The use of force after Iraq

Dr Rod Lyon

While debate swirls in Australia about the ongoing conflict in Iraq, there are a series of larger strategic issues that arise after more than five years of the War on Terror. One of those issues concerns how we should think about the future use of force in the aftermath of the Iraq intervention and its consequences.

The conflict in Iraq has been deeply divisive. Some say Iraq was a strategic misstep in the broader War on Terror. Others say it is the War on Terror that is the misstep, because terrorism is not a genuine strategic threat at all. Have our ideas about use of force been knocked askew by the events of S11? And is it possible for Western countries — including Australia — to return to the use of force doctrines they employed in the latter half of the twentieth century?

That earlier understanding of the use of force was itself profoundly shaped by the security environment of the time. In the first half of the twentieth century, the world was torn by two massively destructive world wars. The invention of nuclear weapons in 1945 helped to quell the enthusiasm for war, and to transform strategic contests between the world's great powers into 'cold' rather than 'hot' wars. Cold wars were composed of arms races, threats, swaggering behaviour, and doctrines of deterrence. Force was 'used' primarily in indirect rather than direct ways.

Robert Art, the US international relations theorist, was later to call this use of force 'gravitational', precisely because its effects — like gravity's — were important but invisible. With the first-order strategic contest primarily waged through a gravitational use of force, the direct use of force ('hot' war) became limited to second-order strategic contests. Those contests were fought for limited objectives with limited force commitments.

After the Cold War, a new age of humanitarian intervention suggested that force could serve moral imperatives, 'saving strangers' to use Nicholas Wheeler's term. The idea of a 'responsibility to protect' took root. Yet those missions typically fell into the category of 'operations other than war'. None suggested the existence of a first-order strategic threat to Western societies: like the limited wars of the Cold War, they too were undertaken as responses to second-order challenges.

Then came 11 September, 2001. An era began which saw the direct use of force against Western homelands. Moreover, those threats came from adversaries that did not compete in arms races, ignored threats and swaggering, and seemed undeterrable. Against such opponents, gravitational use of force looked distinctly less useful. For the first time in decades, Western countries turned to 'hot' war to address direct threats to their nations.

That's when a wave of arguments broke out. Were terrorists actual 'war'-fighters? Could military force address the terrorist threat? Should Western strategic priorities be rearranged to focus on that threat? Were great power threats now less important — even obsolete? Should procurement policies be changed?

Is terrorism strategically significant? Not always: not all varieties of terrorism are equally threatening. Most terrorists still prefer many people watching and not many people dying, as the old saw goes. But globalised, catastrophic terrorism (what David Rapoport would call '4th-wave' terrorism) is much more worrying. Clausewitz believed war was the continuation of politics by other means. Fourth-wave terrorists, typically motivated by religious fundamentalism, see war as the continuation of religion by other means.

After the events of S11, the United States led two international wars, one in Afghanistan and the other in Iraq. The war in Afghanistan was intended to depose the Taliban and to put to flight those Al Qaeda members and supporters basing themselves there. This war fitted well with Western notions that force should be used reactively and discriminately. Even today, most Western publics judge the war in Afghanistan as a legitimate war.

Iraq, on the other hand, was essentially a preventive war. Saddam was not the secret mastermind behind the events of S11. But without S11, the war in Iraq would not have taken place. It was a war intended to slow the slippage of the international security environment towards the crossroads where radicalism would meet the technologies of mass destruction (to paraphrase the US National Security Strategy of 2002). It was a war meant to counter the possibility that Al Qaeda — a radical Sunni extremist group — might access WMD (or relevant technologies) from a Sunni regime which could provide those technologies and hated the US.

And so the coalition of the willing overthrew Saddam. But because the conflict was preventive, the gains from intervention in Iraq have been largely abstract, while the costs have been real. Those real costs have confirmed for many Western observers that force is still best used in accordance with the old, reactive model of warfare rather than the newer proactive model.

So where to now for force planners? Well, here we hit a snag, because use of force doctrines are essentially shaped by judgments about strategic needs. Gravitational use of force has proved an effective and important constraint on great power conflict. And at least in Asia, great power relationships are shifting as a long period of relative stability in the regional security order comes to an end. So we can't walk away from the great power game.

Moreover, there are deep strategic imperatives here for the global balance as well as the regional one: a world in which Western liberal democracies did not exercise predominance in military force — and accrue the gravitational advantages that come from that predominance — would be a much more dangerous and unstable one.

But nor should we understate the challenges to Western security that now arise from an assortment of weak adversaries. Coming to grips with those adversaries has proven extraordinarily demanding over the past five years or so. And this should not be understood merely as a short-term contest between Western countries and Al-Qaeda. The historical waves that Al Qaeda is surfing — towards smaller war-making units and greater technological diffusion — will be with us into the indefinite future.

Our problem, of course, is that we honestly don't know just how 'strong' those small war-making structures can become. We are genuinely uncertain about their capacities. Moreover, as we have become more interested in small, radicalized groups as potential security threats we have simultaneously become more aware of their capacity to exploit the weak governance structures of fragile states. So intervention missions in fragile states have taken on a whole new meaning: they are no longer merely exercises in humanitarian intervention.

All this means we now confront a world of enormous strategic complexity. Regardless of the outcome in Iraq, we will have to cope with that world, and coping will sometimes mean that we need to use force. During coming decades it is not merely likely but certain that Western militaries will be using force both gravitationally and directly, across a wide range of missions, and often in tandem with other policy instruments. Iraq might have temporarily soured the public's support for preventive war, but we cannot simply retreat to the Cold War paradigm. We will need to retain options to employ force creatively in a world of diverse threats.

The Use Of Force: Asymmetric War and the Ill-Chosen Battlefield.

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The world is currently in a phase of asymmetric warfare. By that I mean hostilities in which the two sides have available to them different weapons, and use different strategies and tactics. Government forces still on the whole are based on traditional structures and use conventional tactics; the 'non-state actors' on the other side use, at the moment, urban guerrilla tactics mostly, in Iraq and elsewhere. President Bush has tried to create a sort of moral halo round the operations there by calling them part of the 'War on Terror', but more and more they in fact approximate to a Hobbesian 'war of all against all.' The conflict includes a civil war between Sunni and Shia for eventual political control of Iraq, a nationalist campaign against the occupation forces, assorted tribal and clan operations to pay off old scores, and the jihadists' war against the US. That last is the only one which has any relation to the War on Terror, and it probably constitutes the smallest element in the overall disaster.

That disaster was to my mind entirely predictable from the original US choice of Iraq as an allegedly advantageous battlefield. There is no doubt at all that this was a 'war of choice', one that some Pentagon intellectuals had been wanting ever since the slightly inconclusive outcome of the Gulf War of 1990-1. The then Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, urged it on the President as early as November 2001, when the first troops were being sent to Afghanistan. In the words of one of the most influential journalistic hawks, the enterprise was to change 'the internal structure of Arab regimes and in a larger sense the culture of the Arab/Islamic world' to something 'more democratic and tranquil and accomodationist.' Quite an ambition, but the choice of Iraq as the battlefield to achieve it is inexplicable, save on the basis of Bob Woodward's remark about the policy-makers and others he was interviewing for his three books on the war, 'the level of ignorance was pitiable'.

Even among Republicans in Washington, the Iraq invasion is now widely considered to have been one of the most disastrous strategic errors of recent US military history, worse in its prospective consequences than Vietnam. In my view it was the same error, or perhaps pair of errors, repeated: the wrong choice of battlefield, and under-rating the enemy. Vietnam until the final push of 1975 had also been waged as asymmetric war, though that term was not current at the time. It did not seem to come into widespread use until the jihadists' attack on the US destroyer Cole in 2000, and perhaps ought to be reserved for operations after that date.

Obviously, conventional armies since at least Roman times have been confronted with local resistance forces conducting guerrilla operations of varying levels against them, but the current jihadist operations seem to deserve that more portentous name on three grounds. First, that their ambitions are global: nothing less than a change in the structure of power in the society of states, which actually makes their campaign a hegemonial war, at least in aspiration. Second, that their capacity to mount operations is also world-wide. Third, that their target is mostly the disruption of civilian life, though military targets like the Cole are chosen when opportunity offers. Possibly the change of name will do something to step up efforts to combat this form of warfare more effectively. It certainly will not be advanced if there should be another choice of so ill-considered a battlefield as Iraq (like Iran, for instance).

The most relevant battlefields are within the Western world, and the most vital operations are those of intelligence and police services. But this current kind of threat has two things in common with the old terrorist operations, like those of the IRA against the British government. First, it may well be a 'generational' struggle. When you defeat asymmetric opponents, they do not stay defeated. They withdraw, lie low for a while, and raise their sons to resume the struggle. Second, they can operate with remarkable economy of means: the IRA conducted its campaign against successive British governments for thirty years (1969-1999) on the basis, allegedly, of only about 200 agents 'on active service' at any one time. So they are a formidable threat, and deserve more careful analysis than they have been getting, especially on the political side. As someone once said, there are no military solutions available, only political ones.

A war to end war? Hardly

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Rod Lyon makes an important point in recognising that the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the continuing violence there will affect the future of the use of force — whether, why and how it is employed. Yet that impact will be less straightforward, and probably less profound, than the war's magnitude as a US strategic error might suggest.

There is debate aplenty in security circles about what Iraq means for the shape and conduct of future wars. Views differ over how much the insurgent tactics in Iraq might be replicated, notably in Afghanistan. Iraq has also sharpened arguments over how the United States and its allies should allocate resources in reshaping their militaries — between being better prepared to fight insurgencies in unstable states, or updating their capability for interstate wars that may never occur. These are necessary deliberations, though they should begin with the caveat that the next war is never like the last. I will confine my comments, however, to some aspects of what Iraq might mean for future decisions by Western states, including Australia, to employ armed force.

The Iraq morass, with no pleasant end in sight, has cut short Washington's avowed post-9/11 willingness to launch large-scale and pre-emptive military action. The full cost of what was essentially a war of choice is only now becoming apparent to much of the US population. Trauma such as 24,000 US wounded will linger in the public imagination.

Nor will the political distortion of what turned out to be inaccurate intelligence as a rationale for war be forgotten easily. This legacy of mistrust may make many countries, including US allies, hesitate even more than they otherwise might about resorting to force, even when faced with substantial warnings of genuine future threats.

Still, well before Iraq, many citizens of liberal democracies were already heaven-bent on convincing themselves that force need have little place in their comfortable existence. Iraq has reinforced those perceptions: many in Europe, especially, see the carnage in Baghdad as Washington's problem, not theirs. Disturbingly, parts of Western public opinion have even begun conflating Iraq and Afghanistan, seeing both as places to be out of, even though the latter has long been one of the right theatres to fight Islamist terrorism.

Yet it is deeply premature to pronounce the demise of military might in US or wider Western policy.

The shock of 9/11 changed the US more than Iraq has, or will. Iraq may have stressed and damaged the US military machine — the army and marines anyway — but it has also

put it through a ferocious test. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the US has proven a willingness to inflict and to sustain large-scale casualties. This should belie any perception among others — such as China — that the US politically was capable of waging war only of the minimal-risk kind seen in Kosovo in 1999. Rational states are not likely to call Washington's military bluff any time soon.

Another large-scale terrorist assault on the US would again almost certainly prompt a forceful response by Washington, somehow, somewhere. Indeed, a fresh show of strength by the US might not even require such blunt provocation. Some observers suggest that the muddle and humiliation of the Iraq experience could foster a strategic timidity in Washington not unlike the malaise following Vietnam. An alternative version of 'Iraq syndrome', however, might be a yearning in Washington for a clear, swift show of force elsewhere, to reaffirm America's predominance and self-confidence. If the 1991 Iraq war went a long way to vanquishing Vietnam syndrome, what will bring catharsis this time around?

We may have had a foretaste with the US airstrike on Al Qaeda elements in Somalia during the wider conflict there earlier this year. The world can expect more such opportunistic military forays, though probably not against Iran, or in any other situation where the consequences could easily spin out of control.

In short, then, Iraq has dulled any US appetite for new conflicts of the regime-changing, nation-building or otherwise open-ended sort, but not for the use of force in general.

As for the rest of the West, the picture is mixed. Those in Europe already unconvinced that armed forces can be good for much more than peaceful tasks will remain so. Those more persuaded that force sometimes remains a necessary part of foreign policy — notably the UK and to some extent France — will stick to their guns. It will, however, be even harder after Iraq for the US to cobble together 'coalitions of the willing'. Even in Afghanistan, where NATO has staked its credibility, the only rush of volunteers is that of countries vying for the safer jobs in the quieter provinces.

Australia, with its recent decision to send special forces back to Afghanistan, is one of the few US allies willing to risk battle there. The shifting currents in the use of armed force in recent times, including as a result of Iraq, have not passed Australia by. In particular, a painful confluence of circumstances has increased expectations of Australia — whether we heed them or not — to contribute troops to missions overseas, despite the modest size of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). In this, Australia may be paying the price of its own cleverness: its record of carrying out many operations at manageable political cost and with barely any casualties.

Washington's expectations of Canberra will endure, and probably rise further, partly because some other allies and partners are less likely after Iraq to join US-led coalitions. Pressure may build on Australia to do more to share daily risk on a large scale. We do not know how Australian political will would cope with dozens of casualties, as sustained by Canada. Meanwhile the stress Iraq has placed on the US army and marines suggests that

our powerful ally will be even less forthcoming than during the 1999 East Timor crisis in offering ground forces if we needed help with large-scale stabilisation operations in our neighbourhood.

All of which means that the legacy of Iraq will add to a growing list of long-term demands on the ADF — whatever future Australian governments may come to determine as their deployments of necessity and their conflicts of choice.

Responding to Darfur: Mired in the Sands of Mesopotamia

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For some time now, it has been clear that the decision by the United States and its close allies to invade and occupy Iraq in early 2003 was a strategic blunder of monumental proportions. The rapid descent into massive internal violence in that country has been triggered by a combination of deep-seated sectarian divisions unleashed by the toppling of Saddam Hussein, and incompetent post-invasion administration by Washington. The present clamour among most American political elites for a speedy withdrawal from Iraq is a telling testament to how toxic the situation has become.

The most salient strategic by-products of the Iraq conflict have been well canvassed: it has strengthened Iran's position in the Persian Gulf by creating a power vacuum within the borders of its largest neighbour; it has allowed a further influx of jihadists into the region that has undermined the prospects for victory in Afghanistan; and it has seriously damaged the credibility of the United States as the leading great power in the Middle East.

Less obvious is that the adverse strategic implications of Iraq go well beyond the Middle East. Loss of prestige in Iraq means that the United States is now much less likely in the short to medium term to employ military force to achieve its foreign policy objectives — we need only look at the underlying tone of statements from the Democratic-dominated Congress to understand that.

For many, of course, this is cause for celebration rather than consternation. From this vantage point, the key lesson of Iraq is that using force against a sovereign state without UN authorisation means operating without a legitimate mandate from the international community. This imposes real political limits on the ground. Shia militias, Ba'athists, and Sunni Islamists have all been able to claim that they are simply resisting American-imposed occupation of their country. It's highly unlikely that a UN-badged operation would have been dogged by similar charges of illegitimacy.

Yet America's willingness to use force in the world can be just as much a force for good as it can be a force for instability. We need only look as far as the single most pressing humanitarian crisis since Rwanda to appreciate that. The conflict in Darfur began to unfold in July 2003 and has involved the Sudanese government systematically targeting various ethnic tribal groups in the western part of the country. The UN has estimated that almost half a million people have perished as a direct result of the conflict and that two and a half million have been internally displaced.

In prosecuting a deliberate campaign of ethnic cleansing, the government in Khartoum has resisted international calls for the insertion of a UN force to supplant the ineffectual African Union force. This has included dismissing UN Security Council resolution 1706 passed in 2006 aimed at achieving a strong UN presence in the region. The UN has, so far at least, baulked at designating the conflict "genocide".

The US Congress has had no such qualms, with a 2004 resolution recommending the Bush administration call the Sudan government's actions "by its rightful name: 'genocide'".

Over the past fifteen years, significant debate has occurred over the issue of armed humanitarian intervention – the use of force to protect the human rights of people within a defined territorial space. Those who support it as a policy option argue that the international community has an important moral obligation to safeguard communities from genocide and ethnic cleansing and that sovereignty should be seen as being conditional on a state's willingness to satisfy basic standards of common humanity as defined in the UN Charter. The counter-argument from those uncomfortable with armed humanitarian intervention is that diluting the principle of sovereignty is a recipe for instability in international relations and that determining the appropriate threshold for intervention (e.g. should it be 5,000 or 50,000 dead?) is fraught with difficulty.

There is a strong normative foundation — enshrined in written and customary international law — that genocide and ethnic cleansing are unacceptable state practices in international relations. And, from a hard power perspective, the reality is that only the United States has the force projection capabilities successfully to lead a mission aimed at terminating the genocide in Darfur.

But the potency of these two compelling facts has been subverted by the intervention in Iraq which has dealt a severe blow to the project for humanitarian intervention. By opportunistically invoking some of the central arguments put forward by proponents of armed humanitarian intervention to justify action against Iraq, the Bush administration has seriously tainted US credibility to lead such operations in the future.

As Lawrence Kaplan recently argued in the *The New Republic*, many advocates of decisive action against the Sudanese government have compounded the leadership legitimacy issue for Washington by naively insisting that any intervention can *only* take place with a resolution from the UN Security Council. As we have seen, for a variety of reasons, Beijing and Moscow will not allow the Council to approve an intervention force in Sudan. China and Russia can continue to point to the corrosive effects of the Iraq intervention as a way of disguising narrow economic and sovereignty reasons not to hold the government in Sudan to account.

All but the most myopic of the disciples of Edward Luttwak — who famously railed against the logic of humanitarian intervention in the late 1990s — would concede that the Darfur crisis constitutes an extreme humanitarian emergency, on a par with anything that took place during the 1990s. Bill Clinton is on record as saying US inaction over Rwanda in 1994 was the single biggest regret of his presidency. One may wonder whether George W. Bush will come to have similar regrets over not acting unilaterally to stop the genocide in Darfur.

Force and War After Iraq: Old Wine, New Bottles?

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In bridging the gap between the War on Terror and the more conventional motivation of regime change, the Iraq conflict shows how blurry our ideas about force and war have become. Indeed, key questions about war's purposes remain unanswered. Have radical globalised terror networks engendered a fundamentally new and enduring kind of conflict, which even the Pentagon refers to as a 'Long War'? Or does war largely retain old motives, despite new ways in which force is employed? The distinction is not just a semantic one. Either way, the answer has direct implications for how to respond in an uncertain strategic environment.

It seems self-evident that much of the War on Terror is a reaction to new types of armed conflict. Whether in Palestine, Lebanon, southern Thailand, the Philippines, Chechnya, or Iraq, similar patterns have emerged. 'New wars' are linked to failed and failing states. They operate outside the rules we associate with modern warfare. They engender warlordism, kidnappings, militias, and draw in new actors on a conflict's margins. They feature new economics via convenient alliances linking terrorists to organised criminal gangs, and new tactics that make civilians primary targets. War today even seems to be waged as an end in itself. Terrorists and insurgents often lack clearly articulated objectives, chains of command, and central operational bases. Protagonists fight because their radical ideologies stipulate violence as the only recourse. Under such conditions, terror becomes globalised, facilitated by modern communications, and underpinned by a politics of resentment directed squarely at the West.

So what should we do? Can we fight ideas, if that's what 'new wars' are? One prescription is to retreat from force doctrines and foster a more cosmopolitan global civil society. This envisages joining the war of ideas with our own 'hearts and minds' campaigns: to launch dialogues that ameliorate the bifurcation between what Robert Kaplan called the West's privileged 'First Man', and the disenfranchised 'Last Man'.

However, if this view about war is wrong, such a policy prescription could be dangerous. At worst, conciliatory dialogue and Western-style development could lead to fresh accusations of cultural and economic imperialism, unifying radical groups and creating a global civilisational clash by proxy. At best, it could resemble little more than an intercultural love-in. Would terrorists be invited to the negotiating table? Even if they were (and they showed up), what promises could they make, and would they have the authority to enforce them?

So let's consider the counterargument: that today's 'new' wars aren't that new at all. First, warlords, kidnappings, transnational crime, and mass civilian deaths have been routine features of interstate and civil conflicts. Second, 'new' wars remain rooted in traditional notions of territory. Al Qaeda, Abu Sayyaf, Afghan warlords, Chechen

fighters and Jemaah Islamiyah all need real estate and resources to govern and secure if they are to run viable societies. Little wonder, then, that these groups repeatedly identify those most enduring of motives – self-determination and statehood – as ultimate objectives.

Finally, 'new' conflicts are guided by elites like Bin Laden, Basayev, and Bakar Bashir. And when elite motivations cross over from esoteric ideas into the material realm we are on even more familiar ground. Radical ideas remain powerful instruments, capable of mobilizing Chechen 'black widows', Afghan *mujahideen*, or foreigners to serve as footsoldiers in Iraq. The task is simplified because unlike states, terrorists don't need policies, governance institutions, or to rely on popular preferences. Yet the underlying determinants, and thus the overriding strategic rationales, are all about using force for pragmatic ends.

It's a case, perhaps, of old wine in new bottles. If so, then calling for 'global alliances' – as Tony Blair is fond of doing –could be as problematic as cosmopolitanism. Treating what are often small, localised conflicts as part of an overarching global 'War on Terror' oversimplifies the threat, not to mention making wars like Iraq appear logical ways to employ force.

Here we need to make the distinction that war and force are not synonymous, either for terrorists or states. Fundamentally, terrorists use force against states rather than waging systematic wars upon them. 9/11 reminds us that force is diffuse, and not the sole preserve of nation-states. In fact, it never has been: we've merely assumed that states are best placed to harness and control it. And while that's fine to explain great power contestation, it has less relevance for understanding asymmetric conflict.

Iraq, meanwhile, reminds us that Cold War lessons of deterrence and containment aren't always enduring policy principles. War *can*, in fact, be waged preventively. Nonetheless, doing so is costly. So-called 'rogue' states can be coerced, constrained, co-opted or cajoled much more effectively than terrorists. Such approaches also sidestep the need to prevent disruptions to fragile local power balances with long-term commitments to state-building.

Force, though, remains integral to strategy, especially when myriad threats keep crossing what we once regarded as neat levels of analysis. Force is useful, whether attacking convoys of insurgent leaders with Predator drones, or performing 'snatch-and-grab' raids. Unfortunately, state sovereignty will sometimes be the victim. But that should hardly be surprising given that violating sovereignty has frequently been the norm, and not the exception.

We will also need to develop ways to use force more effectively. That's an oft-repeated mantra amongst strategic policy analysts, but putting it into action is trickier. For one thing, we should remember that using force doesn't always mean making war. Second, we must remember that waging war means more than battlefield victories. Thus, just as we should not overestimate the novelty of contemporary conflict, we should also be

mindful about war's implications. As the Iraqi experience demonstrates, such decisions can't be taken lightly.

The De-Territorialisation of the Use of Force

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It has become commonplace to ridicule the term 'War on Terror'. Terrorism, I have been informed by many an earnest undergraduate, is a tactic; one fights wars against adversaries, not tactics.

I am not convinced. Even if in the aftermath of September 11 the United States and its allies had declared a 'War on al Qaeda' and managed to kill or capture Osama bin Laden, the rest of the al Qaeda *shura*, and all of the al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan, it is more than likely that there still would have been major terrorist attacks in Bali, Riyadh, Madrid, Istanbul and London. None of these attacks were carried out by people who could have by any stretch of the imagination been characterised as members of al Qaeda. Specifying an adversary, fighting a 'War on al Qaeda', would have been a major strategic misconception.

To declare war on a form of behaviour rather than a specific adversary is not at all new. Two hundred years ago, the global hegemon, Britain, declared war on international slavery and managed, through enforcement and moral suasion, to bring about an end to the Atlantic slave trade. Today, there are prohibitions against a range of inhumane practices in warfare, with the promise of serious retribution against those who use them.

The 'War on Terror' is not an isolated instance of Bush administration rhetoric escaping the bounds of the rational. It symbolises a gradual change in the use of force that predates September 11. For five hundred years, the international use of force has been highly territorialised. Territorial units have amassed and used force to seize or gain access to others' territory, or to stop others seizing or accessing theirs. Great powers have constructed territorial spheres of influence and buffer zones. The decision to use or not use force has depended on what costs will be borne by the population and society of a given territorial unit.

Force has also been an indispensable ingredient in stabilising given distributions of territory, and building norms governing the behaviour of territorial units. The use of force has played a central role in both defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and using coercion to shape behaviour. States realise that if they behave in a way deemed unacceptable by powerful or numerous others, they will be subject to delegitimisation and disapprobation, perhaps leading to physical sanctions. Inevitably in an anarchic system, there will be a degree of ambiguity about who is misbehaving and who is enforcing, with both sides claiming the moral high ground.

Over time, a set of international understandings has developed concerning the relations between misbehaviour and coercion. Successive crises played an educative function, defining the limits of acceptable and legitimate behaviour and the bounds of a response that is able to restore the integrity of territorial distributions and norms. Coercive responses seen to be unfitting, illegitimate or excessive can lead to defiance

and determination rather than acquiescence, and damage rather than reinforce territorial distributions and norms.

The use of force has shaped state behaviour at two levels. Deterrence relies on disproportionality: certain behaviours are deemed inconceivable to states due to the inevitability of catastrophic retribution against their territories and populations. At a lower level, enforcement relies on proportionality, the careful matching of the coercive response to the scale of the indiscretion and the painstaking sending of signals through the selection of targets. The two levels operate according to very different logics. Deterrence has prevented direct, all-out great power war for over 60 years, but the sheer scale of destruction threatened endangers the very system of states. Enforcement has become more delicate and elaborate over time (contrast Reagan's bombing of Tripoli in 1986 with Clinton's missile strikes on Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998) but has not deterred the opportunistic use of force by states.

Both deterrence and enforcement in a territorial world target the perpetrator because of its behaviour. Misbehaviour sanctions a coercive response against the state that carried it out; but the perpetrator becomes a legitimate target for only as long as it takes to correct or redress the original misbehaviour. The objective is to use the costs to the perpetrator to force it to abandon or desist from a certain behaviour.

This territorialised world still exists and still shapes the use of force. But over the past two decades there has also occurred a de-territorialisation of the use of force. Actors with no territorial possessions, loyalties or connections have been able to use increasingly potent force, with important implications for how states have begun to use force. Terrorists and violent criminals cannot muster the scale of violence available to states, but their increasing brutality and malevolence works through group psychology and democratic politics to make states respond with measures disproportional to the possible harm that these perpetrators can do to their societies.

The effectiveness of the tactics used by jihadist terrorists and newly violent criminal groups ensures their popularity, and the internet and electronic media facilitates their broad adoption by a range of different groups. This breaks down the coercive practices that have grown up around the territorialised use of force. Identifying and punishing particular perpetrators for only as long as it takes to correct or redress the original misbehaviour will be utterly ineffective in eradicating terrorist and criminal uses of violence. Hence the focus on the behaviour itself with a view to destroying rather than reforming its perpetrators, and the shift from enforcement (the proportionate and carefully targeted use of force) to deterrence (the use of force designed to have catastrophic effects on its perpetrators).

This signals a new form of governance of the use of force in the international system. Rather than the occasional and calibrated administration of coercion among a small group of self-regarding units, the world of transnational threats has moved to something akin to a policing response. From money laundering to illicit WMD proliferation to jihadist violence, states are establishing behavioural regimes and policing them with co-ordinated, coercive frameworks. Increasingly, force is being threatened and used not in response to *faits accompli*, but to buttress a system of close surveillance of behaviour against exacting evaluative frameworks.

The danger is that the territorialised and de-territorialised imperatives on the use of force prove incompatible. Arguably, the latter has dragged the Bush administration into a disproportionate use of American power, thereby triggering a widespread perception of the illegitimacy of the national and systemic interests it is seeking to enforce. In the years ahead, the challenge for the United States and its allies will be to calibrate enforcement responses to de-territorialised force with the enduring systemic requirements of the territorial system.

Concluding remarks on the use of force forum

Dr Rod Lyon

Let me begin by thanking the contributors to the discussion for their input and ideas. The range of their contributions underlines just how diverse the issues regarding use of force have become. From several of the contributions, one can detect a sense that we are still struggling to come to terms with the current international security environment and its principal characteristics.

Michael Wesley points to the 'deterritorialisation' of conflict as a major test for policy-makers, not least because it pulls so sharply against the traditional Westphalian territorialism in our understanding of use of force. This is a valuable distinction; one that should warn us against attempts to find victory in any particular locale. Coral Bell's suggestion that Iraq represents the 'ill-chosen battlefield' contains resonances of this theme. I am not entirely persuaded by her argument that 'the most relevant battlefields are within the Western world' — though part of the struggle must certainly be waged there — because I think the approach too defensive in its orientation. Still, what is certain is that the deterritorialisation of conflict brings major challenges to the fore, and we all share a desire to transform such conflict into something with which we are more familiar.

I see Matt Sussex's piece in much the same light: that it looks for parallels in current dilemmas on use of force in relation to former models. This forms the basis for his 'old wine, new bottles' argument, in which the practitioners of 'new war' tend still to be the educated, national elites wanting their own turn to control national resources and territory. The implication of this argument — and other well-credentialed scholars argue it alongside Matt — is that we should be trying to help build a distinct caliphate for Islamic radicals. This is an important issue. In some ways, it also goes to the core of whether or not we can return use of force issues to a territorial setting, by reining 'new war' back to the old settings.

Rory Medcalf argues that we need to look beyond the carnage in Iraq to recognize that force is not about to wither as a Western policy option, although the enthusiasm for using force to effect regime-change and nation-building might well be diluted for a time. I think this fits with my own expectations of what the next decade might look like; that it will feature many more instances in which we play the game of discrete, discriminate force applications rather than repeat the Iraq adventure. Even if we do suspect possible future WMD linkages to terrorists from a specific state, we will probably be looking for a different way to skin the cat.

And finally Andrew O'Neill reminds us that force can still foster good outcomes in the world as well as bad. Force itself is a neutral instrument. Its underuse as a policy instrument can have consequences almost as unfortunate as its overuse, as events in Darfur attest. Righting our understanding of force after Iraq will entail a greater rehearsing of the idea that force is not always bad. O'Neill's argument is also capable of bearing a strategic extension to what is essentially a humanitarian point: in certain hard cases, policy-makers will decide to use force in the simple belied that outcomes will be worse if they don't use it.

The debate over the proper use of force will not wane soon in Australia. This forum is merely a contribution to that debate and not a resolution of it. But we have to come to terms with the world after S11. A return to the ‘golden days’ of yesteryear is not open to us.