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When Does the Mission Determine the Coalition?
The Logic of Multilateral Intervention and the Case of Afghanistan

SARAH KREPS

Using the debate between the logic of appropriateness and consequences as a theoretical backdrop, I argue that neither is able to explain the United States’ choices between unilateralism and multilateralism in post-Cold War military interventions. The logic of appropriateness is theoretically flawed because states are ultimately unwilling to compromise operational effectiveness on behalf of “oughtness,” and the logic of consequences has until now been insufficiently specified for the purposes of explaining military cooperation behavior. In this article, I suggest that “consequences” are best specified according to time horizon, which creates intertemporal tradeoffs between the long-term benefits of multilateralism and immediate payoffs of unilateralism, and the nature of the intervention, which affects the operational payoffs of multilateralism. I test this argument and the existing explanations against the case of Afghanistan. Its within-case variation—largely unilateral in combat operations and robustly multilateral in post-conflict phases—lends strong support to the logic of consequences as specified according to time horizon and operational payoff.
Q: “Is the coalition unraveling?”

A: “Well, let me make it clear. No single coalition has raveled. Therefore it’s unlikely to unravel.”

In the aftermath of 9/11, the United States saw an outpouring of international support on its behalf. From the now-famous “nous sommes tous américains” headline in *Le Monde*, to the unprecedented Article V invocation by NATO, to the unanimous condemnation of the attacks within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the United States enjoyed a rare respite in anti-Americanism and resistance to U.S. policies abroad. In principle, that support extended to U.S. retaliation through the use of force, and indeed, the international community agreed the United States had “the right of individual or collective self-defense.” Despite the overwhelming offers of assistance, the United States essentially conducted the combat phases of the intervention individually and deferred offers of support to the lower intensity post-conflict phases. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld defended the approach, saying that mission would “determine the coalition. The coalition is not going to determine the mission because it will dumb down everything to the lowest common denominator.”

The largely unilateral combat operations in Afghanistan broke with a post-Cold War trend of multilateralism that had prompted prominent constructivists such as Martha Finnemore to declare multilateral interventionism as an international norm and assert that the normative basis for multilateralism—a “logic of appropriateness”—was the guiding principle behind such behavior. In a seemingly competing claim, however, realist scholars also took credit for explaining post-Cold War intervention behavior. Benjamin Miller tested the empirical record of U.S.-led interventions and suggested that rationalist calculations best explained motivations behind how the United States intervened in this period. Both analytical predictions fell short in the case of Afghanistan. The unilateralism of combat operations undermined the multilateral norm argument, in which states should intervene multilaterally because it was considered appropriate and even if doing so was strategically less effective. But the rationalist argument—specified according to how regional powers incur political costs and according to the level of state interest surrounding the intervention—would have predicted a large intervention and an incentive to incorporate allies.

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2 UNSC Resolution 1368.
As the experience in Afghanistan shows, neither set of expectations held. The United States did not assemble a coalition of strategically “disinterested” states that were operationally inconvenient though politically attractive as a way of legitimating the intervention, as the constructivist argument would have predicted.\footnote{Finnemore, \textit{The Purpose of Intervention}, 80–82.} Rather, the United States only accepted support from instrumentally useful states such as Britain, whose forces were considered to be roughly equivalent with U.S. forces, or from the Northern Alliance, which lacked significant capabilities but provided a source of indigenous resistance on the ground. Only once the United States had established greater levels of stability was it willing to incorporate special operations forces (SOF) from coalition partners, and only then from western European states, Australia, and Canada, whose SOF units were proficient in mountain operations and could easily be matrixed in with U.S. units. The patterns of cooperation in Afghanistan, which will be examined closely in this paper, provide evidence for an intervention based on a “logic of consequences.”

As opposed to other logics of consequences that have been outlined in the literature, which I argue are not properly specified and therefore unhelpful in explaining cooperation behavior, I argue that consequences are a function of the constraints and incentives surrounding the intervention. The first consideration is the state’s time horizon. Diplomacy—the manifestation of multilateral bargaining—takes time. President George W. Bush has acknowledged these intertemporal tradeoffs between acting unilaterally versus multilaterally: “If you’re acting alone, you can move quickly. When you’re rallying world opinion and trying to come up with the right language at the United Nations to send a clear signal, it takes a while.”\footnote{See President George W. Bush press conference, Museum of Science and Industry, 7 July 2006, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/07/20060707-1.html.} More benignly but still problematically, cases such as Afghanistan show that campaign planning is difficult under any circumstance; campaign planning with a coalition that brings multiple inputs becomes more arduous and time intensive. A state with short-term challenges to its security and an outside, unilateral option may therefore have incentives to circumvent the multilateral diplomacy and planning and instead intervene unilaterally.

The second consideration addresses how the nature of the intervention itself affects the potential payoffs of multilateralism. Conventional conflicts that are resource-intensive or operations expected to have long reconstruction phases act as “contested zones” for a hegemon and increase the potential payoffs of and incentives for multilateralism. In contrast, operations expected to be short or light decrease the operational constraints and reduce incentives to intervene multilaterally.

This paper proceeds first by offering some definitional clarity on what it means for an intervention to be multilateral or unilateral. Although this article is not intended to be definitional in nature, the inquiry does turn on
questions of why states choose varying cooperation strategies, so establishing some parameters for what constitutes genuine versus nominal cooperation is a necessary foundation. From there I turn to competing explanations of state cooperation, engaging the theoretical debate on the two logics of behavior, the logic of appropriateness and of consequences. I explain the analytical predictions that follow from those two logics for the specific question of hegemonic cooperation behavior in post-Cold War military interventions. While these logics, as specified in the literature on military interventions, both seemed to be powerful in explaining much of the post-Cold War empirical record, I conduct a case study of Afghanistan to test these existing accounts and find that neither was able to predict or explain the largely unilateral behavior in this intervention.

I suggest that a logic of consequences, one better specified and suited to military cooperation, explains the pattern of cooperation in Afghanistan. I outline the argument and support it through a case study of military cooperation in Afghanistan. Careful consideration of cooperation behavior in Afghanistan shows that this single longitudinal case is better treated as two cases because of an important change in the dependent variable, multilateral cooperation, over time. Afghanistan’s largely unilateral combat operations and robustly multilateral peacekeeping operations—therefore lends itself to a useful controlled comparison. The two cases, combat and peacekeeping operations, are comparable in all respects except for the independent variables under consideration, time horizon and operational payoff, which I argue account for the variance in cooperation outcomes between the two cases. Through this paired comparison, I not only develop an explanation of cooperation behavior across different types of operations, but also help guard against criticisms about a single observation research design—“making many observations from a few”—by introducing variation on the dependent variable (cooperation).

The last section draws limited generalizations about cooperation behavior on the basis of the within-case variation of Afghanistan. While the United States was more eager to cooperate multilaterally in the peacekeeping operations of Afghanistan, it was decidedly more reluctant to incorporate allies in the up-front combat operations. Since cooperation in the latter is considerably more difficult, it provides the harder and therefore more operative test of commitment to multilateralism. In this regard, U.S. unilateralism in

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8 For more on “controlled comparison” and the value of within-case variation, see Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 32–33, 80–81.

Afghanistan’s combat operations is damaging to the logic of appropriateness, which would have predicted multilateral behavior throughout the intervention, an approach that obtained only in the peacekeeping phases of the intervention. Moreover, while the United States made some effort to frame the intervention as a collective enterprise, operational realities were a better test of the logic of appropriateness and U.S. operational behavior failed to meet several important multilateral benchmarks. Rather, the variation across the two phases of operations in Afghanistan finds stronger support from the logic of consequences as specified according to time horizons and operational payoffs.

Conceptualizing Unilateralism and Multilateralism

The theoretical question of why and under which conditions states choose varying cooperation strategies hinges on what are often ambiguous concepts of unilateralism and multilateralism. A necessary first step in addressing this question is therefore to lay out a clear account of what distinguishes a unilateral intervention from one that is multilateral. On this issue, the literature on cooperation offers conflicting guidance. Robert Keohane writes that multilateralism is “the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions.”

This quantitative definition is not helpful in the context of military interventions, however, because it does not specify the degree of contribution and coordination necessary. Counting the Iraq coalition as multilateral because it included states such as Palau, which lacks a military, and Micronesia, which did not supply anything other than political support, is disingenuous. These states were not part of the planning process, did not integrate assets into campaign plans, and had no decision-making authority over the course of the intervention. Nominal contributions or “window dressing” allies such as these do not require substantive coordination of national policies and should not count toward multilateralism.

John Ruggie and Martha Finnemore’s qualitative definitions set a higher bar for multilateralism by emphasizing equal treatment among parties—such as decision making, which would disqualify the Iraq operation that was U.S.-dominated—but put heavy emphasis on UN or International Organization (IO) authorization, which may be unworkable due to power politics in the Security Council, as was the case during the Cold War.

For the purposes of this article, I stake out a middle ground, allowing for multilateralism outside formal institutions but requiring a substantive form of operational cooperation beyond a simple quantitative measure of the number of states that has nominally agreed to be listed as a coalition.

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member.\textsuperscript{12} For this I turn to several helpful indicators, of which the number of coalition states is just one. The others, guided by the rational design literature on institutional decision making and bargaining, include the degree of burden shared by the coalition (whether in financial or personnel terms), power symmetries within the coalition, and regional power representation.\textsuperscript{13} All of these reflect the degree to which the lead intervening state is required to coordinate national policies, based on the general logic that decision making outcomes are a function of power distributions, state interest (in this case measured by troop and financial contributions), and the number of actors.\textsuperscript{14} Multilateralism requires not simply that three or more states nominally participate, but that the collection of states consider, negotiate, and accommodate others’ policy preferences.

While IO authorization is not a necessary condition for multilateralism, it is a sufficient condition. An intervention such as the 1994 Haiti operation, which was operationally unilateral, was at least procedurally multilateral because of its UN mandate.\textsuperscript{15}

According to these measures, interventions such as the Gulf War are fully multilateral because they rank high along both sets of parameters; they are operationally multilateral in that they had a high degree of regional representation, high degree of burden-sharing, and UN authorization. Iraq ranks low because it had no IO mandate, low levels of material contributions, and power distributions overwhelmingly in favor of the U.S. decision makers. The coalition was multilateral in name only.

Why UN and NATO authorization constitute multilateral endorsement, and whether IO authorization can help persuade reluctant allies into participating operationally are both interesting questions that have been explored elsewhere.\textsuperscript{16} This article, however, focuses less on the IO elements of multilateralism. Instead, in asking why the United States intervened unilaterally when offers of allied assistance were in abundance, it naturally highlights the dynamics within a multilateral coalition and the set of incentives within a state’s security environment that would push it to seek allies or intervene with its own assets. A larger project would perhaps look more closely at IO voting dynamics and the relationship between operational and procedural multilateralism.

\textsuperscript{12} This conceptualization borrows from Sarah Kreps, “Multilateral Military Interventions: Theory and Practice,” \textit{Political Science Quarterly} (forthcoming).


\textsuperscript{14} This logic follows a basic realist assumption that institutional decision making is a function of power and interest distributions among parties. A coalition in which U.S. power is overwhelmingly asymmetric or in which U.S. assets overwhelmingly dominates, as in Iraq, means that the United States will have a monopoly on decision making, which would make such a coalition effectively unilateral even if in name it is multilateral.


Multilateral                  Unilateral

Operational

Full Multilateralism
Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan Phase IV, Haiti 2004

Procedural Multilateralism
United Task Force (UNITAF), Somalia, Haiti 1994

Multilateral

Operational Multilateralism

Unilateral

Operational Multilateralism
Afghanistan Combat Ops Iraq 2003

FIGURE 1 A multilateral intervention may obtain either through IO authorization or through a robust operational coalition. This research focuses on the incentives and tradeoffs of the operational multilateralism and the within-case variation of Afghanistan, which was unilateral in the combat operations and multilateral in the post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization operations (phase IV).

Behavioral Logics and the Practice of Intervention

On the question of whether a state is likely to intervene under particular conditions, scholars have dedicated voluminous research. On the question of how they will intervene—cooperatively or alone, with what levels of force, and with what motivations—they have been more silent. Those who have addressed the issue more directly have generally divided into two analytical camps: those who argue that states intervene on the basis of means-ends calculations or a “logic of consequences,” and those who maintain that states are constrained by rules and shared understanding of how force should be used; the latter description would fall under the heading of a “logic of appropriateness.”

The logic of consequences, as applied to intervention behavior, would predict that states act on the basis of estimated costs and benefits of a particular intervention approach. According to this logic, identities, rules, and institutions are less important in determining behavioral outcomes than identifying policy options for a particular issue, assessing expected outcomes, and negotiating an outcome “grounded in calculated consequential advantage.”


Applied to interventions, Benjamin Miller implicitly suggests that this logic of costs and benefits explains the scope of U.S. intervention in the post-Cold War period; he also acknowledges that “there is nothing revolutionary or earthshaking about this logic. Indeed, a major school in International Relations theory (realism) claims that states tend to operate in cost-benefit terms.” Miller makes the convincing argument that international structure, which many realist scholars use as the basis of their behavioral predictions, is actually indeterminate with regard to the scope of hegemonic interventionism. He proceeds to argue that the unipolar power is constrained by regional incentives and constraints, and shows that the best predictors of the scope of behavior—how the hegemon is likely to intervene—are two-fold: the constraints (costs) as defined by the political costs, a function of the powerful actors in the region, and the likely benefits, a function of the intensity of interests at stake for a particular intervention. High costs or resistance in terms of regional constraints along with high interest are likely to produce a massive intervention; low costs and low interest are likely to produce limited intervention. In turn, although Miller does not directly address how these factors translate into cooperation behavior, we might infer that a massive intervention would benefit from multilateral contributions, and high interest but low cost would create incentives for unilaterism. In analyzing the U.S. post-Cold War empirical record, Miller finds great coherence in the nature of interventions and argues that this logic of consequences underlies how the United States intervened across this period.

At the same time, however, a competing logic of interventions gained traction, one that argued that states, including the United States, act on the basis of what is “appropriate.” States act according to the “selection of rules more than with individual rational expectations.” Constructivist scholars who adopted this logic in the context of military interventions agreed that “identities more than interests” governed behavior; as such, states would intervene multilaterally, not on the basis of their material interests but because multilateralism had emerged as the appropriate approach to intervention during the 1990s. Historical cooperation behavior had been strictly instrumental, on the basis of expected benefits. Multilateralism in the post-Cold War environment, however, was not a function of expected utility according to this argument, but a shared expectation of state behavior, an accepted international norm about how states should intervene.

20 Miller, “The Logic of U.S. Military Interventions.”
21 Ibid.
23 Theo Farrell, The Norms of War: Cultural Beliefs and Modern Conflict (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005), 1. This shared expectation of multilateralism fits Farrell’s definition of norms as “beliefs shared by a community about who they are, what the world is like, and given these two things, what they can and should do in given circumstances.”
According to this norm, states would seek to intervene multilaterally—
with UN authorization and a multilateral force consisting of troops from “dis-
interested” states, “usually middle-level powers outside the region of con-
flict”\textsuperscript{24}—because doing so confers legitimacy on the operation. IO authori-
zation and multilateral coalitions served to signal broad levels of international
support for the intervention and legitimated the hegemon’s behavior. The
norms associated with multilateralism were thought to “create, in part, the
structure of incentives states face . . . failure to intervene multilaterally creates
political costs . . . these benefits and costs flow not from material features of
the intervention but from expectations that states and people in contempo-
rary politics share about what constitutes legitimate uses of forces.”\textsuperscript{25}

Testifying to the strength of the multilateral norm in a post-Cold War
environment, Martha Finnemore noted the following:

States adhere to them [multilateral norms] even when they know that
doing so compromises the effectiveness of the mission. Criticisms of the
UN’s ineffectiveness for military operations are widespread. That UN in-
volve ment continues to be a central feature of these operations, despite
the UN’s apparent lack of military competence, underscores the power of
multilateral norms.\textsuperscript{26}

Further corroborating the strength of these norms was that the unipolar
power “bound” itself by UN resolutions and the preferences of coalition mem-
bers even though it had the material capacity to avoid such constraints and
intervene unilaterally. Asking why a state with a preponderance of power
would self-impose costs of multilateralism could only be answered norma-
tively rather than rationally. Indeed, “such strong multilateral norms are not
what one would expect from a distribution of material capabilities so over-
whelmingly unipolar,” especially when operating multilaterally may hinder
the military aspect of the operations.\textsuperscript{27} The United States, with a larger and
more sophisticated military than any other did not need allies to shift the bal-
ance of power. That it nonetheless sought allies suggested an understanding
of the political or normative value of having allies. According to this account,
the unipolar power sought allies out of a normative sense of “oughtness or
a “shared moral assessment” about the “appropriate” way to intervene.\textsuperscript{28}

Driven by appropriateness rather than strategic self-interests, states would
seek to intervene multilaterally even when strict utility imperatives might call
for a unilateral approach to the use of force.

\textsuperscript{24} Finnemore, \textit{The Purpose of Intervention}, 80.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Finnemore, \textit{The Purpose of Intervention}, 134.
\textsuperscript{28} Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,”
\textit{International Organization} 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 887–917; 891. They outline these concepts of
norms, “oughtness” and “appropriateness.”
The post-Cold War empirical record of interventions appeared to confirm this characterization. The logic of appropriateness argument would predict that in a post-Cold War, multilateral, norm-dominated environment, states would seek authorization and a diverse set of allies not for material but rather for political and normative reasons. Constrained by the prospect of political penalties for not intervening multilaterally, states would "go to great lengths" to generate a multilateral solution to legitimate their interventions. Indeed, as the earlier table illustrates, the post-Cold War empirical record of U.S. interventions suggests a pattern of multilateral behavior on the part of the hegemon. The United States consistently operated through UN channels, and with less advanced militaries whose value was not strategic but rather political, as a way to validate the intervention.29

Though the record of interventions in the 1990s seemed to validate both logics, this period offered little variation; most of the interventions during this period arguably targeted issues at the periphery of U.S. security interests and sought to promote American values, prompting critics to refer to the interventions in this period as "social work."30 In none of the interventions during this period were U.S. citizens or assets directly at risk. In their work on case selection, John Gerring and Jason Seawright note that "cases chosen for intensive analysis must also provide sufficient variation along key parameters."31 Cases of intervention within this period do not vary substantially in terms of a key parameter, the nature or motivation for the intervention, so they do not present challenges for explanations that might be unable to account for variation or change. The constraining effects of a multilateral norm, for example, would predict little variation in outcomes, so it is not surprising that this explanation fared well against a period that itself had little variation. A better test of the explanation would have required more variation at least along the "intervention type" parameter, which the Afghanistan intervention, where U.S. interests were directly at stake, introduces.

The Case of Afghanistan

Emerging from the 1990s with its explanatory power firmly in tact, the logic of appropriateness seemed to hit an empirical snag with the Afghanistan intervention. This logic would have predicted a multilateral intervention, with UN participation as well as the incorporation of strategically "disinterested" states. According to the cost and benefit parameters outlined above, the logic of consequences might also have predicted a multilateral outcome, but for

31 John Gerring and Jason Seawright, "Case-Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," Political Research Quarterly (forthcoming).
different reasons. Because of the medium strength of regional players such as Russia, Pakistan, and Iran creating potential political costs (constraints) and the extremely high interest at stake, the expected intervention approach would have been large, creating incentives for multilateralism.

In the case of Afghanistan, however, both sets of predictions were wrong. Based on these analytical expectations, Afghanistan seems to be a least likely case for unilateralism. Yet in spite of the fact that the United States had sought a global coalition for coordinating the law enforcement, intelligence sharing, and financial network aspects of the war on terror, the United States imposed serious restrictions on international participation in the military aspects of the campaign and resisted offers of assistance. As one keen observer of international cooperation noted in an article entitled “Uncle Sam’s Coalition of One,”

Washington is not only in complete military control of the coalition it built to support its objectives in combating al-Qaeda and the Taliban, but it is also in a position of uncontested diplomatic dominace, exercised both actively and passively. It is not operating multilaterally: Echoing U.K. and U.S. efforts at the UN to move toward “smart sanctions” against Iraq, it might be described as practicing “smart unilateralism.”

Unlike information on Iraq, some of which has become declassified and discussed as a result of investigations into intelligence and operational failures, unclassified data on Afghanistan is still sparse. In particular, U.S. and coalition troop data up until about February 2002 is heavily guarded, and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) planners I spoke with were not permitted to speak with precise numbers and primary sources on numbers are still limited. Some important evidence for U.S. interest in centralizing control by minimizing allied participation is detectable, however.

In short, aside from the multilateralism of the peacekeeping and stabilization campaign, an issue I will return to in later sections, substantive allied cooperation in the combat phases of Afghanistan was limited. Other than the CIA, the first forces that moved into Afghanistan were part of the standard, twelve-man Operational Detachment Alpha operating as part of Task

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32 Andrew Bennett writes that “in a least-likely case, the independent variable is at a level that gives only a weak prediction; a finding that it nonetheless produces the outcome is strong supporting evidence.” From Harry Eckstein, “Case Study and Theory in Political Science,” in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., Handbook of Political Science (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 79–137; for application of this most likely/least likely distinction, see Andrew Bennett et al., “Burden-sharing in the Persian Gulf War,” International Organization 48, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 39–75.


Force Dagger. Working with some indigenous forces on the ground, these SOF teams proceeded to degrade Taliban positions in the north, take Mazar-e-Sharif, Kabul, and ultimately provoke the Taliban’s surrender in Kandahar, almost exclusively with U.S. SOF, close air support, command and control, logistics, and decision-making authority.\(^{35}\)

With regard to the allies it did incorporate, it did so bilaterally and almost exclusively after or outside combat operations rather than multilaterally and during the early phases of combat. U.S. military and civilian commanders made it clear the United States was unwilling to engage in the vagaries of coalition warfare while still in the midst of combat operations. One spokesman for CENTCOM, Rear Admiral Craig Quigley, said “You take them [allies] up on their offers at the location and time and manner that fits into the overall fabric of Enduring Freedom . . . the best intentions in the world, if provided in an uncoordinated way, makes things worse instead of better.”\(^{36}\)

Early evidence of this preference for unilateral control is clear in the principals’ meetings that took place soon after the 9/11 attacks. In their discussions on the potential role of allies, then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice mentioned the number of allies—specifically the Australians, French, Canadians, and Germans—who were offering their assistance to the operation. To this, Secretary Rumsfeld responded that “we want to include them if we can” but he voiced his concern that allied military forces could interfere with the effectiveness of U.S. forces, and the coalition had to be hand-selected to accommodate the operational needs of the conflict, rather than to mold the operational plan to the availability of allies.\(^{37}\) The military commanders’ and administrations’ interest was in minimizing allied forces’ integration into operational plans until the United States had secured regions of Afghanistan. From the “get-go,” “the Pentagon did not want to open up its operational military plan against the Taliban to a lot of other players.”\(^{38}\)

Preferences for control of the mission also manifested themselves at least throughout the combat phases of operations. First, instead of accepting material offers and integrating NATO into its campaign plans, the United States instead chose to position NATO assets domestically as part of Operation Noble Eagle (the homeland security mission). None of NATO’s collective assets deployed to Afghanistan. As evidence of the fact that Europe would not be any center or periphery of gravity, one U.S. senior official said “I think it’s safe to


say that we won’t be asking SACEUR [the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe] to put together a battle plan for Afghanistan.”39 There was a clear interest in avoiding the “cumbersome military command and planning structure” of a multilateral military organization such as NATO.40 An ad hoc set of bilateral arrangements rather than a multilateral structure would enable the United States to maintain military flexibility, as Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz made clear in September 2001: “We think we had a collective affirmation of support with what they said with Article Five, and if we need collective action we’ll ask for it. We don’t anticipate that at the moment … We need cooperation from many countries but we need to take it in appropriately flexible ways.”41

Second, while the United States worked more closely with the United Kingdom than any other state, it was cautious with how deeply to integrate British forces in the early phases of the conflict. The United Kingdom contributed numbers of commandos, a Parachute Regiment, Royal Marines, Nimrod surveillance aircraft, and four C-17s from the Royal Air Force.42 It launched some of the early rounds of Tomahawk cruise missiles from hunter-killer submarines, fought side-by-side with the United States in its search for Osama bin laden and Taliban leaders, participated without national caveats in the mountainous engagements,43 and by November 2001 was the only state other than the United States to participate in combat operations.44

Even taking into account the British contributions, the United States was responsible for “shouldering most of the load” in combat operations and was careful in how and when to incorporate British forces.45 While the British had provided the Nimrod reconnaissance platform and tanker support, they did not have any aircraft in a shooting role. In mid-November, the United Kingdom dispatched 100 commandos to Bagram and put an additional 6,400 regular forces on 48-hour alert for action. In what amounted to an awkward diplomatic incident between the United States and Britain, CENTCOM instructed...

43 See General James L. Jones, “Prague to Istanbul: Ambition versus Reality,” speech at the Center for Strategic Decision Research, available at http://www.csdr.org/2004book/Gen Jones.htm. A national caveat is “generally a formal written restriction that most nations place on the use of their forces.” Jones, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, has said that “collectively, these restrictions limit the tactical commanders’ operational flexibility.”
45 Gordon, “Britain Allots Troops for Afghan Ground Combat.”
the British forces to stand by because Afghan leaders had not cleared the British deployment. The Afghanistan foreign minister, Abdullah Abdullah, reportedly said that the British forces had not been invited, asserting to one of the U.S. CIA officers that “this is a violation of our sovereignty. If we are not to be a sovereign nation I should resign. We would prefer that they (the British) leave.”\textsuperscript{46} The British deployment was subsequently put on hold, prompting Britain’s top minister for international assistance to accuse the United States of snubbing its British partner.\textsuperscript{47} Even one of Britain’s most conservative newspapers scored the incident as “the British Government’s first real embarrassment since Mr. Blair gave his full backing to America after the September 11 terrorist attacks.”\textsuperscript{48}

Part of the confusion on the part of eager allied participants resulted from the disorder coming from the United States, which was acting not as a unitary actor but as the State Department and Pentagon, which had different views on whether and when allied troops should engage. State Department officials tended to be more receptive to the European and allied position, agreeing to accept their deployment earlier rather than later, but the Defense Department was highly skeptical, resisting their participation at all, and certainly not until the military finished the combat phase of the campaign.\textsuperscript{49}

Other states such as Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Poland, and Germany did contribute some special operations forces but most of these were brought several months after the fall of the Taliban and were not integrated into U.S. campaign plans. Jordanian and French forces had deployed to Uzbekistan as part of an offer to set up a field hospital. CENTCOM postponed all of these offers until they had established better security, which was in most cases after the fall of the Taliban.\textsuperscript{50} Canadian Special Forces numbered about 250–300 but were deployed as part of a small security detail operating mostly outside Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{51}

Assets came from countries with whom the United States frequently trained and their numbers were small and the troops applied in a discrete, bilateral, ad hoc manner for their expertise in mountainous and winter


\textsuperscript{50} Sipress and Finn, “U.S. Says ‘Not Yet.’”

combat, granting the United States significantly more operational flexibility than a multilateral framework would have allowed.52

Moreover, working with other states’ SOF units does not introduce the level of interoperability problems that would be encountered with conventional units. The main reason is that in Europe, many of the SOF units double as counterterrorism units. They are small units, and need less money, which appeals to states interested in decreasing their defense budgets. As such, European states have been more willing to invest in SOF capabilities, so the differences in capabilities between U.S. and allied SOF are fewer than the differences between conventional capabilities.53

Lastly, though not a state ally, the Northern Alliance produced one of the more notable contributions to the Afghanistan operation. Reliance on their loose coalition of forces was central to the Afghan Model of warfare, which called for involvement of local opposition armies. Working closely with U.S. SOF teams, the Northern Alliance helped capture areas such as Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul, in part through its experiences fighting a twenty-year civil war with the Taliban.54 Though the Afghan Model hinged on an alignment with the Northern Alliance, this group’s role was limited to what Steve Biddle defined with the following tasks: “Screen U.S. SOF from hostile patrols . . . mop up surviving remnants, to occupy abandoned territory (often politically important that local forces be the ones to take control of the ground that the PGMs effectively clear).”55

Cooperation with the Northern Alliance may have been an important condition for intervention, but was limited in its role, capability, and influence on U.S. campaign plans. But other than this nonstate, and to a much lesser extent the British, the United States conducted the combat phase of operations alone, using a combination of Army green berets and CIA teams coordinating to some degree with the Northern Alliance.56 Cutting through the intended appearances of a coalition defeat of the Taliban, one British newspaper observed that “in military terms the capitulation of the Taliban was a U.S. victory. British troops played only a peripheral part.”57 Given that the British were the most central of any ally, this observation is a keen reflection

53 Personal correspondence with twenty-four year Army SOF officer, Dr. Kalev Sepp, Naval Postgraduate School, 14 June 2007.
of the degree to which U.S. operations during these early phases was well short of being multilateral.

Determinants of Consequences

If neither the logic of appropriateness nor the logic of consequences explains this behavior, what does? Drawing from realist insights on alignment behavior, I argue that the motivation to seek allies comes from preferences between reliability and utility. As Ken Waltz writes, external balancing (alliances)\(^{58}\) is one way to shift the balance of power, but “internal balancing is more reliable and precise than external balancing. States are less likely to misjudge their relative strengths than they are to misjudge the strength and reliability of opposing coalitions.”\(^{59}\) Elsewhere he notes that dependence on other states for security creates vulnerability in an anarchic world; wise states therefore “do not willingly place themselves in situations of increased dependence.”\(^{60}\) Under some circumstances, however, internal balancing may either be insufficient to respond to the level of threat or may be too costly, which might therefore push a state toward alliance-seeking behavior in which the state can benefit from additional resources or capabilities.

In practice though, it is unclear how that guidance translates into operational imperatives. When is reliability favored? When does it become too costly, or when do one state’s capabilities become insufficient for that state to handle a challenger on its own? General realist principles may be helpful in explaining grand strategic preferences but are more indeterminate with respect to how a state is likely to devise cooperation plans at the strategic and operational levels. For this we need a more specific set of parameters. I argue that cooperation choices are a function of consequences, as realists would predict, but specified according to two main factors: (1) How immediately state interests are threatened or the costs of not acting quickly (time horizon) and (2) the potential benefits associated with multilateral burden-sharing. These factors create a set of incentives and constraints that determine whether a state with a unilateral option such as the United States is likely to pursue its intervention multilaterally.

**TIME HORIZONS IN THE PLANNING PHASE**

Those two factors correspond to two phases of the intervention. The first phase is the planning phase, the time between when the potential need for

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\(^{58}\) By alliances, I refer less to formal alliance behavior but rather alignment behavior, which includes ad hoc alliances or coalitions that coalesce around a particular political and strategic objective and dissolve after that objective is reached. In this dissertation, I refer to alliance and alignment interchangeably, with the goal of explaining incentives behind decisions to see allies in more fluid circumstances rather than the more rigid alliance structures that seem largely anachronistic.


\(^{60}\) Ibid., 143–46.
intervention arises until the inception of an operation. In this phase, a state assesses the security threat and evaluates courses of action for addressing that threat. In addition to deciding whether to intervene—whether to use airstrikes, ground forces, or covert operations—a state with a preponderance of material power has a cooperation option. It can intervene unilaterally or seek to build a multilateral coalition and obtain authorization.

Whether it chooses the multilateral course of action for its intervention in this first phase depends on its time horizon. Building a coalition and obtaining authorization take time; recruiting each ally entails a series of bargains, from coordinating the decision to intervene, agreeing to the intervention’s strategy, and incorporating these states’ militaries into the campaign. Each of those strategic interactions entails transaction costs in the form of time and in some cases, payoffs to other states for their cooperation. Reaching agreement may take the form of one party holding out for a better deal, a process that “often takes the appearance of a war of attrition—two sides holding out, waiting in the hope that the other will make some significant concession first.” This process may involve either costly delay or no agreement at all.

Even when parties are likely to converge on a particular plan and when the lead intervening state therefore does not need to bargain hard for an agreement, planning with a coalition still takes more time; more parties need to be “read in” to the plan, which creates a considerable cooperation hurdle if there are not preexisting intelligence-sharing agreements with those parties; the more parties that receive a “vote” in planning, the slower the planning and decision making and the greater challenges to unity of effort.

Given these up-front delays associated with the multilateral coordination process, short-term challenges to security will make unilateralism an attractive short-term option, even if it forgoes the longer-term advantages of burden-sharing that is associated with multilateralism. While the state works to strike agreement on the principles, timing, and strategy of intervention with IOs and allies, the putative cause of intervention is gaining in strength and able to exploit the delays of a coalition-building process. As Stephen Brooks writes,

In a system with high levels of security competition, a rational state’s first concern will be to maximize the likelihood of its continued existence, even if focusing on short-term security has negative long-term repercussions ... a rational state will always seek first to maximize its short-term

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61 For definitions of military operations phases, see Tommy Franks, American Soldier (New York, NY: Regan Books, 2004).
64 See the U.S. Army War College Campaign Planning Primer, 8d, Combined Forces Organization.
military security from potential rivals, even if this has negative long-term priorities for other state priorities.\textsuperscript{65}

Thus, short-term threats to security will shorten a state’s time horizon and increase the way the state values present gains over potential future gains,\textsuperscript{66} which might otherwise be high because of the burden-sharing opportunities and the opportunity cost of keeping the state’s military occupied in one location. Concerned with their short-term security, however, the state will discount the value of longer-term priorities and circumvent costly bargaining in favor of shorter-term flexibility to pursue its security and survival even if doing so means forgoing the longer-term benefits of burden-sharing and preservation of the U.S. position of primacy.\textsuperscript{67}

In contrast, a rising challenger or threat, one whose ability to damage another state is more distant, grants states the luxury of more time to address those threats. The threatened state has the luxury of time to work through multilateral channels, collect allies, and generate authorization to address the problem. Delays associated with the bargaining process are immaterial because the security issue does not require immediate action. Threats that are not immediate will decrease the discount rate and increase the state’s willingness to wade through the time consuming bargaining process. Low-level and insulated ethnic conflict such as in the Balkans during the early part of the 1990s and post-conflict peace and stability operations would be consistent with imposing a less immediate security threat to a potential intervening state. The consequence will be weaker security pressures on the state, lower discount rate, preference for the longer-term advantages of multilateralism, and greater tolerance for the multilateral bargaining process.\textsuperscript{68}

In short, with short-term security calculations as its guide, a state is more likely to “use its favorable power position to extract immediate gains” whereas with longer time horizons, it is more likely to “use that power position to shape agreements that bring a slower but longer-term stream of benefits.”\textsuperscript{69} Bruce Russett and Miles Lackey sum up the logic of intertemporal tradeoffs: “if there’s no tomorrow, why save today?”\textsuperscript{70}


\textsuperscript{66} The discount rate refers to the degree to which actors discount the future, “favoring short-term military preparedness over longer-term objectives when they conflict; states often make intertemporal trade-offs.” For the security application of discount rate, see Stephen Brooks, “Dueling Realisms,” \textit{International Organization} 51 no. 3 (Summer 1997): 445–77, spec. 450.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid. This logic, which correlates the way a state values future versus present priorities with the degree to which its security interests are threatened, follows closely from that of Brooks.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{70} Bruce Russett and Miles Lackey, “In the Shadow of the Cloud: If There’s no Tomorrow, Why Save Today?” \textit{Political Science Quarterly} 102, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 259–72.
The logic is eminently intuitive but harder to operationalize. When is tomorrow’s security so uncertain that an actor is wise to capitalize on the immediate gains of today? Although the question of time horizon is still undertheorized in international relations, the preventive/preemptive literature offers a good guide on how variations in time horizon may affect payoffs for action now, in which case unilateralism is preferable, versus the future, where multilateralism strategies might be more desirable. Jack Levy writes that preemptive war is “undertaken in response to the threat of an attack that is perceived to be imminent, whereas preventive action is a response that will generally take several years to develop. Preemption is a tactical response to an immediate threat, whereas prevention is a more strategic response to a long-term threat.”71

Dan Reiter distinguishes between the motivations and time horizons associated with the two types of attacks, arguing that “the term preventive war is used for a war that begins when a state attacks because it feels that in the longer term (usually the next two years) it will be attacked or will suffer relatively increasing strategic inferiority.” Preemption, on the other hand, takes place when the “attacker feels it will itself be the target of a military attack in the short term. The essence of preemption, then, is that it is motivated by fear, not by greed.72

According to these distinctions, Iran’s nuclear program, which in 2005 was estimated as being a decade away from manufacturing nuclear weapons, would constitute a distant, longer-term threat.73 The logic of time horizons I lay out here would predict a continuation of multilateral diplomatic efforts intended to terminate the program rather than unilateral, preventive attack. The shortest term security threats are those in which capability and intent have already been demonstrated in the form of an attack; not only is this the most dramatic way to elicit the fear that Reiter discusses, it is also most likely to decrease the way a state values the future over the present and favor immediate, unilateral retaliation rather than multilateral negotiations.

RELIABILITY AND PAYOFF OF MULTILATERALISM IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

The second main determinant of consequences regarding multilateral-seeking behavior deals with the operational costs themselves. In short, if a state thinks it can win cheaply, it is likely to prefer the reliability of its own assets rather than put itself in a position of dependence on other, possibly less advanced assets. I suggest that the nature of intervention affects these calculations of costs. As Barry Posen has argued convincingly, the United

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States has “command of the commons” in the air, sea, land, and space, but does have some “contested zones” that may challenge its supremacy. One of these contested zones includes force-on-force conflicts against militaries with many more men of fighting age than the United States. Such conflicts are likely to create operational constraints even for a state with a large and advanced military.

During the first Gulf War, for example, Bush Administration leaders expressed concern for the number of troops Saddam Hussein had quickly stationed in Kuwait: 200,000 compared to the 20,000 U.S. troops in theater. “As the US brought in heavy armored forces, two of the world’s large armies eventually would be facing off. If there was conflict, it would be major land warfare. This was nothing like the liberation of Grenada or Panama.” The Iraqi military was thought to have one million well-trained soldiers, compared to an active duty Army size of about 800,000 soldiers. By activating reserve forces and employing other services, the United States may have been able to field the force it deemed necessary to confront the world’s fourth largest military, but also stood to gain by being backed up by troops from Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, France, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom.

Second, the anticipation of an intervention with a long combat or post-combat phase also increases the advantages of multilateralism for three reasons. The main reason is one of simple math. The longer the intervention endures, the greater the financial and personnel burden on the lead intervening state. In addition, assuming that many of the transaction costs associated with multilateral bargaining are concentrated up-front and are relatively fixed, then the longer the intervention endures, the more efficient multilateral operations will become over time. Lastly, a longer operation places constraints on the agility of allied forces; it creates high opportunity costs for one state’s military. Having to maintain 60,000 of one’s own soldiers in Bosnia on a relatively permanent basis, rather than maintain a fraction of that number because of the ability to burden-share, means higher opportunity costs in

75 Woodward, Bush At War, 285.
77 The army also had almost 500,000 in the Army National Guard and 300,000 in the Army Reserve, bringing the total force up to about 1.6 million, but half of this total were soldiers that would have to be activated and were less immediately available. For force structure comparisons between the Cold War and the 1990s, see “A Changed Army,” available at http://www.army.mil/aps/98/chapter2.htm.
78 Indeed, the United States unilaterally deployed a deterrence force of about 200,000 to address the immediate threat that Iraq could invade Saudi Arabia in 1990. The Gulf War is actually more phased than its typical casting as a multilateral operation would suggest. The initial deployments to deal with the immediate threat were unilateral, and the latter deployments were multilateral because of the expectation of a high cost in the operational phases.
79 This is likely to be a fair assumption both because up-front cooperation costs include a steep learning curve for each new coalition operation and because of the difficulty of interoperability in the combat versus post-combat phase of operations.
terms of the foregone opportunities or agility to react to other contingencies around the world because state assets are obligated to one area and unavailable for another.80

Thus, whether a state will seek to intervene multilaterally depends on cost-sharing incentives. Force-on-force interventions that require large numbers of forces as well as those interventions expected to have long post-combat reconstruction operations create incentives for multilateralism. In contrast, the lighter the operational requirements, the less burden to share, the fewer constraints on the state, and the less probable a multilateral intervention. Fewer overall costs mean the payoffs of multilateral burden-sharing are also lower for the same up-front, fixed coordination costs. Special operations missions, which require fewer personnel or costs than conventional operations, will reduce incentives for multilateral burden-sharing. Quick in and out missions,81 those in which long stability operations are either not anticipated or not contemplated,82 or air strikes will reduce constraints on a state and increase incentives for unilateralism.

In the 2003 Iraq war, for example, the United States believed it could win both cheaply and quickly. Declassified planning slides show the United States expected to win with about 100,000 troops and would be able to draw down to 25,000 troops in less than 2 years, and then to 5,000 troops by 2006. One CENTCOM planner said Maj. Gen. David Petraeus’ spring 2003 rush to recruit him onto the planning team “sooner rather than later was based on the sense that the entire war might be over by summer’s end.”83 By that time, the United States would have completed a Phase-IV transition to a “civilian authority” and U.S. troops would have redeployed to the United States—estimates that were thought to be conservative but ended up “startlingly unrealistic.”84

Theoretical Assumptions

Central to this conceptualization of both time horizon and operational payoff is the question of information. Whereas a state may know its own capabilities

80 Robert Samuelson defines an “opportunity cost” as the “foregone opportunities that have been sacrificed.” A more economics-based definition is that an opportunity cost if “the maximum alternative earning that might have been obtained if a productive good, service, or capacity had been applied to some alternative use.” For these definitions, see Wayne E. Leininger, “Opportunity Costs: Some Definitions and Examples,” The Accounting Review, vol. L11.1 (January 1977): 248–51.

81 An example of a quick “in and out” mission would be Panama, where the United States was going in quickly to retrieve Manuel Noriega but had no intentions of remaining and building a new, democratic regime.

82 An example here might be Operation Urgent Fury, in which the United States intervened in Grenada responding to a coup d’état. Once it had overthrown the old government and waited for a new government to take over, U.S. forces left; helping the new government build institutions and maintain stability was never contemplated.


with some certainty, assessing those of their adversaries are only observable and assessable “at some cost,” as David Lake writes in his theory of relational contracting. “Due to diminishing marginal returns, polities never acquire full information about their partners.”

The result is that estimates about threat and payoff are made with some degree of uncertainty and are likely to be estimations about the range of likely costs and benefits. States will be required to make decisions on the basis of incomplete assessments of threats and on ex ante assessments; these assessments may be based on incorrect information, but are the reality under which the actor operates. A decision maker’s ex ante assumptions about time horizon or the likely payoff of varying cooperation behavior become the set of constraints and incentives on which he acts. Thus,

As in any model of costly and therefore incomplete information, it is the beliefs of the actors rather than the actual values of the variables that motivate the choice of relationships . . . although polities may possess incorrect beliefs in any instance, there is no reason that they should be consistently wrong.

I therefore make the assumption that the actual threat and the assessed threat are the same, and the actual and expected payoffs of a particular course of action are the same. This model therefore refers to threats and payoffs rather than beliefs or expectations of those variables, recognizing that those are “beliefs of the polities about the variables rather than the variables themselves that matter.” Intelligence estimates, which may prove to be inaccurate ex post nonetheless serve as the basis of the ex ante decision-making assumptions about threat and are taken as the best assessments of the time horizon and operational payoff variables. As former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Marc Grossman, said in an interview, “knowing what we know now about the Iraq war, we would have waited until we had more allies to go in so we could be sharing the burden now.”

Similarly, a more accurate estimate of the severity of the threat would likely have altered the prevailing view that Saddam posed a short-term threat—a view shared by elites across the aisle—and the perceived urgency of intervention, contributing to more robust coalition building efforts. But the

86 See ibid., chaps. 1–3. These assumptions are drawn from those that Lake applies in his framework of unilateralism and joint production economies (a framework that considers conditions likely to lead to unilateral or multilateral outcomes).
87 Lake, *Entangling Relations*, 42.
88 Ibid.
90 A representative political view on the issue of using force in Iraq is that of Senator Hillary Clinton, who favored obtaining UN authorization but cautioned that some UN members might not authorize force until Saddam Hussein had “actually used chemical, biological, or God forbid, nuclear weapons” and that
information on which the United States based its cooperation strategies had predicted a much shorter, less costly intervention on behalf of what was overwhelmingly viewed as a near-term threat; it is these \textit{ex ante} estimates that I use as the inputs to this decision-making framework.

Time Horizons and Operational Payoffs in Afghanistan

In the case of Afghanistan, the two factors combined to make multilateralism less attractive than the reliability of the U.S.’ own assets. First, the attacks of 9/11 had the effect of making short-term interests a higher priority than longer-term considerations. Despite the series of terrorist attacks in the decade leading up to 9/11,\footnote{See Senator Hillary Clinton, speech on the floor of the Senate, 10 October 2002; available at \url{http://clinton.senate.gov/speeches/iraq_101002.html}.} the United States had largely followed a law enforcement approach to counterterrorism, dissuaded from acting unilaterally and undiplomatically against sovereign states that may have been harboring terrorists.\footnote{Those attacks include the 1993 World Trade Center attack, the 1995 Khobar Towers bombing, the 1998 Embassy bombing, and the 2000 attack on the USS Cole.}

Cofer Black, the Director of the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center from 1999 until May 2002, testified that in terms of operational flexibility, “All I want to say is that there was ‘before’ 9/11 and ‘after’ 9/11. After 9/11 the gloves come off.”\footnote{See “Statement of Cofer Black: Joint Investigation into September 11,” 5th Public Hearing, 26 September 2002, Joint House/Senate Intelligence Committee Hearing.} To some extent, the drastic policy disjuncture prompted by the 9/11 attacks was a subrational response. The attacks did not necessarily mean more attacks were more imminent or more likely than before September 11, 2001. But in terms of how leaders perceived their threat environment, the attacks certainly had the effect of crystallizing the nature and capability of the adversary in a way that the smaller attacks of the preceding decade had been unable to do.\footnote{Robert Jervis, \textit{Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). In his well-known discussion of how states perceive their threats, Jervis hypothesizes that information that percolates in is less likely to shift perceptions than information that emerges in large doses. For U.S. decision makers, the smaller terrorist attacks of the 1990s did little to shift threat perceptions compared to the more dramatic attacks of 9/11, which drastically shifted the mindset about threats.} The attacks dislodged what had been a firmly planted notion that terrorist attack on U.S. soil was “remote,” and ended the cautiousness that had characterized the government throughout the 1990s.\footnote{See “Testimony of Richard A. Clarke before the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States,” 24 March 2004, available at \url{http://www.9-11commission.gov/hearings/hearing8/clarke_statement.pdf}}

As part of the increased risk acceptance that the 9/11 attacks provoked, government attention shifted from longer-term, evolving threats to immediate

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security details. From this shifting mindset, the doctrine of “preemption” ultimately emerged in which the United States would not “remain idle while threats gather” but rather would take “anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack.”96 The attacks clearly made longer-term priorities subordinate to short-term security requirements, a classic neorealist prediction of how increased discount rates will shorten a state’s time horizon and behavior.97

With this post-9/11 mentality came an interest in retaliating quickly and incentives to reject any factors that might constitute a “costly delay” in prosecuting the campaign in Afghanistan. The forcing mechanism behind acting quickly was that “the longer UBL (Usama bin Laden) is free, the greater risk of a hit here at home.”98 Even though allies might mean the expectation of burden-sharing over the long term, several near-term security considerations militated against the incorporation of allies.

The first was the campaign planning process. What was typically a twelve-month process was severely compressed; military planners had to scramble to expedite planning and coordinate, mobilize, and deploy joint U.S. assets in a dramatically shortened window.99 Coordinating the interagency planning process had already exceeded Bush’s preference for quick, decisive retaliation. Generating intelligence analysis of Afghanistan, developing military plans, identifying and securing combat search and rescue facilities in Central Asia, coordinating the possibility of having U.S. European Command (EUCOM) assets in CENTCOMS area of responsibility, and mobilizing military forces had proven to be a considerable interagency challenge in that short window. The problem of incorporating other states’ interests and assets, even if in principle those states appeared to be forthcoming with their assistance, would only have added to the coordination challenges. When asked about how international participation might be incorporated in the early phases of combat, Rumsfeld said, “Look, we’re not able to define a special operations role for our own forces . . . until we do that, how can we talk about including others?”100 The coordination problem with regard to special operations was similar to the coordination issues more broadly.

CENTCOM planners catalogue the way coalition representatives descended on headquarters after 9/11 and that genuine coordination of national policies would have been impossible because of the number of countries represented, the lack of existing information sharing agreements with many of

97 Brooks, “Dueling Realisms.”
98 Dick Cheney, quoted in Woodward, Bush At War, 291.
99 See Campaign Planning Primer 2006, Department of Military Strategy, Planning and Operations, the U.S. Army War College.
100 For more on some of the interagency challenges, see Woodward, Bush At War, 126–70; 136.
these countries, and the poor timing of their arrival. Two to three countries would arrive per week, meaning that it was impossible to backtrack every day to bring each new country up to speed on the approach. “National policy coordination” took the form of the represented countries taking sanitized U.S. planning documents back to their state capitals as a document on which they had no veto rights.\footnote{Author’s interview with lead CENTCOM planner, Col. John Agoglia, 17 April 2007.} If internal planning was already of dubious reliability, turning to external inputs was even more questionable in terms of working within a short window of opportunity.

Second, the short timeline created constraints on the degree of multilateralism from a mobilization and logistics standpoint. Even the more advanced allies, such as the Europeans, lacked advanced expeditionary capabilities necessary for rapid deployment. Many states appeared willing to offer assets, but few if any had assets that could deploy to Afghanistan within the 26-day window from 9/11 to the inception of operations on 7 October 2001.\footnote{See Milan Vego, “What Can We Learn from Enduring Freedom?” U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 128, no. 7 (July 2002): 28-33.} For example, Europeans lacked strategic airlift that would have been required to deploy assets to landlocked Afghanistan. Without U.S. airlift, which had to focus on deploying U.S. rather than foreign assets to theater within this short window, allied assets were unavailable to be incorporated, which added to the reliability concerns.\footnote{David C. Gompert and Uwe Nerlich, Shoulder to Shoulder: The Road to U.S.-European Military Cooperability: A German-American Analysis (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 2002).}

In short, the planning phase leading up to the Afghanistan intervention was one in which a stunning attack on U.S. assets demonstrated the consequences of not acting quickly. With a dramatically shortened campaign-planning window, the United States had little time to coordinate its own assets and had incentives to rely on its own assets rather than introduce what would be costly delays by introducing foreign interests and assets. Acting first and then asking questions about multilateral assistance later was a way to optimize immediate security interests even if it meant compromising longer-term prospects of cooperative burden-sharing. The immediacy of the threat and its impact on planning meant there were potentially negative consequences associated with multilateralism and therefore greater incentives to act unilaterally.

THE AFGHAN MODEL AND LOW PAYOFFS FOR MULTILATERALISM

The combat plan that emerged for Afghanistan operated on the low-end of a resource-intensity spectrum and created few incentives for multilateral burden-sharing. With no written plan for Afghanistan, CENTCOM and the CIA began drafting different plans for an invasion of Afghanistan. CENTCOM had created 150 slides whose force flow changed daily but revolved around three
main options: “bombs, more bombs, and even more bombs,” as one Army
officer referred to the plans. This plan involved sending large numbers of
ground forces—about five divisions—into Afghanistan.  

The CIA created an alternative plan, which focused on a lighter force
reliant on U.S. SOF units working with CIA pilot teams that would enter
Afghanistan in October 2001. They viewed the next six months as a “Val-
ley Forge” in which they would link up with the Northern Alliance units and
build up their military capability, setting the stage for the arrival of the first of
two U.S. Army divisions in the spring of 2002. Early deployments of SOF units
and CIA partners were intended to be part of a 180 day preparation that would
do classic SOF missions: training plans, working with resistors and guerillas,
and fighting until the heavier divisions could arrive six to nine months later,
whether from Pakistan and above Kabul, or through Uzbekistan.

In a presentation to the Bush Administration at Camp David in 15-16
September 2001, George Tenet presented the CIA’s plan, which resonated
with the administration, which believed that “you don’t fight terrorists with
conventional capabilities. You do it with unconventional capabilities.” The
“Afghan Model,” with its emphasis on small numbers of SOF units working
with indigenous allies and with the aid of precision guided munitions,
became the working plan of CENTCOM.

In addition to Rumsfeld’s bias toward transformational, agile SOF, several
factors pointed in the direction of using SOF troops. One was geography;
Afghanistan was extraordinarily mountainous compared to the desert flats
of the Middle East. Moreover, it was landlocked; as one military planner
said, “due to the land-locked nature of Afghanistan, traditional ground forces
were a non-starter. Therefore, heavy reliance on SOF became standard.” The
mountainous terrain of Afghanistan was more likely to require forces riding
on horses, a practice in which U.S. and British forces had some experience,
but which was entirely incompatible with large divisions of ground forces.

Planners also seemed to conclude that the Soviet experience with large
conventional forces in Afghanistan had led to their ultimate demise and

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105 Personal interview with U.S. Army special forces officer, Kalev Sepp, 12 June 2007.
109 Personal interview with Lt. Col Michael Fleck, Deputy Chief, Programs and Legislative Division, 20 September 2006.
should not be replicated; the United States knew that if it “repeated the
mistakes of the Soviets by invading with a large land force, they would be
doomed.” Smaller numbers of special operations troops seemed to present
the most favorable prospects for victory.

Moreover, military leaders intended to rely on SOF because of the lack
of high-value targets; as Rumsfeld noted two days into the bombing, “That
country has been at war for a very long time. The Soviet Union pounded
it year after year after year. Much of the country is rubble. They have been
fighting among themselves. They do not have high-value targets or assets that
are the kinds of things that would lend themselves to substantial damage.”
Without high-value targets, military planners concluded that a combination
of special operations forces plus precision munitions plus an indigenous ally,
which became known as the Afghan Model, would be the most successful
way to wage the campaign.

The Afghan Model, however, which theoretically employed fifty U.S. Spe-
cial Operations Forces to achieve the conventional military equivalent of
50,000 ground troops, had little slack in it for additional coalition forces.
While the United States also has fewer SOF forces, slightly lower than 50,000
in late 2001, the early phases of military operations also required many
fewer than would be required for a conventional attack; for example, as of
November 2001, the number of SOF in Afghanistan was estimated at 100 to
200, generally operating under the organizational unit of the twelve-man Op-
erational Detachment Alpha groups, or Special Forces A-teams. To the ex-
tent that the United States did incorporate foreign special operations forces, it
was because the United States did eventually encounter a deficit of SOF avail-
able to fight in cold, mountainous environments; allies such as Canada and

111 Woodward, quoted in Richard B. Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr, “Winning with
112 Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, Richard Myers, and Secretary of Defense, Don Rumsfeld in
A01.
114 Andres et al., “Winning with Allies.”
115 This estimate is based on United States Special Operations Command’s 2006 Posture, which notes
that the 2006 totals of 52,846 represent a 1,400 person increase from 2005 and a 1,500 increase from 2004;
though the rates of growth for 2002 and 2003 are not included, they cannot exceed 1,500 because the
post-9/11 increase in SOF training did not begin bearing results until a year or two into recruiting and
training. Nonetheless, a conservative estimate for 2001 (fiscal year 2002) would therefore be about 46,846.
116 That amounts to about 4% of the SOF totals compared to about 12% of the total Army and Marine
forces that have been involved in Iraq over a period of 4 years. While the 12% has certainly stretched
the forces, these two services have nonetheless found ways to keep combat brigades rotating through.
See Congressional Budget Office, Some Implications of Increasing U.S. Forces in Iraq, April 2007, available
Operational Detachment Alpha structure and the early months of Afghanistan, see Max Boot, “Special
Forces and Horses,” Armed Forces Journal (November 2006).
the United Kingdom had soldiers who had trained in the Arctic and were uniquely qualified for analogous conditions in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{117}

In general, however, the Afghan Model’s emphasis on the efficiency of SOF meant a requirement for fewer forces and less operational need for allies. As CENTCOM Commander Tommy Franks said in reference to the Afghan Model, progress in Afghanistan would need to be measured by different yardsticks. “Those who expect another Desert Storm (and the huge number of ground troops) will wonder every day what this war is all about. This is a different war.”\textsuperscript{118} Troop requirements were the antithesis of the vast number that Desert Storm had required and served as a disincentive for the incorporation of allies, since the U.S. internal balancing capabilities could almost certainly accommodate the low requirements, and without introducing the hazards of ally reliability or dependence.

Another incentive to avoid large-scale conventional troops is that the United States hoped to avoid noncombatant fatalities and limit collateral damage to nonmilitary infrastructure such as electrical power and roads that would be central to humanitarian relief and reconstruction aid after the combat phase. The goals were to leave a minimal footprint and limit the destructiveness so it would have infrastructure in place for postwar governance. This would also signal motives that were designed against the Taliban and al Qaeda, not against Afghanistan and Islam.\textsuperscript{119} With these goals in mind, a massive campaign, such as the air and land campaign of the Gulf War, would vastly outsize what was thought to be the appropriate degree of force in Afghanistan. Rather, they “meant the smallest possible military presence on the ground in Afghanistan, a concern that ruled out any heavy US conventional ground force involvement.”\textsuperscript{120} It also essentially ruled out assistance from other states that would add to the footprint and be counterproductive to the interest in setting the stage for postwar reconstruction. A smaller, lower impact force that disrupted the terrorist networks but left infrastructure largely in place would be more suitable and effective. Not only was there little benefit to a large, multilateral coalition, such a coalition might actually be counterproductive.

\textsuperscript{119} As Anthony Cordesman points out, some of the reliance on the Northern Alliance was merely accidental, the result of being unable to deploy large numbers of mountain-capable special forces troops in a relatively short amount of time. See The Ongoing Lessons of Afghanistan: Warfighting, Intelligence, Force Transformation, and Nation Building, CSIS Publications, 18. See also O’Hanlon, “Flawed Masterpiece.”
\textsuperscript{120} Benjamin S. Lambeth, Air Power against Terror: America’s Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom (Arlington, VA: Rand Corporation, 2006), 60. For more on the objective to minimize collateral damage with an eye toward reconstruction, see also Thomas E. Ricks and Alan Sipress, “Attacks Restrained by Political Goals,” Washington Post, 23 October 2001, A01.
Though there was some notional idea that the Afghanistan operation would necessarily require “regime change” and a change to President Bush’s campaign promise of not using the military for “nationbuilding,” the focus going into Afghanistan was on military targets rather than institution-building after combat. As one military analyst reported, “a campaign plan was not completed until late November,” and the combination of the unexpected Taliban collapse and the planning focus on combat rather than post-conflict plans meant that no serious consideration had been given to the political objectives, including who would govern Afghanistan, how the United States would go about constructing a democratic government, and how the military objectives related to any political objectives were still unanswered. The administration was focused on its immediate military objectives of hitting specific targets, ridding Afghanistan of the Taliban and al Qaeda, and finding Mullah Omar and bin Laden. Rebuilding the country was a distant goal, one that the United States confronted sequentially, after it had achieved its more immediate security objectives. Finding the means it might need to achieve those goals—which might include generating alliance support for peacekeeping, stability, and reconstruction operations—followed at a later time.

The result is “in Afghanistan, there was no phase IV [planning] . . . there was then a scramble to create a Phase IV plan. It was done initially from a top down approach and modified to employ provisional reconstruction teams.” In a separate document, the Army War College commented on these deficiencies, saying that “the Afghanistan situation had been marred by the excessively short-term approach of the top defense leaders . . . who maintained a ‘tactical focus that ignores long-term objectives.’” As late as November 2001, U.S. senior leaders were asserting that the United States would not maintain a long-term military presence in Afghanistan.  

References:
122 Personal correspondence with Army historian, Conrad Crane, 14 June 2007.
123 Woodward, Bush At War, 275–6.
124 The first sign that the United States was looking at building a new government in Afghanistan was the appointment of James Dobbins as a special envoy to opposition parties in Afghanistan in November 2001. Dobbins deployed to central Asia in November 2001 to begin negotiating the transitional government, the earliest evidence that the United States was considering the political objectives associated with OEF. See, for example, “Dobbins Named U.S. Envoy to Opposition in Afghanistan,” Washington Post, 6 November 2001, A14; and Robert D. McFadden, “Seeking a Kabul Coalition,” New York Times, B1.
126 Internal Army War College memo, quoted in Thomas Ricks, Fiasco, 70.
on shorter-term military objectives rather than longer-term reconstruction
plans meant that the potential benefits of allies in the post-conflict phase
were obscured by the potential challenges they might introduce in the com-
batt phases.

In short, an emphasis on small numbers of special forces, some in-
digenous forces, and precision weapons meant there was little burden to
share in the combat phase and few incentives to collect allies. Second, any
detailed consideration of post-war planning was minimal and therefore cal-
culations on the longer-term consequences of not having allies featured less
prominently. Both of these operational factors created disincentives to the
incorporation of allies. The United States thought it could win cheaply and
that coordination with less reliable allies would only hinder the effectiveness
of U.S. forces.

The Transition to Multilateralism in Phase-IV Operations

The operation in Afghanistan has ultimately become a genuine multilateral
coalition in which the United States assumes about half the personnel burden
with 39 other troop-contributing nations. That Afghanistan has eventually
become multilateral may prompt some criticism about the characterization
that the operation is unilateral. In fact, however, the Afghanistan interven-
tion can be considered as two separate campaigns, and the varying de-
grees of cooperation between the two shed important light on motivations
and willingness to engage in multilateral military cooperation under varying
conditions.

The primary campaign was the removal of the Taliban regime and the
destruction of al Qaeda’s safe haven and disruption of its organization. Ac-
tivities in this first campaign were characterized by high-intensity combat
(kinetic) operations. That campaign saw its greatest intensity in the early
months—from October 2001 to Anaconda in March 2002—but has contin-
ued with offensive counterterrorism operations since then. Initially operating
under Combined Forces Command-Alpha until its disbandment in early 2007,
the participants in these kinetic operations are largely American along with
a few Canadian and British forces who are not constrained by rules of en-
gagement that would proscribe offensive uses of force.

ISAF/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf; and Cindy Saine, “U.S. to Send More Combat Troops to Afghanistan
Next Year,” Voice of America, 4 April 2008. According to this data, the United States has 19,000 troops
participating in ISAF, which is about 40% of the total, but it also has about 10,000 participating in a
command outside ISAF. Thus, the United States has about 31,000 of the 59,000 total troops (about 52%)
in Afghanistan.

129 Hy S. Rothstein, Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare (Annapolis,
MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2006). Rothstein makes a similar argument about the two phases of the
Afghanistan campaign.
The full onset of operations began after the fall of Kabul and with the December 2001 Bonn Conference for Afghanistan reconstruction that created the grounds for International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), created to help the Afghan Transitional Government create security in the country. While this campaign has overlapped temporally with the ongoing combat operations in parts of Afghanistan, it is responsible for what would normally be considered Phase-IV peacekeeping and reconstruction operations. It is lower intensity peacekeeping (nonkinetic) operations mandated by explicit UN authorization. Originally operating only in Kabul, the subsequent mandate of 13 October 2003 expanded ISAF’s mission to areas beyond the capital as different quadrants of the country have stabilized. ISAF engages in stability operations rather than in active, offensive counterterrorism operations. Rules of engagement now allow NATO ISAF to confront “spoilers,” but the NATO Secretary General has made it clear “that does not mean that there is no difference between the counterinsurgency, counterterrorism mandate of Operation Enduring Freedom and ISAF.” Indeed, a mostly American force continues to operate outside the NATO-led ISAF with a separate mandate to conduct offensive counterterrorism operations while NATO ISAF is responsible for peacekeeping and reconstruction. Whereas the progression between Phases I-III combat operations and Phase-IV reconstruction is often assumed to be linear, in the case of Afghanistan it has been much more overlapping, varying more by geography and by whom the operations are conducted rather than distinguished chronologically. Once certain quadrants were stabilized, the United States has then transitioned responsibility to multinational forces (ISAF), and in areas that are still hostile, including the eastern Waziristan area bordering Pakistan, the United States has maintained a separate and almost completely unilateral counterterrorism force as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

The change from a cooperation strategy that is largely unilateral to one that is fully multilateral had three main motivations. First, the peacekeeping phase began once combat operations had brought down the Taliban and al Qaeda military forces. The United States had addressed the short-term

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security challenges that had inhibited the incorporation of allies in the early phases of operations.

Second, it became clear that the stability and reconstruction phases would be lengthy and costly; the recognition that reconstruction would be a multi-billion dollar and multi-year process and the United States could not win this phase “cheaply” made allies more attractive. As Richard Haass testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December 2001, the United States had conducted the “lion’s share of the work” in the combat phase and successfully defeated the Taliban. He called on the international community to share the burden of the “the reconstruction effort. It should not be a mostly U.S. effort. There’s every good reason in the world why the bulk of the resources ought to come from other countries.” 135 Former Pentagon spokesperson Torie Clarke affirmed that “the United States doesn’t plan to have a large presence in a peacekeeping operation”136 and indeed the United States has transferred much of the burden to allies during this latter phase.

Third, in this longer, more costly second phase, the coordination exercise represented a different and significantly less cumbersome set of issues than those of the combat phase. Interoperability problems and prohibitive rules of engagement among coalition members do still present frustrating challenges during peacekeeping operations. A former Commander of U.S. and Allied Naval Forces, Admiral Johnson, referred to the problem of prohibitive national caveats as “a cancer that eats away at the effective usability of troops.”137

That cancer is much less pernicious in peacekeeping than combat operations, however, for several reasons. One reason is a significant aspect of the peacekeeping mission is conducting patrols and reconstruction and development efforts, which is much more about demonstrating a physical presence than wielding a weapon. Former Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan’s (CFC-A) commander Lt.Gen. Karl Eikenberry confirmed that running patrols and nation-building in general can be as much about “establishing presence as is as important as clever military equipment.”138 This is in large part because, as the former Supreme Allied Commander Gen. James L. Jones indicated, “the solution in Afghanistan is not a military one.”139 In these non-military

endeavors, in which the coalition is playing a strong role, national caveats are much less likely to come into play than in combat operations.\textsuperscript{140}

Another reason for the diminished cooperation challenges is that in general, the consequences of varying caveats are less catastrophic for peacekeeping operations should they come into play; different approaches to economic development and running patrols within a Provincial Reconstruction Team are likely to have less lethal interoperability consequences than, for example, a ground troop trying to call in allied close air support from a state whose national caveats prevent them from conducting offensive operations.

An additional reason for why multilateralism in Phase IV is desirable for the United States is that although there are some cooperation costs, they are vastly outweighed by the benefit of the United States not having to rotate 40,000 of its own troops through Afghanistan for the indefinite future. Indeed, the peacekeeping effort may suffer marginally because some states are limited by national caveats so they may only be able to run daytime patrols or not conduct offensive operations, but the overall sustainability of the effort is considerably higher.

Taking into account the cooperation costs and the potential benefits of multilateralism in Phase-IV operations is still a function of consequences, but the values on each of these variables inverted from combat operations to the post-combat phases of operations. Only once it addressed the short-term security challenges and recognized the long time horizon and burden and the relatively less troublesome cooperation issues associated with stability operations was it willing to draw in allies.

Analytical Implications and Conclusions

Afghanistan's within-case variation—largely unilateral in the kinetic phases and robustly multilateral in the nonkinetic phases—sheds important light on the question of why and under what conditions a hegemon such as the United States will seek allies. First, it lends strong support to the logic of consequences argument as specified according to time horizons and operational payoffs. Short time horizons in the planning phase meant an ad hoc, compressed planning that proved thorny for coordination and integration of U.S. air, sea, and ground assets and tested the interagency coordination process. Laying out a NATO-based campaign plan or one with many states even integrated on a bilateral basis in twenty-six days presented a significant planning challenge. Adding to the disincentives to collect allies, the so-called Afghan Model's reliance on small numbers of SOF units meant the United States actually did not need allies from an operation payoff perspective and less capable allies might actually have been detrimental.

\textsuperscript{140} Personal interview with Rian Harris, the Economic Officer (Commercial Section) in the U.S. Embassy, Kabul Afghanistan between September 2005-August 2006, (11 September 2006).
Following the collapse of the Taliban came the understanding that the post-conflict operations would be a costly enterprise in terms of time, financial resources, and personnel, which created incentives for alliance-seeking behavior in the second campaign. Moreover, cooperation challenges in peacekeeping and stability operations were lower risk, making any consequences of attempting to cooperate with less reliable allies less severe.

Second, cooperation behavior in Afghanistan operations, particularly when considered as two discrete campaigns with varying operations tempos and strategies, also sheds light on the degree to which U.S. cooperation is guided by a logic of appropriateness. If a logic of appropriateness had guided U.S. cooperation behavior, we would have expected to see multilateral participation across the intervention. Instead, the observable outcome was largely unilateral in the first phase and robustly multilateral in the second. As I argue earlier, cooperation in peacekeeping operations is not a hard test of commitment to multilateral principles because the cooperation challenges and consequences are less severe than for combat operations.

Testing whether the logic of appropriateness has guided intervention behavior therefore requires looking not just at the trend of interventions in the 1990s, many of which were peacekeeping missions that included states with less advanced militaries,141 but testing it against high-stakes combat phase of Afghanistan.

The early phases of Afghanistan therefore introduce the first hard test of multilateralism for the logic of appropriateness, and against this operation, evidence in support of this logic is unconvincing. Unlike the logic’s predictions, the United States was unwilling to compromise effectiveness by undertaking what would be more time-consuming planning of a combined (coalition) operation rather than one that was unilateral. Such aversion to the constraints of cooperation is consistent with concern about consequences and inconsistent with the predictions of “appropriateness.”

An honest reading of the case, however, does show that even under heightened security conditions, the United States did not eschew appropriateness altogether. In the weeks after 9/11, the United States touted the breadth of its international support for the campaign against terrorism, acting as if there were some value to generating international consensus and sanction for its efforts.142 In a speech held within 100 days of the 9/11 attacks, President Bush argued that in the war on terror, “we are supported by the collective will of the world.”143 Even Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld,

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who at times denigrated coalition operations, at other times expressed appreciation for “the representatives of the many nations in our coalition, [who] are helping to defeat an adversary that has declared war on our people and indeed on our way of life.” Such rhetoric implies some awareness that appearing multilateral might generate political benefits, behavior consistent with the constructivist logic. The multilateral rhetoric diverged from the unilateral realities, however, suggesting that while superficially the United States was willing to be guided by appropriateness, it was fundamentally guided by consequences. When it came to the largely unilateral substance of the military operation, claims of broad multilateral efforts look disingenuous.

This observation raises the prospect of a dichotomy in which the framing of the operation reflects the logic of appropriateness, whereas the combat operations themselves reflect consequences on the ground. While this distinction does not entirely impugn the logic of appropriateness, it is nonetheless damaging. Rhetoric may indicate normative pull but does not meet the benchmarks constructivists have laid out in their arguments: Was the United States willing to adhere to multilateralism even when doing so compromised the mission’s effectiveness? Did it expend significant resources to build a coalition even in a clear case of aggression that would legitimately provoke a unilateral response? Did the United States work through the UN even though the source of provocation was uncontested? The U.S. military response in Afghanistan exhibited none of these indicators of appropriateness. Rhetoric may be an indicator of normative salience but is a dramatically lower bar than a test of action, which U.S. behavior did not meet.

Abstracting from the case of Afghanistan, which issues disconfirming evidence for the logic of appropriateness, it would seem that a reevaluation of the post-Cold War period more generally would be fitting. What has been cast as a series of interventions that operated on the basis of appropriateness may find more persuasive explanations in the logic of consequences that I have outlined in this article. If consequences are a function of time horizons and operational payoffs, then perhaps the period of the 1990s is not explained exclusively through appropriateness but by the nature of those interventions.

Many of the interventions during this period, including Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia were humanitarian in nature, with low security stakes and correspondingly long time horizons. None of these created the short-term challenges that would make immediate, unilateral intervention more attractive. Each of them simmered for long time periods, giving the United States time to generate IO authorization and, where necessary, develop campaign plans.

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145 Finnemore, The Purpose of Invention, 134. For more on the discussion about whether the United States would seek UN authorization explicitly for combat operations in Afghanistan, see Anne Penketh, “Annan: UN Must have Role in Fight against Terrorism,” The Independent, 25 September 2001, 5.
that would incorporate other states’ interests and assets. The expectation of low operational burdens in several of these cases, particularly Somalia and Haiti, meant that while these interventions had IO blessings, the United States conducted the operation itself largely unilaterally. Bosnia, on the other hand, which some U.S. military planners thought might require hundreds of thousands of troops, was operationally multilateral. The variation between the levels of operational multilateralism across this period may also gain leverage from the explanation outlined here.

The more recent case of Iraq would appear to introduce evidence that undermines this theory. Given that the Iraqi threat was not imminent and the operational burden was high, a multilateral approach should have been overdetermined, and yet the United States intervened without UN authorization and with nominal allied participation. But contrary to the evidence that has emerged in the years after 2003, the intelligence leading up to the war suggested that Iraq was a serious short-term threat, and the thought that the United States could win quickly and cheaply produced unrealistically low estimates of the resources that would be required and for how long. These ex ante assessments, though obviously misguided, were those used as the inputs for the cooperation approach applied to Iraq. More accurate estimates, according to this theory, would have produced a more robust multilateral coalition building approach.

Whether and under what conditions the United States seeks a coalition does appear to depend on the mission. When it needs the flexibility of time to achieve security objectives, the United States may circumvent multilateral channels and intervene unilaterally in the interest of time. Such conditions will elicit the “self-help” behavior, which for a state with a unilateral option may mean that it opts for the reliability of its own capabilities rather than bringing together allies that might introduce costly delays or compromise effectiveness. But where the operational costs of an operation are high, there will be incentives to share the burden and to build a multilateral consensus on intervention.

While these distinctions appear to hold against the contours of the U.S. intervention record of the 1990s and the within-case variation of Afghanistan, they would benefit from detailed case studies from that period and from the last several years, cases that might further refine causal logics and scope conditions. What happens, for example, when the time horizon and operational

146 Barry McCaffrey, testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 28 February 1993, 103rd Cong., 2d sess.
147 See 2002 National Intelligence Estimate; declassified portions available at the National Security Archive.
148 See declassified CENTCOM’S POLO STEP slides that showed a troop presence of only 6,000 troops by the end of 2006; available at The National Security Archive.
payoffs variables operate in different directions, as they arguably did in the Gulf War? What does the case of Iraq say about how the role of perceptions and expectations factors into the anticipated incentives and payoffs of varying cooperation strategies? Where does the role of relative power fit in this explanation, and as the relative power of the United States ebbs and flows, would it affect the incentive structures associated with varying cooperation strategies? Does this logic apply to entities other than the hegemon, whether large states such as Russia and its interventions in Chechnya or smaller states and organizations such as the African Union in Sudan? These questions offer fruitful points of departure for further research.