

**Structural,  
Institutional  
and Normative  
Challenges**

# **THE IRAQ CRISIS AND**

# **WORLD ORDER**



**EDITED BY RAMESH THAKUR AND WAHEGURU PAL SINGH SIDHU**

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# The Iraq crisis and world order: Structural, institutional and normative challenges

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Edited by Ramesh Thakur and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu

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Part I

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Framing the issues

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## Iraq's challenge to world order

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*Ramesh Thakur and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu*

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The United Nations (UN) is a collective instrument for organizing a volatile and dangerous world on a more predictable and orderly basis than would be possible without the existence of the international organization. It is the symbol of humanity's hopes and dreams for a more secure world. If it did not exist, the United Nations surely would have to be invented. Most people still look to the United Nations as our best hope for a shared future, especially if it could be reformed to reflect today's needs and realities. Yet, if some of its fiercest critics are to be believed, the damage the United Nations causes is such that it deserves to be de-invented.

Indeed, because of these divergent views, the basis of world order, with the United Nations at the centre of the system of global governance, has come under increasing strain in recent years. One reason for this is inflated expectations of what the United Nations could accomplish. A second is that threats to peace and security and obstacles to economic development lie increasingly within rather than between states. A third is the growing gravity of threats rooted in non-state actors, including but not limited to terrorists. A fourth is the growing salience of weapons of mass destruction that, in their reach and destructiveness, challenge the basis of the territorial state. And the fifth is the growing disparity between the power of the United States and that of all other states, and the challenge that this poses to the Westphalian fiction of sovereign states equal in status, capacity, power and legitimacy.

The Iraq war of March 2003 was a multiple assault on the foundations and rules of the existing UN-centred world order as well as the critical

transatlantic relationship. Post-war Iraq confirms that it is easier to wage war without UN blessing than it is to win the peace – but victory in war is pointless without a resulting secure peace. Speaking to the General Assembly on 23 September 2003, Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that “we have come to a fork in the road . . . a moment no less decisive than 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded”.<sup>1</sup> In a number of key meetings during and after World War II, world leaders drew up rules to govern international behaviour and established a network of institutions, centred on the United Nations, to work together for the common good. Both the rules and the institutions – the system of global governance with the United Nations as the core – face an existential challenge. On the one hand, Annan noted, the Iraq war could set a precedent for the “proliferation of the unilateral and lawless use of force”. On the other hand, he asked to what extent states might be resorting to unilateral instruments because of a loss of faith in “the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments” at their disposal. Consequently, the Iraq crisis became the primary motivation for Annan to announce the establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.<sup>2</sup> Although the mandate for the Panel did not explicitly mention the need to examine the crucial relationship between the United Nations and the United States, possibly its single most important member, there is no doubt that most of the deliberations as well as the recommendations of the report were informed by the state of relations between these two key actors in the world order.<sup>3</sup>

### Relations between the United States and the United Nations

The relationship between the United Nations and the United States is as critical as it is difficult to get right. The central challenge of global governance is a double disconnect. First, there is a disconnect between the distribution of “hard” and “soft” power in the real world, on the one hand, and the distribution of decision-making authority in the existing intergovernmental institutions, on the other. The second disconnect is between the numbers and types of actor playing ever-expanding roles in civil, political and economic affairs within and among nations and the concentration of decision-making authority in intergovernmental institutions.

In turn this has provoked a double crisis of legitimacy. With regard to the second disconnect, legitimacy is the conceptual rod that grounds the exercise of power by public authorities in the consent of the people, so the circuit is broken with the growing gulf between the will of the people and the actions of governments. As regards the first disconnect, legiti-

macy is the conceptual rod that connects power to authority, so the circuit is broken when power and authority diverge. The dominant power of the United States – military, economic, cultural, educational and media – is *the* characteristic of contemporary international relations. The United States has an unparalleled capacity to use its “hard” and “soft” power to push its own agenda. Without Washington’s participation, the provision of global public goods is impossible. Although major powers have always been able to play more important roles than lesser powers, the US capacity at present is historically unique for the Westphalian order.

The United States is the world’s indispensable power; the supreme power and the hyper-power are other synonyms that have been used in recent times to describe this phenomenon. But the United Nations is the world’s indispensable institution, with unmatched legitimacy and authority, together with convening and mobilizing power. The Security Council is the core of the international law enforcement system and the chief body for building, consolidating and using the authority of the international community. For any international enforcement action to be efficient, it must be legitimate; for it to be legitimate, it must be in conformity with international law; for it to conform to international law, it must be consistent with the UN Charter. There will be times when UN-centred international diplomacy must be backed up by the credible threat of force. This can come only from the United States and its allies. In truth, the maintenance of world order since 1945 has depended more on US than UN ability and will. But the will to wage war will weaken if force is used recklessly, unwisely and prematurely. Progress towards a world of a rules-based, civilized international order requires that US force be put to the service of lawful international authority.

The United Nations is the main embodiment of the principle of multilateralism and the principal vehicle for the pursuit of multilateral goals. After World War II, Washington was the chief architect of the normative structure of world order based on the international rule of law. There was, alongside this, deep and widespread confidence in the United States as a fundamentally trustworthy, balanced and responsible custodian of world order, albeit with occasional lapses and eccentricities. In the past few years Washington has engaged in a systematic belittling, denigrating and hollowing out of a whole series of treaties with respect to nuclear weapons, landmines, international criminal prosecution, climate change and other regimes. In Iraq, the United States signalled that it would play by the rules of the world security institution that it helped create if, but only if, that institution bends to America’s will. Coming after years of US exceptionalism, this united most of the rest of the world against American unilateralism.

The United Nations has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, and is structured to discharge this responsibility in a multipolar world where the major powers have permanent membership of the key collective security decision-making body, namely the UN Security Council. The emergence of the United States as the sole superpower after the end of the Cold War distorted the structural balance in the UN schema. The ending of the Cold War also shifted the balance away from inter-state warfare to intra-state conflicts. The double question for the decision makers in Washington often became one of determining:

- whether US security and political interests were better served by engaging with distant and possibly inconsequential conflicts unilaterally, or through UN peace operations, or not at all; and
- whether the consequences of this choice for the United Nations' authority and capacity to keep the peace would have any rebound effects on the United States itself.

The Security Council is the proper locus for authorizing and legitimizing the creation, deployment and use of military force under international auspices. But it is singularly ill suited to take charge of the command and control of fighting forces. The United Nations' own panel on peacekeeping concluded that "the United Nations does not wage war".<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the burden of responsibility for international military engagement typically falls on the United States and its allies, which, as the world's most powerful group, often can make the greatest difference. What is the optimal "mode of articulation" between the United Nations as the authoritative custodian of international peace and world order and the United States as its de facto underwriter? Many American decision makers find it difficult to understand why countries that do not contribute a "fair share" of the military burden should be given any determining role in deciding on the deployment of US military forces. In 1992, Richard Cheney, then Defense Secretary in the administration of George H. W. Bush, remarked that critics of the United States should remember that world order was maintained by the United States, not the United Nations. As William Pfaff notes, the statement reflected two dominant American views. First, given its history of isolationism, the United States did not seek such a role but accepted the responsibility (flowing from its power) thrust upon it after World War II. Second, the United States is uniquely qualified to be the sole superpower because it is a virtuous power.<sup>5</sup>

One of the main reasons for the US rejection of the League of Nations after World War I was fear of an automatic requirement to use military force as decided by the League. The symbolic shift of the world organization's headquarters after World War II from Geneva to New York did

not lessen the innate American suspicion of overseas entanglements at others' behest. As Sarah Sewell notes, the United Nations remains a lightning rod for many US concerns about distracting entanglements of US forces overseas.<sup>6</sup> The US Congress was careful to enunciate that decisions by the Security Council could not encroach upon the internal constitutional distribution of war-making power in the United States.

Operation Desert Storm, launched in 1991 to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait, generated unwarranted and unsustainable optimism about the centrality of the United Nations in the new world order, and about the degree to which the United States was prepared to place its military power at the disposal of the United Nations. This idealism was ephemeral because it was based on a unique confluence of circumstances that had produced a fortuitous conjunction of national US interests and the international interest. President George H. W. Bush left office on a cautiously optimistic note with regard to US-UN relations in the realm of international peace operations. The initial, naive enthusiasm of the succeeding Clinton administration, which assumed office committed to enlarging US involvement in expanding UN peace operations, quickly faded in the face of hard realities, notably the complexities of external intervention in civil wars. Since then it has become evident that the administration of the day must grapple with five interlinked and challenging questions concerning when and how Washington should:

1. offer political support to UN missions;
2. provide military assistance to them;
3. participate in possible combat operations through them;
4. enhance the peacekeeping credentials of the United Nations; and
5. opt for military action outside the UN framework.

The five policy dilemmas suggest that the division between unilateralism and multilateralism in American foreign policy with respect to international peace operations is a false dichotomy. The relationship is dynamic, not static; and multifaceted, not unidimensional. The United States remained essentially multilateral throughout the 1990s. Significant signs of unilateralism surfaced only in 2001, after President George W. Bush took office. But what did change over the course of the 1990s was the centrality of the United Nations in the US scheme of multilateralism. Learning from experience in a world no longer divided by the Cold War blocs yet facing messy internal conflicts, Washington progressively divided its multilateral impulse between the United Nations as the global mobilizing and legitimizing organization, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as the strategic enforcement arm for peace operations in Europe, and ad hoc coalitions of the willing for theatres beyond NATO's traditional area of operations. Outside Europe, Washington progressively retrenched from direct participation in UN peacekeeping, but not neces-

sarily from all forms of involvement in them. At the end of the spectrum, if the United Nations is unable or unwilling to acquit itself of the “responsibility to protect”<sup>7</sup> victims of genocide, ethnic cleansing or other egregious humanitarian atrocities, Washington can forge multilateral coalitions of the willing to lead military interventions to stop the atrocities.

Multilateralism – the coordination of relations among several states in accordance with certain principles (such as sovereign equality)<sup>8</sup> – remains important to US foreign policy and the United States remains the pivot of multilateral action in the maintenance of international peace and security. Because the world is essentially anarchic, it is fundamentally insecure, characterized by strategic uncertainty and complexity resulting from too many actors with multiple goals and interests and variable capabilities and convictions. Collective action embedded in international institutions that mirror mainly American value preferences and interests enhances predictability, reduces uncertainty and cuts the transaction costs of international action in the pursuit of US foreign policy. “America First” nationalists are sceptical of the value of the United Nations to US foreign policy, viewing it more as a constraint. Why should US power be harnessed to the goals of others? Multilateralism implies bargaining and accommodation, and compromise is integral to such multilateral negotiation. But US power and assets are such that Washington does not need to compromise on core values and interests. Liberal institutionalists, in contrast, believe that multilateral organizations can externalize such bedrock US values as respect for the rule of law, due process and human rights. Multilateralism rests on assumptions of the indivisibility of the benefits of collective public goods such as peace (as well as international telecommunications, transportation, and so on) and diffuse reciprocity (whereby collective action arrangements confer an equivalence of benefits, not on every issue and every occasion, but in aggregate and over time).<sup>9</sup>

US power, wealth and politics are too deeply intertwined with the cross-currents of international affairs for disengagement to be a credible or sustainable policy posture for the world’s only superpower. In their insular innocence and in-your-face exceptionalism,<sup>10</sup> Americans had long embraced the illusion of security behind supposedly impregnable lines of continental defence. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 proved the vulnerability of the US homeland to quarrels rooted in complex conflicts in distant lands.

If isolationism is not an option in today’s globally interconnected world, unilateralism – the robust use of military force to project US interests and promote American values overseas – cannot be the strategy of choice either. Like the two world wars, the “war” against global terrorism is neither one from which America can stay disengaged, nor one that it can win on its own, nor is it one that can be won without full US en-

gagement.<sup>11</sup> A world in which every country retreated into unilateralism would not provide a better guarantee of US national security, now and for the foreseeable future, than do multilateral regimes.

Exceptionalism is also deeply flawed. Washington cannot construct a world in which all others have to obey universal norms and rules, whereas the United States can opt out whenever, as often, and for as long as it likes with respect to nuclear tests, landmines, international criminal prosecution, climate change and other regimes. Richard Haass, former Director of the Policy Planning Unit at the US State Department, called this “a la carte multilateralism”,<sup>12</sup> and some others privately call it, even more insultingly, “disposable multilateralism”.

In the case of non-UN operations, the United States would *prefer* to obtain the legitimating approbation of the United Nations if possible, in the form of enabling UN Security Council resolutions authorizing the operations. But the United States is most unlikely to accept a prior Security Council resolution as a *mandatory* requirement for the use of military force overseas. The problematic element in this comes from the equally compelling US interest in promoting the norm of the United Nations being the only collective legitimator of international military action. Washington thus faces an unresolved and irreconcilable dilemma between instilling the principle of multilateralism as the world order norm, and exempting itself from the same principle because of its sustaining and enduring belief in exceptionalism, in its identity as the virtuous power.

The contradiction came to a head in 2003 in relation to the Iraq war. Most non-Americans found it difficult to see how one country could enforce UN resolutions by defying the authority of the world body, denigrating it as irrelevant and belittling its role in reconstruction efforts after the war. As the year drew to a close, the future and prestige of the United Nations were under scrutiny as never before. The Iraq war proved to be doubly damaging to the United Nations. Those who went to war condemned the world organization for lacking the courage of its convictions with regard to 12 years of Security Council resolutions demanding full Iraqi compliance. Those who opposed the war condemned the United Nations for lacking the courage of its convictions as an anti-war organization by not censuring an illegal war and punishing the aggressors.

### Was the war inevitable?

In September 2002 President George W. Bush famously warned the United Nations of irrelevance if the organization failed to enforce its resolutions on recalcitrant outlaws. The confusing compromises of multi-

lateralism were cornered by the moral clarity of an administration willing to distinguish good from evil and determined to promote one and destroy the other. For Washington, the issues could hardly have been more serious. Could one of the world's most brutal regimes be permitted to remain in power until it succeeded in acquiring the world's most destructive weapons? The concurrent crisis with North Korea proved the wisdom of dealing with Saddam Hussein before he got his hands on nuclear or other equally powerful weapons – for it would have been next to impossible to defang him after he had usable weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems.<sup>13</sup> America's threat of war, unilaterally if necessary, galvanized the United Nations into putting teeth into the inspection machinery and produced unprecedented cooperation from the Iraqis.

However, cooperation from Baghdad would not have lasted forever. Based on all previous experience, international pressure would have slackened with the passage of time, and Saddam would have returned to his familiar game of cheat, deny, defy and retreat. His survival after full US military mobilization would have gravely dented US global credibility. In that case, the United Nations, with no independent military capability, would have lost its most potent enforcement agent (the United States) even as other would-be tyrants would have been emboldened. The resulting political backlash in the United States would have imperilled continued American membership, and the United Nations would have become the twenty-first century's League of Nations.

The contrary argument accepted UN authorization as necessary, but not sufficient, and preferred UN irrelevance to complicity. For all its moral authority, many feared that the United Nations lacks moral clarity. The record of the Security Council is not especially notable for a sense of moral compass and the courage of international convictions. There was a growing sentiment that, if the United Nations was bribed and bullied into submission and sanctioned war, the legitimacy of the United Nations itself, as the guardian of the rule of law and the protector of the weak, would have been eroded instead of being stamped on military action against Iraq. People look to the United Nations to stop war, not to wage one, especially one based on the revolutionary doctrine of pre-emption.

In the ensuing six months leading up to the war, instead of a pro forma test of UN relevance, the agenda shifted to being a litmus test of US legitimacy. In the end, the US argument failed to carry the world. Among the reasons for the strong worldwide anti-war sentiment were doubts over the justification for going to war; anxiety about the human toll, uncontrollable course and incalculable consequences of war in an already inflamed and extremely volatile region; and scepticism that the United States would stay engaged – politically, economically and militarily – for the years of reconstruction required after a war. Washington found it especially difficult to convince others of the need to go to war – against Iraq

rather than against other states that posed a clearer and more present danger in their programmes of weapons of mass destruction or in their culpability with respect to links to international terrorism, and now rather than later – and did not help its cause by a continually shifting justification. The costs incurred, even before the war began, included fissures in the three great institutions of peace and order since World War II: the United Nations, NATO and the European Union.

Moreover, the war (without UN authorization), though swift and decisive, does not appear to have been as effective as the threat of war. The ousting of Saddam Hussein might eventually pave the way for a brighter future for Iraqis but the credibility and authority of the United Nations appear to have been gravely damaged, and it is not clear that the prestige of the United States has been greatly enhanced. There was grave disquiet that the United Nations was being subverted by the US agenda, and that it risked becoming to the United States what the Warsaw Pact was to the old Soviet Union: a collective mechanism for legitimizing the dominant power's hegemonism. In a worrying portent for the United Nations, significant groups in many countries voiced the heretical thought that they would not have supported a war against Iraq even if backed by the United Nations. For many of them, the United Nations subsequently largely legitimized the Iraq war through its recognition and endorsement of the aftermath of the Iraq war, in particular the occupation of the country by the coalition forces and the transfer of Iraqi sovereignty to the transitional government.

### Iraq as a political earthquake

Wars are cataclysmic events. Out of the destruction of major wars emerge new fault-lines of international politics. To this extent, wars are the international, political equivalent of earthquakes, eruptions on the surface reflecting deeper underlying seismic shifts in the pattern of major power relations. The Cold War was unusual because of the longevity of the conflict and because of the peaceful manner in which it ended. The tectonic shifts ushered in by the realignment of forces after the Cold War were all the more significant, but they were hidden from view for an unusually long time because of the peaceful resolution. It took the 9/11 terrorist attacks to force the pace of change and sharpen the new post-Cold War contours of international politics. This new shape became more visible after the Iraq war.

The most pressing task in “post-war” Iraq became to stabilize the security situation, establish a transitional political authority, initiate the necessary steps for post-war reconstruction, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and embed these in durable institutions and structures sufficiently

resilient to survive the withdrawal of a foreign presence in due course. The larger goal in the region was to assuage the humiliation inflicted on the collective Arab identity, deal with legitimate Palestinian grievances with the same mix of boldness and firmness shown in Iraq, impress upon the Arab world in general the need for deep political, social and economic reforms, eradicate terrorism from the region, and assure Israel's long-term security and survival.

There was also the larger question of the changing nature of threats in the modern world, the inadequacy of existing norms and laws in addressing such threats, and thus the need for new "rules of the game" to replace them. The urgent task was to devise an institutional framework that could marry prudent anticipatory self-defence to the centuries-old dream of a world in which force is put to the service of law, which protects the innocent without shielding the criminals.

This is why the Iraq war has the potential to reshape the bases of world order in fundamental, profound and long-lasting ways. For, arguably, the Bush administration seeks to replace:

- self-defence (wars of necessity) with preventive aggression (wars of choice);
- the tried, tested and successful strategy of containment with the untried, untested, potentially destabilizing yet possibly unavoidable doctrine of pre-emption;
- negative deterrence with positive compulsion;
- non-proliferation and disarmament, as represented in the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) package, with non-proliferation on its own;
- universal non-proliferation as per the NPT with differentiated non-proliferation, where the proliferating countries' relationship with the NPT is subordinated to their relations with the United States. US-friendly countries such as Israel are not on the list of countries of concern, whereas US-hostile countries are grouped into the "axis of evil" and US-ambivalent/neutral countries such as India become objects of watchful caution;
- a multilateral system of global governance centred on the United Nations with a unilateral system of US pre-eminence;
- leadership by consent-cum-persuasion with leadership by command and control;
- the European search for a new world order, based on the Kantian transition from barbarism to culture through liberal institutionalism, with the old world order, discarded by Europe after centuries of increasingly destructive warfare, based on force of arms; and
- the Westphalian order of sovereign and equal states with a post-Westphalian order of one pre-eminent if virtuous power.

The long list of fundamental changes suggests that we will continue to live in interesting times. It is difficult to deny that many of today's institutions and systems are indeed out of date and incapable of meeting contemporary challenges. Even if Washington was wrong with regard to the particular case of Iraq, it may still be right in respect of the general argument about the institutionalized incapacity of existing mechanisms to cope with today's changed and fast-changing threats. The evolution of institutions of international governance has lagged behind the rapid emergence of collective problems with on-border and cross-border dimensions. Any one intervention does not simply violate the sovereignty of any given target state in any one instance; it also challenges the principle of a society of states resting on a system of well-understood and habitually obeyed rules. Does the solution – or even one possible solution – to this lie in amending existing rules and institutions? If these are incapable of change, do they deserve to be abandoned? Or should they be jettisoned only when replaced by new and improved successor laws and institutions, because otherwise, in the resulting authority vacuum, anarchy rules – and this is not acceptable? If regime change is to be a legitimate goal, must we make the argument for that, agree on the criteria of legitimate statehood, and amend or replace the UN Charter accordingly? The report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is both an acknowledgement of this dilemma as well as a valiant, if partial, effort to address it.

### Outline of the book

The key questions provoked by the above observations are: was the Iraq war a symptom of tectonic change or, alternatively, was it an event that might precipitate a collapse of the current world order? That is, do we need to think in terms of an impending paradigmatic shift, or will modifications to the current architecture suffice?

In the wake of Iraq, how will key countries, significant regional organizations and surviving international institutions deal with an unfamiliar post-Westphalian order of one pre-eminent if virtuous power? How will the growing divergence between legality and legitimacy, which bitterly divided not only the international community but also domestic opinion, be bridged in the course of this significant transition?

To address these issues, the volume begins with a historical chapter that examines the origins of the Iraq crisis in 1980. This chapter draws attention to two critical moments in the story: first, the Security Council's inadequate, indeed misguided, reaction to Iraq's attack on Iran in 1980;

and, second, the unilateral imposition by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of “no-fly zones” over Iraq in early 1991 and the launch of Operation Provide Comfort, a harbinger of unilateral initiatives that would under the unity of the Security Council’s purpose and decisions on Iraq after 1998. The rest of the volume is divided into area and thematic/conceptual chapters.

Part II examines some crucial structural and normative issues in the light of the Iraq crisis: unipolarity and Westphalian sovereignty; the disconnect between threats to international peace and security and state sovereignty; and the rise of a global public opinion against the war. The six chapters in Part III offer perspectives from Iraq’s immediate neighbourhood – the so-called broader Middle East – and examine the implications of the ongoing Iraq crisis for the key countries in the region and their evolving relationships with both the UN-centred world order as well as the United States. Part IV provides perspectives on the Iraq crisis from further afield. It looks at the role played by four of the permanent five members of the Security Council (the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Russia), as well as by Germany, Japan, Pakistan, Latin America, NATO, the European Union and the UN Security Council throughout the Iraq crisis and the implications of their actions in the emerging world order. Part V looks at the legal and doctrinal implications of the Iraq war, including the responsibility to protect norms; the universalization of human rights norms; the international use of force and the legality and legitimacy of the war on Iraq; and post-war relations between occupying powers and the United Nations.

## Conclusion

The United States has global power, soft as well as hard; the United Nations is the fount of international authority. Progress towards international civilization requires that US power be harnessed to UN authority, so that force is put to the service of law. Through their bitter separation over Iraq, the United States and the United Nations provoked a legitimacy crisis about both US power and UN authority. The United States’ certainty of moral clarity – values that it espouses and principles in defence of which it is prepared to stand up and be counted – put the US leadership on a course that seriously eroded its moral authority in the exercise of world power. The United Nations’ lack of a sense of moral clarity diminished its moral authority. The United Nations is the arena for collective action, not a forum where nations that are unable to do anything individually get together to decide that nothing can be done collectively.

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## Notes

1. The text of the Secretary-General's address can be found at <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/printsgstats.asp?nid=517>.
2. Ibid.
3. The report of the Panel can be found at <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>.
4. *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, UN Doc. A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000, para. 53.
5. William Pfaff, "Europe Is Unqualified for the World Role It Seeks", *International Herald Tribune*, 26–27 May 2001.
6. Sarah B. Sewell, "Multilateral Peace Operations", in Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, eds, *Multilateralism and US Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), p. 209.
7. The phrase is from *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre for ICISS, 2001). Ramesh Thakur served as one of the ICISS Commissioners.
8. John G. Ruggie, "Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution", in John G. Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 8–11.
9. Robert Keohane, "Reciprocity in International Relations", *International Organization*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Winter 1986), pp. 1–27.
10. For the importance of the sense of exceptionalism in US foreign policy, see Samuel P. Huntington, "American Ideals versus American Institutions", in G. John Ikenberry, ed., *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* (3rd edn, New York: Longman, 1999), pp. 221–253.
11. See Ramesh Thakur and Hans van Ginkel, "An International Perspective on Global Terrorism", *United Nations Chronicle*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (September–November 2001), pp. 71–73.
12. Quoted in Thom Shanker, "Bush's Way: 'A la Carte' Approach to Treaties", *International Herald Tribune*, 1 August 2001.
13. The issue of "weapons of mass destruction" was the focus of the second workshop of this project held in Japan on 18–23 October 2004, starting at the Asia-Pacific University in Beppu and concluding at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. That work will be published as a companion volume to this book: *Arms Control after Iraq: Normative and Operational Challenges*, edited by Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, forthcoming).

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# The Iraq Crisis and World Order: Structural, Institutional and Normative Challenges

Edited by Ramesh Thakur and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu

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The Iraq war was a multiple assault on the foundations and rules of the existing UN-centred world order. It called into question the adequacy of the existing institutions for articulating global norms and enforcing compliance with the demands of the international community. It highlighted also the unwillingness of some key countries to wait until definitive proof before acting to meet the danger of the world's most destructive weapons falling into the hands of the world's most dangerous regimes. It was simultaneously a test of the UN's willingness and ability to deal with brutal dictatorships and a searching scrutiny of the nature and exercise of American power.

The United States is the world's indispensable power, but the United Nations is the world's indispensable institution. The UN Security Council is the core of the international law enforcement system and the chief body for building, consolidating and using the authority of the international community. The United Nations has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, and is structured to discharge this responsibility in a multipolar world where the major powers have permanent membership of the key collective security decision-making body, namely the UN Security Council.

The emergence of the United States as the sole superpower after the end of the Cold War distorted the structural balance in the UN schema. Progress towards a world of a rules-based, civilized international order requires that US force be put to the service of lawful international authority. This book examines these major normative and structural challenges from a number of different perspectives.

**Ramesh Thakur** is the Senior Vice-Rector of the United Nations University, Japan, and an Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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