



**COALITION OF THE WILLING
OR
COALITION OF THE COERCED?**

PART II

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I. INTRODUCTION

After failing to obtain authorization for war from the UN Security Council, the Bush Administration has scrambled to assemble a so-called “Coalition of the Willing” to lend the military action against Iraq the illusion of genuine multilateralism and legitimacy.

Prior to the Security Council debacle, the administration had boasted of more than 40 countries in their “Coalition of the Willing,” but refused to identify these coalition members. On Tuesday, March 18, Secretary of State Colin Powell finally released a list of 30 countries that he claimed had agreed to be publicly identified as members of the alliance. However, according to the *Washington Post*, officials of at least one of these countries, Colombia, were apparently unaware that they had been designated as a coalition partner.¹ It is not known how many other governments first learned of their membership in the coalition through the media. Other nations, including Hungary and the Netherlands, have allowed their names to be placed on the coalition list, while at the same time reassuring their citizens that they will not actually support the military action in any substantive way.²

On March 18, Powell also claimed that another 15 countries were part of the coalition but preferred to remain anonymous. These are almost certainly the Middle Eastern countries that have cooperated with the U.S. military, but face strong opposition from their people and signed an Arab League declaration in mid-February to oppose any Arab country providing military assistance to any war on Iraq.

By Thursday, March 20, the Administration had bolstered their list, adding Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Solomon Islands and a few others, for a total of 43 partners who agreed to be identified. On the following day, the White House inexplicably dropped UN Security Council member Angola from the list while adding three additional countries, for a total of 45 countries that support the U.S.-led attack.

II. WHO’S IN THE “COALITION OF THE WILLING”?

ONLY TWO THAT ARE PROVIDING SIGNIFICANT TROOPS

In the first Gulf War, allies sent or pledged more than 295,000 troops to support the 430,000 U.S. troops in the campaign to end the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.³ By contrast, this time around, the U.S. forces will be joined by only 45,000 British and 2,000 Australian troops. Otherwise, the extent of personnel committed amount to only a handful of experts that specialize in chemical and biological weapons and other technology.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS

In an ironic twist, the coalition in support of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” includes several countries with dismal human rights records of their own. According to ratings by Freedom House, 17 of the countries have “not free” or “partially free” democracies. Transparency International reports that 24 (more than half) have high levels of corruption. And the U.S. State

¹ Dan Balz and Mike Allen, “U.S. Names 30 Countries Supporting War Effort,” *Washington Post*, March 19, 2003.

² Jonathan Weisman, “War Will be Mostly an American Effort,” *Washington Post*, March 19, 2003.

³ Ibid.

Department's annual human rights survey describes the overall human rights situation in 18 of the coalition countries as poor or extremely poor. For example, the State Department report notes that torture and/or extrajudicial killings were carried out by security forces in coalition members Albania, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Macedonia, Nicaragua, Philippines, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.⁴ The International Press Institute also condemned numerous members of the coalition. According to IPI Director Johann P. Fritz, "This is more a list of the 'coalition of the sinning' rather than of 'the willing.' It contains many governments that have done their utmost to suppress and stifle the independent media in their countries." Fritz highlighted serious problems, including arbitrary arrests of independent journalists, in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Azerbaijan, as well as lack of concern for violence against journalists in Colombia, Uzbekistan, and Georgia.⁵

GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTING LESS THAN 20% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION

Although the Administration has attempted to portray the 45 countries in the coalition as representing a significant share of the world's nations, these countries, combined with the United States, make up less than 20 percent of the world's population. Even if the 15 unidentified countries were named, they would not make much of a difference since they are almost certainly the small Middle Eastern countries that are supplying bases and other support in the region. For example, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain combined have a smaller population than New York City, one of more than 160 U.S. cities that passed resolutions against war. Of the countries that are on the list, 26 have populations of less than 10 million people. Moreover, since polls show strong majorities opposed to the war in virtually all countries except the United States and Israel, the Administration is highly misleading when it suggests that more than a billion people support the war.⁶

ONLY 4 OF 15 UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

With only Britain, Spain and Bulgaria on their side, the U.S. launched an intense arm-twisting campaign to try to win over nine votes in support of a resolution authorizing war. At one point, U.S. officials claimed that they had won over four of the undecided Council members, but none of these has joined the "Coalition of the Willing." The White House initially placed one of the non-permanent members, Angola, on the coalition list, but then removed it a day later without offering an explanation.

ONLY 4 AFRICAN NATIONS

Only 4 of the 53 nations in Africa are listed as members (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda). This is in spite of the fact that all sub-Saharan African nations face the likelihood of being denied trade preferences offered under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act if they oppose the war. AGOA grants preferential access to U.S. markets to sub-Saharan African countries that meet a list of eligibility criteria. One demand is that countries "not engage in activities that undermine United States national security or foreign policy interests."

⁴ Erik Leaver and Sara Johnson, "Human Rights Records of Coalition Countries," Institute for Policy Studies, Foreign Policy in Focus Project, March 24, 2003. (see: www.ips-dc.org)

⁵ Financial Times Global News Wire, March 19, 2003.

⁶At a March 20, press briefing, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer stated "All told, the population of the coalition of the willing is approximately 1.18 billion people around the world."

ONLY 7 OF 33 LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS

Since Colombia is the recipient of billions of dollars in U.S. aid, U.S. officials appear to have assumed the Colombian government would agree to be in the coalition without even being asked. Four others, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador, are in the middle of negotiations with the United States for a Central America Free Trade Agreement. Another Latin American country, the Dominican Republic, has also asked for permission to be a party to the trade deal.

NATO WANNABES

Eight of the countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia) in the coalition are eager for NATO membership, which they believe will not only strengthen national security but also give the country a stamp of Western approval that might help increase foreign investment and trade. However, they must all gain approval of current NATO members, which means that President Bush could block or delay approval by not requesting ratification by the U.S. Senate. The ratification period begins March 26.

TURKEY?

The designation of Turkey as a “willing” partner is questionable. First, the Turkish Parliament stunned U.S. officials by rebuffing an offer of some \$15 billion in grants and loan guarantees in exchange for allowing the deployment of tens of thousands of U.S. troops in the country. Then, on March 21, the parliament temporarily blocked U.S. military use of the country’s airspace. Although this position was later reversed, Turkey is now antagonizing the Bush Administration by vowing to increase the number of Turkish troops in northern Iraq, a move the U.S. government fears will incite clashes with Iraqi Kurds.

III. WHO IS NOT IN?

11 OF THE 15 UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Although the Administration is placing nearly all the blame for the diplomatic disaster in the UN on France, the truth is that U.S. officials failed miserably in their efforts to even gather a so-called “moral majority” of nine votes. It is not as though they didn’t try. The U.S. ambassadors to Russia and Mexico made thinly veiled threats in the media regarding potential negative consequences for those countries, Republicans in Congress blustered about withdrawing U.S. military bases from Germany and vowed to place trade sanctions on French wine, and the President suspended action towards gaining Congressional approval of the U.S.-Chile trade deal. American spies even did surveillance on the homes and offices of the UN ambassadors from the Security Council countries, hoping to gather information to manipulate the vote. The public will never know what types of bribes or threats were made behind closed doors. And yet at the end of the day, these tactics were not enough to persuade 11 countries on the Council to abandon their positions.

161 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING LEADING ECONOMIES ON FOUR CONTINENTS⁷

The countries with the largest GDP's in Europe, South America, Africa and Asia are opposed to the U.S. position on Iraq. These include: Germany, Brazil, South Africa, and China.

NAFTA PARTNERS

Despite the fact that Mexico and Canada's economies are highly dependent on the U.S. market through the North American Free Trade Agreement, both neighbors took a stand against the United States. Mexico withstood intense pressure from U.S. officials aimed at garnering support for a resolution backing war. In a move that probably ensured opposition in strongly nationalist Mexico, the U.S. ambassador to that country, Tony Garza, made thinly veiled threats in the media, warning that U.S. legislators might block any legislation related to Mexico as revenge for a "no" vote in the Security Council.⁸

In Canada, the United States' No. 1 trading partner and neighbor, Prime Minister Jean Chretien received loud applause when he announced to the House of Commons on March 18 that Canada would not support in any way the U.S.-led attack. Public opinion in Canada has been strongly against the war. In Montreal, a March 15 demonstration of 200,000 was the city's largest ever. Svend Robinson, a member of Parliament from the National Democratic Party, has vowed to heckle President Bush, whom he considers a war criminal, when he makes a scheduled visit to the House of Commons in May.

IV. CONCLUSION

Even as the world's superpower, with enormous military and economic resources at its disposal, the United States has managed to assemble only a motley coalition of countries in its so-called "Coalition of the Willing." While they may number 45 nations, only two are making significant contributions to the military actions. Others are reassuring their overwhelmingly anti-war publics that being on the coalition list is basically meaningless. And even with the military operation well underway, the Administration cannot even reveal the identities of all of the members of this alliance.

In the end, almost all of the assembled "Coalition of the Willing" governments stand in direct opposition to the will of their people. Far more impressive is the list of nations that have stood up to U.S. bully tactics and stand opposed to both this war at this time and to the larger arrogant U.S. doctrine of pre-emptive war.

⁷ Based on the 207 countries identified by the World Bank *World Development Report 2003*. There are 191 UN member states.

⁸ Colum Lynch, "Costa Rica Reprimands U.N. Envoy Over Iraq," *Washington Post*, Feb. 21, 2003.

Appendix

“Coalition of the Willing” Members*

		2001 population (mill)
1	Afghanistan	27.2
2	Albania	3.4
3	Australia	19.4
4	Azerbaijan	8.1
5	Bulgaria	8.1
6	Colombia	43.0
7	Costa Rica	3.9
8	Czech Republic	10.3
9	Denmark	5.4
10	Dominican Republic	8.5
11	El Salvador	6.4
12	Eritrea	4.2
13	Estonia	1.4
14	Ethiopia	65.8
15	Georgia	5.0
16	Honduras	6.6
17	Hungary	10.2
18	Iceland	0.3
19	Italy	57.7
20	Japan	127.1
21	Kuwait	2.0
22	Latvia	2.3
23	Lithuania	3.5
24	Macedonia	2.0
25	Marshall Islands	0.1
26	Micronesia	0.1
27	Mongolia	2.4
28	Netherlands	16.0
29	Nicaragua	5.2
30	Palau	0.0
31	Panama	2.9
32	Philippines	77.0
33	Poland	38.7
34	Portugal	10.2
35	Romania	22.4
36	Rwanda	8.7
37	Singapore	4.1
38	Slovakia	5.4
39	Solomon Islands	0.4
40	South Korea	47.6
41	Spain	39.5
42	Turkey	66.2
43	Uganda	22.8
44	United Kingdom	59.9
45	United States	284.0
46	Uzbekistan	25.1
	TOTAL	1,170.5
	AS % OF WORLD TOTAL	19.1

* according to State Department reports, as of March 24, 2003.
Population figures from World Bank, *World Development Report 2003*.