

III. Coalition of the Willing

A. U.S. Role in Fulfilling Social Functions

The problems of so-called failed states and rogue states, as well as the associated issue of humanitarian intervention, have emerged since the end of the Cold War, as illustrated by the heated international debate that raged over the propriety of intervention in Kosovo. After the September 11 attacks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism emerged as serious issues for the world. In the Iraq war, the U.S. and the U.K. split with France, Russia, and Germany over the propriety of preemption.

As illustrated by this series of events, traditional problem-solving frameworks and concepts are ineffective in dealing with the new problems, which leaves the international society more vulnerable to schism. The question of whether terrorism is a security issue at all is, for example, a fundamental issue that must be addressed. An act of terrorism committed by any group, whether the group is a national entity or not, that intentionally employs methods of mass destruction can reasonably be considered as a security issue.

Countries that support terrorism constitute a threat on the basis of their intent, and a state victimized by terrorism can act reasonably in exercising its right to self-defense. Any response, however, that does not clearly distinguish between international relations and domestic crime simply lays the groundwork for chaos, and a clear-cut distinction between military forces and police forces is necessary in this respect.

Legitimate methods for handling terrorists have not been set forth under international law. The phenomena of terrorism and guerilla warfare, which are not addressed by traditional international laws of war, were already apparent during World War II. Referred to initially as “unconventional warfare,” these phenomena moved into the mainstream as fighting tactics during the Cold War. While these tactics have been in continuous use since then, they have not been addressed by the United Nations framework that came into being during the final stages of World War II.

Rules governing the right to self-defense that were organized and set down during the final stages of World War II were framed in the context of aggression by

one country against another. What is generally considered as the end of World War II was, in reality, merely the cessation of hostilities between the national militaries of the world's major powers at the time, and non-regular army forces continued to fight in the colonies and other peripheral areas. Under the traditional international laws of war, conflicts between non-regular army forces were deemed illegal, and the combatants were not afforded prisoner of war status. With the United Nations acceptance, however, of such conflicts as "ethnic wars," these combatants were afforded some of the rights of prisoners of war under international humanitarian law. With the September 11 attacks, terrorism has taken on a different form from that assumed during the Cold War, and has grown much larger in scale. How to treat the terrorists, however, remains unresolved.

As has been noted, the world's leading powers rarely reach consensus on major issues, and the international community must acknowledge this. The problem, however, does not end there. When issues arise for which there is strong demand for a response or resolution, inaction simply because those involved cannot reach agreement on how to address the unprecedented problem is unacceptable.

Someone must step in to play the societal function even without consensus among the international community – more specifically, without consensus among the members of the Security Council. Most states in the world, whether explicitly or tacitly, accept the fact that the U.S. is expected to bear the brunt in this scenario. The international community depends on the U.S. to respond not only to newly emerging issues related to security, but also to the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the India-Pakistan issue, and other disputes as well. Without U.S. involvement, these issues could not be resolved. For this reason, it is important that the U.S. be encouraged to work within a multilateral framework, while acknowledging the fact that the U.S. as a hegemon wields overwhelmingly dominant power and is in a position to play the societal function demanded by the international society.

B. Coalition of the Willing

The international community differs from any single national society in that there is no central authority and it is therefore anarchic. With no *a priori* body to provide redress when an "injustice" occurs, an agent to "fight against injustice in the name of Heaven" is needed. Whoever is willing and capable of fighting against injustice should be entrusted with this task. No other conceivable means of

redressing injustice exists within the international society.

The present five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council were expected to act as the frontline in the “fight against injustice in the name of Heaven.” The creation of the Security Council reflects the historical context and power among nations as of the end of World War II. In brief, the United Nations structure with the five permanent members of the Security Council at its center has been one mechanism by which the “fight against injustice in the name of Heaven” could be conducted.

As the Iraq war made clear, however, these five permanent members of the Security Council do not agree on how to deal with weighty issues. The question we must address is how these impasses are to be treated. If it is agreed that the only option in the anarchical international society is for these issues to be managed by states with the desire and capacity to do so, the formation of the coalition of the willing led by the U.S. can be seen as having a certain significance toward that end.

The coalition of the willing should also be considered in light of risk sharing. Unlike the threat posed by a specific potential enemy before the Cold War, today’s world is fraught with frequent dangers and omnipresent risks, and alliances are no longer formed in response to a specific threat. The key to alliances now is risk sharing. In reality, perception of what constitutes risk (risk awareness) and the concept of how risk is distributed (risk distribution) differ by country, which makes total risk sharing difficult. Moreover, risk communication concerning one’s own perception of risk and risk distribution is difficult to attain even on a national level, as illustrated by the experiences with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) (mad cow disease). At the international level, one can expect even larger difficulty.

One acts as a true friend, a true ally, by sharing risks and participating in a coalition of the willing. In the case of the Iraq war, the U.S. and the U.K. were able to develop risk sharing on every front. Not only did both states understand the relationship between the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism to be the greatest risk facing the international society today, but the U.S. and the U.K. also agreed on the specifics, that the Saddam Hussein regime posed too great a risk for the international community to accept, and on the method to be used in removing this risk. The two states developed a plan for taking decisive action in the form of unprecedented preemption by deploying military forces and, if necessary, for implementing “regime change.”

Based on this method, the U.S. and the U.K. shared the various risks involved (the political risk involved in launching preemptive action, the risk of battlefield casualties among one's own troops, etc.). Australia, Poland, Spain and others also shared a certain portion of these risks. While the Japanese government did not share in the military risks, Japan did take on the domestic and international political risks involved in taking the initiative in pledging its support for the U.S.

The U.S. did not simply ignore the many countries that were unable to share risks completely, utilizing instead bases and other assets in what some have named an "asset alliance." Treaty-based alliances have been broken down into a coalition of the willing and an asset alliance according to individual states' shares of the risks. Traditional treaty-based allies cannot serve as true friends based solely on shared values; in the future, distinctions will be made among allies along an axis of risk sharing.

There will, however, also be those among the countries without an alliance treaty with the U.S. that will act to share risks with regard to specific issues. In this respect, the U.S. may choose in the future to approach problems by rallying states with the will and capacity for risk sharing to form coalitions of the willing designed to deal with specific issues. In this scenario, bilateral alliances would be easier for the U.S. to exploit than multilateral alliances, as became evident in the contrast in action taken by NATO countries and the Asia-Pacific bloc at the time of the Iraq war. Whether or not this new form of alliance takes hold, countries that share both the values of the U.S. and its risks will likely occupy the circles closer to the U.S. core in the concentric circle model, and these positions will bring special responsibilities.