



The Role of Military Coalitions in Shaping the Outcomes of Military Operations: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Throughout history, military coalitions have always been a mainstay for nations in order to conduct large-scale military operations. World War 2, for example, was two military coalitions conducting military operations against each other. Military coalitions can also result in greater diplomatic ties between allies and closer bonds between states. States who work together in a coalition can develop great trust in each other and will assist each other in future endeavors.

In the present times, however, nations tend to conduct military operations by themselves, without creating a military coalition. In 2024, both Russia and Israel conducted military operations solo with very different results from their operations. Russia, without an official coalition to rely on, has seen several setbacks in their attempt to annex Ukraine. Israel, on the other hand, has seen success in their attempt in pushing out the Hamas Terrorist group out of the Gaza Strip. These very different results put into question what contributions military coalitions make to military operations.

The incentives and cost of creating a military coalition have weighed in many world leaders' minds; and with the varying results that have occurred in 2024, the costs really put into question whether coalitions even influence the likelihood of success in military operations. This puts into question: **Whether the creation of a military coalition increases success of Military Operations**. If solo Military operations are succeeding, there could be a reduction in the use of coalitions in the near future. This could induce lower levels of international cooperation among countries. A further question is whether the structure of the military coalition is important for the success of the operation and whether any coalition structure increases the likelihood of success. Should Coalitions strategically choose their members as opposed to letting anyone join and contribute to the cause?

If states see working alone as more beneficial than working with others, they might gravitate towards greater use of military operations in their areas, as they are able to do so without any need of support. Alternatively, if the lessons suggest military coalitions increase the success of military operations, it will be beneficial for states to create those coalitions, which could increase international cooperation among states, and limit skirmishes among neighbors. There have not been many deep dives into this topic. This paper is an exploration of this topic, setting a foundation for later investigation that can be conducted with access to more resources and data. This paper's role is an exploratory review in which to establish an understanding of how best to proceed in studying the impact of Military Coalitions on the success of military operations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

A coalition, according to Major Peter C. Hunt (1998) in the *Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* is “a force comprised of military elements of nations that have formed a temporary alliance for some specific purpose.”¹ The commitment of a coalition is more than giving aid and money to buy equipment. There needs to be boots on the ground with military elements from multiple countries in order to be considered a coalition. Coalitions are distinguished from alliances because they are temporary. Coalitions are formed for a specific campaign, as opposed to alliances which are longer term.

The United States position on coalition building is positive. The *2022 National Defense Strategy* written by the Department of Defense (2022) states that “To strengthen and sustain deterrence, the Department will prioritize interoperability and enable coalitions with enhanced capability.”² That is, the United States is prioritizing the use of military coalitions in military operations.³

There are three advantages that may come from creating a coalition, which will be referred to as the success variables: sharing firepower as well as the burden of war, expanding supply lines and areas of operations, and raising legitimacy in the military operation. First, coalitions are able to share the burden of a military operation and as well as combine firepower.

¹Hunt, Peter C. “Coalition Warfare: Considerations for the Air Component Commander.” School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1998, pp. 4. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA347021.pdf>.

²Department of Defense. *2022 National Defense Strategy*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2022, pp. 2. <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>

³The Department of Defense (2015) defines allies as “countries with which we have formal, long-term relationships built on shared values and common forward momentum”.

The Department of Defense (2022) insists that coalitions for a military operation are better able to “share risks, confront aggression, and impose prohibitive costs.”⁴ Daniel S. Morey (2016) contends that “The obvious advantage to fighting as a coalition is to combine power to defeat an enemy that no individual state could overcome.”⁵ Creating a military coalition can combine firepower of weaker states to face a more powerful state in an even match.

Second, coalitions expand supply lines and the Area of Operations. Marina E. Henke (2016) gives the example of what the process of choosing partners in a coalition looked like when the United States was operating in Darfur, Sudan: “the United States desperately sought coalition participants that could provide strategic transport assets such as helicopters.”⁶ A coalition can expand movement in an Area of Operations that increases the success of a military operation. Morey (2016) echoes this sentiment, arguing “working with coalition members is the only way certain states can reach the combat area. Without England providing vast staging areas, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the United States to field an effective force against Germany during the Second World War.”⁷ Coalitions can facilitate moving supplies from far places, causing fewer backups of logistics.

⁴Department of Defense. *2022 National Defense Strategy*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2022, pp. 10.
<https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>

⁵Morey, Daniel S. “Military Coalitions and the Outcome of Interstate Wars.” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2016, pp. 533–51, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fpa.12083>.

⁶ Henke, Marina E. *Constructing Allied Cooperation : Diplomacy, Payments, and Power in Multilateral Military Coalitions*. Cornell University Press, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501739705>.

⁷ Morey, Daniel S. “Military Coalitions and the Outcome of Interstate Wars.” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2016, pp. 533–51, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fpa.12083>.

Third and most importantly, Coalitions have a large impact on legitimacy in both the domestic and international communities. Having more states involved in a coalition supporting a military operation can support a public's perception of the military operation as a team effort. As Marina E. Henke (2016) states, "Multilateral coalitions enhance the perceived legitimacy of the operation and thus public support—domestically as well as internationally."⁸ If multiple states and their constituents approve of the operation, then it increases the likelihood that your constituents will conclude that it is fine for their state to join. This can create a domino effect in which more states join the coalition leading to more approval from constituents. If more states join a coalition in a military operation and the perceived legitimacy of the operation increases, this in turn, can increase morale of the troops and financial support from coalition members to keep moving forward with the military operation. James P. Thomas (2000) describes Coalitions as "a political imperative for military action."⁹ Specifically, as more states join the coalition, there is correlation with increased legitimacy for the military operation.¹⁰ Marina Henke (2016) says this a little differently: the opponents to operations lose support as the rest of the world agrees on moving forward with the military operation. "If the world community appears to rally behind a cause, international opponents of the intervention have a much harder time defending

⁸ Henke, Marina E. *Constructing Allied Cooperation : Diplomacy, Payments, and Power in Multilateral Military Coalitions*. Cornell University Press, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501739705>.

⁹Thomas, James P. *The Military Challenges of Transatlantic Coalitions*. Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2000. https://search.library.brandeis.edu/discovery/fulldisplay/alma998758870101921/01BRAND_INST:BRAND

¹⁰Thomas, James P. *The Military Challenges of Transatlantic Coalitions*. Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2000. https://search.library.brandeis.edu/discovery/fulldisplay/alma998758870101921/01BRAND_INST:BRAND

their case politically, but potentially also militarily.”¹¹ Countries determined to build domestic support to join a military coalition will argue, as Marina Henke (2016) states, “coalition building can abate domestic criticism that the operation is financially too costly, politically too controversial, or potentially too lethal for the nation to bear.”¹²

The effect of military coalitions is also affected by the specific identities of the coalition members. When the Pivotal state, the state that will lead the coalition, decides whom to include, they are thinking how it will increase their success in the operation. It is important for the coalition builders to choose countries who are able to share the burden, which is important for success in the operation.

There are also reasons why coalitions can lower the success of a military operation, which will be referred to as the failure variables. The first failure variable would be free riding, or states not contributing to the coalition. Some countries will not contribute as much as you thought, which can hurt chances of success if multiple countries are not supporting you. Scott Welford (2015) emphasizes “Coalition builders may compensate partners to offset the private costs of war, which reduces free riding, or avoid free riders altogether.”¹³ If there are free riders, there will be a chance for those taking advantage of the coalition without contributing anything, and thus lower the chances for success. Avoiding free riders in a coalition can help share military

¹¹Henke, Marina E. “Buying Allies: Payment Practices in Multilateral Military Coalition-Building.” *International Security*, vol. 43, no. 4, 2019, pp. 128–62, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00345.

¹²Henke, Marina E. “Buying Allies: Payment Practices in Multilateral Military Coalition-Building.” *International Security*, vol. 43, no. 4, 2019, pp. 128–62, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00345.

¹³Welford, Scott. “Coalition Politics and War Termination.” *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 85, no. 2, 2023, pp. 568–80, <https://doi.org/10.1086/723018>.

burden and can contribute to the success of military operations. Scholars also emphasize the decisions that the Pivotal State makes to allow which country to be successful as ever.

Secondly, having many leaders vying to take charge of the Coalitions can delay or hinder actions countries are able to take, especially for the host country. As James P. Thomas (2000) explains, “coalitions are widely perceived by the country's military and the general public as restricting US freedom of action in conducting operations.”¹⁴ Having restrictions on freedom of choice can cause inaction and miscommunication, which will decrease the success of a military operation. More leaders mean more people may try to take control and try to gain control for their own benefit, which could create confusion among the troops and decrease their morale. This could decrease the success of the military operation. More leaders are also harder to control. Many high-ego leaders are a recipe for disaster as Daniel Morey (2016) notes that Napoleon, the most successful military general, “directly questions the ability of states to work together during combat and even mark coalitions as preferred targets.”¹⁵

The final concern would be based on diverging interests. If everyone is in the coalition for a different reason, this can lead to fragmentation, as everyone will be trying to progress their own goal, not the coalition's goal. This creates inefficiency and hurts the success of the military

¹⁴Thomas, James P. *The Military Challenges of Transatlantic Coalitions*. Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2000. https://search.library.brandeis.edu/discovery/fulldisplay/alma998758870101921/01BRAND_INST:BRAND

¹⁵ Morey, Daniel S. “Military Coalitions and the Outcome of Interstate Wars.” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2016, pp. 533–51, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fpa.12083>.

operation As Rottem Sagi expresses, “Divergent interests and conflicting world views can create divisions and fracture the coalition.”¹⁶

From the literature, there is a reason for positing the research question. On one side, coalitions help in the success of military operations. Military coalitions can combine the firepower of the partners as well as share the cost and bear the fatigue together. They can also help increase the area of operation as opposed to conducting an operation alone. It allows a state to work in places it had previously been impossible to work. Finally, it increases legitimacy. If many countries are working together, there is a lower chance the criticism will outweigh the support of the international community. The domestic public support will also increase as the cost is shared. This all, however, depends on how the coalition is structured and who is in charge and willing to contribute. Coalitions that are fitted with internationally established and high income countries have a higher chance of success in the military operation, as opposed to countries who don't have the foundation to support the coalition.

On the other hand, the success of a military operation can also be negatively impacted by the free riding by coalition partners as well as the competition among leaders. Butting heads and competition among leaders for differing goals can also hurt your chances for success as they will have their own goals in mind as opposed to completing the objective in the military operation. Diverging Interests can also be important to consider, if not everyone is interested in the same goal. The structure of the coalition can contribute to these factors, and so strategically chosen members can decrease the chances of these variables from appearing.

¹⁶Sagi, Rottem. “Diverse Coalitions: Reconciling Disparate Ideologies and Incongruent Collective Identities.”

Mobilizing Ideas. November 3, 2015. <https://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/2015/11/03/diverse-coalitions-reconciling-disparate-ideologies-and-incongruent-collective-identities/>

From the readings, it would seem that the consensus concerning coalition building applies equally to other countries as well as to the United States. Sharing firepower as well as costs seems to be the emphasis of the coalition building as well as extending the range of battlefields with supply lines. But, the drawbacks of coalition building seem to be particular problems for the United States. This does not match the offered stance of the United States. These success and failure variables will be a particular focus when looking at the case studies of the United States. The United States does have the opportunity to overcome these failure variables and to favor the chances for success. The United States has many allies, increasing its ability to choose among allies that agree with the terms of the campaign.

Chapter 3: Hypotheses

The research question concerns the usefulness of Military Coalitions. The hypothesis addresses whether Military Coalitions are more likely to share military elements which can decrease burdens, expand the range for supply lines and areas of operation, and create increased legitimacy in fighting a conflict internationally. Also, the hypothesis addresses whether military coalitions are more likely to fail when they encounter problems of free riders, multi-leadership, and diverging interests.

Hypothesis 1 states that when Coalitions bring a larger amount of firepower they can carry the coalition towards success in a military operation. The act of overwhelming firepower is essential in claiming superiority in a fight. Hypothesis 2 connects with hypothesis 1 and states that when Coalitions can share the burden of war, they increase their likelihood for success in a military operation. If more troops are available, the burden will impact each individual less. Hypothesis 3 states that when Coalitions expand the area of operations as well as supply lines, they increase their likelihood for success in a military operation. Having more states, especially in the area of operation, part of a coalition can reduce the cost of maintaining operation support and supply lines. There can be a center of operation closer to the battlefield states can work and coordinate in. Hypothesis 4 states that when Coalitions increase legitimacy of a conflict that can increase the likelihood of success in a military operation. If there is a higher degree of legitimacy, the coalition is able to operate more freely without needing to worry about repercussions and criticism from its constituents. The hypotheses are conditional upon the structure of the coalition. Choosing members who have an established international reputation for legitimate interventions and can contribute to a greater point is important for the success of the Coalition. Even if a coalition is established, if the countries are not well established in the

international sphere, they will become ineffective members which can undermine the effectiveness of the military coalition.

Nonetheless, creating a coalition has problems unto itself, and solving these is important to the success of the operation. Free riding is a problem when coalition partners do not contribute enough. Multiple leaders can lead to a backlog of decisions because too many hands causes indecision. Finally, diverging interests can cause one partner to diverge from the goal of the success of military operation and more for their own self benefit.

Chapter 4: Research Design

4.1: Variables

When looking at the variables, I will be looking to see whether a campaign made use of a military coalition and if that military would be considered a success or a failure. A campaign's use of a military coalition will be coded based on whether there was formal documentation of two or more states declaring cooperation and support with military elements for that particular campaign. This coding is based on formal documents from the coalition countries themselves or from a multilateral international organization such as the United Nations. The absence of evidence of any state pledging cooperation and support of military elements will be coded as a lack of military coalition in the campaign. We will also be looking into the most prominent members of the coalition and how they performed in helping the coalition.

The success of a campaign will be coded by using the standards of the formal objectives that were set out at the beginning of the campaign. Specifically, we are not looking at the after effects of the campaign, only if the objectives that were laid out at the start of the campaign were met. This is essential, as many campaigns have subsequent phases with different formal objectives.. For example, the first campaign of the War of Afghanistan switched objectives over the course of the war. Coding of success or failure is based on official documentation through the country or a multilateral international organization. I examined formal documents, identified the initial objective, and analyzed if the coalition was a success or failure. If a campaign completed all objectives, it is coded as a success. If it failed to reach all objectives, the coding specifies how close the coalition was to completing the objective and why the coalition failed in meeting some of the objectives.

After identifying the military coalitions and coding their success or failure, I will then analyze the six intervening variables of the campaign. The first three are variables that contribute to success of the campaign: Sharing of military elements and distribution of costs and fatigue, extent of the area of operations and supply lines, and the degree of legitimacy of the campaign. I will group these variables as the “Success Variables”. I also will be analyzing another three variables that contribute to failure: free riding, fragmented leadership, and diverging interests. I grouped these three variables as “Failure Variables”. We will use documents and first-hand and second-hand accounts to determine the effect of these intervening variables. I analyze if a coalition, or lack of one, greatly contributed to the success variables. We will also analyze whether the coalition was able to overcome the failure variables. I also analyze whether these six variables were a significant factor in ensuring the success of the campaign.

4.2: Case Selection

The cases for comparison are five campaigns. I narrowed my cases to the United States, so that the same country led the campaigns, making it simpler to compare all the cases consistently. I also only include conflicts after 1953, as campaigns before 1953 had different international power structures compared to more recent cases. This paper also only included international conflicts, as campaigns overseas are much different than domestic campaigns. The Department of Defense defines a military operation as one “designated by the Secretary of Defense as an operation in which members of the armed forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations, or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or an opposing military force.”¹⁷ However, when dividing cases, we will use the concept of a campaign, which is

¹⁷US Department of the Army. *TITLE 10—ARMED FORCES Section 101 - General Military Law*. US Government Printing Office, 1956. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title10/>

defined by the Webster dictionary as “a series of military operations in a particular area or for a particular purpose as part of a war.”¹⁸ Many military operations have multiple campaigns throughout the operation as long as each campaign has a distinct area of operation, supply lines, and military elements. This is how I distinguished a military operation from a campaign. When deciding on which campaigns, I narrowed them to these particular campaigns:

1. American War in Vietnam: The Gulf of Tonkin Campaign 1965-1969
2. Operation Just Cause; Invasion of Panama 1989
3. Operation Desert Storm; 1st Invasion of Iraq 1991
4. Operation Enduring Freedom; Invasion of Afghanistan 2003-2011
5. Operation Iraqi Freedom; 2nd Invasion of Iraq 2001-2013

[pdf/USCODE-2011-title10-subtitleA-partI-chap1-sec101.pdf](#)

¹⁸*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Merriam-Webster, www.merriam-webster.com.

Accessed 29 Mar. 2025.

Chapter 5: Operation Desert Storm

On August 12th 1990, Saddam Hussain, the leader of Iraq, accused Kuwait of meddling with Iraqi oil prices and determined that annexation was the correct move on Iraq's end which ended with the invasion of Kuwait. The United States and Allies, concerned with Iraq's actions, determined that intervention was needed, which was named Operation Desert Storm. From January 17 – February 28, 1991, the United States and allies successfully implemented an offensive strategy that liberated Kuwait and drove Iraqi forces out of the country. From this conflict, we will determine if there was a coalition, success of the campaign as a whole, and the effect of a coalition, or lack of one, on the success of the operation.

5.1: Coalition and Success of campaign

After the initial invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the United Nations formally adopted Resolutions 660, 662, and 664 which demanded “Iraq withdraw immediately and unconditionally all its forces to the positions in which they were located on 1 August 1990” and “begin immediately intensive negotiations for the resolution of their differences.”¹⁹ When there was no movement, on November 29, 1990, the United Nations adopted Resolution 678 in which it allows member states “to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions.”²⁰ This identified the goal of this a military campaign as upholding Resolution 660, that is, driving the Iraqi forces back to the positions previous to the invasion. The result was a success in the terms of fulfilling the goals of

¹⁹ UN Security Council. “Resolution 660.” No. 660. 2 August 1990.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/94220?ln=en&v=pdf>

²⁰ UN Security Council. “Resolution 678.” No. 678. 29 November 1990.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/102245?ln=en&v=pdf>

Resolution 660. The resulting invasion of Iraq Occupied Kuwait from the allies resulted in, as the General Accounting Office describes it as, the “collapse of the Iraqis’ ability to resist, helped liberate Kuwait and elicit Iraqi compliance with U.N. resolutions.”²¹ The United Nations, in Resolution 686 (8), decided the “suspension of offensive combat operations By the forces of Kuwait and the Member States cooperating with Kuwait pursuant to resolution 678 (1990).”²² This signifies the end and the success of the campaign. From the result of the conflict, I code Operation Desert Storm a success in the campaign.

There is evidence to support the conclusion that there was a coalition during Operation Desert Storm. In Resolution 678, it was stated that Member States of the United Nation were tasked with carrying out the intervention, suggesting it was a concerted effort. In Resolution 686 we see the mention of the member states cooperating with the intervention, meaning multiple states were involved. The United States, the forefront of this intervention, also urged a coalition, stating in its National Security Directive 54 “United States shall seek the maximum participation of its coalition partners.”²³ Donald Wright observes coalition building before Operation Desert Storm was initiated as “Egypt, Syria, France, and the United Kingdom joined the Coalition and

²¹General Accounting Office. *Operation Desert Storm: Operation Desert Storm Air War*. US Government Printing Office. 1996. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GAOREPORTS-PEMD-96-10/html/GAOREPORTS-PEMD-96-10.htm>

²²UN Security Council. *Resolution 686*. No. 686. 2 March 1991. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/108110?ln=en&v=pdf>

²³US White House. *National Security Directive 54*. US Government Printing Office. 1991. https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nsd/nsd_54.htm

began sending forces to Saudi Arabia in the fall of 1990.”²⁴ The evidence supports the claim that Operation Desert Storm was indeed a Coalition effort.

5.2: Intervening Success Variables

The first variables we will examine are the three success variables, which are the sharing of military elements, including distribution of costs and fatigue; extent of the area of operations and supply lines; and the degree of legitimacy of the campaign. These variables are linked to the success of military campaigns.

The real sharing of military elements is evident for this coalition. Even though the United States was the forefront Coalition member, sending in almost 500,000 soldiers for the coalition, which represented almost 68% for the entire coalition, other coalition members contributed. According to the United States Army, Egypt sent in 40,000 soldiers while others, like the Netherlands sent in 2 frigates to help with the navy.²⁵ These sharing of military elements was needed to create the coalition army needed to defeat Iraq’s 900,000 strong army²⁶. However, the size was not the only thing that contributed to the coalition’s battlefield success. The technical advantage given by each of the coalition partners was an important factor as well. The British

²⁴Wright, Donald P. “Deception in the Desert: Deceiving Iraq in Operation DESERT STORM.” *Weaving the Tangled Web: Military Deception in Large-Scale Combat Operations*. Army University Press. CH. 12. 2018.

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Books/Browse-Books/iBooks-and-EPUBs/Deception-in-the-Desert/#:~:text=The%20defense%20of%20Saudi%20Arabia,in%20the%20fall%20of%201990.>

²⁵ Englehardt, Joseph P. “DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM: A CHRONOLOGY AND TROOP LIST FOR THE 1990-1991 PERSIAN GULF CRISIS” Strategic Studies Institute. Army War College Press.

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA234743.pdf>

²⁶Pyle, Richard. “Iraq's Army Was Once World's 4th-Largest.” Midland Daily News. March 31st, 2003.

<https://www.ourmidland.com/news/article/Iraq-s-Army-Was-Once- World-s-4th-Largest-7151366.php>

armor was so dominant that it permanently disabled more more Iraqi tanks than it got hit . For example the British Challenger tanks had a kill tally of 300 tanks while suffering 0 losses²⁷. The sharing of the military elements as well as the sharing of the military technology lowered the human cost borne by the coalition; there were only 250 coalition losses compared to 30,000 on the Iraqi side.²⁸ Of the 250 fatalities, 47% of these were not American, meaning there was a sharing of death fatalities among coalition partners. The sharing of military elements and technology to overpower the Iraqi force as well as the spread of fatalities among all coalition partners shows that creating a coalition had a part to play in the success of this campaign. Egypt and the United Kingdom are good examples of countries with an established international presence which could be relied on for contributing the military necessity to jumpstart the military campaign.

The supply lines and logistics were also an important part of the coalition's contribution during Operation Desert Storm. As William G. Pagonis and Michael D. Krause described shared logistics "built the theater infrastructure, sustained a victorious military campaign, and closed out the theater of war by bringing personnel and materiel home."²⁹ The success of logistics and supply lines would have been much more difficult without the use of coalition partners. The use of Saudi Arabia seaports and airport facilities was invaluable in the US military's ability to stage

²⁷"Gulf War." National Army Museum. Date Accessed March 25. 2025.

[https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/gulf-war#:~:text=Casualties,around%205km%20\(3%20miles\).](https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/gulf-war#:~:text=Casualties,around%205km%20(3%20miles).)

²⁸Remembering The Gulf War: Key Facts And Figures About The Conflict" IBFBS Forces News. February 28 2021.

[https://www.forcesnews.com/news/remembering-gulf-war-key-facts-figures#:~:text=It%20was%20the%20largest%20deployment,1990%20Documentary\)%20%7C%20Forces%20TV](https://www.forcesnews.com/news/remembering-gulf-war-key-facts-figures#:~:text=It%20was%20the%20largest%20deployment,1990%20Documentary)%20%7C%20Forces%20TV)

²⁹Pagonis, William G. and Krause, Michael D. "Operational Logistics and the Gulf War." The Institute of Land Warfare. April 11 1994. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA278028.pdf>

resupply.³⁰ Saudi Arabia and other countries not only shared their facilities, but also provided the transportation within the theatre of war which helped lower the demands on US resources and strengthened their supply line and logistics a lot more.³¹ This shows that the logistics of the coalition was essential for winning the war and sustaining victory after victory. Without the coalition, the supply lines would have been much more expensive and the United States would have a much more difficult time maintaining its superiority over Iraq.

The public perception of Operation Desert Storm was also fairly high with most surveys showing around 76-79% of respondents thought the United States was right about invading.³² When asked why the United States was right about invading, a respondent expressed their reassurance that many countries were also part of the intervention, making the United States in the right.³³ The operation was supported by the United States congress after the United Nations voted in favor of starting an intervention. It appears that the United Nation's call to create a coalition influenced the congressional vote. This public support helped legitimize the start of the

³⁰ US General Accounting Office. *OPERATION DESERT STORM: Transportation and Distribution of Equipment and Supplies in Southwest Asia*. US Government Printing Office. 1991. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/nsiad-92-20.pdf>

³¹ US General Accounting Office. *OPERATION DESERT STORM: Transportation and Distribution of Equipment and Supplies in Southwest Asia*. US Government Printing Office. 1991. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/nsiad-92-20.pdf>

³² Sanger, David E. "War in the Gulf: Public Opinion Poll Finds Deep Backing, While Optimism Fades." *The New York Times*, 22 Jan. 1991, www.nytimes.com/1991/01/22/us/war-in-the-gulf-public-opinion-poll-finds-deep-backing-while-optimism-fades.html. Accessed 29 Mar. 2025.

³³ Sanger, David E. "War in the Gulf: Public Opinion Poll Finds Deep Backing, While Optimism Fades." *The New York Times*, 22 Jan. 1991, www.nytimes.com/1991/01/22/us/war-in-the-gulf-public-opinion-poll-finds-deep-backing-while-optimism-fades.html. Accessed 29 Mar. 2025.

intervention and the sustained public support gave more time for this operation to accomplish the goal. The campaign was also very short, so there was no time for public support to waver. This evidence shows that the public perception of legitimacy to this military operation appears to have been affected by the military coalition. It was helped by these larger internationally recognized countries joining into the fight, giving more legitimacy that these countries are willing to risk their public perception since they believe in the objectives of this military campaign.

5.3: Intervening Failure Variables

The next set of intervening variables are those that contribute to the failure of coalition operations. These variables include: free riding, contending or fragmented leadership, and diverging interests. These variables are linked to failures of military operations when coalitions are involved.

Contending or fragmented leadership was not seen in this conflict. It was obvious that the United States was in the forefront of the operation. The United States had General Norman Schwarzkopf commanding the combined coalition forces.³⁴ Other leadership positions were also filled by officers from the US military such as LTG Paul Funk, commander of Armor during Operation Desert Storm, or MG Gary E. Luck, commander of the Airborne corps.³⁵ The United States were clearly in charge of the coalition and the direction the battlefield was going. The leadership did not butt heads with any other leaders as the operation went along. This leadership

³⁴US Department of the Army. "Operation Desert Storm Key Leaders." Army University Press.

Accessed March 25th 2025. <https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/desert-storm/index.html#KeyLeaders>

³⁵US Department of the Army. "Operation Desert Storm Key Leaders." Army University Press.

Accessed March 25th 2025. <https://www.history.army.mil/html/bookshelves/resmat/desert-storm/index.html#KeyLeaders>

did not change throughout the conflict, as the conflict was very short; General Norman Schwarzkopf did not change or was not relieved of command.³⁶ Having that consistency was very important for the flow of the military campaign and its success.

The second variable, free riding, was not a problem as well. The countries who joined also contributed to the coalition. Out of the 39 countries involved in the coalition in some form³⁷ 36 countries contributed military elements in some form ranging from 1 squadron of fighter jets from Italy to 10,000 soldiers from Pakistan.³⁸ There was also a spread of the cost, as no one country took all of the cost. Among the Coalition members included in the deadcount, 44 British, two French, one Italian, 29 Saudis, nine Egyptians and six from the United Arab Emirates were just some of the troops that lost their lives during Operation Desert storm.³⁹ The costs were not borne only by the United States, but by many countries big and small. This shows that free riding was very limited during this conflict.

³⁶Lopez, Todd C. "Schwarzkopf, architect of Operation Desert Storm, dies at 78" US Army. December 31 2012. https://www.army.mil/article/93595/schwarzkopf_architect_of_operation_desert_storm_dies_at_78#:~:text=1988%20to%20August%201991%2C%20Schwarzkopf,Shield%20and%20Operation%20Desert%20Storm.

³⁷ "Remembering The Gulf War: Key Facts And Figures About The Conflict" IBFBS Forces News. February 28 2021. [https://www.forcesnews.com/news/remembering-gulf-war-key-facts-figures#:~:text=It%20was%20the%20largest%20deployment,1990%20Documentary\)%%20%7C%20Forces%20TV](https://www.forcesnews.com/news/remembering-gulf-war-key-facts-figures#:~:text=It%20was%20the%20largest%20deployment,1990%20Documentary)%%20%7C%20Forces%20TV)

³⁸Englehardt, Joseph P. "DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM: A CHRONOLOGY AND TROOP LIST FOR THE 1990-1991 PERSIAN GULF CRISIS" Strategic Studies Institute. Army War College Press. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA234743.pdf>

³⁹Hooglund, Eric. "The Other Face of War." Middle East Research and Information Project. August 1991. <https://merip.org/1991/07/the-other-face-of-war/#:~:text=%5B3%5D%20A%20total%20of%20343,from%20the%20United%20Arab%20Emirates.>

The final failure variable concerns diverging interests. In the case of Operation Desert Storm, there was only one interest, which is the liberation of Kuwait. It was set in the resolution 660. The member states joined for a similar cause. One example was Israel, which was on the receiving end of 47 SCUD missiles during the operation. Israel chose not to retaliate for fear that might lead some members to pull out of the coalition.⁴⁰ This supports the conclusion that all members had the same interest in the coalition regardless of obstacles such as targeted attack.

5.4: Closing

The presence of the success variables and the absence of the failure variables present the pattern of military coalitions that play a part in the success of those military campaigns. The sharing of the military elements from countries ranging from Canada to Niger , coupled with an extended supply lines through countries like Saudi Arabia, and the legitimacy from more than 35 countries supporting the war effort supported this campaign to be an overwhelming success. The absence of any significant free riding, existence of a prominent and unquestionable leader, and a clearly defined common interest further supported the success of this campaign. Operation Desert Storm was a perfect rendition on how to use a military coalition for success. Future cases throws doubt on this narrative.

⁴⁰Collins, Shannon. "Desert Storm: A Look Back." Department of Defense. January 11 2019.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/1728715/desert-storm-a-look-back/>

Chapter 6: American War in Vietnam

While the Vietnam War spans a long timeline, the years of 1964 to 1969 constitute a distinct campaign. In 1964, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was signed into law to allow full military intervention in Vietnam. In 1969 following the Tet offensive, which included simultaneous North Vietnamese military attacks on South Vietnamese cities during the holiday of Tet, the American campaign in Vietnam began a switch to de-escalation and self-reliance for the South Vietnamese as the US support back home dropped drastically after the Tet offensive.⁴¹ The case study focuses on this 5 year campaign.

6.1: Coalition and Success of campaign

The document that formally engaged the Americans in a conflict with the North Vietnamese was the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, following the incident by the same name. In 1964, two American Destroyers were stationed in the Gulf of Tonkin in which they radioed that they were under attack from the North Vietnamese forces.⁴² After this reported attack, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which allowed the President to take “all necessary measures to repel any armed attack.” The resolution stipulated the success of this campaign would be fulfilled only if “peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions.”⁴³ This meant that the success of the military campaign would be measured by

⁴¹Office of the Historian. *U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War: The Tet Offensive, 1968*. US Government Printing Office. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/tet>

⁴²Office of the Historian. *U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War: the Gulf of Tonkin and Escalation, 1964*. US Government Printing Office. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/gulf-of-tonkin>

⁴³US Congress. *Tonkin Gulf Resolution (1964)*. US National Archives. 1964. <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/tonkin-gulf-resolution>

whether peace and security was secured in the region and the campaign prevented further aggression by the North Vietnamese. By 1969, this had not been met, as by April, there were still a number of American casualties and the overall casualties had ballooned more than the Korean War at that point⁴⁴ Furthermore, there were still attacks on South Vietnamese Targets by North Vietnamese soldiers. There was no international peace from when de-escalation and more shift to self-reliance by the South Vietnamese had begun around 1968.⁴⁵ This proves that the mission was not successful in 1969 as the United States led coalition had not prevented aggression and ensured international peace. This was a further downturn of success after 1969. I would mark the campaign as a failure as it did not successfully fulfil their objectives set out by the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution .

While the United States was the primary foreign country involved in the Vietnam War, many other countries also participated in the conflict, fighting on the American side. In 1964, President Johnson announced the “More Flags” Campaign, which called on countries like the Commonwealth nations to provide support to the United States in the fight against communism.⁴⁶ Many countries answered the call, including South Korea, Australia, and Thailand. Each of these countries provided military equipment as well as soldiers, with countries such as South Korea

⁴⁴ “Battlefield: Vietnam Timeline”. Public Broadcasting Services. Accessed March 25 2025.

<https://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/timeline/index3.html>

⁴⁵Office of the Historian. *Ending the Vietnam War, 1969–1973*. US Government Printing Office. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/ending-vietnam>

⁴⁶Bruce, Becky L. "Vietnam and the More Flags Campaign, 1964–1965: The Search for American Allies in the Commonwealth." *UNL V Retrospective Theses & Dissertations*, 2004, doi:10.25669/jdij-9bno.

and Thailand contributing up to 320,000 and 10,000 soldiers, respectively.⁴⁷ We can see that multiple countries contributed military elements to the campaign, along with a specific outreach effort that called for several nations to join the military effort. This demonstrates that the conflict can be classified as a coalition. However, this military coalition might be seen as weak. Many of the countries in this coalition did not have an established role in the international sphere. South Korea, for example, was seen as a developing country and did not come into its own until the 80s.⁴⁸ Thailand, as well, was not considered an internationally dominant country. Some key countries that did fit the description of a leading global leader like Canada, the United Kingdom or France, were not part of the military coalition.

6.2: Intervening Success Variables

The first variables we will examine are the three success variables, which are the sharing of military elements, including distribution of costs and fatigue; extent of the area of operations and supply lines; and the degree of legitimacy of the campaign. These variables are linked to the success of military campaigns.

While we are able to observe the sharing of military elements, we can see that the United States was providing an overwhelming part of the military campaign. The United States deployed almost 2.7 million soldiers during the war, accounting for nearly 87% of the total

⁴⁷Bruce, Becky L. "Vietnam and the More Flags Campaign, 1964–1965: The Search for American Allies in the Commonwealth." *UNL V Retrospective Theses & Dissertations*, 2004, doi:10.25669/jdij-9bno.

⁴⁸Kim, Kwan S. "THE KOREAN MIRACLE (1962-1980) REVISITED: MYTHS AND REALITIES IN STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT" Kellogg Institute for International Studies. November 1991.

https://kellogg.nd.edu/sites/default/files/old_files/documents/166_0.pdf

forces that were in Vietnam.⁴⁹ This shows that the distribution of forces was not as balanced as a typical coalition might be. This could be due to the absence of many leading global actors, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, or others.⁵⁰ These countries would have carried much more weight compared to developing nations, which the United States had to support. For example, the United States was forced to provide simple military supplies like clothing to coalition partners such as Thailand to ensure they could fight.⁵¹ The sharing of casualties was different. New Zealand had the largest ratio of casualties to their total force, even surpassing the United States, with a ratio of 2.18 compared to the United States's 2.15. This means that, proportionally, more New Zealand soldiers died in combat compared to U.S. soldiers.⁵² This demonstrates that the soldiers in some of the coalition partners were actively supporting the operations, not sitting back and letting the United States bear all the costs. However, this was not enough to classify this success variable as fully realized, as most of the coalition partners did not contribute sufficiently and were not adequately supplied due to their countries not being wealthy enough to sustain significant contributions.

Supply lines were also essential for the United States. Vietnam was a far away place and technology was not advanced enough to sustain prolonged American deployment. This meant

⁴⁹US Vietnam War Commemoration. "United States Allies in the Vietnam War." Department of the Army. 2005. https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/assets/1/7/VW50th_Allies_Posters_11-6-19REV.pdf

⁵⁰Colman, Jonathan. "NO TEA PARTY: THE BRITISH-AMERICAN STRAIN OVER VIETNAM." HistoryNet. December 5 2018. <https://www.historynet.com/no-tea-party-british-american-strain-vietnam/>

⁵¹US Vietnam War Commemoration. "United States Allies in the Vietnam War." Department of the Army. 2005. https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/assets/1/7/VW50th_Allies_Posters_11-6-19REV.pdf

⁵²US Vietnam War Commemoration. "United States Allies in the Vietnam War." Department of the Army. 2005. https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/assets/1/7/VW50th_Allies_Posters_11-6-19REV.pdf

that the United States needed help from other coalition members to ensure that supply lines could be developed near the field of operations. Multiple countries stepped up to the task to ensure that the coalition was able to become successful. Thailand, for example, was a great source of help for the United States in this regard. Their location was a prime staging area for the United States to conduct missions for resupply or for bombings over Vietnam. The Thai Army allowed the United States Air Force to use multiple bases from Takhli to Don Muang to fly bombing missions over Vietnam and to conduct covert missions in Laos and even allowed them to build military bases which cost \$250 million.⁵³ The Philippines allowed the United States to use their naval bases to conduct resupply by seas.⁵⁴ This eased up the United States logistical problems as these are shorter distances compared to having to transport resupply all the way from the United States. This was crucial for the success of the military campaign, as the United States played the largest role in the operation. If they could operate efficiently, the likelihood of achieving the objective would increase.

The third variable of legitimacy, however, was not present in this military campaign and was most likely a major reason in this military campaign was not given enough time to reach its objective. The war's legitimacy was not helped by the coalition, as the American public saw this force consisting mostly of the United States. The United States also took most of the casualties and even more than the Korean War. The United States took a total of 211,324 casualties in

⁵³US Vietnam War Commemoration. "United States Allies in the Vietnam War." Department of the Army. 2005.

https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/assets/1/7/VW50th_Allies_Posters_11-6-19REV.pdf

⁵⁴US Vietnam War Commemoration. "United States Allies in the Vietnam War." Department of the Army. 2005.

https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/assets/1/7/VW50th_Allies_Posters_11-6-19REV.pdf

Vietnam compared to 157,530 in the Korean War.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the public saw many of the United States's best allies, like Canada and the United Kingdom, rejecting the call for support, which hurt the perception that many of the global actors and the western powers were for this war.⁵⁶ In the present day looking back, Thomas Forte concludes that the American people saw the war as “an unwinnable war, fought for a questionable cause that ultimately led to nothing but dead Americans and a loss of faith in the U.S. government.”⁵⁷ Back in 1968, it was much the same, especially after the Tet offensive, which was a huge morale hit for the United States public. From 1965 to 1969, the average percentage of the public supporting the war was below 50%, but had fallen by 1969 to around 35%.⁵⁸ This was a relatively low number compared to other military campaigns such as Operation Desert Storm. This also culminated in one of the largest protests at that time in October 1969, with over 250,000 people participating. This sent a signal to the US government. The US government responded to the signals of an illegitimate war with the stoppage of the bombing runs in North Vietnam and limits on the number of soldiers deployed to Vietnam.⁵⁹ This shows the broad perceptions that the Vietnam War was illegitimate

⁵⁵“Battlefield: Vietnam Timeline”. Public Broadcasting Services. Accessed March 25 2025.

<https://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/timeline/index3.html>

⁵⁶Colman, Jonathan. “The Challenges of Coalition-Building: The Vietnam Experience, 1964-1969.” Royal United Service Institute. March 15 2010. <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/challenges-coalition-building-vietnam-experience-1964-1969>

⁵⁷Forte, Thomas. “The Vietnam War and the Shifting Tides of Public Opinion.” Dickinson College. April 19 2017. <https://blogs.dickinson.edu/hist-118pinsker/2017/04/19/2895/>

⁵⁸“Public Opinion and the Vietnam War.” Digital History. Accessed March 25 2025.

https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam_pubopinion.cfm

⁵⁹Office of the Historian. *U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War: The Tet Offensive, 1968*. US Government Printing Office. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/tet>

and was one of the breaking points leading to the ultimate failure of the campaign. The absence of a coalition consisting of global actors undermined the legitimacy in the war.⁶⁰

6.3: Intervening Failure Variables

The next set of intervening variables are those that contribute to the failure of coalition operations. These variables include: free riding, contending or fragmented leadership, and diverging interests. These variables are linked to failures of military operations when coalitions are involved.

Free riding did exist within this coalition. Many of the countries that were also involved did not contribute as much as they were expected to contribute. Thailand, as mentioned before, did not even supply their troops with adequate clothing, hoping the United States was able to give it to them. This lack of effort from some countries hurt the coalition by providing it with inadequate military assistance to successfully complete the objectives. There were many countries that were interested in the outcome of the war and wanted a piece in “combating communism” but were not willing to give out military elements. Becky Bruce points out that England, a country that wanted to see the goals of the campaign succeed and wanted to stop communism, nevertheless, outright rejected the call for countries to contribute.⁶¹ Canada was also a country that was eager to see North Vietnam fail but did not support the coalition military. However, they did send aid and support in non military support.⁶² These countries that supported

⁶⁰ This action was one of the reasons why the United States lost their hold for preventing aggression, as they further relied on an unready South Vietnam to hold the bulk of their mission.

⁶¹ Bruce, Becky L. "Vietnam and the More Flags Campaign, 1964–1965: The Search for American Allies in the Commonwealth." *UNL V Retrospective Theses & Dissertations*, 2004, doi:10.25669/jdij-9bno.

⁶² Bruce, Becky L. "Vietnam and the More Flags Campaign, 1964–1965: The Search for American Allies in the Commonwealth." *UNL V Retrospective Theses & Dissertations*, 2004, doi:10.25669/jdij-9bno.

the United State's to fight against communism but were unwilling to shell out any military support.

While most of the countries joined the war to prevent the spread of communism, each country had their own reasons as well, and this led them to take actions that sometimes undermined the coalition. Thailand, for example, used the coalition to exert regional power in Southeast Asia as Vietnam was a growing threat in regional politics.⁶³ Stopping North Vietnam's push for power would be achieved, regardless of what was the outcome of the campaign, leading to more Thai free riding. This was the same for Korea. They were fighting to ensure continuing American Security to the Korean Peninsula and for the economic assistance that was promised if they became involved in the conflict.⁶⁴ This reasoning might be the reason they fought so hard but were not committed to the objectives of the campaign, as they were trying to impress the United States and achieve funding for their country's revitalization. There were many different goals in the conflict that pushed those who did not care about the campaign's objectives and the United States to focus their contributions on their own objectives. That affected the success of the campaign and ultimately led to the failure of this campaign.

Contending or fragmented leadership was present as well. The South Vietnamese's leader did not agree with the American leaders at all. They often butted heads, as the American leaders

⁶³Colman, Jonathan. "The Challenges of Coalition-Building: The Vietnam Experience, 1964-1969." Royal United Service Institute. March 15 2010. <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/challenges-coalition-building-vietnam-experience-1964-1969>

⁶⁴Oh, Daniel. "The Two Koreas and the Vietnam War." Wilson Center. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/essays/two-koreas-and-vietnam-war>

wanted more social and military reforms to bolster the fight against North Vietnam.⁶⁵ The president of South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem, often refused and was corrupt as well, leading to a disconnection between the South Vietnamese and Americans. This hurt the coalition as the two largest members often did not see eye to eye. This culminated in the US involvement in the coup and assassination of the South Vietnamese President, which hurt the ties between the two nations.⁶⁶ This did not improve with new leadership, as there was now no trust between the United States and South Vietnam. These two leaders, butting heads and destroying trust handicapped the campaign.

6.4: Closing

The Vietnam War is a clear example of failure due to having a weak coalition. While a coalition was present, it lacked the global leader allies of the United States and was filled with nations that did not have a strong track record as reliable international allies. Only one of the three success variables was present in this military campaign, while all three failure variables were evident. The presence of the failure variables suggests that the issue was not whether there was a coalition, but rather who was involved. The lack of coherent membership and the failure of these members to provide solid military support to the coalition demonstrates the lack of urgency felt by the coalition. This was further emphasized by free riding and diverging interests among the member nations. It also highlighted the leadership's failure to support America or South

⁶⁵“THE DIEM COUP IN VIETNAM” Miller Center. University of Virginia Press. Accessed March 25 2025.

<https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/diem-coup>

⁶⁶Nicher, Luke. “New Light in a Dark Corner: Evidence on the Diem Coup in South Vietnam, November 1963.”

National Security Archives. November 1 2020.<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/vietnam/2020-11-01/new-light-dark-corner-evidence-diem-coup-november-1963>

Vietnam, as this was not their priority in the coalition. This underscores the importance of the coalition's composition and how it can impact the failure variables.

Chapter 7: Operation Enduring Freedom

After the events of September 11th, 2001, the United States and President Bush were eager to take down those responsible for the attack. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility and was hiding behind the Taliban in Afghanistan.⁶⁷ This, in part, led the United States to intervene in Afghanistan and drive out Al-Qaeda and, by proxy, the Taliban. This campaign became known as Operation Enduring Freedom, the first phase of the War in Afghanistan. The campaign lasted from 2001 to 2014 and was followed by the occupation of Afghanistan and Operation Freedom's Sentinel. I will focus primarily on the period from 2001 to 2014, as this is when the most significant effects of coalitions can be seen. By 2014, many US and Coalition military forces had pulled out.

7.1: Coalition and Success of campaign

The objective of this campaign was to prevent further terrorist attacks on the United States. This was laid out on September 18th, 2001, in which Congress authorized the President to “use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.”⁶⁸ This, in large part, authorized President George Bush's campaign in Afghanistan

⁶⁷US Department of State. *The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days*. US National Archives. 2001.

<https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/6947.htm>

⁶⁸US Congress. *Joint Resolution: To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States*. US Government Printing Office. 2001.

<https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ40/PLAW-107publ40.pdf>

where the Taliban was harboring Al-Qaeda and helping it create training camps.⁶⁹ While some were skeptical of how successful the War in Afghanistan as a whole was, I conclude that Operation Enduring Freedom completed its stated objective to stop future attacks on the United States by Al-Qaeda. Since 9/11, there has not been a single major attack on the US from Al-Qaeda.⁷⁰ Operation Enduring Freedom had a part to play in the preventing Al-Qaeda attacks; many of the Al-Qaeda training camps and their soldiers, which had no protection in Afghanistan, after the Taliban was dismantled, and Al-Qaeda scattered off.⁷¹ Because of the dismantlement of Al-Qaeda as an effect and objective of the campaign, I code this military campaign as a success as it completed its objective.

This military campaign can be coded as a coalition. After the 9/11 attack, the United Nations passed resolution 1373 (2001) condemning the attack and urging all states to combat terrorism and provide support for states that were fighting those same organizations.⁷² This led many countries including the United States' closest allies like Germany, the United Kingdom, and Canada to supply military equipment, supplies, and soldiers to fight alongside the United States.⁷³ Since there were different countries sending in military equipment and boots on the

⁶⁹“9/11 FAQs” 9/11 National Museum. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://www.911memorial.org/911-faqs>

⁷⁰Thomas, Clayton. “Al Qaeda: Background, Current Status, and U.S. Policy” US Congress Press. May 6 2014.

[https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11854#:~:text=Al%20Qaeda%20\(AQ%2C%20alt.,Africa.](https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11854#:~:text=Al%20Qaeda%20(AQ%2C%20alt.,Africa.)

⁷¹Thomas, Clayton. “Al Qaeda: Background, Current Status, and U.S. Policy” US Congress Press. May 6 2014.

[https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11854#:~:text=Al%20Qaeda%20\(AQ%2C%20alt.,Africa.](https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11854#:~:text=Al%20Qaeda%20(AQ%2C%20alt.,Africa.)

⁷²UN Security Council. *Resolution 1373*. No. 1373. 28 September 2001.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/102245?ln=en&v=pdf>

⁷³US White House. *International Contributions to the War Against Terrorism and Operation Enduring Freedom*. US

National Archives. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov>

</march11/coalitioncontributions.html>

ground, I can code this campaign as having a military coalition and I would even consider it a strong military coalition as some of the closest allies with the United States and global leading actors were present.

7.2: Intervening Success Variables

The first variables we will examine are the three success variables, which are the sharing of military elements, including distribution of costs and fatigue; extent of the area of operations and supply lines; and the degree of legitimacy of the campaign. These variables are linked to the success of military campaigns.

We can see there were many military elements shared within the conflict. While the United States supplied most of the soldiers, many countries contributed with troops. The United Kingdom, for example, was the first to contribute to the operation and actually led the security forces after Operation Enduring Freedom. Germany also sent in 130,000 troops throughout the operation, showing support in terms of having boots on the ground.⁷⁴ Having these countries who have a reputation for upholding international cooperation supported the Coalition immensely. There were also many countries that shared the cost of casualties during the campaign, such as the United Kingdom. Although the United Kingdom had only 4,500 soldiers in the country, representing 15% of the United States' force, they suffered nearly 20% of the casualties that the United States incurred.⁷⁵ This shows the sharing of military elements and the sharing of the costs

⁷⁴Münch, Philipp. "Never Again? Germany's Lessons from the War in Afghanistan." *Parameters*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2020, doi:10.55540/0031-1723.2689.

⁷⁵UK Parliament. *House of Commons Hansard Debates for 26 January 2006*. UK National Archives. 2006.

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cm_hansrd/vo060126/debtext/60126-10.htm#60126-10_head0;

“Number of fatalities among Western coalition soldiers involved in the execution of Operation Enduring Freedom from 2001 to 2021.” Statista. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://www>

of the campaign. This contributed to the success of the campaign as this enabled them to dismantle the Taliban more swiftly insofar as having more troops allowed them to operate on a larger scale and seize opportunities that would not have been possible if a single country had been fighting alone. In short, more troops provided greater resources and manpower, enabling broader operations and a stronger presence on the ground.

Similar to Operation Desert Storm, the logistics would have been difficult if the troops had been forced to base everything in the United States. Instead, the United States and other coalition forces were able to use the territories of many countries. Turkey, for example, allowed the coalition to use their country for overhead flights and for basing so the coalition could more efficiently resupply the troops in Afghanistan.⁷⁶ Saudi Arabia allowed the United States to fly overhead to be able to conduct the missions in Afghanistan, such as bombing runs and resupply, which helped America to more effectively use their airpower.⁷⁷ The most important countries, however, were the Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan, which allowed the United States to use their bases which were only around 100 miles from Afghanistan.⁷⁸ All this combined provided the United States with supply lines to more effectively

[.statista.com/statistics/262894/western-coalition-soldiers-killed-in-afghanistan/#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20soldiers%20killed,of%20the%20War%20on%20Terror](https://www.statista.com/statistics/262894/western-coalition-soldiers-killed-in-afghanistan/#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20soldiers%20killed,of%20the%20War%20on%20Terror)

⁷⁶US White House. *International Contributions to the War Against Terrorism and Operation Enduring Freedom*. US National Archives. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/march11/coalitioncontributions.html>

⁷⁷US Department of the Air Force. *2001 - Operation Enduring Freedom*. US Air force Historical Support Division. Access March 25 2025. <https://www.afhistory.af.mil/FAQs/Fact-Sheets/Article/458975/2001-operation-enduring-freedom/>

⁷⁸Wright, Donald P. "A Different Kind of War." Combat Studies Institute Press. May 2010. <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/DifferentKindofWar.pdf>

complete the objective of Operation Enduring Freedom with the use of overhead airspace and bases to conduct missions and support the logistics of the campaign.

While most Americans supported the war because it meant getting revenge on what happened during 9/11, having allies in this fight reinforced the legitimacy of this campaign. The polls suggested that the Americans supported seeing America with the Allies fight the war and to topple the military regime of the Taliban.⁷⁹ In contrast, perception of the campaign shifted to become more negative once the coalition ended and the American troops were on their own.⁸⁰ This suggests that the coalition supported the legitimacy of this military campaign. Operation Enduring Freedom was successful as the high popular support increased the morale of the troops, while during Operation Freedom Sentinel the mood soured and the morale of the soldiers fell. However, it should be noted that the withdrawal and the declining popular support happened simultaneously, which could be interpreted as a snowball effect as each fed off the other. This shows the complex nature of war in Afghanistan and how the legitimacy of the war was there during Operation Enduring Freedom but absent in Operation Freedom Sentinel.

7.3: Intervening Failure Variables

The next set of intervening variables are those that contribute to the failure of coalition operations. These variables include: free riding, contending or fragmented leadership, and diverging interests. These variables are linked to failures of military operations when coalitions are involved.

⁷⁹Phillips, Amber. "When and how Americans started souring on the war in Afghanistan." Washington Post. August 19 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/08/18/when-how-americans-started-souring-war-afghanistan/>

⁸⁰Newport, Frank. "American Public Opinion and the Afghanistan Situation." Gallup. August 27 2021. <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/354182/american-public-opinion-afghanistan-situation.aspx>

Free riding does not seem to have been present in this campaign. As previously expressed, many of the United States' most respected allies were contributing troops, such as Germany contributing 130,000 troops and Australia providing their full Special Forces branch.⁸¹ This was also a first for many countries in a long time to support a conflict of this magnitude. For example, France and Italy each gave their only naval battleship support group to the campaign, and these constituted almost 24% and 13% of the total naval force during Operation Enduring Freedom.⁸² This shows the full commitment of these countries and shows the members of the coalition were contributing.

Most of the countries agreed on the goal of the campaign, as they were there to suppress terrorism and to stop the threat of another terrorist attack on the United States or their own soil. For example, Great Britain, led and was actually in charge of the ISAF or the International Security Assistance Force which was a group whose objective was to eliminate Agancitism's capabilities and opportunities to harbor terrorists again.⁸³ This fits into the narrative that Britain's primary objective for joining the coalition was just fighting to eliminate the chances for the terrorists to plan any future attacks. However, there were many who had different goals that evolved, which might have contributed to the failure after the success of Operation Enduring

⁸¹US White House. *International Contributions to the War Against Terrorism and Operation Enduring Freedom*. US National Archives. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/march11/coalitioncontributions.html>

⁸²US White House. *International Contributions to the War Against Terrorism and Operation Enduring Freedom*. US National Archives. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/march11/coalitioncontributions.html>

⁸³NATO. *ISAF's mission in Afghanistan (2001-2014)*. NATO. 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm

Freedom. Germany's goals, for example, went from stopping future terrorist acts to improving relations with the United States by staying in the coalitions after enduring freedom.⁸⁴ This growing divergence of purpose may have contributed to the failure afterwards: Many others withdrew their coalition support after the United States achieved its initial goal. This supports the conclusion that during Operation Enduring Freedom, the united coalition's goal supported its success while afterwards, the division in goals contributed to its downfall and failure.

It was obvious from the start that the United States was the leader of this operation after the events of 9/11. The countries were there in support of the United States, and none tried to take over Operation Enduring Freedom. Furthermore, the United Nations resolutely stated that these states should support what the United States was doing.⁸⁵ There was also consistent leadership within the United States. Only two presidents were involved with the operation, and only the US generals who primarily took command of Operation Enduring Freedom. This meant that the US was able to coordinate and consistently have leadership, without changing the objectives or how things were done .

7.4: Closing

Similar to the Vietnam War, the Afghanistan War can be split into multiple phases with multiple goals with each of them. The initial phase covered in this case was different from the subsequent phases, which changed the objectives and changed the intervening success variables. The initial part of the conflict was a success. During the coalition, which successfully achieved their goal, the intervening success variables were present and the failure variables were absent.

⁸⁴Münch, Philipp. "Never Again? Germany's Lessons from the War in Afghanistan." *Parameters*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2020, doi:10.55540/0031-1723.2689.

⁸⁵UN Security Council. *Resolution 1373*. No. 1373. 28 September 2001. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/102245?ln=en&v=pdf>

This was due, in part, to the solid coalition of members who contributed to the success of the operation. As the campaign changed, however, we can see the failure variables arise, such as differing goals. This emphasizes the importance of the campaign's goal to ensure that the goals of the members do not diverge. Even if the coalition partners are the same, their concerns and commitment may evolve in different directions, which can affect the operation as a whole. This difference led to many key coalition partners leaving the operation, lowering the effectiveness of the success variables and the success of the campaign overall. This emphasis on the goals will be seen even more in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Chapter 8: Operation Iraqi Freedom

After the events of 9/11, the pressure on the United States to ensure that all threats against the United States were dealt with were at an all-time high. Iraq, which has been hostile against the United States ever since the Gulf War in 1989, was on top of the official list of threats. This led, on September 12th, 2002, to an accusation that Iraq was harboring Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and to a demand that Iraq remove them and immediately disarm.⁸⁶ This culminated in a full scale invasion on March 20th, 2003, to topple Saddam Hussain and his dictatorship. I focus this case on Operation Iraqi Freedom which lasted from March 20th, 2003, to December 15, 2011. I chose these boundaries as this was the majority of the coalition fighting during this time period. Also, the mission changed after December 15, 2011, going from finding WMDs to state building, leading many countries to leave the coalition⁸⁷.

8.1: Coalition and Success of campaign

After the accusations concerning the WMDs, the United States Congress passed the *Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002*, which gave President Bush the power to “enforce all relevant Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.”⁸⁸ It also stated:

⁸⁶Foster, Jessica. “Poliheuristic Decision-Making Analysis: President George W. Bush and the Decision to Invade Iraq.” Wild Blue Yonder Journal. October 19 2023. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Wild-Blue-Yonder/Articles/Article-Display/Article/3534259/poliheuristic-decision-making-analysis-president-george-w-bush-and-the-decision/>

⁸⁷US Defense Casualty Assessment System. “Operation New Dawn (OND).” US Department of Defense Press. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/app/conflictCasualties/ond>

⁸⁸US Congress. *H.J.Res.114 - Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002*. US National Archives. 2002. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-joint-resolution/114/text>

United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 (1990) authorizes the use of all necessary means to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolution 660 (1990) and subsequent relevant resolutions and to compel Iraq to cease certain activities that threaten international peace and security, including development of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the obstruction of United Nations weapons inspections in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 (1991).⁸⁹

This meant that the objective of the operation was to remove the Weapons of Mass Destruction from the hands of Saddam Hussain and the state of Iraq. The second part of the initial American objective was removing Saddam Hussain and restoring democracy and peace in Iraq. This campaign objective was not achieved and the campaign was ultimately a failure. The biggest reason why this campaign was that there were no WMDs in Iraq and peace and democracy were not achieved by 2001.⁹⁰ If the whole point of this operation was to find and eliminate these WMDs and they were not there from the start, it can be listed as a failure. Although they succeeded in toppling Suddian Hussian, the campaign contributed to a large mess in the Middle East onto which terrorist organizations stepped in. The ousting of Saddam Hussian created a power vacuum in which many terrorist groups ravaged the land and created chaos and not just in Iraq. Keeping democracy and peace within the region was a definite failure in this sense.

During the Operation, President Bush had built what was called the “Coalition of the Willing” in which Bush led an effort to combine troops to the war with 49 countries ultimately

⁸⁹US Congress. *H.J.Res. 114 - Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002*. US National Archives. 2002. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-joint-resolution/114/text>

⁹⁰Kelley, Robert E. “Twenty years ago in Iraq, ignoring the expert weapons inspectors proved to be a fatal mistake.” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/essay/2023/twenty-years-ago-iraq-ignoring-expert-weapons-inspectors-proved-be-fatal-mistake>

joining.⁹¹ The force was composed not only of American troops, but also 7,100 Troops from Great Britain to 600 from Romania, and many other countries.⁹² The United States announced that in the coalition, "Every major race, religion and ethnic group in the world is represented. The coalition includes nations from every continent on the globe."⁹³ We can say that there was indeed a coalition in this campaign.

8.2: Intervening Success Variables

The first variables we will examine are the three success variables, which are the sharing of military elements, including distribution of costs and fatigue; extent of the area of operations and supply lines; and the degree of legitimacy of the campaign. These variables are linked to the success of military campaigns.

In the shares of Military Elements, there is a big gaping hole on who was involved. Many of America's closest allies like Germany, Belgium, and France believed that the Iraq WMDs posed a threat for international security, but refused to be a part of the United States Coalition as they believed that starting a war would not "produce the stable, liberated democracy that Americans hope."⁹⁴ This led to many of America's closest allies not willing to join the coalition, causing the coalition to have less power than could have been assembled. In fact, it was only the

⁹¹Partlow, Joshua. "List of 'Willing' U.S. Allies Shrinks Steadily in Iraq." Washington Post.

December 8 2007. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/07/AR2007120702585.html>

⁹²Beehner, Lionel. "The 'Coalition of the Willing'." Council on Foreign Relations. February 22 2007.

<https://www.cfr.org/background/coalition-willing#chapter-title-0-3>

⁹³Daalder, Ivo H. "The Coalition That Isn't." Brookings Institute. March 24 2003. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-coalition-that-isnt/>

⁹⁴Gordon, Phillip H. "The Crisis in the Alliance." Brookings Institute February 24 2003. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-crisis-in-the-alliance/>

United Kingdom that contributed enough military supplies and troops to make an impact in the coalition.⁹⁵ This can also be seen with the share of the costs of war. Out of the Total Casualties of 4,921 among coalition forces, 4,598 or 93% were borne by the United State's forces.⁹⁶ Only 179 were from the United Kingdom. Only 144, or 3% were from all the other members of the coalition.⁹⁷ Many of the other countries that were formally part of the coalition did not contribute any troops and bore none of the costs of war, showing free riding in this coalition. This limited commitment could have been due to concerns of building a new stable and democratic Iraq. Their concerns were correct as the coalition ended up failing that objective.

The supply lines were essential for the success of this military campaign. The Gulf War in 1991 that liberated the country Kuwait created a close relationship between the United States and Kuwait. The United States actively stationed troops and equipment in Kuwait throughout the 1990s prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom.⁹⁸ When coalition forces ultimately invaded Iraq for a second time, Kuwait played a central role in hosting troops. Since Kuwait borders Iraq, Kuwait was an efficient route for supplies to be transported in.⁹⁹ Furthermore, Turkey was also an

⁹⁵Daalder, Ivo H. "The Coalition That Isn't." Brookings Institute. March 24 2003. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-coalition-that-isnt/>

⁹⁶ Zakir-Hussain, Maryam. "Twenty years on: The shocking numbers behind the Iraq war." The Independent. March 20 2023. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-war-bush-twenty-years-anniversary-b2302031.html#>

⁹⁷"WAR IN IRAQ - 20 YEARS ON" Blessma. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://blesma.org/iraq/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20179%20British%20service%20personnel,divisions%20were%20particularly%20hard%20hit.>

⁹⁸"Iraq vs. Kuwait." Peace Research Center Prague. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://www.prcprague.cz/fcdataset/iraq-kuwait#:~:text=Kuwait%20assumed%20a%20central%20role,relations%20with%20Baghdad%20in%202004.>

⁹⁹"Iraq vs. Kuwait." Peace Research Center Prague. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://www.prcprague.cz/fcdataset/iraq-kuwait#:~:text=Kuwait%20assumed%20a%20central%20role,relations%20with%20Baghdad%20in%202004.>

essential partner, allowing American armor to cross to Iraq over Turkey's border. This was essential in maneuvers to take the northern part of Iraq.¹⁰⁰ Without Kuwait and Turkey as part of the Coalition, this campaign would have been more difficult logistically as the United States would be forced to transport everything from the United States.

The legitimacy of this campaign was low from the start. The largest reason for low legitimacy was there was no approval from the United Nations, as they even deemed it illegal for these coalition forces to conduct the operation.¹⁰¹ This led countries like Canada to refuse to join the coalition claiming that from the international standpoint, the United States should not be conducting these operations without UN approval.¹⁰² Furthermore, there were no Arab States, except for Kuwait that joined.¹⁰³ This lowered the confidence of countries internationally, which affected the number of countries willing to join and contributed to the amount of military elements given by coalition partners. Domestically in the United States, President Bush claimed that the international community actually approved of this conflict. To try to seek legitimacy, Secretary of State Colin Powell presented what he called evidence.¹⁰⁴ Many saw the evidence of

¹⁰⁰Peltz, Eric, et al. *Sustainment of Army Forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom: Major Findings and Recommendations*. RAND Corporation, 2005, www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG342

¹⁰¹MacAskill, Ewen. "Iraq war was illegal and breached UN charter, says Annan." *The Guardian*. September 15 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/16/iraq.iraq>

¹⁰²Boileau, John. "Canada and the Iraq War". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 20 December 2023, *Historica Canada*. www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canada-and-the-iraq-war.

¹⁰³Schifferes, Steve. "US says 'coalition of willing' grows." *British Broadcasting Company*. March 21 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2870487.stm>

¹⁰⁴Doherty, Carroll. "A Look Back at How Fear and False Beliefs Bolstered U.S. Public Support for War in Iraq." *Pew Research Center*. March 14 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/03/14/a-look-back-at-how-fear-and-false-beliefs-bolstered-u-s-public-support-for-war-in-iraq/>

the WMDs as a facade and maybe doubted the objective in invading Iraq to create a stable country. The American public also agreed that if the UN forbade the war, it was less of an legitimate military campaign.¹⁰⁵ Once the international community exposed the lie that there were no WMDs, defection and withdrawal from the coalition began, like the United Kingdom withdrawing 1600 troops.¹⁰⁶ Similar to Operation Enduring Freedom, once the withdrawal of the troops started, it looked to the American public as if the United States was the only one left in Iraq. In 2019, it was polled that most Americans believe that it was a mistake sending troops to Iraq.¹⁰⁷ This shows that the international support from the International community and major allies proved invaluable for showing legitimacy of the war and the success of the war overall.

8.3: Intervening Failure Variables

The next set of intervening variables are those that contribute to the failure of coalition operations. These variables include: free riding, contending or fragmented leadership, and diverging interests. These variables are linked to failures of military operations when coalitions are involved.

Free riding in Operation Iraqi Freedom was a problem, as many members in the coalition did not support the campaign effort in any tangible way beyond rhetoric. On March 24th, there was an update of coalition contributions, but only three of the countries were actively giving military elements while the others, like Albania, Macedonia, and Micronesia were not providing

¹⁰⁵Doherty, Carroll. "A Look Back at How Fear and False Beliefs Bolstered U.S. Public Support for War in Iraq."

Pew Research Center. March 14 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/03/14/a-look-back-at-how-fear-and-false-beliefs-bolstered-u-s-public-support-for-war-in-iraq/>

¹⁰⁶Beehner, Lionel. "The 'Coalition of the Willing'." Council on Foreign Relations. February 22 2007.

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/coalition-willing#chapter-title-0-3>

¹⁰⁷"Iraq." Gallup. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1633/iraq.aspx>

substantial amounts of troops or supplies and were there just to be in the coalition.¹⁰⁸ The lack of countries actually supporting the war effort left a big hole in which, by names, it seems to be a lot of countries working together, but in reality it was the United States with little help from half the coalition and virtually no help from the other half. This was evident in the distribution of the costs with 97% of the casualties borne by the United States and the United Kingdom. The free-riding impacted the legitimacy as well as the many watching countries that pledged support but provided nothing else affected the perceptions of the American public.

Contending or fragmented leadership, however, did not exist. The United States was the sole leader and decision maker throughout the conflict, as they were the one who threatened military action against Iraq initially.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the majority of the coalition forces were American, so almost all of the troops were commanded by Americans. This meant that the Coalition only had one country that was making the majority of the decisions; the Contending or fragmented leadership variable was not present in this case.

Diverging Interests were a problem, however. The coalition members did not have the same priority. Poland, on one hand, joined the coalition so they could have better military experience with their troops and also to strengthen their relationship with the United States.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Daalder, Ivo H. "The Coalition That Isn't." Brookings Institute. March 24 2003. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-coalition-that-isnt/>

¹⁰⁹US White House. "President Says Saddam Hussein Must Leave Iraq Within 48 Hours." US National Archives. 2003. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html>

¹¹⁰Piwonski, Mariusz. "Why polish soldiers are in Iraq." Poland Ministry of Defense. 2006. <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org>

Similarly, Australia joined solely to strengthen its alliance with the United States.¹¹¹ These reasons could limit the amount of resources that was given, as they did not truly believe in the cause of the war and had separate motives different from the overall objective. If it was military experience or to increase their relationship with the United States, they were less willing to risk troops' lives..

8.4: Closing

By the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2011, the coalition had failed to achieve the objective of finding WMDs as well as creating a stable and democratic Iraq. This could have been anticipated when key America's Allies rejected the claim and the United Nations as a whole deemed this campaign unauthorized. The skepticism and disapproval led to multiple countries to reject joining, lowering the legitimacy of the campaign, and led to many countries that did formally join the coalition to free ride and to use their membership to achieve their diverging goals. This shows the importance of the structure and reasoning for the coalition fight. If multiple countries that are historical allies reject the coalition, the United States should look into why and do more investigation before proceeding with the campaign. It also shows that having multiple countries without a unifying motive is not the best plan of action.

¹¹¹Daley, Paul. "After John Howard took Australia to war in Iraq, he was scarcely held to account. Instead, he was re-elected." The Guardian. March 18 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/19/after-john-howard-took-australia-to-war-in-iraq-he-was-scarcely-held-to-account-instead-he-was-re-elected>

Chapter 9: Operation Just Cause

During the 1970s and 1980s, General Manuel Noriega was considered the de facto ruler of Panama, rigging elections so that his puppet candidates were put in places of power he was then able to control. The United States was complicit in this, as long as Noriega supported American operations in Latin America. However, when Noriega went rogue and created campaigns harassing United States military personnel,¹¹² accusations of drug smuggling and money laundering came to light, which prompted a response in Panama.¹¹³ There were reports of attacks on US service members as well as threats to the lives of American citizens within the country of Panama.¹¹⁴ The United States rapidly responded with an invasion of Panama on December 20, 1989, with 26,000 troops on the ground with the intent of toppling the regime of Noriega.¹¹⁵ This was Operation Just Cause. On January 3rd, 1990, less than 2 weeks from when the Invasion began, Noriega surrendered to the United States and by January 12 all operations ceased in Panama and the Operation officially ended.

9.1: Coalition and Success of Campaign

The objective of Operation Just Cause was laid out in President George Bush's decree for the use of military intervention in Panama in order to "protect the lives of American citizens in

¹¹²Runkle, Benjamin. "REMEMBERING MANUEL NORIEGA AND HIS CAPTURE." War on the Rocks Press. June 6 2017. <https://warontherocks.com/2017/06/remembering-manuel-noriega-and-his-capture/>

¹¹³"Dec. 20, 1989: Invasion of Panama." Zinn Education Project. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/invasion-of-panama/>

¹¹⁴"Dec. 20, 1989: Invasion of Panama." Zinn Education Project. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/invasion-of-panama/>

¹¹⁵Stilwell, Blake. "How Operation Just Cause, the US Invasion of Panama, Ousted a Dictator." Military.com. January 31 2023. <https://www.military.com/history/how-operation-just-cause-us-invasion-of-panama-ousted-dictator>

Panama and to bring General Noriega to justice in the United States.”¹¹⁶ This laid out three parts of the objectives: To protect the US citizens in Panama from Noriega loyalists, to arrest Noriega and bring him to the US for justice for the crimes committed, and to restore justice in Panama. These objectives were met, with resounding success. The Panamanian Defense Force had been defeated within only 5 days of fighting, protecting the citizens from the largest group that was threatening their safety.¹¹⁷ Noriega also was captured by January 3rd, tried and found guilty, and sentenced to 40 years in prison.¹¹⁸ Without the threat of Noriega and the Panamanian Defense Force, democracy returned to Panama with Guillermo Endara being elected as president.¹¹⁹ This was a successful campaign.

Operation Just Cause was not a coalition. It involved 26,000 US troops, and no other countries' militaries provided any equipment or other items. There was also no communication with the UN, as President Bush initiated this operation unilaterally. Since there was no communication or any lending or sharing of military elements, we can code this Operation as not a Coalition.

¹¹⁶US White House. *Address to the Nation Announcing United States Military Action in Panama*. The American Presidency Project. 1989. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation>

¹¹⁷Baker, Kensley. “What happened when the US military invaded Panama? Overwhelming force and deafening non-stop rock.” Yahoo News. February 12 2025. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/happened-us-military-invaded>

¹¹⁸Martinez, Kathia. “Noriega, US ally turned target, dies after decades in jail.” El Paso Times. May 30 2017. <https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/2017/05/30/noriega-us-ally>

¹¹⁹Schwaller, Shannon. “Operation Just Cause: the Invasion of Panama, December 1989.” Army Heritage and Education Center. November 17 2008. https://www.army.mil/article/operation_just_cause_the_invasion_of_panama

9.2: Intervening Success Variables

The first variables we will examine are the three success variables, which are the sharing of military elements, including distribution of costs and fatigue; extent of the area of operations and supply lines; and the degree of legitimacy of the campaign. These variables are linked to the success of military campaigns.

For Operation Just Cause, there was no extra strength needed from other countries. Because this was not a coalition, there was no sharing of military elements, meaning all the troops and military equipment were purely given by the United States. However, the United States was able to assemble an overwhelming force. The United States went in with Apache Helicopters, the first time used in combat ever, as well as with Stealth Aircrafts.¹²⁰ This, coupled with 26,000 American troops including the Navy Seals and the 82nd Airborne, overwhelmed the Panamanian Defense Force, which only included around 3000 troops as well as capabilities limited to only mortar fire and machine guns. The United States was using and was described by Robert Harding as a “hammer killing a fly.”¹²¹ It was reflected in the unequal cost of this campaign, as there were 23 fatalities from the United States compared to 314 fatalities suffered by the Panamanian Defense Force.¹²² More than 10% of the Panamanian force was reported as killed in action, while only 0.08% of the US force was reported as killed in action.

¹²⁰Stilwell, Blake. “How Operation Just Cause, the US Invasion of Panama, Ousted a Dictator.” Military.com. January 31 2023. <https://www.military.com/history/how-operation-just-cause-us-invasion>

¹²¹Baker, Kensley. “What happened when the US military invaded Panama? Overwhelming force and deafening non-stop rock.” Yahoo News. February 12 2025. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/happened-us-military-invaded>

¹²²“The Human Cost in Panama.” Physicians for Human Rights. October 1991. [Operation-Just-Cause-The-Human-Cost-of-Military-Action-in-Panama](#)

The supply line was not a problem for the United States as it was a very swift conflict that did not need to have prolonged stationing of troops. It was also important to note that Panama is only 3 hours from Florida, where most of the flight missions were able to take off.¹²³ There was no need to create supply lines as it was close enough that refueling was not necessary. The United States troops were able to station in Florida and Georgia, not needing to rely on other countries to be able to effectively transport items; Panama is not on the other side of the world.

Even though there was no UN resolution that authorized the use of military force against Panama, International legitimacy was not needed for the swift operation. Many Latin American countries expressed concern for the national sovereignty of Panama and how this operation might affect the future of freedom in Latin America as a whole.¹²⁴ Some allies of the United States, such as the United Kingdom, supported the invasion while Canada and the Netherlands offered hesitant support as opposed to Russia and China who condemned the “illegal” use of force as well.¹²⁵ This legitimacy and support was not needed, however, since the country was so close and short lived, international legitimacy was not a factor. National legitimacy in Panama and the United States, however, was present. Most people of Panama approved of the removal of Norega, showing that over 90% of Panamaians that were interviewed by CBS considered the removal of Norega a positive shift; up to 80% who had a loss due to the operation still said it was

¹²³Cole, Ronald H. “The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Panama.” Joint History Office. November 1995. https://www.jcs.mil/Just_Cause.pdf

¹²⁴ General Accounting Office. *Panama: Issues Relating to the US Invasion*. US Government Printing Office. 1991. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/nsiad-91-174fs.pdf>

¹²⁵Cramer, Jane Kellett. “‘Just Cause’ or Just Politics?: U.S. Panama Invasion and Standardizing Qualitative Tests for Diversionary War.” *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2006, pp. 178–201. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org>.

worth it.¹²⁶ Within The US government, the operation had bipartisan support.¹²⁷ The American public also supported the campaign with 56% approving strongly about protecting the American citizens living in Panama. Not needing to have the support of the international community gave the United States more flexibility, especially when the Panamaians and fellow Americans supported the campaign as well. As this was not a coalition, there were no failure variables to be identified.

9.3: Closing

It shows something very important for warfare: Whom the United States are fighting against and where the battlefield is located should influence how the United States should conduct their campaign. President George Bush, when conducting Operation Just Cause, faced very different challenges than from Operation Desert Storm. When having the Monroe Doctrine in effect, intervening in a Latin American country shielded the United States from some International condemnation. The United States also had many more citizens there, giving more legitimacy for the war there. The small scale of the Panamanian Defense Force gave the United State the opportunity to proceed without a coalition as the United States knew they could overpower Panama alone with minimal costs and a swift outcome. Since Panama is very close to the United States, it had less need to create a coalition in order to minimize supply lines. As the result of knowing who they were up against, coupled with the proximity, they were able to show the legitimacy of the campaign with support from the people in America as well as in the country in Panama. This situation was very different from Desert Storm, which was located more than 6

¹²⁶Sanger, David E. "The Noriega Case: Public Opinion—Panamanians Strongly Back U.S. Move." *The New York Times*, 6 Jan. 1990, www.nytimes.com/1990/01/06/us/the-noriega-case-public-opinion

¹²⁷Cramer, Jane Kellett. "'Just Cause' or Just Politics?: U.S. Panama Invasion and Standardizing Qualitative Tests for Diversionary War." *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2006, pp. 178–201. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org>.

times as far, and was up against an adversity with a formidable force; this needed more support to liberate Kuwait. The case shows that even though coalitions are able to increase support, the context of having a very close and small adversary proportional to you can induce you to to decide that fighting alone would be a better concerted effort.

Chapter 10: Breakdown and Conclusion

These different cases give differing accounts of the importance of the variables, especially how the coalition is structured and the importance of its members. The extent to which the variables contribute to the success of the military campaigns varies under specific conditions. The presence or the absence of the failure variables, however, is definitely a factor in checking effectiveness of a military coalition. Yet, there are certain situations in which the absence of the success variables might be more important than the presence of the failure variable. We will go in depth into each of the variables and how they affect the likelihood of success or failure..

10.1: Sharing of Military Elements and Distribution of Costs

Sharing of military elements combines the firepower of multiple countries and distributes the cost among multiple armies so that no single country feels the bulk of the burden. By sharing military elements the coalition is better able to completely overwhelm the opposing military. This overwhelming force is also able to keep the total casualties lower as the overwhelming force is more likely to render the opposing force ineffective.

From looking at the cases, we see a caveat to this; In the cases where the sharing of military elements and distribution of costs contributed most to success, such as Operation Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom, the coalition members were Global actors with larger economies and had been allies to the United States. Examples from Operation Desert Storm included the 40,000 troops and 2 frigates provided by Egypt and the Netherlands respectively.¹²⁸ In Operation Enduring Freedom, the 130,00 Troops sent from Germany made a formidable

¹²⁸Englehardt, Joseph P. "DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM: A CHRONOLOGY AND TROOP LIST FOR THE 1990-1991 PERSIAN GULF CRISIS" Strategic Studies Institute. Army War College Press.

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA234743.pdf>

contribution to the campaign and coalition.¹²⁹ We can see in these campaigns, coalition member's contribution helped bring down the casualties from the United States. The British, in Operation Desert Storm, took as many casualties as the United States proportionally. By contrast, in the Iraq War and the Vietnam War, the coalition's members were not as powerful and many were poorer developing countries. The Vietnam War's main coalition partners were the Koreans and Thailand which at the time were not the most economically robust countries, so that the Americans supplied Thailand with clothing in order to fight; the United States suffered a much higher casualty rate. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States allies, Germany and Canada, did not lend a hand and the United States had to rely on many smaller and less well equipped countries to fill out the coalition.

In the American war in Vietnam and Iraq War cases, there were many instances of low contributions in which countries joined the military coalition and ultimately did not contribute to the cause. Especially in the Iraq war case, many smaller and developing countries, such as Albania, Macedonia, and Micronesia, joined the coalition but ultimately contributed very little to nothing to the coalition.¹³⁰ This hurt the success of the military campaign as a result.

Nevertheless, the use of military coalition to increase military coalition could be important only when against an opposing military that is well trained and armed. In the American War in Vietnam and Operation Enduring Freedom, the opposing military was battle hardened and large: the North Vietnamese Army and the Taliban had fought in major engagements within the

¹²⁹Münch, Philipp. "Never Again? Germany's Lessons from the War in Afghanistan." *Parameters*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2020, doi:10.55540/0031-1723.2689.

¹³⁰Daalder, Ivo H. "The Coalition That Isn't." Brookings Institute. March 24 2003.

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-coalition-that-isnt/>

previous 10 years.¹³¹ ¹³² The Iraqi army was considered one of the largest and most feared militaries in the world.¹³³ This is in contrast to the Panamanian Army in Operation Just Cause, in which the opposing military was smaller than an army division and had very little experience in terms of fighting and tactics. This made the use of Coalition military elements unnecessary as the opponent was so small with that the United States was able to have overwhelming force all by itself.

These factors are important to understand when the sharing of military elements would be effective and when it would be not as useful for contending against an opposing force. Knowing who is in your coalition and what they contribute is essential to ensure success. However, knowing your enemy is also important.

10.2: Supply Lines and Area of Operations

A secure Area of Operations and Supply lines is one of the most important factors in success in an overseas conflict. Ensuring that the coalition force has sound logistics of support, and a solid stream of needed supplies is essential for success. This is difficult when fighting far away from existing supply lines. Coalitions can be helpful. Knowing a coalition member is close to the area of operations and able to give support for expanding the supply is essential in planning for the military campaign.

¹³¹US White House. *Statement on the Ninth Anniversary of the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan*. Ronald Reagan Library. 1988. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/statement-ninth-anniversary>

¹³²Office of the Historian. *Dien Bien Phu & the Fall of French Indochina, 1954*. US Government Printing Office. Accessed March 25 2025. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/dien-bien-phu>

¹³³Ottermann, Sharon. "IRAQ: Iraq's Prewar Military Capabilities." Council on Foreign Relations. February 3 2005. <https://www.cfr.org/background/iraq-iraqs-military-capabilities>

Having a coalition partner close to the area of operation increases the odds for better supply lines. In the Iraq war, Kuwait was essential for the United States in staging the fight as it could prepare and station supplies in a country that directly borders the opposing military. The same can be said for the Vietnam War, which used the Philippines and Thailand for their supply lines.¹³⁴ If there are no real allies around the area of operation, it makes it a lot more difficult to create these supply lines, but not impossible. Operation Enduring Freedom is a good example in that the United States were able to create agreements with neighboring Central Asian countries for supply lines.¹³⁵ Nonetheless, this took a considerable effort. The location of the theater of operation is also a factor. In the case of the Vietnam War, South Vietnam's location close to the water made possible the transport of ships and missiles, which expanded the types of weapons available. This was important as this offers larger supply drops for cheaper cost.

However, the distance of the theater of operation from the United States is also important to consider. In the case of Operation Just Cause, the country of Panama was just a short plane ride away, much closer than the 4 other cases. This allowed the United States to mobilize on its own bases without worrying about the coordination and effectiveness of logistics. There was no need for a coalition member or to agree to station supplies.

Knowing the area of engagement is important for a campaign to plan more efficient logistics. Having allies close to the area of operation or knowing whether the area of operation is landlocked is important for your decision on whom to ask to join the coalition and what they

¹³⁴US Vietnam War Commemoration. "United States Allies in the Vietnam War." Department of the Army. 2005.
https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/assets/1/7/VW50th_Allies_Posters_11-6-19REV.pdf

¹³⁵Wright, Donald P. "A Different Kind of War." Combat Studies Institute Press. May 2010.
<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/DifferentKindofWar.pdf>

should bring. Knowing whom you fight and where they are located is important whether it is even worthwhile to build a coalition.

10.3: Degree of Legitimacy of the Campaign

Legitimacy is seen as one of the most important factors to consider for the success of military campaigns. If the United States has support from the American population, policy makers are able to easily push through funding for additional equipment or even establish a draft for additional troops as needed. It can also help with morale among troops. Knowing that the people back in their hometowns are rooting for them increases their commitment towards the success of the campaign. Having and maintaining a coalition increases this legitimacy. When there is a large global intervention, the population is able to more easily support the operation. However, there are some additional factors that need to be considered.

Who is in the coalition definitely has an impact on legitimacy, as there are certain countries that carry much more weight in terms of legitimacy. In cases like Desert Storm and Afghanistan, the legitimacy was strong as there were long-standing American allies with strong economies coming in support, which influenced the American population that this was the right move. In the Iraq and Vietnamese War, there were far fewer of these global actors that were in support of the coalition, leading to skepticism in the population and ultimately a fall in legitimacy.

The length of time the coalition is maintained during the military campaign is also a factor to consider. In the Afghanistan War, there was higher legitimacy and support in the beginning of the war. However, as more and more coalition partners pulled out, the support started to wane. This differs from Operation Desert Storm, in which the coalition partners supported the war from

the beginning to the end. It was also a fairly quick affair. The expected length of time in the campaign is important to consider since over time legitimacy will definitely wane.

Finally, the objective of the operation is an important factor to consider for the degree of legitimacy. In the case of the Iraq war, the objective was to remove the weapons of mass destruction and Saddam Hussain to ensure a stable and democratic Iraq. Many countries rejected these objectives as they thought it was either exaggerated or unattainable; This led to a loss in confidence among many Americans. This was in contrast to a short, simple, and credible objective in Operation Iraqi Freedom in which the goal was to eject Iraq from Kuwait without the complexity of taking down a whole regime.

In the case of Operation Just Cause, the short time frame of the operation was the essential fact that kept the legitimacy was kept high. The operation was very quick ,which meant there was little time for the public to object. The initial high support from the Panamdians and the Americans gave the push needed for the success of the campaign without giving the public support a chance to deteriorate. There was not much need for International approval as the campaign was quick and close enough to disregard what the international community thought of the campaign.

Keeping a coalition groomed and maintained is a key factor for keeping legitimacy, especially when the campaign is a long one. Successful campaigns keep their coalition throughout the conflict. The length of the conflict is a factor in sustaining this coalition support, as prolonged conflicts usually experience deteriorating support and legitimacy while quick campaigns keep their initial high support throughout the conflict. Finally, the use of close allies to the United States with strong economies is very important for legitimacy, as the international

community's legitimacy will comment on whether the United States did or did not rally these countries around it, affecting the legitimacy.

10.4: Free Riding

The existence of free riding goes hand in hand with the first success variable in which there is a less sharing of military elements: this is bound to be the result of free riders. Free riders make it seem that on paper there might be many countries that are helping build up the military. In practice, however, many of those countries do not support anything as they are there just for the benefits of being part of the team without contributing anything.

This happens more often in military campaigns that do not have countries with larger economies that are able to support. In cases like the Vietnam War or the Iraq War, without larger economies supporting military operations, it becomes more obvious how little the coalition partners are giving in exchange for the benefits of riding the coattails of the United States. Examples included Korea and Thailand, which did not send much supplies. This being obvious can hurt the legitimacy of the campaign in that the United States relying on these developing countries for support even though they are contributing nothing shows how little support they actually have from other parts of the world.

10.5: Contending or Fragmented Leadership

Having contending or changing leaders during a conflict could be something that is a concern in your coalitions. Contentious leaders that come into the coalition can erode the morale of the coalition, the objectives, and how the military campaign runs. In the Vietnam War, the butting heads between the Vietnamese leaders and the United States leaders was a factor in how the campaign was viewed as there was no consistency of leadership within the conflict. It could

also be seen in the War in Afghanistan to some extent, as many American Presidents had differing views of the war and appointed different Generals in Afghanistan in subsequent phases.

These differing views can have consequences that are not initially thought of, such as in the Vietnam War which ultimately caused a pulling out operation by the change of the operation. The War in Afghanistan was seen as the same thing, as they were pulling out as well, which was seen as the point of losing legitimacy as well. Having differing leaders will cause confusion to both the troops and to the public causing a decrease in confidence in both parties, as what can be seen in the Afghanistan War aftermath and Vietnam War case.

10.6: Diverging Interests

When not everyone is on the same page, problems are bound to arise within the campaign. If coalition members have differing goals, they may focus more on their individual objectives rather than the overarching goal of the coalition. This increases the chances of free riding, as their goals may be easier to achieve and require fewer sacrifices.

This dynamic was evident in the Iraq War, where many countries involved in the conflict were not primarily concerned with stabilizing Iraq or removing Saddam Hussein. Instead, their interests lay in securing greater assistance and trade advantages from the United States. As a result, they offered only minimal support—just enough to maintain favor with the U.S.—without full commitment to the mission. A similar situation occurred during the Vietnam War. Countries like South Korea sought economic relief from the United States, while Thailand aimed to assert dominance in Southeast Asia. These motivations were largely disconnected from the broader objectives of the United States and the coalition. Such diverging interests placed significant pressure on the U.S., which remained committed to the primary mission while its allies pursued separate agendas.

10.7: Conclusion

Understanding these factors is essential for the success of a military campaign. Simply forming a coalition is not enough; it must be well-structured and aligned in purpose. Ensuring that coalition members have strong economies and military capabilities can enhance effectiveness while reducing the likelihood of free riding. However, mission planning is even more critical—before assembling a coalition, it is important to assess whether the mission's duration and objectives align with coalition dynamics. The geographic area of interest also plays a crucial role in establishing supply lines through coalition members. Poor planning—or a lack of planning—can determine whether failure factors emerge in a military campaign. In some cases, unique operational circumstances may make a solo campaign more effective than a coalition effort. Ultimately, while coalitions can enhance military success under certain conditions, their effectiveness depends on the specific nature of the operation.

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