recommendations, American intervention in Korea was a foregone conclusion. However, a direct confrontation between the two superpowers was considered to be undesirable by Washington. This was illustrated in the NSC-68 recommendation that dialogue between the US and the Soviet Union always be left open as a possible recourse during instances of heightened tensions.\textsuperscript{13}

The Truman Administration was thus caught in a difficult position. There was the obvious desire to assist the South Koreans in repelling the Soviet-instigated North Korean invasion. Yet, this desire to act quickly, and even unilaterally, was tempered by the reality that the world might not be able to survive another global conflict that would involve infinitely more destructive military technology than that which was used in the Second World War. Furthermore, it would be fair to say that the idea of collective security, which had failed miserably under the auspices of the League of Nations, was still on the minds of Western policy-makers. The United Nations had been established for the very purpose of preventing widespread conflict through collective action.

Reitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz argue that there were several considerations in the works at the national level in the US that favored UN action in Korea. The first consideration rode on the "assumption that it was still a valid operational goal of United States policy to maintain and to advance the prestige and effectiveness

\textsuperscript{12}See Paterson and Merrill, \textit{Major Problems in American Foreign Relations}, p. 263.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
of the United Nations". After all, the UN was "the world security organization, and had, as one of its primary objectives, the elimination of the resort to force to obtain political objectives". In this particular instance, if the UN failed to act, the organization would take an especially rough blow to its prestige do to the fact that the UN was so involved in the post-war administration of the Korean Peninsula.

Furthermore, the UN was a tool that the US "could not overlook in trying to construct an anti-Soviet coalition and in seeking organized support from free nations for its policies". In this respect, the US would attempt to deter the Soviet Union from taking part in activities detrimental to the stability of the existing international order by siding with a vocal moral majority composed of allied and non-aligned states. These views were expressed in part in a June 25, 1950 telegram from State Department adviser John Foster Dulles and John M. Allison, director of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs, to Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk:

It is possible that the South Koreans may themselves contain and repulse the attack and, if so, this is the best way. If, however, it appears that they cannot do so, then we believe that United States force should be used... To sit by while Korea is overrun by unprovoked armed attack would start a disastrous chain of events leading most probably to world war. We suggest that the Security Council might call for action on behalf of the organization under Article 106 by the five powers or such of them as are willing to respond.

At the now famous Blair House meeting that occurred with the president later that day, Acheson further elaborated on US strategy as it pertained to the UN

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14 See Reitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, United States Foreign Policy, p. 267.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 See http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/...ollections/korea/large/wee1/elsy_3_1.htm
Security Council. Acheson hoped that the US would be able to capitalize on the absence of the Soviets, and their veto power, from the UN over the seating of Nationalist China in the organization:

In the absence of the Soviet representative, it might be possible to have the Security Council adopt a further resolution calling upon all or certain states to respond in so far as they are able to any request from the Korean Government for aid in its defensive effort.\textsuperscript{19}

At 2:00 P.M. on June 25, 1950, the UN Security Council convened an emergency session at the request of the US to address the situation on the Korean peninsula. Since the Soviet Union was not present to vote down American proposals, the Security Council was able to agree upon, in very short order, a resolution condemning the actions of North Korea. According to the resolution, the UN

\textit{Determines} that this action constitutes a breach of the peace,

I. \textit{Calls upon} the authorities in North Korea
   (a) To cease hostilities forthwith; and
   (b) To withdraw their armed forces to the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel;

II. \textit{Requests} the United Nations Commission on Korea
   (a) To observe the withdrawal of the North Korean forces to the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel; and
   (b) To keep the Security Council informed on the execution of this resolution.

III. \textit{Calls upon} all Members to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities.\textsuperscript{20}

By June 26 the United Nations' potential as a policy-implementing tool of the United States was becoming apparent to the President and his advisors. Very quickly, the Truman Administration expressed its pleasure with the quick and decisive condemnation of North Korean actions through a public statement:

\textsuperscript{19} See http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/...ollections/korea/large/week1/elsy_5_4.htm
The Government of the United States is pleased with the speed and
determination with which the United Nations Security Council acted to
order a withdrawal of the invading forces to positions north of the thirty-
eighth parallel. In accordance with the resolution of the Security Council,
the United States will vigorously support the effort of the Council to
terminate this serious breach of the peace.\textsuperscript{21}

It is also clear from the final line of this statement that the United States was
fully prepared to act in any means necessary to turn back the tide. However, the
Truman Administration pursued these ends through the United Nations Security
Council. It was on the following day that the Council voted to adopt a resolution
that committed the international organization and its members to a much harder
line than that of the preceding June 25 resolution. The June 27 resolution noted
from the report of the United Nations Commission for Korea that the
authorities in North Korea have neither ceased hostilities nor withdrawn
their armed forces to the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel and that urgent military measures
are required to restore international peace and security, and...
...that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the
Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack...\textsuperscript{22}

That the US would take the lead role in responding to the invasion of South
Korea was a foregone conclusion. The US was the only country with the means
to respond to the attack. American forces were already stationed in East Asia,
principally in Japan, and the US had the financial and logistical capability of
bringing more troops into the theatre. Most of America’s European allies, as was
previously discussed, were still recovering from World War II and struggling to
retain their standings as colonial powers. While a few other countries did

p.117.
\textsuperscript{21} See http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/...collections/korea/large/week1/kw_11_1.htm
\textsuperscript{22} See http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/...collections/korea/large/nee1/ayer_1_1.htm
contribute forces to the UN venture- the United Kingdom being the most notable
eexample- the United States gladly provided the bulk of manpower and materials.

That is not to say that the US did not welcome support from other nations. In fact, any additional material support from fellow UN member nations would help to alleviate some of the initial burdens of supplying troops with necessary supplies and equipment. Furthermore, as William Steuck pointed out, such support helped to "bind friendly nations to the U.S.-initiated venture...", and had a deterrent effect on the Soviet Union.\(^{23}\) International backing would also "undermine Soviet claims that the U.S. effort in Korea had little support among the masses worldwide and would ensure ongoing support within the United States for a collective approach to U.S. foreign policy".\(^{24}\)

**Great Britain, Canada, and France**

The British were, by far, the most important members of the coalition arrayed against the communists in Korea. While their initial contributions of a brigade and two infantry battalions, as well as a small contingent of naval vessels were small in comparison to the US military presence, the British still wielded immense political clout in the international arena. Great Britain was still first among the European members of NATO and maintained its connection with the numerous Commonwealth countries. These facts made British backing of key importance to the American efforts to respond to North Korea's invasion.

\(^{23}\) See Steuck, *The Korea War*, p. 56.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 56.
Rosemary Foot points out that in the initial stages of the Korean crisis, the British found it difficult not to support the US. In 1950 the British were dependent on American military and economic aid (in the form of the Marshall Plan) for its security and rehabilitation. Failing to support the US would likely jeopardize this aid and seriously undermine the cohesiveness and strength of the newly created NATO.\textsuperscript{25} The British government viewed the North Korean invasion as a “Soviet probe, signaling a new and dangerous development in Russian policy”.\textsuperscript{26}

Canada, unlike Great Britain, was not as enthusiastic about supporting American intervention in Korea. The Canadian government did not place the same value on intervention for the sake of stopping communism as the Americans or the British. In fact, in the early days of the Korean crisis, spokesmen for the Canadian government were telling reporters that the North Koreans would most likely be allowed to complete their conquest of the South unopposed.\textsuperscript{27}

It was only after a solution to the situation was pursued through the UN that Canada became willing to back an American-led police action in Korea. Ottawa would participate as long as the intervention had the sanction of the international community.\textsuperscript{28} Initially, Canada contributed several destroyers and an air transport squadron to the UN effort, but it was not until the second week of

\textsuperscript{25} Rosemary Foot, "Anglo-American Relations in the Korean Crisis," p. 43.
\textsuperscript{27} See Stairs, The Diplomacy of Constraint, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p. 60.
August that the Canadian government decided to pursue the formation of a new infantry brigade for service in Korea.\textsuperscript{29}

Initially, France supported American efforts on the Korean Peninsula. As a member of the Security Council, France backed the June 25, June 27, and October 7 resolutions that all allowed for greater flexibility in Korea for the US. In terms of military support, the French contributions to the UN force in Korea were minimal. French forces were already combating communist insurgents in Indochina at the time of the Korean crisis. The problems in Indochina were draining French military and financial resources to the point where the US was bankrolling the bulk of France’s efforts in Southeast Asia by 1954. Since they were unable to give much in the way of military support in Korea and were heavily dependent on US aid in Indochina, the French leaned their political support to the US in the summer of 1950.

\textit{Arab and Asian Countries}

A UN response to North Korean invasion was welcomed and supported by a number of smaller developing nations- they welcomed the setting of a precedent of the unacceptability of aggression. From the global geo-political perspective, North Korea was a tool of the Soviet Union being used to further imperialist aims. The Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand all offered combat troops to the Korea effort, as did Turkey. In these cases, the governments viewed the Korean crisis

\textsuperscript{29} See Stairs, \textit{The Diplomacy of Constraint}, p. 89.
as an opportunity to forge stronger military ties with the United States in the face of an increasingly aggressive communist agenda in Asia.\textsuperscript{30}

However, in many cases an American unilateral response would be equally unwelcome by these same smaller countries, many of which had just achieved nationhood after decades of European colonial interference. For instance, India immediately took a lead role among Arab and Asian countries in reacting to North Korea's attack on the South. The Nehru government contributed a field hospital to the UN effort in Korea. However, India was hesitant to contribute combat units in light of American domination of the UN effort and even became one of the leading proponents of a cease-fire just three months into the conflict.

\textit{State of the coalition}

American diplomatic successes in the early days of the Korean War were not duplicated on the battlefield. South Korean forces performed abysmally as the North Korean army steamrolled south and captured Seoul in a matter of 3 days. The first sorties flown by the US Air Force on June 28 failed to stem the tide and the introduction of American ground forces on July 1 proved to be similarly ineffective.

Initially, the UN forces are not equipped well for combat. The first US troops to arrive on the Korean Peninsula were members of an understaffed occupation force from Japan. In most cases, American and UN forces were still using World War II era gear and weapons, while the North Koreans were supplied with the latest Soviet technology. Most encounters between North Korean and UN forces

\textsuperscript{30} See Steuck, \textit{The Korean War}, p. 73
in the first month of the war resulted in UN withdrawals, so that by July 30 only Pusan remained outside of communist hands. Even the diplomatic scene appeared to be darkening for the US as the Soviet Union decided to end its boycott of the UN on August 1. The return of the Soviet representative to the UN Security Council left the US faced with the potential problem of gridlock on issues concerning Korea.

Indeed, the United States had to fight hard to keep the issue of North Korean aggression front and center. The attention of the UN was constantly diverted by the Soviet representative to the question of Communist Chinese representation. Soon, the two issues became intertwined as India proposed the linking of the two as grounds for a cease-fire and a return of North Korean forces back across the 38th Parallel. However, there is no evidence to indicate that the resolve of the US and its closest allies (Great Britain, in particular) to resist communist aggression weakened. In fact, it was only at this point in the conflict that significant numbers of UN troops began to arrive on the Korean Peninsula. It was also in late August that General MacArthur began to lay the groundwork for his landing at Inchon.

The military and diplomatic situation of August 1950 took a dramatic about-face with General MacArthur's successful implementation of Operation Chromite. The UN landing at Inchon on September 15 quickly reversed the military situation in Korea and sent the communists streaming back across the 38th Parallel. Suddenly, the United Nations was presented with a potentially divisive issue. The June 27 Resolution called on member nations to repel North Korea's armed aggression. This would imply that UN forces would only seek to restore the 38th
Parallel as the dividing line between North and South Korea. However, the startling success of the UN’s September 1950 offensive left open the possibility of reuniting the two Korea’s, as the UN had intended to do following World War II.

As UN forces pushed north towards the 38th Parallel, the US encouraged the UN to call for the reuniting of the Korean Peninsula. On September 29 possible Soviet opposition in the Security Council was circumvented through the introduction of a resolution to the General Assembly. The resolution recommended that

(1) all appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea; (2) all constituent measures be taken, including the holding of elections under the auspices of the United Nations, for the establishment of a unified, independent, and democratic government in the sovereign state of Korea; (3) United Nations forces should not remain in Korea any longer than necessary to achieve the first two objectives; and (4) all necessary measures be taken to accomplish the economic rehabilitation of Korea.\(^31\)

The resolution passed on October 7, the same day that US forces crossed the 38th Parallel. Two days later, UN forces crossed into North Korea. While the resolution did not overtly state approval for the crossing of the 38th Parallel by UN forces, the document’s goals were such that the only way for them to be achieved was through the defeat and occupation of North Korea.

Crossing into North Korea also held benefits for the United States. The defeat of communist North Korea would strike a major blow to the prestige of the Communist bloc and make the Kremlin think twice about any future aggressive actions. Furthermore, the Truman Administration had already been accused of losing China to the communists. Failure to defeat North Korea would only serve

\(^{31}\) See Reitzal, Kaplan, and Coblenz, *United States Foreign Policy*, p. 271.
to heighten domestic opposition in the US and lend credence to the accusation that the administration was "appeasing a beaten Communist foe." 32

Cracks in the coalition

As successful as the United States was in creating a United Nations response to North Korean aggression, the American-led effort in Korea was not without its detractors. The success of the Inchon landing and the rapid movement of UN forces northward actually increased friction among the American-led coalition.

*British and Western pressure*

The resolution that was adopted on October 7 authorizing UN troops to proceed into North Korea was actually a revised draft of an earlier resolution considered by the US. The second draft was toned-down at the request of the British who hoped to avoid provoking the PRC or the Soviet Union and perhaps trigger World War Three. The resolution presented to the General Assembly stipulated that UN troops were not remain in North Korea for any longer than was necessary, so that the Chinese and the Soviets would not become uneasy over the presence of an occupying Western force just over the border. 33 There were also backroom negotiations between the British and the Americans, as well as debate within the Truman administration, that yielded a policy that permitted only

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South Korean troops to operate along the Chinese border. The wholesale approval of American policy wishes was nearing its end.

Initial skirmishes between South Korean units and Chinese "volunteer" forces on October 25 and General MacArthur's November 6 public acknowledgement of and irritation with the building Chinese offensive sent shivers through the UN coalition. The entry of a major communist power into the conflict held out terrifying repercussions for America's Western allies.

It was a popular misconception among the West that Mao and the PRC received their marching orders from the Kremlin. As a result, Chinese intervention in Korea was akin to direct Soviet intervention in the conflict. This was an undesirable prospect considering that much of the world assumed that a conventional conflict between the US and the Soviet Union would escalate into another world war. And while the US is insulated by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Western Europe is not. Any conflict between the West and the Communist bloc would certainly be heavily contested in the forests and plains of Western Europe. Although it was highly probable that American atomic might would eventually prevail, the European continent, and even the British Isles, would be devastated as Western European military capabilities were not yet up to par with the Soviets and their Eastern European allies.\(^\text{34}\)

Compounding these fears was the realization among key European figures that the war in Korea could compromise the security of Western Europe. Reitzal, Kaplan, and Coblenz point out that the

\(^{34}\) See Steuck, *The Korean War*, pp. 148-149.
Korean hostilities placed tremendous strains on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The defense of Korea was not deemed as important an objective of policy by the European NATO countries as it was by some vocal and influential elements in the United States. In Europe there was a fear of general war in the Far East with the consequent diversion of American strength.  

It was this rather pessimistic view of the Cold War world that led the British, the Dutch, and even the Canadians to resist the calls for direct action against mainland China emanating from some circles of the American government and military.

The British, while incredibly supportive of most American efforts at the beginning of the crisis, led the charge against the widening of the conflict into China. Prime Minister Atlee stated to his cabinet in November 1950 that the UN "should not be trapped into diverting a disproportionate effort to the Far East... Korea was not in itself of any strategic importance to the democracies [of the West] and it must not be allowed to draw more of their military away from Europe and the Middle East."  

Before flying to the US to meet with American officials in late 1950, Prime Minister Atlee consulted with the French concerning the American desire to escalate the Korean conflict. The French President had similar misgivings about the potential problems that could arise from American bombing of China. Upon arriving in the US Atlee reminded Truman Administration officials during a December 1950 meeting that the British and French, as well as the UN, would not go along with American attacks on China. As Foot puts it, "the cloak of

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35 See Reitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, United States Foreign Policy, p. 283.
legitimacy that UN support for America's initiatives in Korea had provided would be completely removed."^{37}

In addition to global strategic concerns, the British also had other misgivings about taking an openly hostile stance with the PRC. Great Britain had recognized the People's Republic of China in 1950, much to the chagrin of American officials. While charges of self-serving economic interest were levied against Great Britain by the US, Prime Minister Attlee and other British officials countered that they did not believe that there was a strong link between the Soviet and Chinese brands of communism. By not overtly antagonizing (or even attacking) China over the Korean situation, the British hoped to avoid driving the PRC and the Soviet Union together.^{38}

The Arab-Asian response

While most of America's Western allies fully supported a UN response to the situation in Korea, a number of the newly independent states of the Middle East and South Asia were lukewarm, at best, with their support. Egypt, for instance, the most prominent of Arab nations and a member of the Security Council at the time of the June 25 resolution, had only voted in favor of the proposal due to the lack of communication between the country's leadership and its ambassador.^{39}

Iran, too, was less than enthusiastic when it came to supporting the American position. Tensions with the British had been on the rise over the previous few years over oil agreements and had led the Iranian government to be suspicious

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^{38} See MacDonald, Korea, p. 43.
of the West. Additionally, a possible confrontation with the Soviet Union- Iran's northern neighbor- steered Tehran clear of making any inflammatory gestures.\textsuperscript{40}

Although the US was faced with some opposition in the early days of the Korean conflict, the lack of support from a few Arab and South Asian nations was not enough to curtail American freedom of movement when it came to responding to North Korea's attack. Most nations sympathized with South Korea and were concerned about the possible expansionist motives of the Soviet Union and Communist China. Widespread reservations about US-UN policies only began to appear at the height of UN success on the Korean peninsula.

The success of the Inchon landing and the rapid northward advance of UN troops raised the issue of where to stop the offensive. The original June 27 resolution calling for member nations to assist in repelling the North Korean attack made no mention of crossing the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel. In fact, a literal interpretation of the document would lead one to believe that UN forces were to stop at the former border. However, as was already discussed, there was strong sentiment, particularly among US officials, to resolve the Korean issue once and for all.

The resolution presented to the General Assembly on September 29 that would allow UN troops to advance beyond the 38\textsuperscript{th} Parallel met with Soviet opposition several days later. On October 2, 1950 the Soviet delegate presented a counter-resolution to the General Assembly that called for a cease fire in

\textsuperscript{30} See Steuck, \textit{The Korean War}, 81.  
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 82.
Korea, the withdrawal of foreign troops from the peninsula, free elections through the country, and UN supervision of the whole process. India then stepped in and suggested that a subcommittee be formed to work out a compromise between the two resolutions. India’s position was supported by the Arab states, Israel, Mexico, and the Communist bloc and held out the possibility of a mediated settlement to the conflict. However, the US pushed for, and achieved, the defeat of the Indian proposal. Five days later, the American resolution was adopted and the US was given the green light to pursue the destruction of North Korean forces above the 38th Parallel. American victory in the UN did not come without a price—Indian alienation would prove to be a thorn in the side of the US in the coming months.

It was during the discussions concerning the reappraisal of UN aims in Korea that the PRC began to weigh-in on the matter. A September 30 speech by Zhou Enlai expressed that "the Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression nor will they supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by foreigners".\textsuperscript{41} On October 2, Chinese intentions were further clarified when Zhou told the Indian ambassador in Beijing that China would intervene militarily in Korea if US troops crossed the 38th parallel.\textsuperscript{42}

Such threats proved to be particularly troublesome to India’s government. Nehru’s cabinet watched with some anxiety as China began to make good on expansionist rhetoric in Tibet. China’s invasion of Tibet meant that India would now share a common border with its communist neighbor to the north. It could

\textsuperscript{41} See Steuck, \textit{The Korean War}, pp. 93-94.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 94.
be suggested that Nehru's attempts at limiting the scope of the war in Korea and his government's efforts at concluding a peace agreement were influenced by the prospect of making China hostile to India by siding with the US in Korea. However, the Chinese warnings and India's concerns fell on deaf ears. American officials felt that if China had really wanted to intervene it would have done so at an earlier stage.  

American actions and strains on the coalition

The wave of Chinese volunteers filtering into North Korea helped to steadily turn the tide in favor of the communists. General MacArthur was quick to call on President Truman to allow him greater flexibility when it came to military options on the peninsula. Of greatest annoyance to MacArthur was his inability to strike at military and industrial targets inside of China. He felt that if China was going to commit troops to the North Korean side then China was a legitimate and necessary target. The UN commander also suggested that the US support Nationalist Chinese operations against the mainland and encouraged the use of Nationalist forces in Korea. MacArthur's calls for military action against the PRC caused a good deal of tension within the Truman Administration, as well as the UN. In both cases, opponents of direct action against China feared that such a move would only serve to widen the conflict.

President Truman, himself, alarmed American allies with a comment on November 30, 1950. When asked about the potential use of atomic weapons in Korea, Truman responded that it was not outside of the realm of possibility. The

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43 See MacDonald, Korea, p. 52.
British and the Dutch were very unhappy with the statement and State Department officials were rushed in to help restore calm. However, the damage was already done as each Western European nation spoke out against the use of atomic weapons. States among the Asian-Arab group also weighed in on the issue. Prime Minister Nehru of India stated that it was an "absolute necessity" to avoid the use of the atomic bomb.\(^{44}\)

The tensions created within the coalition by Truman's statement and the perception that MacArthur was determined to widen the conflict demanded an immediate and profound US reaction. The response came in the form of the firing of General MacArthur in April of 1951. Although the American public sympathized with the World War Two hero, American allies were growing increasingly concerned with the comments being made by the general and the accumulation of authority that rested in his hands. MacArthur squashed a proposed peace initiative on March 24 and was faced with a subsequent Chinese-North Korean offensive. The Truman Administration had hoped to broaden the authority of the UN commander by allowing UN aircraft to pursue hostile aircraft back to their bases in Manchuria. However, there was fear within the administration that US allies would not support the broadening of authority as long as MacArthur held the position- he was not to be trusted with handling the situation delicately.\(^{45}\) The desire to maintain UN support for actions in Korea and to avoid the escalation of hostilities in East Asia led Truman to dismiss MacArthur on April 11.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 180.
For all intents and purposes, the situation in Korea did not change much between the summers of 1951 and 1953. For this reason, the analysis of American coalition-building efforts in response to North Korean aggression ends with the dismissal of MacArthur. The dynamics of the coalition facing the communists in Korea remained essentially the same for the final two years of the war. For two years the UN forces fought a see-saw struggle across the 38th Parallel with North Korea and China. Issues surrounding prisoners of war and PRC representation in the UN held up a cease-fire for more than a year. In the end it was American threats of serious escalation, allied restraint, Stalin’s death and exhaustion on both sides that brought about an end to hostilities in Korea in 1953.

The Korean War: Some conclusions

Although the history of the Korean War was far from over with the dismissal of MacArthur in April 1951, the events dating from June 25, 1950 to this point best illustrate the efforts undertaken by the United States to secure international backing for a response to North Korean aggression. In terms of the June 27, 1950 UN resolution, US-UN efforts can be considered a success. North Korean forces were eventually turned back and the boundary between North and South Korea was re-established in the neighborhood of the 38th Parallel.

This military result was achieved through American-led international political deliberations towards the formation of a broad coalition of support among UN
member nations. And while the United States shouldered much of the military burden on the Korean peninsula, its efforts to turn back North Korean-Communist bloc aggression had at least received official international sanction. For a short time, anyway, the United States had achieved its goal of heightening global awareness of communist expansionist designs and building a consensus to keep aggression in check.

Furthermore, the American tendency towards unilateral action was reined-in enough to prevent the wholesale abandonment of support for US-led military actions in Korea. Signs of US unilateralism began to appear almost immediately following the invasion of South Korea. It was a foregone conclusion that the US would intervene in Korea: one need look no further than the message sent by John Foster Dulles and John Allison to Secretary of State Dean Rusk on June 25. However, the Truman Administration chose to pursue this goal through the United Nations Security Council, thus avoiding the appearance of a superpower bullying a developing nation.

Additionally, American efforts to address the Korean crisis by working through the UN helped to decrease the chances for the outbreak of hostilities between the US and the Soviet Union. A wider conflict was also averted by the decision not to pursue military and industrial targets within the PRC. Although, strategically, strikes of this nature would have made sense—particularly during the bleak hours of the UN efforts following the entry of Chinese troops into the fray in November 1950— they could have warranted massive retaliatory airstrikes by the Chinese from bases in Manchuria. These strikes could have, in turn, led
to the use of atomic weapons by the United States in order to protect interests and troops in Korea and Japan.

Claims that the United States lost the Korean War ring hollow and fail to acknowledge the successes achieved at a difficult time for the US on the international scene. Granted, the US-UN forces failed to unify the Korean peninsula and were, at times, faced with the proposition of abandoning Korea altogether. However, the stated objectives of the UN forces at the time of intervention were to repel the aggressor forces and restore the territorial integrity of South Korea. These goals were achieved, in addition to the fact that the US, through the UN (and not without some difficulties) was able to provide a united front against aggression.

The Persian Gulf War

During the early morning hours of August 2, 1990 the world witnessed an act of aggression similar to the one in Korea some fifty years earlier. While Iraq's military had been posturing on the borders of Kuwait for more than a month, most leaders- globally and regionally- felt that tensions between the two countries had been eased. However, by the end of the day on August 2 Kuwait was, for the most part, in the hands of Iraq.

While both Iraq and Kuwait occupy vast stretches of hot desert on the other side of the globe from the United States, the Bush Administration was quick to condemn the Iraqi aggression. In fact, most of the international community rose
in vocal opposition to Iraq's invasion of its tiny neighbor. The Security Council immediately passed Resolution 660 the day of the invasion condemning Iraq and calling upon Saddam Hussein to withdraw his forces from Kuwait. This resolution also invoked Articles 39 and 40 of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. It is in this chapter of the charter that the Security Council is given the powers to respond to acts of aggression through the use of economic sanctions, as well as the possible use of military force. The following day brought with it an equally impressive sight with the issuing of a joint US-Soviet statement further condemning the invasion. The Cold War enemies had managed to put aside ideological differences to work towards collective security. From its very beginning, then, American efforts to respond to Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf centered on building a broad coalition of support.

Building the coalition

Constructing a coalition to oppose Iraq's invasion of Kuwait proved to be a relatively easy task for the United States. It was only a matter of hours, not days, before the Security Council had met on the issue and passed Resolution 660. The speed of the Security Council's initial resolution, as well as the Bush Administration's decision to pressure Iraq, could in some respect be attributed to the expressions of outrage from the Arab world.

46 See Freedman and Karsh, p. 81.
The United States and the Soviet Union

America swiftly condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. President Bush immediately turned to the UN Security Council and pushed for the Council to condemn the invasion (which it did). Fortunately, Secretary of State James Baker was in the Soviet Union for a conference at the time of the invasion. From the very beginning, then, the US and the Soviet Union were engaged in a cooperative dialogue. America's European allies were also consulted during the early hours of the crisis so that a consensus on the type of response could be reached. President Bush's discussions with Prime Minister Thatcher (detailed later) may have had a hardening effect on the President's resolve to stand strong against aggression.

However, from the very beginning, it was decided that the US would, in fact, work through the UN, not unilaterally. Unilateral action against an Arab country, regardless of the circumstances, would have resulted in widespread condemnation of the US. American support for Israel had left most Arab countries suspicious, at best, of the US. An immediate American military response against Iraq could have pushed a majority of the Arab world into Iraq's corner. Plus, there was the sticky issue of European relationships with Iraq (those of France and the Soviet Union have already been noted). It was important to have the backing of such nations when dealing with Saddam Hussein.

Additionally, with the end of the Cold War, it was now possible for the US to work through the UN in a manner consistent with the organization's founding
principles. The idea behind the founding of the UN had been the maintenance of
global peace through collective security. However, that mission proved difficult to
fulfill as the Cold War world began to take shape and international politics
became polarized. Cooperation among the five permanent members of the
Security Council became impossible. Then suddenly in 1989, as successive
Eastern European governments freed themselves from communist shackles, the
Soviet Union itself faced disintegration. The Iron Curtain had fallen. President
Bush, while reiterating the four basic principles of Resolution 660, also captured
the mood of the moment in a September 11, 1990 speech

We stand today at a unique and extraordinary moment. The crisis in the
Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move
toward an historic period of co-operation. Out of these troubled times, our
fifth objective- a new world order- can emerge: a new era- freer from the
threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the
quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West,
North and South, can prosper and live in harmony.47

On August 6 the US continued its push for an international response to Iraq
with the sponsoring of Resolution 661. The resolution passed 13-0, with only
China and Yemen abstaining. Resolution 661 built upon the message of
Resolution 660, but the latest one was given some teeth. Since Saddam had
shown no signs of pulling out of Kuwait, the Security Council imposed an
embargo on Iraq that was aimed at cutting off all trade (except for medical
supplies and food stuffs) with the outside world. Since Iraq had already been in
substantial debt prior to the invasion of Kuwait (the invasion of his oil-rich
neighbor may have been Saddam's answer to the problem), it was hoped that

47 Lawrence Freedman, "The Gulf War and the New World Order," Survival 33, no. 3 (May/June
economic sanctions would have a severe impact on Iraq's resolve to remain in Kuwait.

Resolution 661 required some skillful diplomacy on the part of the Bush Administration. Oil was covered under this resolution and much of Iraq's exported oil was shipped via pipelines through neighboring countries. Turkey, in particular, stood to lose substantially if the flow of oil were to be cut. However, after consultations, the Turkish government agreed to shut down the pipeline and even allowed the US use of its airbases - moves that showed the strength of Turkey's commitment to the international coalition.\textsuperscript{48}

Perhaps the most interesting of the positive developments to come out of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was the degree to which the Cold War had thawed that would allow for cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union. Immediately following the invasion there was a joint-statement released by both governments condemning the act of aggression. When asked about the decision to side with the Soviet Union's former Cold War adversary, President Mikhail Gorbachev commented that

the world had become different and the two superpowers were in the situation where we had to show whether we were able to cooperate in this new situation, especially on such a critical issue like aggression. A country was occupied. If we were not able to cope with that situation, everything else would have been made null and void.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48} Arthur H. Blair, At War in the Gulf: A Chronology (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), p. 15.
\textsuperscript{49} See wysiwyg://24/http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/gorbachev/1.html
Gorbachev continued by saying that "we [the Soviets and Americans] were quite firm about it [the statement]... We called for an immediate end to the aggression..."\textsuperscript{50}

However, the Soviets were in a position not entirely dissimilar from that of France. The Soviet Union had been Iraq’s largest supplier of weapons and had spent years cultivating a positive relationship with the Arab world. Much like France, then, the Soviet Union preferred a political solution to the situation. As Gorbachev pointed out that while the USSR was taking firm stance against aggression, they "were also acting as friends of Iraq... We were throwing a life ring to Iraq. If they reversed the situation, they could have preserved the relations. We didn't say we were breaking everything at once"\textsuperscript{51}

Indeed, the Soviets played a very prominent role as intermediaries between Iraq and the UN-sanctioned coalition. While cooperating in the Security Council by allowing the passage of numerous resolutions that addressed the situation in the Gulf, the Soviets also sought to keep diplomatic channels open in hopes of finding a peaceful solution to the crisis. Gorbachev urged the Arab countries to find an Arab solution to the problem. The Soviets even went so far in September as to suggest that a conference addressing all Middle East issues (including the Palestinian question) be held- although this proposal did not go over well with the Bush Administration.\textsuperscript{52} Aside from these differences of opinion, Soviet support was of the utmost importance in the successful construction and maintenance of the coalition. It is difficult to imagine how the US would have been able to

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
operate through the UN if the Soviets were uncooperative and prepared to use their veto in the Security Council.

The Arab World

It was believed by key Arab leaders, President Mubarak of Egypt, among them, that the tensions between Iraq and Kuwait had been eased to the point where an invasion was not a possibility. Even after the invasion, an Arab solution to the crisis was sought, but to no avail. Mubarak's proposal for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait followed by an Arab League summit to work out differences between the two sides fell on deaf ears.\textsuperscript{53}

Since the Arab League stressed unity, particularly on the issues of Israel and the Palestinians, any action that worked to disrupt this unity and project an image of disorder to the Western world was deemed undesirable. A mere day after Iraqi troops moved into Kuwait, the League condemned the invasion. Jordan appears to have been the key dissenter on this issue due to its precarious geographical position. King Hussein urged the Arab League to stall the vote on the condemnation so as to not back Saddam into a corner from which he refused to come out. However, the disappointment and revulsion among League members was enough to ignore this request and fall in line with much of the rest of the global community.

In terms of the responses of individual Arab nations, Egypt was quick to view Iraq's move against Kuwait in a very negative light. Although the two nations had

\textsuperscript{52} See Freedman and Karsh, The Gulf Conflict, pp. 175-176.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 70.
been on friendly terms for years (Egypt was a major supporter of Iraq during that country's war with Iran from 1980-1988) President Mubarak took Iraq's invasion as a personal affront. Saddam Hussein, just days before the invasion, had assured Mubarak that he had no intention of attacking Kuwait. The bald-faced nature of this lie quickly soured the Egyptian president on Iraq.\textsuperscript{54}

Syria, another key nation of the Arab world, was also quick to condemn Iraq's invasion of its neighbor. Syrian President Hafiz Asad had a long-standing personal rivalry with Saddam Hussein. The mutual dislike dated back to the late 1960's and each leader looked for the opportunity to do harm to the others' position. The nature of the rivalry is unimportant to this discussion of coalition building, but the fact that tensions existed makes it much easier to understand why Syria came out so vocally against Iraq's move.\textsuperscript{55}

In addition to Egypt and Syria, Saudi Arabia and some of the smaller Persian Gulf states, such as the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, could be lumped into the anti-Iraq coalition. Saudi Arabia, in particular, was feeling the pressure from Iraq. Although Saddam had expressed no intention of invading Saudi Arabia, he did not bother to withdraw any of the 140,000 troops or hundreds of pieces of heavy armor occupying Kuwait. Furthermore, Saddam's word had proven to be less than reliable as of late and the Iraqi president's decision-making did not appear to conform to any rational dimensions.

With the support of Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia the US found itself able to take a more active role in responding to Iraqi aggression than if it had to go it

\textsuperscript{54}See Freedman and Karsh, The Gulf Conflict, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., p. 95.
alone. Although Egypt's position in the Arab world had been diminished as a result of the peace that had been established with Israel, President Mubarak still wielded immense clout in the Middle East. The addition of Syria to the coalition, while helping to strengthen Arab backing, also helped to minimize the threat of terrorism as the Syrians exerted a great deal of influence over groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Saudi Arabia, the home of Islam's holiest sites, further cemented Arab backing of the international response to Iraq. The US-led coalition was essentially given a mandate to carefully deal with the situation in the Persian Gulf without fear of mass governmental condemnation—something the US was typically a target of as a result of its backing of the Israelis. Finally, the 12-9 vote by the Arab League to sponsor the deployment of Arab troops in Saudi Arabia on August 12 was a major victory for the US. With a majority of Arab countries committed to the military security of Saudi Arabia, the US was shielded from much of the criticism that could have been levied against it.

This is not to say that the general populations in each of these countries felt the same way as their government about Iraq's invasion. Maha Azzam points out that there were pro-Iraqi demonstrations across the Muslim world. The Palestinians and Jordanians, in particular, came out in support of Saddam. There were also demonstrations in Yemen, Algeria, and Pakistan. On February 3, 1991, an estimated 300,000 demonstrators massed in Morocco to protest the air war against Iraq.\(^56\) However, none of these countries directly aided Iraq in its showdown with the rest of the world. In fact, Morocco sent several thousands

troops to Saudi Arabia to help in its defense. While popular opinion may have been more militant and pro-Iraqi, most governments realized that it would be unwise to openly oppose coalition efforts (Yemen would realize this after its “no” vote for resolution 678). Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria each took steps to limit popular opposition to the efforts against Iraq. The Syrian military even went so far as to open fire on a crowd of pro-Iraqi demonstrators on August 29, 1990.

The West and Japan

The decision to respond was also made easy for a number of Western countries and Japan due to one very simple factor: oil. So much of the world's oil came from the region that a conflict between two major oil-exporting countries could only serve to drive up the prices of the commodity and would threaten the stability of the global economy (see Table 1).

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$^{57}$ See Freedman and Karsh, The Gulf Conflict, p. 188.
Britain, as was to be expected, proved to be a solid backer of the American position from the very initial stages of the crisis. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was en route to the United States at the time of the invasion. As Freedman and Karsh point out, "it was inconceivable that Mrs. Thatcher would be anything other than outraged by the Iraqi action. She saw Saddam as another in a series of dictators against whom Britain must react strongly."\(^{58}\) The authors go on to make the case that Thatcher's tough stance helped to strengthen President Bush's resolve to tow a tough line with Iraq.\(^{59}\) In an interview with the PBS program Frontline Thatcher's resolve to push back aggression was made apparent as she recalled her first conversation with President Bush concerning the Iraqi invasion:

...I told him [President Bush] that aggressors must be stopped, not only stopped, but they must be thrown out. An aggressor cannot gain from his aggression. He must be thrown out and really, by that time in my mind, I thought we ought to throw him out so decisively that he could never think of doing it again.

But then don't forget I'd had all the experience of the Falklands and so I had no doubt what you had to do to deal with an aggressor, and my generation, as indeed, President Bush's, knew a terrible World War which had been caused because we didn't deal firmly enough with Hitler in the early stages...\(^{60}\)

In addition to the fact that Thatcher and much of the free world was repulsed by Iraq's brutal aggression, the safety of the world's economic stability was reviewed in terms of the Persian Gulf's share of the Earth's petroleum reserves. Thatcher apparently considered the worst-case scenario in which Saddam's forces would roll down the west side of the Persian Gulf region and envelope


\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 75.

\(^{60}\) See wysiwyg://46/http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/thatcher/1.html
some 65% of the world's oil supply. Military options were on the table from the beginning as the British Prime Minister appraised the country's ability to respond with at least attack aircraft.\textsuperscript{51}

The French, traditionally speaking, as well as at the time of the Persian Gulf Crisis, were less willing to fall directly in line with American policy. While the US and Britain were more committed to a hard line with Saddam, the French dispatched a dozen envoys to the Middle East to seek a diplomatic solution. The primary reason for France's softer line was the fact that Iraq had been an important client state during the 1980's as the French supplied Iraqi with close to 25% of its arsenal.\textsuperscript{62}

Although French naval forces were routed to the Persian Gulf in response to Iraq's invasion, the government of Francois Mitterand made it clear on August 9 that his country's military forces were in no way connected to the coalition forces being pulled together by Washington.\textsuperscript{63} This was one day after the French President had responded to the situation in Kuwait by stating

\begin{quote}
France has for long had friendly relations with Iraq. You know that we continued to help it during the war with Iran. That allows us to say all the more clearly that we accept neither the aggression against Kuwait nor the annexation which followed.\textsuperscript{64}
\end{quote}

The mixed messages being sent to Iraq appear to be the result of the French desire to follow a different diplomatic path than the US when it comes to foreign policy decisions. It was important to the French that they be seen standing against aggression, but also willing to negotiate a peaceful end to the situation.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p. 115.
Freedman suggests that the uniqueness of the French response can be attributed to the French desire to regain some lost political clout, particularly among Arab countries. Nowhere was this more apparent than in France's repeated attempts to solve the crisis through linking Kuwait with the Palestinian issue. However, Mitterand's statements and actions can also be viewed in the larger context of France's post-DeGaulle international independence.

Regardless, even though France did not immediately follow the lead of the US, it did come out publicly and denounce Iraq's actions.

Germany and Japan both found themselves placed in equally difficult positions when Iraq invaded Kuwait. In terms of offering military assistance to the effort to protect Saudi Arabia neither country could respond with anything other than verbal and moral support—both Germany and Japan were constrained militarily by their constitutions as a result of World War II. Germany appeared to be the more frustrated of the two, though, by not being able to contribute military forces to the coalition. Instead, the German government contributed with material assistance and even dipped into its financial resources (although this was only after intense and frequent lobbying on the part of the US).

Although Japan was similarly restricted as Germany when it came to sending forces overseas, the Japanese government was less willing contribute directly to coalition efforts. Japan's government was sensitive to the fact that their country depended upon the Middle East for some 70% of its oil imports. A desire to refrain from alienating its Middle East oil suppliers then had an impact on the

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65 Ibid., p. 116.
Japan's ability to assist the US-led effort in its initial stage.\textsuperscript{67} However, it should be noted that after a flurry of international criticism and pressure, as well as the passage of several weeks during which the crisis showed no signs of ebbing, the Kaifu government agreed to contribute financially. $9 billion was pledged to the coalition effort after the start of the air offensive in January 1991. Prime Minister Kaifu even raised the possibility of sending a body of Japanese personnel to serve in non-combat roles, although that proposal was squashed before it even got off of the ground.\textsuperscript{68}

While it was important to work diplomatically through the UN, it became clear in the days following Iraq's invasion that much of the Persian Gulf region was at risk. This called for quick action on the part of western governments, particularly on the part of the US, to better guarantee the safety of Saudi Arabia. On the same day that Resolution 661 was passed the Saudi government invited US troops onto its soil. Three days later, on August 9, the first contingents of the American 82\textsuperscript{nd} Airborne Division began arriving in Saudi Arabia.

President Bush also authorized the US Navy to inspect ships in the Gulf as part of the enforcement of Resolution 661. This action risked the label of US unilateralism as it predated Resolution 665 (August 25) by 13 days. However, as Freedman and Karsh point out, the Bush Administration's "evident readiness to push forward with a blockade provided a spur to those Council members who might otherwise prefer to wait and see how the sanctions were working before

\textsuperscript{68} See Freedman and Karsh, The Gulf Conflict, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 121.
moving on to this next step. Thus, the US was able to retain some freedom of
movement to push for a speedy resolution to the crisis, through exercising
leadership in the Security Council, while still operating within the confines of the
international coalition. This "go with us or we'll go it alone" mentality would
reappear in the days preceding the air war as France and the Soviet Union
attempted to arrange last minute peace proposals.

The continual military buildup in the Persian Gulf during the autumn months of
1990 underscored President Bush's steadfast determination to resist aggression.
As National Security Advisor General Brent Scowcroft noted, "While the
president hoped that economic sanctions would work, he made up his mind fairly
early on that force would be used if necessary and that planning should be based
on the assumption that sanctions would fail." Perhaps the crowning
achievement in the Bush Administration's efforts to take a hard line with Iraq was
the passing of Security Council Resolution 678 on November 29. This resolution
authorized

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\text{Member States cooperating with the Government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 January 1991 fully implements... the foregoing resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Security Council resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area...}^{71}
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In commenting on why the US sought such a resolution from the Security
Council, Secretary of State Baker stated that

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\text{We wanted to make certain that since we were operating under United Nations authority, we had sufficient authority from the Security Council to}
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69 Ibid., p.145.
70 See Yetiv, The Persian Gulf Crisis, p. 64.
71 Ibid., p. 175.
use force... 'All necessary means' would, under international law and law applicable to the United Nations, give us sufficient authority to wage war. And he came back with the answer that it would (PBS.org).72

With international approval to use force if necessary to dislodge Iraq's military from Kuwait, President Bush could now consider an offensive option as US military forces reached 230,000 by the third week of November and would eclipse 300,000 by Christmas. By December, coalition forces numbered roughly half a million and the number was still growing as European and Arab countries continued to contribute additional troops. Airforce and ground units continued to arrive in Saudi Arabia as the January 15 deadline neared, so that coalition forces had a slight 7:5 edge in manpower in the Gulf by the end of the second week of January.

The first two weeks of January 1991 were marked by intense negotiations, mostly of French or European Community origins, to head off a military resolution to the crisis. All attempts failed due to either Iraq's refusal to withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally or US opposition to plans that called for an international conference in return for Iraq's withdrawal. The US was opposed to several French initiated plans that promised a conference in advance because this suggested that the UN was giving in to aggression and such proposals would violate the language of Resolution 660. Although their attempts at finding a peaceful solution had failed, the French remained an active part of the coalition and the National Assembly voted on January 16 to place French forces under US command if hostilities commenced. This proved to be a significant victory for US leadership of the international coalition.

The commencement of the air offensive against Iraq beginning in early morning hours of January 17 marked a crucial stage for the coalition. On several occasions Iraq launched Scud missile attacks against Israel. Saddam had hoped that such attacks would bring Israel into the conflict and thus drive a wedge into the coalition. Key Arab members would never allow for their forces to fight for any cause associated with the Jewish state. Although Egypt had made peace with Israel, Syria certainly had not, nor could the Saudis or Kuwaitis be expected to be overjoyed at the prospect of the Israelis joining in.

Fortunately for the coalition, Israel showed amazing restraint in the face of Scud attacks that began on January 18 - a move that contradicted earlier statements that the Jewish state would retaliate against Iraq under such circumstances. In a boost to international unity, both Egypt and Syria actually signaled on January 18 that neither country would object if Israel defended itself. However, these surprising statements were never put to the test. Israeli forces never responded to the missile attacks on its cities (possibly due to American refusal to give Israeli attack jets clearance codes).

The last real challenge to the unity of the coalition against Iraq during the Gulf War came as a result of the incredible and unexpected success of the ground war. The massive flanking maneuver employed by General Schwartzkopf caught the Iraqis off-guard and resulted in some 10,000 prisoners being taken just in the first 24 hours of the ground campaign.\textsuperscript{73} With coalition forces having ejected the Iraqi military from Kuwait and a large contingent of US armored units occupying

\textsuperscript{73} See Blair, \textit{At War in the Gulf}, p. 104.
southern Iraq, questions concerning the fate of Saddam Hussein began to be asked.

Since Saddam had been demonized by Western politicians and the media for the duration of the Gulf Crisis (references to Hitler were not uncommon), the American public expected that removing Hussein from power would be a goal of the US. As Freedman and Karsh point out, a poll showed that “71 per cent of the American people believed that the toppling of Saddam should be an allied goal, while only 29 per cent of respondents in a Newsweek survey believed that an Iraqi withdrawal with Saddam still in power would constitute a coalition victory. Bush Administration rhetoric only reinforced these beliefs as officials publicly stated that Iraq would be better off without Saddam in power and opposition groups were urged to take matters into their own hands.”

However, the ground war was halted just 100 hours after it had begun, with US forces well outside of Baghdad. Saddam’s offer of unconditional surrender put an end to the coalition effort and allowed the dictator to remain in power with a portion of his military intact. There were several reasons for this turn of events. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney highlighted the military and political consequences of marching all the way to the Iraqi capital:

If we’d gone to Baghdad and got rid of Saddam Hussein—assuming we could have found him— we’d have had to put a lot of forces in and run him to ground some place. He would not have been easy to capture. Then you’ve got to put a new government in place and then you’re faced with the question of what kind of government are you going to establish in Iraq? Is it going to be a Kurdish government or a Shia government or a Sunni government? How many forces are you going to have to leave

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there to keep it propped up, how many casualties are you going to take through the course of this operation?\(^{75}\)

Just for the purposes of maintaining regional stability in the short term, it made a good deal of sense to leave a substantially weakened Saddam in power. The power vacuum that would have resulted in his absence could have given a country such as Iran the upper hand in Persian Gulf affairs. More important to key members of the coalition, particularly Turkey, the large Kurdish minority may have been incited to seek the establishment of their own Kurdistan—something the Turkish government did not want to see happen.

Furthermore, marching into Baghdad would have gone beyond the letter of Resolutions 660 and 678. While the expulsion of Iraq’s military from Kuwait through “all necessary means” was authorized, the overthrow of Saddam’s regime was not spelled out. While the US had successfully argued its case for movement across the 38th Parallel in Korea over 50 years earlier, the was no parallel prior UN mandate to point to as there had been relating to the unification of the Koreas.

The exact consequences of forcibly replacing Iraq’s government are debatable, but it is safe to say that such a move would have proved unpopular among much of the international community. Former President Gorbachev addressed this issue by saying, “I don’t think either we, or the Security Council, would have supported such a course of action. And, the Americans would have become isolated— it would have exploded the international coalition”.\(^{76}\) Muslim countries, such as Iran and Jordan, who had declared their neutrality during the

\(^{75}\) See Freedman and Karsh, The Gulf Conflict, p. 413.
war would certainly have opposed such a move on the part of the US. It is hard to imagine that even the strongest Arab backers of the coalition, Egypt and Syria, would accept such direct interference by the US in the internal affairs of an Arab country. The US most likely saved itself from an immediate public relations fiasco by not marching on Baghdad, but Saddam Hussein's survival has meant more than a decade of headaches for American policy makers.

The Persian Gulf War: Some Conclusions

It is difficult to imagine that the US would have achieved similar success had the Bush Administration not put so much stock in former a broad coalition of support for a response to Iraqi aggression. With the Cold War at its end, the Security Council was able to live up to its collective security expectations. Although there was some dissension among the Arab/Muslim world (most notably Yemen and the PLO) when it came to taking action against Iraq, the mere fact that every proposed resolution made it through the Security Council without being vetoed speaks volumes to the nature of the unity achieved between August 1990 and February 1991.

Perhaps the one negative aspect of the coalition formed to face Iraq was the restrictive nature of the cooperative agreement when it came to dealing with Saddam Hussein. The US had to respect the wishes of regional governments that a power vacuum not be left in Iraq. American forces could have rolled into Baghdad and taken care of the Saddam problem in 1991. However, such a

move would have been unpopular in the Arab world (even among Saddam's enemies). The US would not have been able to maintain a forceful presence in the Persian Gulf region without the support of nations in the region.

The War on Terrorism

September 11 and the American response

On September 20, 2001, President George W. Bush addressed a dramatically changed American public on the country's preparedness and plans to deal with the new and significant terrorist threat:

Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.

We have seen their kind before. They're the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way to where it ends in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies. Americans are asking, "How will we win this war?"

We will direct every resource at our command- every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war- to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network.

Now, this war will not be like the war against Iraq a decade ago, with a decisive liberation of territory and a swift conclusion. It will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat.

Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have seen. It may include dramatic strikes visible on TV and covert operations secret even in success...

And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.
From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support
terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime...\textsuperscript{77}

These words, spoken by the current President Bush on September 20, 2001,
serve as the best starting point for any examination of the coalition-building
nature of the current American war against terrorism. President Bush was
correct in saying that this conflict will be unlike those in Iraq or Kosovo because
the enemy is like a gas: it has no defined boundaries and is difficult to capture in
its entirety. Furthermore, the nature of the coalition being constructed- and
currently maintained- is vastly different than the coalitions that were built in
response to aggression in Korea and the Persian Gulf.

The statement, "every nation in every region now has a decision to make:
Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists,"\textsuperscript{78} certainly suggests that the
United States has taken a leadership role in combating global terrorism.
President Bush was being far more forceful than either his father or President
Truman in forming an international coalition. Help is not being asked for, it is
being demanded. Nations not providing this help through military, intelligence,
law enforcement, or financial means risk facing the wrath of an angry American
populace. Thus, to a degree, the policy of the current Bush Administration is also
meant to highlight the enemies of the US.

In the case of the Korean and Persian Gulf Wars the United States was not
attacked. The US just happened to take a leading role in responding to
aggression. The current war on terrorism, is vastly different in the fact that
American soil was the target of an attack. Nor was it an attack akin to Pearl

Harbor because the Japanese had attacked a military target. The September 11 attacks killed thousands of civilians. The basic, yet sacred idea of the right to life, liberty and property- natural rights- the foundation of modern Western Civilization, were assailed as four jumbo jets met with unintended destinations. Since the US was attacked, the feeling was, it had a right to respond and defend itself. Additionally, the fact that some 80 nations lost citizens to the World Trade Center attacks made it easier for the US to rally support.

Building the coalition

In light of the global revulsion over the terrorist attacks, there appeared to be little reason to justify and seek approval from other nations for a just response. Yet, the Bush Administration still made it a point to keep an informal checklist of who was with us and who was not in the months following September 11. America's NATO Allies were in (the organization had for the first time in its history activated Article V: an attack on one is an attack on all). Britain, in particular, was with the US- Prime Minister Blair was in the audience on September 20 as President Bush articulated the American position to the world. America's Middle Eastern partners (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt) were in (sort of). Even Yemen and Jordan- two countries that had opposed US action during the Gulf War- were really in. The Bush Administration even considered reaching out to Libya and Iran after the governments of both countries expressed regret over the events of September 11.79

79 Michael Elliott, "We're at War," Time (September 24, 2001): 40-44.
Afghanistan was not in on the side of the US. The ruling Taliban were thought to be harboring the terrorist mastermind behind the September 11 attacks, Osama Bin Laden. In addition to Bin Laden, Afghanistan was the suspected site of numerous terrorist training camps that had turned out at least 10,000 recruits over the previous decade. President Bush, in his September 20 address turned his focus on the Taliban and offered them one last chance to side with the US through meeting five conditions:

1. Deliver to the United States authorities all of the leaders of Al Qaeda who hide in your land.
2. Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens you have unjustly imprisoned.
3. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country;
4. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan. And hand over every terrorist and every person and their support structure to appropriate authorities.
5. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating.\(^6\)

When the Taliban rejected these conditions, the wrath of the US turned on the country of Afghanistan.

However, before any military action could be taken against Al Qaeda and Taliban targets within the landlocked nation of Afghanistan, a few key partnerships did, in fact, need to be formed. Uzbekistan, Afghanistan’s northern neighbor, allowed the US military the use of several of its bases and became the staging area for the Army’s 10th Mountain Division. More important to American efforts, though, was the cooperation that it received from Pakistan and its leader President Musharaff. What began initially as a promise to allow American overflights of Pakistani airspace, soon grew into the use of airbases from which

the US could bring to bear a much larger contingent of airpower against the Taliban and Afghanistan. Once the aerial bombardment of terrorist and Taliban targets began in October of 2001, the Bush Administration continued to play up the coalition aspect of the war on terrorism. British and French naval forces participated in some of the earliest salvos launched against targets within Afghanistan. Both European countries also contributed significantly to the build up of special operations forces on the ground that played an important role in targeting and organizing resistance. Additionally, Australian, Canadian, German, and Turkish forces have served in either offensive or peacekeeping roles, while NATO AWACS surveillance planes have, for the first time ever, patrolled the skies over the US.⁸¹

While there were rumors that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were being less than cooperative in freezing the financial assets of terrorist organizations, Bush spokespeople simply reaffirmed that those nations remained important members in the coalition. The mere fact that there was no public disapproval voiced by the governments of key Arab states was a diplomatic victory for the US. Norman Podhoretz explains that by

Getting a minimal endorsement from as many predominantly Muslim states as possible helped to create the impression that our war was not against Islam but against terrorism. Bin Laden might claim to be fighting in the name of Islam against the Christian “Crusaders” of today, but with the backing of several Islamic countries, Bush could charge the terrorists with having “hijacked” a religion that—from his perspective and perhaps even believed—stood for peace and love.⁸²

For all intents and purposes the international coalition spoken of by the Bush Administration has held together when it comes to the issue of Afghanistan and the Al Qaeda terrorists that are still in hiding in some stretches of the country. Operation “Anaconda” which began on March 4, 2002 and wrapped up two weeks later was a perfect illustration of the international goal of rooting out terrorists. Nearly 1,000 American troops participated along side of an equal number of Afghan fighters and another 200 soldiers from Australia and NATO countries in a hard-fought operation to clear out remaining Al Qaeda fighters from the Shahikot Mountains of eastern Afghanistan. There certainly was no official outrage from any country over this operation due to the fact that it seemed within the bounds of acceptable actions to the international community.

Possible cracks in the coalition

The coalition has proven far more fragile over the possible extension of the war on terrorism to other countries, most notably Iraq. Talk of moving against countries with no direct link to the September 11 attacks poses the potential of damaging fragile, but warming relations with countries like Iran, China and Russia. The US military presence in Central Asian countries has already threatened to tip the balance in the region. A move to unseat Saddam Hussein would not win the US any friends among the nations on the “bubble”, nor would there be much support among America’s NATO friends.

However, statements made by President Bush during the 2002 “State of the Union” address, and more recently on March 13 suggest that he is considering
pushing the war on terrorism elsewhere. Immediately following the President’s statements, Vice President Cheney was sent on a whirlwind 10 day-12 nation tour of the Middle East aimed at gaining support for a possible move against Iraq. Support was not forthcoming.

Some conclusions about the war on terrorism

The war on terrorism will continue to yield successes such as the capture of key Bin Laden lieutenant Abu Zubaydah as long as the Bush Administration continues to act in areas and ways approved of by the world community. In the case of Zubaydah, the terrorist organizer was captured in Pakistan through a joint American-Pakistani operation on March 28. A number of key figures in the Al Qaeda organization are thought to have fled Afghanistan to Pakistan and other nations in South and Central Asia and the east coast of Africa (Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, and Indonesia are all possibilities).

The US might do well to form cooperative relationships with these suspected Al Qaeda destinations, similar in form to the partnership that has been formed with Pakistan. The Indonesian government, for instance, has expressed its displeasure with the US effort in Afghanistan from its very beginning. Indonesia is a vast country that would pose a challenge to any US action that did not have the backing of its government. The Bush Administration should look to establish a dialogue and some common ground so that American objectives against terrorism can, at the very least, be pursued by Indonesian authorities.
Unilateral action by the US against Iraq remains a distinct possibility. While there may be no firm link between Saddam Hussein and the events of September 11, Iraq may be a legitimate target. Saddam has proven that he has no qualms about using chemical weapons against civilian and military targets. There is no doubt that the region, and the world, would be a safer place without him. However, the US should remain mindful of the tentative nature of the support for the war on terrorism. The international community favors the use of weapons inspectors at this point and the US attempt to work within this framework and remain patient for the time being.\textsuperscript{83}

**Coalition-building: conclusions**

While coalition-building is not the only response available to the US in the event of state versus state aggression outside the Western Hemisphere, it certainly does offer the greatest chance for success. Although unilateral action might offer the US the quickest way to react to an attack, it may also lead to the disapproval of the world community (as it did in Vietnam).

The Truman Administration was tempted to act alone in the early hours and days of North Korea's invasion of the South. This course of action would have resulted in American forces being engaged in the action much earlier than they would otherwise. However, the US would not have had the moral authority to react had it not pursued matters through the UN first. With UN sanction, it was difficult for the Soviet Union and neutral states that the US was merely acting on

\textsuperscript{83} Kenneth Pollack, "Next Stop Baghdad?" \textit{Foreign Affairs} 81, no. 2 (March/April 2002): 32-47.
its own imperial designs. Furthermore, coalition-building in this instance may have averted a world war.

Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait presented the first Bush Administration with a task equally as daunting as that of the Truman Administration forty years prior. President Bush also chose to act through the UN in order to build an international consensus against Iraq. This allowed the US to act as the protector of a weak Arab nation rather than a Western infidel trespassing on the sacred soil of Saudi Arabia. While it would be difficult to argue that President Bush was not motivated by oil in the occasion of the Persian Gulf War, the US was able to once again obtain international sanction to act against aggression and made the UN a viable tool of coalition-building in the post-Cold War world.

The current Bush Administration finds itself at the head of a nation once again engaged in a tumultuous area of the world. Conducting a war on terrorism in the belt of Islam has called for diplomatic delicacies in its later stages. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, it was difficult to find a nation that would not acknowledge the fact that the US had the right to defend itself. And while the initial attacks on Afghanistan did create a stir among extreme sectors of the populations of Pakistan and Indonesia, the early part of the war proved to be the easiest. Allies were easy to come by in September and October of 2001. However, the war has moved into a touchy phase that raises the specter of US unilateral action against such terrorist-friendly states as Iraq. A move of this nature could potential prove damaging to the cooperative relationships that the US has managed to foster in the international arena.
There are lessons to be learned from the Korean War, the Gulf War and the initial phases of the war on terrorism. Coalition-building has eased anti-American sentiment in all three cases and offered the US much-welcomed support (especially in the Persian Gulf war). While coalitions are by their very nature more restrictive than acting unilaterally, they offer the best hope of success for American overseas interventions.
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