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In November 2002, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1441, which provided Iraq one "final opportunity to comply" with previously and materially breached disarmament obligations[1]. Unanimously passed, this resolution expressed that:

"Iraq has been and remains in material breach of its obligations under relevant [UNSC] resolutions' concerning WMD and ballistic missiles, and consequently Iraq must 'begin to comply with its disarmament obligations' within a given time-frame and subject to nine paragraphs of governing conditions, specifically by fully cooperating with UNMOVIC and the IAEA and reporting accurately its own inventories to the Security Council. Failure by Iraq to take the 'final opportunity' offered by UNSCR 1441 to rectify the 'continuous violations of [Iraq's] obligations', will lead (as the Council had 'repeatedly warned') to 'serious consequences' for Iraq."[2]

Inspections were to begin within a 45-day timeframe, with a promise of "serious consequences" upon recognition of further violations. However, by March 2003, with support by the "coalition of the willing,"[3] the United United States launched military operations in Iraq. Within weeks, Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown and the country was placed under occupation.

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[1] Security Council. "SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS IRAQ IN 'MATERIAL BREACH' OF DISARMAMENT OBLIGATIONS, OFFERS FINAL CHANCE TO COMPLY, UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTING RESOLUTION 1441 (2002)

[2] Security Council resolution 1441, Adopted by the Security Council at its 4644th meeting, S/RES/1441 (8 November 2002), available from http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/1441.pdf.

[3] King, John. "Bush: Join 'coalition of willing'." CNN, Cable News Network, 20 Nov. 2002,

Prior to this occupation, the United States' actions and strategies were conducted in organized efforts toward the ultimate war on terrorism. In consensus with the United Kingdom, the United States' expressions were methodized to express that not only did Saddam Hussein possess Chemical and Biological Warfare (CBW), but that Hussein sought to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Colin Powell, in an address toward the United Nations Security Council in February 2003[4], laid out a plethora of evidence in efforts to provoke the decision that Iraq had breached Resolution 1441. Powell appealed to the weight of the Council's resolutions and its purposes to maintain international peace and security, thus in the Council's responsibility to quell any risk toward it. However, this was simply a weightless appeal to the United Nations, as the United States had made clear to this point that if the United States deemed it warranted, it would take action with or without Security Council approval. In a statement to CNN in late 2002, Powell expressed that if the United Nations was unwilling to authorize action in Iraq, the United States would proceed with force.[5] The United States invaded Iraq without United Nations support, and this was vehemently opposed by a number of member states. Although the U.S. argued that its action was authorized by Resolution 1441, which promised "serious consequences, " then United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan identified it as a violation of the UN Charter. As no United Nations resolution had explicitly approved action at that time, the Security General acknowledged the United States' invasion and violence in Iraq as illegal through the United Nations Charter.

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[4] Powell, Colin. "Remarks to the United Nations Security Council." U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, 5 Feb. 2003.
[5]McIntyre , Jamie. "White House: U.S. doesn't need U.N. permission on Iraq." CNN, Cable News Network, 10 Nov. 2002,

Syria

In March 2011, peaceful protests in Syria that were associated with the Arab Spring provoked a harsh crackdown by the government. . A worsening economic situation, in combination with repressive measures by the Assad regime and gradual radicalization of the opposition, broadened into a civil war, creating a regional humanitarian and economic crisis. The international community originally brushed off the protests as a reflection of domestic grievances, but the rise of extremists and protesters with support from groups such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State[6] has Syria marked as a site of extremist violence and thus, a potential threat to international peace and security. However, with the recognition of the detriment of the Syrian state and of its stability (or lack thereof), the United Nations Security Council has failed to develop a consensus toward action. Many meetings have shared a theme of "expressed concern at the deteriorating situation" and often of "urging major stakeholders to the conflict [the Syrian government in particular] to resolve conflict through dialogue, rather than armed violence." In fact, deadlock can be seen so far as the Resolutions that have managed to pass without being vetoed by any of the Permanent Five states.

The Security Council passed UNSC Resolution 2042 on April 14, 2012 and acknowledged by the "P3," the United Kingdom, the United States and France, as "regretful it had come after a year of repression and the deaths of an estimated 10,000"[7]. However, Resolution 2042 condemned "widespread violations of human rights by the Syrian authorities, as well as any human rights abuses by armed groups, recalling that those responsible shall be held

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[6] Juraj, Medzihorsky, et al. "Rhetoric of Civil Conflict Management: United Nations Security Council Debates over the Syrian Civil War." Research & Politics, Vol 4, Iss 2 (2017), no. 2, 2017.

[7] Security Council resolution 2041, *Security Council Unanimously Adopts, Authorizing Advance Team to Monitor Ceasefire in Syria*, SC/10609 (14 April 2012), available from http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/sc10609.doc.htm.

accountable, and expressing its profound regret at the death of many thousands of people in Syria." It authorized an unarmed team to "liaise with the parties," but did not lay a burden of the maintenance of the ceasefire, as expressed by a Syrian representative. Shortly thereafter, Resolution 2043 was passed on April 21, 2012, which established a "supervision mission," and emphasised the situation as fragile and the necessity of restoring peace.

Because of varying insinuations of the violence developing within the country and the different assumptions of necessity in solutions, Permanent Five members are unable to authorize physical action in the threat of this violence on a multilateral level. Russia and China, historically promoting non-interventionist framing and policies, have vetoed many proposed resolutions which do not prioritize dialogue with the Assad regime. The United States, however, through Nikki Haley, has consistently expressed agitation about the lack of action in developing solutions to the violence in Syria. Upon the April 5th 2017 incident, in which chemical agents were deployed killing civilians, Haley acknowledged the Council as unable to act in holding Assad accountable due to the constant deadlock that has become the norm in this threat to peace. She expressed, "When the United Nations consistently fails in its duty to act collectively, there are times in the life of states that we are compelled to take our own action."[8] Hours later, the United States took action it forewarned, conducting a missile strike aimed at a Syrian Airbase.[9] This action was met with a special UN session in direct response to the United States' actions. In this session, states expressed their strong opinions toward the United States. Notably, in an address to the Council, Bolivian Ambassador Sacha Soliz expressed United States as acting unilaterally as

[8] Haley, Nikki. "Remarks at an Emergency UN Security Council Meeting on Chemical Weapons in Syria." U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, 5 Apr. 2017.
[9] Nations, United. "Syria: As US Responds Militarily to Chemical Attack, UN Urges Restraint to Avoid Escalation." UN News Center, United Nations, 7 Apr. 2017,

"prosecutor, jury [and] judge"[10] in Syria, at one point referencing Colin Powell's infamous presentation years prior regarding Iraq. Russia further identified this action as a "flagrant violation of international law," as it considered the United States' strikes an act of aggression without United Nations concession. However, unlike its operations in Iraq, current United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has not rebuked United States action as illegal, but appealed to restraint from further action that could escalate the conflict.

The United States is no stranger to unilateral action. Often cited as the world's police force, the country has historically made clear that in the face of international threats - especially to its citizens - it will take action. However, this domestic prioritization is complicated when considering the United States' adherence to the United Nations. The country ratified the United Nations Charter in July 1945. This Charter contains Article 103, which authorizes it as the highest authority in international law[11]. Such a supremacy clause states that the United Nations Charter - in the event of any conflict with other international agreements or obligations - shall prevail as the determining and utmost authority. Upon establishing and ratifying this treaty, states inherently agree to abide to its commitments. The United States, a foundational member to the United Nations after ratifying its Charter, thus maintains the responsibility to act within international approval according to its allowances.

These allowances include the proposition of unilateral action on the basis of states' self defense. Acts of force outside of the approval of the United Nations Security Council act as an invasion of state sovereignty, and are thus against international law. In Iraq and Syria, the United

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[10]Roth, Richard. "Haley to UN: US 'Prepared to Do More' in Syria." CNN, Cable News Network, 7 Apr. 2017.
[11] Nath, Rathindra. "Un Charter And United Nations." Rights, Security, Council, and Human.

States took the initiative to act unilaterally, without explicit United Nations approval. These cases highlight two significant instances of the United States acting outside of the United Nations Security Council, an organization the country is a significant member of. The value of the countries' role within the organization causes its actions to hold great weight. In both Iraq and Syria, threats to international peace and security were heavily debated and the root of tremendous controversy on behalf of the permanent five states. In both instances, the United States decision to invade the states, or conduct acts of force against the states, were followed by an outpouring of debate and contention within the United Nations. However, while in Iraq the Security General has been noted to express United States actions as illegal when viewed through the United Nations Charter, a statement of such clarity was not made in the same capacity following actions in Syria. The argument has been made, however, by various member states within the organization in the fear of the consequences such actions have on the maintenance of international peace and security through the United Nations organization. These cases allow insight to two periods of international threats to security. Though the threats were of varying degrees in each period, the United States' utilized its power and resources to take unilateral action without United Nations approval, in both. These cases provide context to the international responses to such action in order to understand the further effect on the credibility of the United Nations organization.

This thesis will be a comparative study of the United States' actions in instances of international conflict in Iraq and Syria, with the international understanding of existing threats in those periods. In order to understand the international levels of support or rejection toward the United States' in these instances, the degree to which the United States' acted beyond the scope

allowed by the United Nations will be explored. Ultimately, an assessment of the existing

responses and consequences dealt to the the United States, or lack thereof, will beg the question

of United Nations credibility and maintenance of international authority.

    The primary research question to be examined is: When the United States acts outside of

international organizations it has pledged an adherence to, what is the response, if any?

    In conjunction with a response, or lack thereof, do these actions ultimately result in

undermining United Nations' credibility? In order to understand its involvement within the

United Nations, the expectations of the United States as a Permanent Five member must be

considered. Upon ratification of the United Nations Charter, such expectations and

responsibilities are accepted and assumed to be followed. Further incorporated into the

expectations of the Permanent Five are the decision-making processes of the United Nations

Security Council. The development of a UN Security Council resolution and the weight it holds

lends understanding to the United States adherence to or neglect of United Nations rulings.

Ultimately, considering these factors in conjunction with a recognition of the threats to

international peace and security in times of the United States acting outside of the United

Nations can provide understanding of the conditions to the international reactions that follow the

aforementioned instances. Giving context to to the ways in which member states acknowledge of

international threats is particularly significant in allowing insight to the reality of the world

during these periods. It allows a recognition to the motivation behind states' pursuit of solutions,

whether that be in taking action, or actively pursuing diplomatic solutions instead. To understand

states' responses to a threat, one must first understand states' perceptions of that threat.

In 1922, Carl Schmitt famously defined a sovereign as he who decides on the exception.[12] In determining when to defy international law in an argument of serving the greater good, whether that be of the world or of its domestic agenda, the United States recognizes its role as a significant and influential world power. My argument holds that due to its depth of influence and resources, the United States asserts its ability to act beyond the United Nations. It does so regardless of the threat of consequence in circumventing international law and as a result, undermines the organization's credibility on an international sphere. The cases of Iraq and Syria will provide ample demonstration of vital decision-making processes within the United Nations Security Council in periods of international conflict. The expectations of members of the United Nations Security Council as well as the perceptions of power the permanent five states attribute to the Council provide a foundation to understanding the inner workings and processes existing in establishing resolutions to conflicts of concern. By acting beyond or in spite of the United Nations, the United States directly influences its ability to maintain peace and security for all other states as it directly threatens the organization's authority as an international power.

Background of the United Nations and its Charter

Established in 1945, the United Nations is an international organization designed to institutionalize cooperation between states. With inclusion of all countries legally recognized as a sovereign state, the United Nations maintains the largest global membership. Its development has upheld the intention of creating an equilibrium in solutions to coordination problems.

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[12]Vinx, Lars. "Carl Schmitt." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stanford University, 7 Aug. 2010.

Countries come together in order to establish global norms and regulations, so that miscommunication and lack of universal identifications do not result in international conflict. Taking on an informational role to enable credible commitments, the United Nations enables collective action through its four main purposes:

1. Committing to maintaining international peace and security.

2. Developing relations amongst nations

3. Fostering cooperation amongst nations to solve international issues

4. Providing a forum in which countries could meet to further aforementioned goals.

In obtaining membership, states ratify the United Nations Charter, the treaty foundational to the United Nations. Its articles outline the duties, responsibilities and vital elements to the purposes and objectives of the organization as well as states within it. Upon ratification, states indicate their consent and contractual binding to this treaty. The Charter acknowledges that upon ratification, commitment to the United Nations supersedes all other treaty obligations.[13] It further recognizes two primary justifications for using uncontested force on another state's soil:

1. the permission of the Security Council

2. a self-defense claim

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[13] Treaty, The Euclid. "What Is Article 102 of the UN Charter?" EUCLID (Euclid University) Treaty and Depositary.

The United Nations Charter maintains the purpose of establishing "conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained." Article 25 of this Charter states that "The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter."[14] Article 25 correlates with Chapter VII, a single statement that recognizes resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council as binding.

Within the United Nations and established at the point of its conception, is the United Nations Security Council. Instituted in 1946, the United Nations Security Council is the smallest, yet most powerful collective body within the United Nations. Its core members are the victors of World War II, known widely as the "Permanent (P)5," or China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Identified as integral to the maintenance of collective security of the international community, the Council upholds the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security through its decision-making processes. With the responsibility to curate decisions comes the power to stagnate it, as each core member maintains the ability to "veto" any proposition made within the council. Determining what constitutes as acts of aggression, the P5 has the responsibility to call upon conflicting parties to settle disputes and thus, recommends settlement terms themselves. These recommendations are made to the UN General Assembly, as all actions outlined or decisions made are deemed required to member states. Failing to comply with UN Security Council decisions makes state actions illegitimate within the international community.

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[14]Library, Hammarskjold. "Are UN Resolutions Binding?" United Nations, United Nations,

Articles 23 to 29 of the UN Charter empower the Security Council to ensure that states do

not resort to war and when deemed necessary, to call upon conflicting parties to resolve their

disputes peacefully. If having risen to this level, the Security Council is also mandated to take

coercive measures in recommending appropriate measures of resolution, in order to ascertain the

maintenance of international peace and security. This means that resolutions by the Security

Council are legally binding.

Decision-making within the United Nations requires unanimity amongst its Permanent

Five members. While this not indicate abstention from votes, states can utilize their power to

"veto" propositions. Debidatta Mahapatra expresses that while the mandates of the United

Nations Security Council are predicated on good faith amongst its members for the enforcement

of peace, they also have the potential to render the Security Council ineffective when the group

fails to work as a unanimous unit[15]. The United Nations' effectiveness is tied to its commitment

and the perception of its authority. This commitment includes the "absence of external support

for belligerents and successful diplomatic efforts"[16] accompanied with minimal antagonism

amongst the group[17]. Its authority is framed by its rules, which stay the same.

By ratifying the United Nations Charter, states agree to adhere to its rules and hierarchies.

However, compliance has not been a credible point of United Nations history. Many states have

been known to fail to comply to UN resolutions or simply disregard the responsibilities outlined

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[15] Aurobinda Mahapatra, Debidatta. "The Mandate and the (In)Effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council and International Peace and Security: The Contexts of Syria and Mali." Jan-Mar 2016, pp. 48-49.
[16] Darya Pushkina, 'A Recipe for Success? Ingredients of a Successful Peacekeeping Mission', International Peacekeeping 13/2 (2006) pp. 133–138
[17] Darya Pushkina, 'A Recipe for Success? Ingredients of a Successful Peacekeeping Mission', International Peacekeeping 13/2 (2006) pp. 147–149

in its charter. A 2002 study by Professor Stephen Zunes identified that since its 1974, 90 out of about 1,500 UN Security Council Resolutions were consistently violated, without consequence[18]. The report contains an understanding that the response by the United Nations, rather than the statistics themselves, hold the greatest weight. When the United Nations does or can not respond with consequences to violation of its resolutions, there is a threat to its image as a credible international authority. In his study, Zunes supported a narrow focus that specifically analyzed resolutions with calls to action, rather than condemnations. Of this study, the top three violators were found to be Israel, Turkey and Morocco. It is well known that states fail to comply with UN resolutions and at times, may work outside the organization itself. However, states' compliance (or lack thereof) with the UN Charter is debated in validity, as often times they are argued to be wholly within the regulations of the organization. As a Permanent member of the Security Council and an integral resource in the organization, the United States' as a violator of United Nations rulings holds a different weight. The United Nations validates unilateral action only in specified cases.

Unilateral Multilateralism

Post-Cold War international politics acknowledges that tolerance toward unilateral action depends on a theory of security. Specifically, there must be an identification of human goods or rights at stake in a given conflict and whether their preservation requires action of force. However, this means that the protection of values is often delayed in waiting for a unanimous or

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[18] Zunes, Stephen. "United Nations Security Council Resolutions Currently Being Violated by Countries Other than Iraq ." Foreign Policy In Focus, 1 Oct. 2002,

passing vote by the Security Council. The effectiveness of multilateral and unilateral diplomacy

can thus be limited by multilateral authorization in varying places and circumstances[19]. Through

the UN Charter, decisions under Chapter VII and by the Security Council should be supported by

a vote of at least nine members in the Council, including concurring votes by Permanent 5

members, assuming no "vetos" have been utilized. The limited capacity for the Security Council

to respond to threats to peace and security is further met by the UN Charter's protection of

states' right to self defense[20], without addressing the possible need for unilateral use of force at

an earlier stage of conflict. In fact, upon the United States conducting four days of air raids in

Iraq in December 1998 after receiving support from varied nations, United Nations Secretary

General of the time, Kofi Annan, showed that when the Council withholds the comfort of

immediate authorizations, states' endorsed a claim of continued authority from previously

standing resolutions. States seeking action will find it. In this claim, Kofi Annan recognized that

international authorization of actions in times of conflict will either come directly from Security

Council dictate, or from a manipulation of its past standings. While this may allow a claim to

United Nations power in states' seeking justification through its resolutions, it also

acknowledges the misuse of that power. Utilizing a means to an end does not inherently assert

value to the means. Rather, it holds the ability to mold the significance of the means - in this

case, power the United Nations is able to maintain - to the will of the states seeking particular

action. The United States' air raids, while not granted approval by the Council in a resolution

directly relevant to and in accordance with the current conflict, was interpreted instead through

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[19] Wedgwood, Ruth. "Unilateral Action in the UN System [Article]." European Journal of International Law, no. 2, 2000, p. 349.
[20] "Chapter VII." United Nations, United Nations, www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html.

the foundation to the United Nations, its Charter. Authorization with regard to the United

Nations, if not derived from the Security Council's power to direct action, will be derived from

available means as necessitated by states seeking to act.

The United States in particular maintains its own level of unilateral-multilateralism in

support toward multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. There has been a history of

support toward advancing American interests while imposing constraints on actions of other

states without apology, an approach furthered since the 2001 terror attacks. However,

Mahbubani identifies that while the United States is largely successful in protecting its own

interests and agendas within multilateral institutions[21], an increasingly interdependent world

signifies that the United States can serve its domestic agenda with more success by working

through and alongside cooperative efforts, specifically through the United Nations. In

conjunction, a strong United Nations will be one in correlation with United States interests such

as combating terrorism and rebuilding failed states[22]. With this realization of interdependence in

the face of unilateral action, however, is the indication that states participating in and displaying

allegiance to multilateral activities and priorities, then rejecting outcomes not inherent to its own

sovereign style or agenda, exhibits unilateralism and a double standard in the core intention of

maintaining international peace and security. This pattern has concerning implications.

Establishing a norm of double standards and inadequate adherence to international guidelines

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[21] Kishore Mahbubani, 'The Permanent and Elected Council Members', in David M. Malone (ed.), The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century (Boulder: Lynne Rienner 2004) pp. 253–266
[22] Kishore Mahbubani, 'The Permanent and Elected Council Members', in David M. Malone (ed.), The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century (Boulder: Lynne Rienner 2004) pp. 259

gives a weak foundation to the maintenance of a goal as significant as international peace and

security.

Any acknowledged threat to the production of peace is unpredictable unilateral action.

The United States, in maintaining a dominant military force in conjunction with its allegiance to

United Nations ideals, is indicative of a predilection for following its own ideals over that of the

international rulings. This notion is one internationally acknowledged and historically proven,

leading to a debate about the nature of the path to global security. Brian Frederking writes about

the United States' role in the United Nations, asking whether the international community

through the United Nations is a hierarchical system inherently led by the United States, or a less

hierarchical system characterized first by political cooperation amongst the members of the

United Nations Security Council[23]. Frederking argues that too much hierarchy is understood as a

risk to undermining global security, as establishing a sole military power cannot provide

substantial security in an increasingly interdependent world. Hegemonic power is maintained

through an assertion of legitimacy and consent[24]. Belying the authorization of global security

laws asserts that a state cannot be bound by that which all states are expected to be. This creates

a paradox in expectations of international authorities and the maintenance of security as a result.

Frederking utilizes the security - hierarchy paradox to understand this relationship. Under

this paradox, hierarchy in both excessive and insufficient amounts undermine efforts toward

global security. Just as the lack of a common authority regulating international peace would be

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[23] Frederking, Brian. The United States and the Security Council: collective security since the Cold War. London, Routledge, 2007 p. 3
[24] Frederking, Brian. The United States and the Security Council: collective security since the Cold War. London, Routledge, 2007 p.3-4

insufficient to solving international conflict, so would asserting that certain rules cannot apply to a state solely due to the power and resources it maintains. It is deemed counterproductive. Hegemony requires legitimacy and consent by member states. Thus, emphasizing of dominance over the majority of a decision-making body and amongst those from whom cooperation is needed, risks alienation and misguidance. Global security in a contemporary world requires a degree of cooperation upon which interdependence and sincerity is foundational[25]. (cite)

A part of a multilateral organization with the reach that the United Nations maintains, the United States must offer a degree of appropriate cooperation. The country's relationship to the workings and decision-making processes of the United Nations are related to the organization's ability to strike a balance of security and hierarchy in the world. If the United States considers itself not bound to the policies and decisions all member states are expected to follow, the effects must be considered. Other states cannot be encouraged to follow rules that the United States in its given role of a world power, does not. However, this can lead to the decline of states willing to cooperate with the United States and as a result, threaten the interdependence of global security. Frederking deduces that if the United States "asserts exceptions to the rules [...] then it reduces the legitimacy of the international order that supports its interests."[26]

When Unilateral Action is Warranted

One major example of states' shifting perceptions lies in United Nations Resolution 1373 on terrorism, adopted in September 2001. Resolution 1373 mandates that states take the

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[25] Frederking, Brian. The United States and the Security Council: collective security since the Cold War. London, Routledge, 2007
[26] Frederking, Brian. The United States and the Security Council: collective security since the Cold War. London, Routledge, 2007 p. 4

necessary steps to prevent commission of terrorist attacks. This would include criminalizing any

form of support toward entities or persons of terrorist acts or groups[27]. The resolution referenced

states' preferences to act unilaterally or develop alignments outside of the United Nations. Thus,

so long as it is identified as working in direct response to terrorism or the prevention of its

attacks, states are able to take action outside of the United Nations. The United States was one

state to ultimately benefit from this Resolution. Beyond the countries fight against terrorism, the

correct framing allowed the country the ability to grant the authorization for unilateral action. In

furtherance of the country's "war on terror," Resolution 1373 allowed it to secure its interests as

guided by predetermined geopolitical visions without explicit direction from the United Nations.

<p style="text-align: center;">Decision-Making Processes</p>

Framing Conflict

Existing within the decision-making process is a theory of framing. The ways in which

rhetoric revolves around international conflicts informs motivations towards developing

solutions[28]. Medzihorsky in accompaniment with Milos Popovic and Erin Jenne explain that the

United Nations Security Council regulates conflict management on two dimensions: problem

definition and solution identification. Problem-Solution Logic corresponds to prescriptive norms,

what one is <u>expected</u> to do. This logic identifies that certain actions, or non-actions, are to be

undertaken in deviating situations[29]. If the problem can be defined in terms of human-rights

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[27] UN Security Council, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) [on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts], 28 September 2001, S/RES/1373 (2001).

[28] Juraj, Medzihorsky, et al. "Rhetoric of Civil Conflict Management: United Nations Security Council Debates over the Syrian Civil War." Research & Politics, Vol 4, Iss 2 (2017), no. 2, 2017.

[29] Juraj, Medzihorsky, et al. "Rhetoric of Civil Conflict Management: United Nations Security Council Debates over the Syrian Civil War." Research & Politics, Vol 4, Iss 2 (2017), no. 2, 2017.

violations, an implication of guilt is placed on a state unable to protect its population. Thus, a solution will take the frame of intervention in order to establish a norm of global conflict management[30].

In efforts to take action, the P5 of the Security Council maintain varying motivations. China and Russia often promote non-interventionist framing of conflict, such as solutions through engagement with governments in order to utilize tools of diplomacy[31]. This is seen as promoting multilateral efforts in order to achieve an involved and inclusive solution between each side of a conflict. On the contrary, what Medzihorsky identifies as the "P3" (the United States, France and the United Kingdom), utilizes a discussion around the discovery of human rights violations in order to initiate intervention framing. This frame includes the requirement of outside action or influence due to a government's failure to maintain power or protection over its civilian population. Framework employing a foundation of human rights violation inherently contains a "call to humanity and morality," in order to act as a defense in favor of a call to action. Once civilian lives or rights are under threat, such rhetoric works in inciting recognition that there is an injustice to be acted upon. This framework is often dependent on action in opposition to the continuance of one-sided violence.

Of course, it is valuable to note that each stance, while containing varying but diplomatic means of action, maintains individual political incentives of precedent for the countries behind them.

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[30] Juraj, Medzihorsky, et al. "Rhetoric of Civil Conflict Management: United Nations Security Council Debates over the Syrian Civil War." Research & Politics, Vol 4, Iss 2 (2017), no. 2, 2017.
[31] Juraj, Medzihorsky, et al. "Rhetoric of Civil Conflict Management: United Nations Security Council Debates over the Syrian Civil War." Research & Politics, Vol 4, Iss 2 (2017), no. 2, 2017.

Just as the United Nations' mandated Responsibility to Protect includes rhetoric of problems and solutions, so does it require an understanding of conflict. If an issue is not deemed at a level of severity or violation enough to invite discussion, action is inhibited. In order to frame a conflict, we must first define it. In an analysis of the United Nations Security Council's debates regarding the Syrian Civil War, Juraj Medzihorsky defines conflict as used in the United Nations as:

"portrayed as a struggle between two parties in which violence is mostly a byproduct of armed encounters; various terms are used to describe violence as two-sided and blameless. Theme words include "crisis", "struggle", "war", and "chaos". Warring actors are nameless "parties" whose "fighting" and "clashes" generate "losses" and "casualties" that "threat[en]" to undermine "stability" or "security"."[32]

Understanding the threat to the United Nations' credibility upon the disregard of its rulings requires an understanding of where this disregard originates from. Richard Gowan finds that international organizations, such as the United Nations, draws its credibility from the great and simple assumption that it tells the truth[33]. Objective truths are both required and tested upon crafting decisions during political disputes. As international conflicts and threats to peace and security become more complex, so do the importance of the United Nations in remaining a source of objective information.

[32] Juraj, Medzihorsky, et al. "Rhetoric of Civil Conflict Management: United Nations Security Council Debates over the Syrian Civil War." Research & Politics, Vol 4, Iss 2 (2017), no. 2, 2017. P. 1
[33] Gowan, Richard. "End Times Diplomacy at the Un." Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 70, no.2, Summer 2017, pp. 11

Role of Information in Framing United Nations Resolutions

Gowan acknowledges the long tradition of states using the United Nations Security

Council to argue the facts surrounding crises, either preceding or in place of determining

solutions. The facts of a conflict dictate the action relevant to solving it. Thus, as do lawyers in

building a case, states seeking to avoid or encourage direct involvement in a conflict advance the

facts relevant to each position. Within United Nations' resolutions is specific wording that

promote or inhibit forceful intervention in conflict, which states utilize both in defense and

explanation of ascribed actions. The Syrian Civil War has highlighted this weakness of the

Council, but in doing so has increased a demand for the United Nations fact-finding services.

Russia, a powerful ally of the Assad regime, has encouraged deflection of criticisms of said

regime, turning instead to facts which debate Syrian rebels as terrorists. Independent United

Nations investigators, however, continue to collate and confirm information outlining violence of

the regime.[34] International policies and resolutions by the Council must be based on a

determination of the facts surrounding a crises. This risks the production of a "Cassandra" [35]

complex, further known as the constant production of correct facts and analysis on war, only to

be ignored. Seen most recently throughout the Security Council's debates on action in Syria,

there has been a push for the collection of facts and analysis of the war, focusing on

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[34] Gowan, Richard. "Why U.N. Fact-Finding Is a Flashpoint in Syria's Civil War." World Politics Review, 9 July 2017,
[35] Gowan, Richard. "Why U.N. Fact-Finding Is a Flashpoint in Syria's Civil War." World Politics Review, 9 July 2017. P. 4, references greek mythology which combined the gift of prophecy with the curse of disbelief

record-keeping specific to the regimes' crimes. However, with the growth of information has not come an increase in unanimity.

Role of Geopolitics

The process of decision-making amongst the permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council directly affects issues of international peace and security. A unified stance, or lack thereof, have the ability to either prevent or allow detrimental loss of human life and of state stability. Thus, an understanding of the role of the United Nations Security Council in making decisions is first developed by an understanding of the influential processes of the principal states making them.

Examined by Debidatta Mahapatra, geopolitics is used as an analytical tool with geographical, political and ideological dimensions. Understanding the geopolitics of a state allows us insight of the geographical framing within which political entities pursue their interests and reproduce powers (footnote). States interests are often linked to their geopolitical visions, defined as "any idea concerning relations between one's own and other places, involving feelings of insecurity or disadvantage and/or invoking ideas"[36].

Understanding the United States' geopolitics and geopolitical vision is relevant to this comparative study as it is about the performance of political acts. A states' geopolitics involve designations of spaces as "theirs versus ours," distinctions between hostile and friendly places or

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[36] Aurobinda Mahapatra, Debidatta. "The Mandate and the (In)Effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council and International Peace and Security: The Contexts of Syria and Mali." Geopolitics, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan-Mar2016, pp. 43-68.

peoples, and even a specification of friends versus enemies[37]. These visions transition state's

identities into political policies. As a shared understanding of self and others, the foundation of

identity enables states to make sense not only of its own actions, but of the actions of others.[38]

Thus, United States' international involvements and decision-making policies to build on its role

as protector of Western ideals and utilize its resources in the name of human rights can be seen

as derived from an integration of its identity as the world police power, and a current

international superpower.

In this role of great power comes tremendous responsibility. As an international

superpower, the ability to influence other states - both small and large - allow the United States

to either promote the ultimate guidelines and authorization of the United Nations, or to

undermine them. While the United States has maintained a balancing act between

acknowledging United Nations authorization and keeping its power over the country at bay, it

does so precariously with regard to states' identification with the organization. In the promotion

of international peace, do states align themselves with the agenda of the United States, or that of

the United Nations, which the United States has adhered its loyalty to legally, but not actively?

United States as an Actor Within the United Nations

The United Nations is no stranger to criticism regarding inaction or bureaucratic delays.

Its credibility is often questioned in circumstances of international conflict, wherein states

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[37] Aurobinda Mahapatra, Debidatta. "The Mandate and the (In)Effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council and International Peace and Security: The Contexts of Syria and Mali." Geopolitics, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan-Mar2016, pp. 62

[38] Frederking, Brian. The United States and the Security Council: collective security since the Cold War. London, Routledge, 2007 p.3-4

indicate the need for strong and capable action or deal with a risk of its amplification. However, it is during these periods in which the core of the United Nations purpose is emphasized. A multilateral international organization designed to instill cooperation between states, the United Nations must maintain and promote the peace and sovereignty of every member state, instilling processes toward solutions as deemed necessary. When states inherent to the creation of this organization utilize their role as a dominant power to override its decisions or simply work outside of its allowances identified through the Charter, the United Nations faces a dilemma of credibility. Particularly due to the country's significant role within the organization, the United States often balances between a role of example or of exception to United Nations guidelines and international law. In assessment of the United States resulting influence on perception of the United Nations, there is a concern of the legitimacy of resources regarding consequence. The international community, while on record often criticizing or commending United States actions, is rarely seen to enact consequences on its controversial endeavors. Whether this is due to the country's allies, tremendous resources, or abundance of influence within the United Nations, it leads one to analyze the factors surrounding United States' actions, rather than the responses directly related to them. In its role as an influential permanent member, the United States maintains the ability to argue its actions as morally, if not economically permissible. Even when technically illegal and argued as such, factors surrounding the United States' influence and ability to ally with states in support of its actions are far more telling of specific international statements against.

When acting outside of the United Nations Security Council's knowledge or in skewed interpretation of its resolutions, the United States undermines United Nations credibility and

international influence. The international community steadily acknowledges the shortcomings of this organization, especially in times of controversial conflict. In response, there is often a call for continuous development in Security Council responses to these times. However, this response has grown to prioritize the collection of information and places an emphasis on determining facts surrounding conflict, rather than constructing stable solutions for them directly.

Representative of governmental administrational leanings and priorities during cyclical administrations is United States' involvement within the United States Security Council throughout history. The United States, widely acknowledged as the "world's police force," has historically placed domestic policies at the forefront of its decision-making processes within the Security Council, inciting mixed reactions and impacts of this consistency. This variation is often due to the realities of the international climate at that period, as is often found in times of global conflict. While our actions in Iraq have lent to extreme controversy, with many rejecting the claims of relevance and necessity, actions in Syria has preceded quite a mixed reaction. These particular situations lend to many questions regarding the United States' ability to supersede UN Security Council decisions (or lack thereof) without consequence. The first, however, may be a question of difference.

The international climate during each period of decision-making varied, as is often found in issues of global conflict. While the information which supplied and promoted the drive to invade Iraq was profound, it was largely inconclusive. Decisions regarding this particular conflict were largely defined and based on determined holdings regarding factual evidence surrounding the possibilities of action. There is hardly a state which finds itself unopposed in its

determinations of what actions could, or rather, should be taken in order to maintain the responsibilities outlined in the UN Charter. This reality provides an outlook to the United States repercussions in its actions outside and in blatant disregard of UN Security Council decisions.

The interpretation of United States actions by states and the global community at large influence the perception of its credibility. Prior to its invasion in Iraq, the United States sought permission from the United Nations and received a clear rejection of any further action. The circumstances surrounding such action were not determined in that period as necessitating unilateral and United Nations sanctioned results. Prior to its actions toward Syria, the United States warned the UN Security Council of the effects that may follow the constant deadlock in ruling for or against specific actions. In this scenario, a grand majority of P5 state-approved actions were vetoed by states aligned with Syrian government. This gave aid the clear perception of bureaucratic inability to govern a situation to which none saw a clear solution. As a result, though the actions by the United States was controversial in Syria and provided the means for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, the great number of objections to its unilateral actions were met with similarly powerful approvals or abstentions of opinion. While this does not make clear whether the varying consequences or opinions of United States' actions outside of UN Security Council decisions maintains significant impact on the occurrence or considerations of those actions, it allows an understanding of the varying responses and thus, consequences of them in an international context. In order to understand the innate decision-making process of the United States both within and outside of the UN Security Council, one must further understand the processes in occurrence with the governmental administration of the time.

In 2003, the United States publicly declared it would proceed with the "coalition of the willing," as a result of the failure of diplomacy. This was in accordance with actions toward Iraq, specifically the United Nation's rejection of United States' request to invade under an impression of the existence of weapons of mass destruction. Failing to receive international authentication, a domestic agenda was prioritized.

2017 saw a similar level of forbearance. Regarding the bureaucratic deadlock that has surrounded the crisis of civil war in Syria, Nikki Haley famously stated, "When the United Nations consistently fails in its duty to act collectively, there are times in the life of states that we are compelled to take our own action."[39] Minutes after a Security Council meeting which discussed and failed to conclude on an action of solution in Syria, the United States proceeded to take its own action. Having failed to disclose such an intention, emergency Council meetings were called to allow countries the ability to respond to the unilateralism portrayed.

2003 Iraq Invasion

"If [other governments] do not act, America will." In his State of the Union address, then President Bush identified Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an "axis of evil" in provisioned efforts toward the ultimate war on terrorism[40]. The insistence of American freedom and unilateralism was a theme that continued on toward President Bush's speech to the United Nations General Assembly. In coalescence with the United Kingdom, the United States' was in a process of of

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[39] "Syria: Read Nikki Haley's U.N. Speech About Chemical Attack." Time, Time,
[40] President, Bush. "Complete Transcript of President Bush's Speech to Congress and the Nation ." 2003 State of the Union Address, 23 Jan. 2003.

expression that not only did Saddam Hussein possess Chemical and Biological Warfare (CBW), but that Hussein sought to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD). At this point, other nations were content working within the United Nations to pass resolutions to contain Iraq, such as UNSCR 1441,

However, the both the international community and domestic observers were aware of the United States' intentions in deciding on international policies. The United States has a historical record outlining the its commitments to its domestic agenda above that of the United Nation's international policies. Identified as a particular form of "selective engagement,"[41] there is a maintained a tradition of utilizing the United Nations as simply a means to an end. In the pursuit of unilateral interests, the multilateral organization allows a narrative of support. Understood as determined to pave its own way in determining action in Iraq and other threatening states, the United States' openness to the United Nations resolutions was expressed as only "one stop - and a parallel one - on its chosen journey."[42] That journey was ultimately based on the agenda for the American "war on terrorism" and would be carried out so long as it was domestically supported.

Thus, the the Bush administration's agenda so personally administered was acknowledged to be no different. Regardless of Iraq's assurance to adhere to the penultimate United Nations Security Council Resolutions imposed upon them, another United States led invasion was inevitable. There was an official rhetoric revolved around the untrustworthy and violent nature of Hussein by the United States, making any assurances or vows by Iraq

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[41] Michael Dunne, author. "The United States, the United Nations and Iraq: 'Multilateralism of a Kind'." International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), no. 2, 2003, p. 257.
[42] Michael Dunne, author. "The United States, the United Nations and Iraq: 'Multilateralism of a Kind'." International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), no. 2, 2003, p. 271

inconceivable to the reality. This made clear that regardless of United Nations or the Security

Council's organization or approval, the United States administration had an agenda to pursue and

would do so accordingly[43]. Unless there was a ruling deemed relevant or in correlation with the

United States' intentions to act, all else would not be considered of legitimate authorization by

the state.

The United States argued that their actions in Iraq were authorized through Resolution

1441. The resolution promised "serious consequences" for a lack of full compliance and

achievement with its objectives.[44] Therefore, the United States argued that as Iraq failed to

comply in cooperating with the identification and destruction of weapons programs, it would

proceed with the example of the consequences previously noted.

US Presentation to the UNSC

In what he later identified as "a great intelligence failure,"[45] Colin Powell presented a

speech to the United Nations. It was a detailed presentation describing Iraq's weapons programs

and as a result, continuing threats to international security. The speech was an articulation of a

call to war against Iraq, which was being ascribed as violating the United Nations and

international law in hiding weapons it was ordered to reveal. However, though a presentation to

the United Nations, Powell later acknowledged through an interview that in authorizing his

speech, the President Bush had decided on the United State's' course of action. Powell said, "At

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[43] Michael Dunne, author. "The United States, the United Nations and Iraq:
'Multilateralism of a Kind'." International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), no. 2, 2003, p.
267.
[44] Security Council resolution 1441, Adopted by the Security Council at its 4644th meeting, S/RES/1441 (8
November 2002), available from http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/1441.pdf.
[45] Breslow, Jason M. "Colin Powell: U.N. Speech 'Was a Great Intelligence Failure.'" PBS, Public Broadcasting
Service, 17 May 2016.

the time I gave the speech on Feb. 5, the President had already made this decision for military action. The dice had been tossed. That's what we were going to do."[46]

The Resolution passed just three months prior was identified as having provided international authorization for this pre-established decision. Powell continued, "The reason I went to the U.N. is because we needed now to put the case before the entire international community in a powerful way, and that's what I did that day."

Acknowledged as a simple formality, Powell asserted that the information presented at the United Nations and thus, to the international community, was a culmination of points and expressions previous speeches and reports had already identified. The information and thus, the truth being claimed at the time, was known by the world. Thus, there was a claim to the body of the United Nations that inaction to Iraq's defiance of Resolution 1441 would lead to its irrelevance. Emphasizing the obligation of the United Nations to preserve peace, Powell proffered a call to action, claiming it was the duty and responsibility to all those represented within the United Nations to act.[47]

Responses to this stance varied throughout the Security Council. While the United Kingdom was the United States' strongest ally in support of military intervention in Iraq, strong opposition included states such as France, Russia and China. France argued on January 20, 2003 that military intervention would be the worst solution, indicating that any resolution proposing as much would be vetoed. February 14 of that year, France's foreign minister Dominique de Villepin identified that the risks of military action as desired by the United States and the United

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[46] Breslow, Jason M. "Colin Powell: U.N. Speech 'Was a Great Intelligence Failure.'" PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 17 May 2016.

[47] Powell, Colin. "Remarks to the United Nations Security Council." U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, 5 Feb. 2003.

Kingdom included: incalculable consequences for the region's stability, having to rebuild peace once the war was completed and that real progress was being seen in conjunction with a lack of proven links as expressed by Powell's speech[48]. Russia and China shared the view that if so necessitated and if Iraq continued to resist cooperation with the United Nations, action would be supported so long as it went through the proper international channels, such as the Security Council.

At this time, member states were becoming weary of Iraq's difficulty complying with the many resolutions and warnings by the United Nations. However, this was not enough to invoke unanimity in determining unilateral action. Many states either supported continuing inspections and United Nations supervision, United States action without United Nations backing, or simply exploring other diplomatic options toward disarmament of the country. This example allows complex insight to states' stance within the organization. Many states in support of working through the organization, as intended by adherence to its authority, were no less in favor of international peace and security than those open to action outside of it. The United States actions, though with support of some states, was against the purpose of the organization. The United Nations as an organization intended to direct calls to action cannot be undermined by a debate regarding willingness to abide by its processes. States' willing to act unilaterally - against or outside of international law - threaten the credibility of the organization's' role in authorizing collective action itself.

Syria

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[48]"Statement by France to Security Council." The New York Times, The New York Times, 14 Feb. 2003.

The Syrian Civil War, which began in March 2011, has been an ongoing humanitarian crisis. While the conflict itself is a culmination of issues that the United Nations Security Council has dealt with in the past, the lack of unity within the permanent five member states has halted effective actions. Decisions surrounding the conflict have engaged in supervisory and diplomatic engagements, such as UNSCR 2043, which established a mission in recognition of the need to restore peace to the region. The Security Council has struggled to succeed in developing substantial solutions regarding the war in Syria, instead giving way to heavy debate on the relevant issues. As a result, many states have become exacerbated at the ongoing conflict. Stuck in a limbo between assigning blame and warranting force, the United Nations has recognized the difficulty in consensus between states with varying objectives. While Russia calls for the view of Syrian civilians as terrorists as an ally of the regime, Western states such as the United States, have called for consequences to the Assad regime's' violence against Syrian citizens.

Thus far, almost 500,000 civilians are been estimated to have lost their lives, and millions have been displaced as a result of this ongoing war[49]. The Syrian Civil War, however, provides evidence of an international conflict in which many are decided – yet, opposed. The conflict in Syria has resulted in tremendous deadlock within the UN Security Council, which many sources have found to increase the threat on the United Nations universal notion of credibility. After the April 4, 2017 chemical attack, the push for information was clear. Syrian representatives argued that terrorists groups, not the government, was responsible for such attacks[50]. Russia made clear that an investigation as to the responsible party was necessary prior to any discussion of

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[49]"Death Tolls." I AM SYRIA, www.iamsyria.org/death-tolls.html.
[50] "Chemical-Weapons Attack in Syria Was Largest Such Event Since 2013, Disarmament Affairs Chief Tells Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." United Nations, United Nations, 5 Apr. 2017.

responsibility and responsive action. States such as the United States, however, provided a warning. In the emergency meeting directly following the chemical attack, United States ambassador Nikki Haley gave the following remarks: "When the United Nations consistently fails in its duty to act collectively, there are times in the life of states that we are compelled to take our own action."[51] A resolution proposed in this meeting, demanding the Syrian government provide information regarding its military operations during the period of the attack, was dismissed by Russia under the argument of "categorically unacceptable text."[52] This is a simple example of the deadlock that has plagued United Nations Security Council proceedings regarding the war in Syria. In representation of the United States, Haley continued to express that "If we are not prepared to act, then this [Security] council will keep meeting [...] to express outrage at the continuing use of chemical weapons *and it will not end.*"[53]

The United States air strike on a Syrian air base occurred hours after the emergency Security Council meeting that discussed the chemical attacks in question. As Haley had warned, the United States took its own action. President Trump announced the decision to conduct these strikes as in "the vital national security interest of the United States to prevent and deter the spread and use of chemical weapons."[54] This interest was one forewarned within the preceding Security Council meeting, but not introduced or cleared by its authorization. As a result of the United States unilateral decision to conduct airstrikes in direct response to a conflict in

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[51] Presse, Agence France. "US Threatens Unilateral Action If United Nations Fails to Act on Syria." Arab News, Arabnews, 5 Apr. 2017.
[52] Presse, Agence France. "US Threatens Unilateral Action If United Nations Fails to Act on Syria." Arab News, Arabnews, 5 Apr. 2017.
[53] Emphasis mine
[54] Karimi, Faith. "What You Need to Know about US Strike on Syrian Air Base." CNN, Cable News Network, 7 Apr. 2017.

international security, another emergency United Nations Security Council meeting was called by Bolivia.

Throughout this emergency meeting, states utilized the voice provided within the Security Council to reprimand or support the United States decision to take action outside of the authority of the organization. Russia and Bolivia's arguments contained sentiments of the United States' 2003 presentation to the Security Council. The United States' recent actions in Syria were likened to the 2003 invasion in Iraq, with states naming the Syrian airstrikes as an "act of invasion" without the authorization of the Council and as such, a representation of a violation of international law. In the split of opinion, there were thematic concerns. States against the United States willingness and ability to take unilateral action - both against another state and in response to issues of concern - questioned the sovereignty of international authority. France, for example, reminded the Security Council that undertaking actions like the United States has, has given rise to extremism as a result. By not acting accordingly with international authorities, a greater threat to the security sought maintenance for may be undermined.

The international response to the United States unilaterally taking action in response to violence by the Syrian regime was met with swift international response through the United Nations Security Council. However, while after the 2003 invasion in Iraq, Security General Kofi Annan expressed that acting outside the authorizations of the United Nations Charter the United States was in violation of international law, Security General Antonio Guterres has simply requested for further unilateral action to be ceased. The response to the United States years after its invasion in Iraq is centered more around a fear of international retribution and a resulting increased threat to peace and security as a result of such action

Conclusion/Analysis

The United States has maintained an imbalance in loyalty between its domestic and international agenda. This is a trend both accepted and understood, but often vilified by the international community. It is a trend that is here to stay. The country's adherence to its domestic agenda is one with many branches. Within the protection and sustenance of its international policies is the push in a fight for humanitarian intervention and against terrorism. Because the avenues of action are unclear - to United States' standards - the conflict of pursuance will be continuous. When the propositions and information provided by the United Nations remain in conflict with that of the United States, it is expected that the United States may proceed internationally. This has been a standard of the country. However, utilizing the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council as a means to the United States' ends has its consequences. A result of the standard of unilateral multilateralism, and of adhering to the international organizations on the basis of its promotion of United States interests, is the effect on its role as an international authority. As a world superpower and a "world policeman" the United States sets an example for internationally ethical and appropriate behavior. Acting outside of the international organization it has ratified and pledged adherence to undermines the authority the organization has to sustain power. States' following the United States' example of taking forceful action in the name of its own interests and that of international security without United Nations authorization is a dangerous precedent. The organization was formed to foster cooperation and multilateral decision-making in order to preserve peace in times of conflict. In order to maintain this role, states must believe in the shared goal of cooperation. When the

United Nations as an organization does not take a strong stance upon the recognition of states' unilateral behavior, it undermines its role as a guiding power in international affairs. The response to United States unilateralism in other states has been conflicting. States and especially leaders within the United Nations, are hesitant to dictate United States acts of aggression - even with the countries' own justifications - as violation of international law. This is not blind to member states, and sets a model of expectation.

In Iraq and Syria, responses to the United States taking unilateral action were strong and swift. After the 2003 invasion in Iraq, the world saw the consequences of unilateral force when conducted beyond the scope of the United Nations Security Council. After airstrikes were conducted in Syria in 2017, innumerous references to the Iraq invasion and its consequences were made. The pattern of the United States' acting on behalf of its domestic agenda is not a new phenomena. The responses by member states on the acceptability of this trend and the rising threat of repercussions from them are not either. Without clear response by the Secretary General or the organization of the United Nations regarding the United States role within and outside it, there is a pattern that will not be broken. States cannot simply wait for the United States subsequent calls to unilateral action in order to prepare a response either in support or against. Doing so puts the member states of the United Nations in adherence to the will of the United States and its agenda, over that of the international community. If the goal is the maintenance of peace and security through multilateral decision-making and resolutions, it is the goal that must be promoted. Unilateral action in violation of the United Nations Charter and of United Nations Security Council resolutions must be declared as such. Failing to take a stand further undermines the credibility of the United Nations. To be identified as international authority in the

maintenance of peace and security, the focus must remain on this maintenance. A struggle for credibility and power must not come from states meant to promote its goals. To continue this trend is to shift the threat to security from international conflicts and violence to that of the inner workings of the United Nations and its members.

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