

ten countries “—all aspirants to NATO membership---have united behind a strongly worded statement of support for the United States in a further sign of the increasingly polarized positions in Europe toward a possible war in Iraq.”⁶³

The case of Iraq illustrates the divisions among the Allies concerning specific WMD threats. France and Germany, for example, believed that Iraq could continue to be contained and deterred in order to prevent the use of its WMD against any of its neighbors. These two NATO Allies argued that UN inspections in Iraq should be given more time, thereby allowing diplomatic efforts to continue as well. In addition, France and Germany stated that additional UN inspectors should be sent to Iraq to aid in the inspection efforts. Conversely, the United States and some other countries did not agree with this recommendation of continued containment and opted to use military force to disarm Iraq. When plans were being made for the war with Iraq, Belgium, France, and Germany all temporarily “blocked plans to send planes and missiles to defend Turkey,”⁶⁴ another NATO Ally.⁶⁵

However, not all of the Allies shared the opinions of these three countries. The United States found support from other NATO Allies, including Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. London and Warsaw contributed both troops and equipment to conduct the military campaign in Iraq. However, divisions within the Alliance have led to a shift in U.S. policy concerning coalition building for conducting military operations. According to U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, “[W]ars can benefit from coalitions of the willing, to be sure. But they should not be fought by committee. The mission must determine the coalition, and the coalition must not determine the mission. If it does, the mission will be dumbed down to the lowest common denominator, and we can’t afford that.”⁶⁶

⁶³ “New Allies Back U.S. Iraq Policy,” *International Herald Tribune*, 6 February 2003, available at <http://ebird.dtic.mil/Feb2003/e20030206152244.html>

⁶⁴ Associated Press, “NATO Delays Iraq Military Plan,” 29 January 2003, available at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/unmovic/2003/0129nato.htm>

⁶⁵ This question was not resolved until 16 February 2003, when the Alliance’s Defense Planning Committee (a body in which France chooses not to participate) made the necessary decisions.

⁶⁶ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, remarks at National Defense University, Washington, D.C., 31 January 2002, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2002/s20020131-secdef.html>

→ + ~~US~~ NATO has moved from being a defensive alliance to a coalition ready-made coalition for various operations.