That adversaries will seek to prevent U.S. action by denying the United States access to territory and airspace is to be expected. That geography and nature itself will sometimes pose constraints, from mountain ranges to bad weather, is a fact of life. But what options exist when friends, allies, or neutral states deny the United States the use of their facilities and airspace or even of U.S. assets located on their soil? Insofar as the United States must respect such states’ sovereignty over their own territory, these entities can prevent U.S. actions without using violence or force simply by saying “no.” Unlike adversary-imposed constraints such as the destruction of base facilities or simple physical constraints such as distance, these diplomatic constraints on access present both advantages and disadvantages for military planners. While far more difficult to predict and hence to plan for, diplomatic constraints are at least somewhat susceptible to diplomatic counterefforts. Unlike an adversary or Mother Nature, states may be convinced to reverse their opposition to U.S. operations, thereby alleviating the problem.

One might expect that the network of relationships that exists between the United States and its friends and allies worldwide would help limit the number of occasions in which diplomatic access constraints emerge. The U.S. military has an excellent record of cooperation with a great many countries—a record that has facilitated U.S. access abroad for a wide range of activities. Yet there is tremendous variability to these relationships, and the links between ties and access can often prove tenuous indeed. Some of the United States’ closest friends and allies have, for example, denied the United States the right to overfly their airspace for certain operations, as did Greece
with regard to NATO combat aircraft during Operation Allied Force. Other friends, however, have proven more open to persuasion. Hungary, for example, allowed NATO combat forces to base on its soil for that same operation despite strong internal reservations about the impact cooperation with NATO might have on the ethnic Hungarian population in Serb-controlled Vojvodina.

Understanding how circumstances have affected other countries’ decisions about U.S. access in the past can help the USAF better prepare for contingencies to come. In this chapter, we will discuss the history of U.S. access around the world, region by region, to draw lessons that will help planners and others lay a firmer groundwork for ensuring adequate access in the future.

THREE KINDS OF ACCESS

Permanent Presence

The presence of U.S. forces abroad, in bases or facilities that are operated by the United States either alone or in concert with host countries, constitutes an important kind of access. Today, the United States has substantial base presence (often referred to as “permanent” presence) in several NATO countries as well as in Japan, in Korea, and at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

With the exception of the Guantanamo Bay facility, all such permanent basing is hosted by allies that the United States is committed by treaty to defend. In fact, these garrisons—which have often served as focal points for U.S. military operations overseas—were established in large part to better equip the United States to effectively defend the countries in question. However, host-nation approval for use of these bases and facilities in missions not directly related to their intended purpose—defense of the host’s territory—is by no means assured.

In Europe, the threat that for many years justified the ongoing U.S. presence there has largely evaporated. The risks of war in Korea, on the other hand, are such that allied support for the United States in the event of a conflict is virtually assured regardless of other disagreements with Seoul and Tokyo. In other situations, however, host countries may have little incentive to support U.S. actions that might
conflict with their own interests. NATO ally Turkey, for example, did not allow the use of U.S. forces stationed at Incirlik to counter Iraqi intervention in the Kurdish civil war in 1996. Moreover, there are concerns that U.S. forces in Japan might not be permitted to participate should the United States decide to actively support Taiwan in a struggle with Mainland China.¹

Mission Presence

In addition to permanent forward presence, the United States maintains substantial “mission” presence in countries where there is an ongoing military mission but to which there may or may not be a treaty commitment. The presumption in many of these contexts is that when the mission is over, U.S. troops will leave, as is the case with the current deployments in Saudi Arabia supporting Operation Southern Watch. Also in the mission-presence category are smaller deployments—such as the continuing naval and air support activities in Singapore—that lack the breadth and capability to qualify as true forward presence but that nonetheless contribute to the overall U.S. posture abroad. Missions of this sort may include defense of the host country and its interests, as in Kuwait and Oman, or may simply serve mutual needs, as in Australia. As with forward presence, however, having troops in place is no guarantee of the U.S. right to use them however and whenever it wishes. As noted previously, for example, Saudi Arabia has repeatedly prevented planned U.S. air strikes on Iraq when it has not shared the U.S. view of the necessity for strikes.

Limited Access

Finally, there are those countries where the United States maintains no forces on a regular basis but where its troops visit on occasion to assist in training, for exercises, or to take part in contingency operations. On each such occasion, of course, U.S. presence is subject to the invitation and/or approval of the host.

When it comes to employing U.S. forces in actual operations, existing arrangements for limited access can be helpful but, like permanent and mission presence, is hardly definitive. On the one hand, the physical presence of U.S. forces in place may make it easier for nations hosting ongoing U.S. deployments to permit use of their bases and facilities for contingency operations. However, many countries may for internal political and cultural reasons be sensitive to the long-term presence of foreign troops on their soil and attempts to negotiate ongoing access with these partners may thus be counterproductive. On the other hand, leveraging limited-access arrangements with such countries can help secure additional access when needed.

**Formal Agreements and the Determinants of Access**

Within all three of these access categories there is substantial variation in the extent to which U.S. presence is governed by formal agreements or arrangements. In some cases, explicit provisions exist governing access to the country and its facilities. In other instances, there may be an agreement regarding the legal status of U.S. troops in the country but little more. With some countries, including Saudi Arabia and several of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) states, no agreements of any sort exist, and issues are handled on a case-by-case basis.

In fact, neither the extent of U.S. presence nor the formalization of access arrangements appears to be a decisive factor governing whether a country will grant access to the United States in a given situation. To the extent that these arrangements and levels of U.S. presence reflect shared security needs, access will almost certainly be granted if both states feel it is necessary to meet those needs. Beyond that, however, no such guarantees exist.

Students of alliance behavior will not find this surprising. After all, it has been estimated that countries join their allies in war only about one-quarter of the time. Although this estimate may not be heartening, these odds are significantly higher than those of nonallies fighting alongside one another. Thus, it does not seem unreasonable

---

2Smith (1996), p. 17; see also Siverson and King (1980).
to assume that while presence and formal commitments may not guarantee access, they are likely to improve the chances that access will be granted. The historical record appears to support this assumption.

Another contributing factor that is potentially even more important than presence—because presence, after all, is limited to only a few countries—may be political-military ties and relations. Close military-to-military ties by and large suggest at least some shared security interests and are thus potentially indicative of a proclivity to cooperate in pursuit of common goals. U.S. military ties with other countries are diverse, ranging from the mutual defense commitments noted above to programs of contacts and exercises that may or may not be backed by formal agreements. Such formal agreements also vary, comprising those that regulate military assistance; those that formalize access arrangements, as discussed above; and agreements and arrangements regarding contacts, arms sales, and the like. Not all states with which the United States has contacts have arrangements that spell out such agreements; in some cases, these are states with which ties are comparatively close—as witness, once again, Saudi Arabia.

The U.S. experience with the combination of presence, ties, and access varies from region to region, as each part of the world presents both different access needs and different political and diplomatic environments. It is therefore crucial to consider each such region separately, both to draw appropriate lessons from the past and to better define future needs. Conclusions about access that can be derived from these regional analyses can to some extent be generalized, and similar patterns are evident across the regions. However, as far as actual basing and operations are concerned, it behooves us to identify issues that are region-specific, so that strategies can be devised to address each.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND PROSPECTS

Europe

In many ways, Europe is the United States’ access gateway to much of the rest of the world. The United States has relied on its substan-
tial forward presence in Europe not only for local missions, but also for operations in the Middle East and Africa. Moreover, while the need has not yet emerged for such a contingency, Europe could readily be considered a potential base for efforts in South Asia as well.\footnote{Indeed, European bases have been deeply involved in supporting the counter-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan.} Europe’s rich infrastructure, modern economies, and strong historical ties to the United States have made it an obvious choice to support and facilitate a wide range of combat, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations—a situation that can be expected to continue. An obvious example was Desert Storm, in which an entire corps of U.S. Army forces stationed in Europe was moved to Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the large number of forces on the ground, U.S. military ties with European states not only are substantial but have grown over the past decade. Half a century of security commitment to NATO has now been expanded to embrace three new NATO members. Moreover, the NATO PfP initiative, which the United States sponsored, has increased the cooperation sphere to include 17 additional European countries and several Central Asian states. While there is no security commitment on the part of the United States to the non-NATO PfP states, there are substantial and growing programs of military contacts with several of them. Further, the desire on the part of several of these countries to achieve full-fledged NATO membership may affect their willingness to support U.S. efforts both in Europe and worldwide.

However, even close friends can disagree. Thus, while overall support has been excellent and relations good, a few outstanding cases point up the kinds of problems that can emerge.

The 1973 airlift to Israel and the Operation El Dorado Canyon strikes on Libya have already been mentioned in this context. In the former case, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Turkey all refused to provide any support to the United States or even to allow U.S. aircraft to overfly their territories,\footnote{Boyne (1998); Comptroller General of the United States (1975); Lund (1990); and Timsar (1981).} while Spain, France, Germany, and Italy turned down requests to support the Libyan
raid.\(^5\) Then, three years after *El Dorado Canyon*, Spain asked that the U.S. 401st Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), based at Torrejon Air Base, leave the country. The public call for the F-16s’ departure was an outgrowth of a 1986 promise by Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez that U.S. presence would be reduced in the face of rising anti-American sentiment in the country. Yet another contributing factor may well have been the participation in the Libyan strike of two KC-10 refueling tankers flying out of Zaragoza without authorization and, according to the Spanish government, without Madrid’s knowledge. While U.S. access to other bases in the country was retained, the United States acceded to Spain’s request, and the fighter wing was moved to Italy.\(^6\)

Most recent U.S. military operations in Europe have focused on the former Yugoslavia, where both the Bosnia and Kosovo actions have included U.S./NATO air strikes. Although these operations were authorized and conducted by NATO, Greece refused to allow the alliance’s combat forces to fly over its territory or to use its bases, although it did provide logistical support and allow humanitarian overflight.\(^7\) Tellingly, Greece’s behavior must be contrasted with that of Albania and Bulgaria, neither of which is a NATO member, and with that of Hungary, which became a NATO member after the Bosnia operation but before Kosovo. All three countries permitted overflight, and Hungary and Albania also hosted U.S. and NATO forces on their soil. Furthermore, Bulgaria did so despite facing a similar domestic situation to that in Greece, with significant ethno-cultural linkages to the Serbs fueling high levels of public opposition to the bombings. Hungary, in turn, had to overcome substantial domestic concern that its support of NATO actions might endanger the large ethnic Hungarian community in Vojvodina, a region in Serbia.\(^8\)

\(^5\)Boyne (1999); Stanik (1996); Doerner (1986); Hersh (1987); “Allies Wanted ‘All-out’ Attack” (1986); Church (1986); Owen and Brown (1986).

\(^6\)Schumacher (1986); Steele (1987); Riding (1990); Aguirre (1988); Mann (1988); “U.S., Spain Announce Withdrawal of U.S. F-16s” (1988); Cody (1987).

\(^7\)“The First 8 Days” (1999); Abdallah (1999); “Orthodox but Unorthodox” (1999); “Air Ban on Turkish Fighter Planes” (1999); “Stifling U.S. Pressure” (1999).

\(^8\)Tagliabue (1999); “Brave Gamble” (1999); “Balkan States Back NATO” (1999); Jordan (1999a); Jordan (1999b); Szamado (1999); Fitchett (1999); “NATO Deployed” (1999); and Sly (1999). While the governments in question may have differed in the degree to
European access problems have thus been a constraint on U.S. freedom of action. These experiences show that participation in NATO and even a history of the closest possible ties with the United States, as with the United Kingdom, do not ensure that access will be granted. What, then, drives such unwillingness to cooperate?

Fear of reprisal, be it economic or terrorist, was the most common reason European allies cited for their failure to support U.S. policy both in 1973 and in 1986. In fact, Portugal did suffer repercussions for its support of the United States in 1973, enduring a complete cutoff of oil supplies from the Arab states. In 1986, European leaders questioned not only whether the planned U.S. action would invite reprisal but also whether it would be particularly effective in curtailling terrorism. Later reports suggested that evidence linking Libya to the terrorist attack in a Berlin discotheque that served as a spur to the air strikes may not have been entirely convincing to foreign governments. On the other hand, the British prime minister’s justification to Parliament of her decision to grant the United States access was based in part on shared U.S. intelligence.

The more recent Greek situation is somewhat different and considerably less straightforward. What is particularly telling is that NATO member Greece gave in to whatever combination of public opposition and traditional tension with Turkey existed there while other allies and even non-NATO states cooperated with the United States despite what appeared to be equally valid reservations.

Clearly, Greece was willing to take the risk of angering the United States and NATO in refusing to go along with the rest of the alliance. However, it seems clear that Athens understood that anger and dissatisfaction were probably all that it risked, as there was no danger that the alliance would turn its back on this long-time NATO member. Hungary, by contrast, as a new NATO member, feared precisely such a rejection, remaining uncertain as to the solidity of the al-

which they supported NATO’s goals in Kosovo, their dramatically different responses to the crisis—despite many similarities in their situations—would appear to require a more complex explanation.

10Hersh (1987).
11Owen and Brown (1986).
liance’s commitment to its defense and security. Diplomatic efforts on the part of other NATO states and of the alliance as a whole were thus successful in convincing Hungary to open up its territory to NATO aircraft for the Kosovo mission. Bulgaria and Romania, which hope to be invited to join NATO, and Croatia, which has yet to be asked to join the PfP, were even more inclined to respond affirmatively to NATO pressure. The situation was similar in 1973. Portugal, a NATO member, was globally isolated and mired in a colonial war in Africa. Looking for support wherever it might be found, Lisbon was more susceptible to pressure from the United States than were other NATO countries, whose international positions were stronger.\(^{12}\)

The *Allied Force* experience may thus be viewed as featuring several Portugals and, for the short term at least, may be a valuable lesson for European policy. The greater security concerns and perceived dependence on the United States of new NATO members and NATO aspirants may well render such states more cooperative and more susceptible to persuasion than long-term NATO allies such as Greece or France. Supporting this thesis is the fact that PfP partner Ukraine has offered NATO territory for use as a training range, which NATO has accepted.\(^{13}\) Recently, Azerbaijan even raised the possibility of establishing bases on its territory—an offer that has been received with considerable ambivalence by the United States.\(^{14}\)

The extent to which the United States can take advantage of such opportunities depends in part on its ever-evolving relationship with Russia. While ties with the post-Soviet states continue to be built and strengthened, the realization that Russia continues, to varying degrees, to see those states as lying within its sphere of influence has limited the West’s willingness to reach out to them. Russia’s own cooperation in European security since the end of the Cold War has been variable, reflecting its unique interests and concerns. The game of leverage that would be required to make full use of the entire post-Soviet space is thus sufficiently complex that, insofar as other options remain available, too strong a reliance on the post-Soviet states is unlikely and probably inadvisable.

---

\(^{12}\) Timsar (1981).

\(^{13}\) U.S. Defense Secretary, Ukrainian Leaders Discuss” (1999).

\(^{14}\) Baku Asks for US Support” (1999); “Foreign Minister Zulfugarov Says” (1999).
In summary, the situation in Europe continues to be broadly favorable, if only because the options there are so plentiful and diverse that occasional setbacks are fairly easy to overcome. This does not mean, however, that new options should not be pursued, as the experience of being but one country away from mission failure, as occurred with Nickel Grass, is always a possibility. Focusing attention on and building ties with PfP states and Russia may provide just the opportunity the United States will need at some point in the future, while also potentially enhancing its overall reach further east.

Southwest Asia and the Middle East

As already noted, bases and forces in Europe have repeatedly been used to support U.S. operations in the Middle East and North Africa. Turkey, a NATO member that straddles the two regions, has been particularly integral to activities in both regions. But the United States has not relied solely on Europe for its Middle East operations. While U.S. permanent presence as defined above is maintained only in Turkey, the United States has maintained sizable forces in Saudi Arabia since the end of the Gulf War in 1991. While Turkey is the only state in the area to which the United States has a formal security commitment, U.S. airmen, soldiers, and sailors also operate in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, supporting a range of missions that include but are not limited to those related to Gulf security.

Access in the Gulf region has always been limited and case-specific. Before the Gulf War, the U.S. *modus operandi* in the region was to come in, do what it planned to do, and leave. This pattern was determined not by U.S. preferences—indeed, Washington continually pressed for improved and formalized access arrangements—but rather by the refusal of friends, particularly Saudi Arabia, to support a more permanent presence. In fact, of all the Gulf states, Oman is the only one with which the United States has formal access arrangements that predate Desert Storm.

The Saudis have, however, repeatedly granted the United States contingency access. In 1987, when the Iran-Iraq War spilled over into attacks on Saudi and Kuwaiti shipping, the Saudis supported
and facilitated Operation Earnest Will, the U.S. response of reflagging and escorting Kuwaiti ships. \[15\] In 1990, heavy pressure from the United States—coupled with American intelligence sharing that convinced Riyadh of the Iraqi threat to the kingdom—induced the Saudis to permit an enormous deployment of men and equipment to their country. \[16\] Following the Gulf War, Riyadh broke with tradition by allowing the United States to maintain some presence, as did a number of other countries in the region. However, while formal arrangements for access and defense ties have since been negotiated with Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar, Saudi Arabia remains a notable standout, refusing to formalize the relationship in any meaningful and enduring way.

Further, as with the Europeans, the granting of base and facility access to U.S. forces has not guaranteed carte blanche for their use. While no-fly zones continue to be enforced by U.S. and British forces based in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, the use of these bases for additional missions was denied on multiple occasions in 1996, 1997, and 1998. \[17\] Furthermore, persistent Saudi reluctance to allow aircraft based on its territory to engage in punitive strikes against Iraq continues to hinder operations. \[18\]

In some aspects, then, the Gulf story is not altogether different from that in Europe. When U.S. and allied interests have intersected, as was the case with Operations Earnest Will and Desert Shield/Desert Storm, support has been forthcoming. The close ties that the United States had forged with Saudi Arabia and with several of the other Gulf states certainly helped lay the foundation for cooperation—but simple convergence of interests is probably itself a sufficient explanation, with concern over Iraq’s behavior and future potential helping elucidate even Syria’s willingness to support coalition efforts in Desert Storm.

---


\[18\] Jehl (1999).
Because the Gulf War ended with Saddam Hussein still in power, there was some support in the region for permitting some U.S. forces to stay, particularly since that presence has had the sanction of the United Nations. Insofar as actual combat operations against Iraq have been concerned, however, the Saudis and some of their neighbors did not and do not feel comfortable serving as bases for what some see as continued harassment of Iraq. While military action to defend their territories and economies—as had been taken in 1987 and 1991—was acceptable, these more recent strikes have not been seen as advantageous to the host states but have instead been viewed as a potential irritant to Baghdad in a region where grudges can be long-lasting. “You Americans will eventually go home,” the Gulf countries in essence say, “leaving Saddam’s regime intact and us, his neighbors, vulnerable to retribution.” It should not be completely surprising, then, that the Saudis and their neighbors have concluded that they have little to gain from supporting these ongoing and inconclusive U.S. attacks.19

The United States has other friendships in the region, but each has posed its own complications. Jordan, a friend of many years’ standing and a state that the United States has characterized as a “major non-NATO ally,” failed to provide any support during the Gulf War and has opposed several U.S. strikes on Iraq since that time. Amman’s close ties to Iraq as a balancer against Syria have on these occasions outweighed its desire for closer relations with the United States. Israel, also a close friend and a major non-NATO ally, is problematic as a base of operations for reasons relating to the continued uncertainties of its regional position.20 States such as Georgia and Azerbaijan, which are actively courting U.S. friendship and which, like Turkey, span the political geography of Europe and the Middle East, may well be willing to offer additional support. However, their situation is complicated by their relationships with Moscow and by Russia’s desire to maintain (or regain) its influence

---

19Not surprisingly, the most notable exception to this attitude has been Kuwait, which has supported the majority of U.S. actions. Kuwait, of course, continues to feel the greatest threat from Iraq and thus the greatest security dependence on the United States.

20See Khalilzad, Shlapak, and Byman (1997) for a full discussion of these issues.
over former Soviet dominions, as well as by internal challenges to their long-term stability.

Thus, while the Gulf experience with access constraints is not dissimilar to that of Europe, the overall Gulf and Middle East environment is considerably more problematic. Specifically, the lack of strong alliance ties creates a great deal more uncertainty, and failure to ensure the right to use forces located in certain countries, such as Saudi Arabia, continues to plague operations and planning. Moreover, there would appear to be no easy way to ensure that the situation improves in the future. The only obvious solution is to develop alternatives to heavy reliance on any single state such as Saudi Arabia, but this is far from easy in a region whose volatile politics require that U.S. policymakers remain abreast of the nuances of each state’s strategic position prior to asking any favors—or assuming the existence of common goals. Here, more effort at convincing friends and allies of the U.S. position may well be in order. Greater transparency regarding U.S. objectives and more extensive sharing of intelligence could help bring others’ strategic assessments more closely in line with those of the United States, but such steps need to “begin at the beginning” with full awareness of the limitations imposed by regional concerns of too-strong ties to the Americans. In the meantime, the forces in the Gulf remain in place despite the difficulties encountered in actually using them over the past decade.

Asia

Although the United States maintains a strong and sizable presence in East Asia and the Pacific, it has not been involved in any substantial military operations in that region in some time. The level of U.S. political commitment here, however, is quite high. Bilateral defense agreements with Korea, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand and unilateral commitments to provide for the security of the Marshall Islands, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia all promise sustained U.S. involvement. Furthermore, the United States maintains a small number of forces in Singapore and has a

\footnote{Khalilzad et al. (2001), Chapter Four, contains a first-order discussion of USAF basing requirements and options.}
substantial investment in the development and growth of defense ties with a number of other regional states.

Certainly, there is a fair amount of regional agreement that the United States should remain involved in this part of the world. Although it has been some time since anything other than exercises and the occasional humanitarian operation have actively involved U.S. forces here, many in the region believe that the U.S. presence acts as a stabilizing force. Yet opinions regarding what exactly the United States is expected to stabilize vary. Some Asians fear the emergence of a hegemonic China, while others worry about a rearmed and imperialistic Japan. Japan and Korea, meanwhile, remain separated by centuries of mutual distrust. U.S. security guarantees are seen as hedges against all of these dangers.

At the same time, however, most countries in the region wish to avoid inflaming tensions in what is seen as a fairly stable and highly prosperous period of history. Thus, for example, few are willing to openly avow support to the United States if it comes to the aid of Taiwan in a possible war with the People’s Republic of China (PRC). These divergent attitudes and desires make it difficult to predict how countries would respond to U.S. calls for support, as such response is likely to be highly variable and sensitive to the details of the specific scenario.

U.S. forces in Asia are permanently based primarily in South Korea and Japan, with smaller components on the sovereign U.S. territory of Guam and in Australia and Singapore. The latter’s strategic interest in maintaining good ties with the United States is self-evident; it has offered increased access for U.S. forces, an offer that is being taken advantage of. While the United States enjoys no permanent presence in Thailand, the two countries participate in a regular and substantial program of military exercises and maintain close ties. Finally, U.S. arrangements with Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands are based on compacts of free association that commit the United States to take full responsibility

---

22Hua (1998).
for the security and defense of these countries. In exchange, the United States enjoys considerable access rights.23

Of course, the United States also has a long-standing program of close cooperation with Australia. As Canberra reevaluates its security situation in light of recent events in Indonesia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, opportunities may arise to develop this relationship even further.

But it is Japan and Korea that form the cornerstones of the U.S. presence in Asia. U.S. bases in these two countries are substantial, longstanding, and governed by agreements similar to those with NATO allies in Europe. More important, these host countries view U.S. presence as a vital component of their own national security and defense. In the case of Korea, U.S. forces located on Korean soil are there specifically to help the host country defend against attack. As for Japan, Tokyo has proven its commitment and friendship as Washington’s key partner in Asia both throughout the Cold War and since its end, and continued limits on the role of Japan’s own military strength ensure that the relationship remains mutually advantageous. While there have been domestic concerns in Japan about the scope and impact of the U.S. force presence in their country, revised guidelines for the U.S.-Japan defense partnership, approved in 1997, have further strengthened bilateral military ties. Among other things, these guidelines formalize a commitment on Japan’s part to support U.S. forces in the area, as required, for example, during a regional crisis. This builds on prior commitments to bilateral cooperation in support of Japan’s own defense. Thus, history, force structure, and formal arrangements all increase the likelihood that both Japan and Korea will continue to view support of U.S. policy as in their own best interests.

That said, as was demonstrated in the discussion of Europe, even highly reliable partners sometimes change their minds. The classic

---

23Palau was the last of the three countries to sign such a compact. Although Palauans voted in favor of such a compact in seven successive referenda beginning in 1983, their state’s constitutional bar on nuclear materials on its territory was incompatible with the requirements of U.S. access and presence, which might have necessitated transit of such materials through Palauan waters and airspace. A constitutional amendment finally removed this block, and the compact was signed in 1993.
Asian example is the Philippines. U.S. bases in the Philippines were closed at that country’s request in 1991 after protracted negotiations focusing primarily on remuneration resulted in an agreement that the Philippine Senate would not accept. Following base closure, relations deteriorated and defense ties between the two countries were largely curtailed by 1996, although the defense commitment remained binding. Now, relations are on the upswing, as evidenced by a newly negotiated status-of-forces agreement and a planned program of exercises. It seems likely that the Philippines’ renewed interest in U.S. friendship stems primarily from a desire for U.S. support in its continuing diplomatic—and intermittently military—dispute with China over ownership of the Spratly Islands. The United States, for its part, insists that it takes no position on the Spratly issue, seeking only to protect the sea-lanes of communication (SLOCs) in the region. While port visits and training exercises with the Philippines are resuming, the United States has said that it has no intention of reestablishing a permanent presence there.

Aside from these political concerns, some geographical constraints to U.S. capabilities in Asia also exist. Guam, for example, represents a valuable chunk of sovereign U.S. territory in East Asia, but the island is distant from most likely conflict locations. Similarly, U.S. forces in Korea and Japan, while well situated for their primary mission of deterring North Korean adventurism, are based far away from the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea. Physical access both in those critical areas and farther south is currently limited. Similarly, while Diego Garcia may provide purchase in some instances, its distance from much of the Asian region makes it another necessary but insufficient component for the wide scope of potential future operations.

Given that existing basing arrangements provide only incomplete coverage of the region as a whole, and given the uncertainty of the political dynamics of the region, the presence and security ties that the United States enjoys in East Asia should not be construed as

---

24 A volcanic eruption that did grave damage to Clark Air Base while negotiations were under way did little to help the Filipino case. See Suarez (1988); Briscoe (1988); Sciolino (1988); Blaustein (1991); Albor (1991); “Philippine Senate Rejects U.S. Base Deal” (1991); and “Manila Says Subic Naval Base Will be Closed” (1991).
ensuring adequate access across the range of possible contingencies. To the contrary, scenarios where access could be a problem can easily be imagined. Indeed, the ambiguity of relations among states in East Asia and the clear and continuing U.S. interests there make for a dangerous level of uncertainty with regard to future needs and whether it will be possible to meet them. The only viable solution appears to be to diversify and to hedge, maintaining and building as wide a network of ties as possible so as to increase the odds of access and thus facilitate whatever operations may be necessary in the future.

To a large extent, the United States appears to recognize this. Its broad efforts to engage the wide range of Asian states serves a number of policy goals, and access is certainly among them. Even U.S. efforts to build defense ties with China, which have fluctuated in lock-step with overall Sino-U.S. relations but have also yielded some results, have implications for access. Ongoing contacts include reciprocal naval visits, a number of high-level meetings, and Chinese agreement to allow some continuing access to Hong Kong, long a favorite port of call for U.S. servicemen and women and useful for the refueling and servicing of aircraft on long voyages. Military contacts have also been increasingly pursued with Malaysia, and ties with Indonesia have a long history—although the latter were curtailed in the late 1990s due to events in East Timor.

But if access remains somewhat uncertain in the Asia-Pacific region, it presents even more of a concern in South Asia, where existing U.S. relationships are far less developed than they are in the East even as the region grows increasingly volatile. Unlike the Pacific Rim, this region suffers from poor infrastructure and tremendous poverty. The United States has built some contacts here, but they have proven difficult to sustain. Ties with Pakistan were severely curtailed first in the 1970s and again in 1990 because of U.S. concerns over Islamabad’s nuclear ambitions. Pakistan’s 1998 nuclear weapon testing confirmed these worries and further strained relations with the United States. The military coup in October 1999 further complicates matters. U.S.-Pakistan cooperation in Operation Enduring Freedom has improved the overall climate of relations between Islamabad and Washington, but the tense standoff between Pakistan and India over the status of Kashmir remains a troubling element,
and the long-term prospects for relations with Pakistan remain uncertain.

India, which also carried out nuclear tests in 1998, has never been an ally of the United States. Although some ties were built in the early Cold War years, they soon deteriorated to near-nonexistence for most of that period. Contacts were beginning to develop in the mid-1990s, with some exchanges of high-level visits having taken place, when they were derailed by India’s atomic testing.

While neither India nor Pakistan seems a particularly likely partner in the short term, the rest of the region is even less appealing. Thus, the possibility of improved relations with India and Pakistan should be left open, particularly if these countries make progress toward defusing the tense situation that prevails between them and take steps to stabilize their nuclear competition.

Another alternative may lie somewhat to the north. Through the PfP and bilateral cooperation programs, connections are being built with several of the post-Soviet Central Asian states, notably Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, both of which participated along with the United States in the 1998 CENTRASBAT (Central Asian Peacekeeping Battalion) exercise, held “in the spirit” of the PfP. Here, as with the European PfP partners, there are concerns about Russian reactions should ties with the United States deepen too quickly.27 These post-Soviet states, although carrying considerable baggage of their own, could provide infrastructure and may be worth exploring as potential operating locations should need and opportunity intersect in this area.28

---

27 Russia itself, however, may prove a useful partner in Asia. Military contacts between the Russian Far Eastern forces and the U.S. Pacific Command, for example, have developed substantially over the past few years. Although these contacts have recently been scaled back as part of a general Russian moratorium on military ties with the United States and NATO, there is hope that they will yet be revitalized.

28 Relations with several former Soviet republics in Central Asia deepened dramatically during Operation Enduring Freedom.
Latin America

On paper, the United States has a significant security commitment to Central and South America. The 1947 Rio Treaty created a *de jure* defensive alliance in much of the hemisphere, with each signatory committed to seeing an attack against one as an attack against all. In practice, however, the collective security clauses of the treaty are unlikely to be effectively invoked.\(^2^9\) At the same time, many of the countries on the American continents share a strong interest in regional security.

U.S. involvement in Central and South America in the 1990s has focused overwhelmingly on drug interdiction, an area of mutual concern to Washington and many regional governments. Supporting contingency access for this mission is a network of partnerships and contacts the United States has built, some specifically for this purpose. Close ties exist with Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, and El Salvador. Also involved in programs of military exercises and training with the United States are Guatemala, Chile, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic, and there are plans to initiate some training for Nicaraguan officers in the future. The Bahamas also provides support for the antidrug mission, and Jamaica hosts U.S. and Canadian training exercises. Guyana has declared that the United States is welcome to its airspace and waterways in connection with the drug war, and an agreement to that effect also exists with Trinidad and Tobago. While Venezuelan cooperation has been more variable, it has included some training for host-nation forces. Going far beyond the drug enforcement mission, Argentina—which alone among Central and South American states sent forces to the Gulf War—has been accorded the status of major non-NATO ally.

The United States sponsors multilateral exercises both in the Caribbean and in South America. For example, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the United States all participated in the “Allied Forces 97” peacekeeping exercises. In addition to the drug war, the United States has undertaken humanitarian ef-
forts in the region; in 1998, U.S. personnel were dispatched to Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua to provide disaster assistance following the decimation of the area by Hurricane Mitch.

While facilities and infrastructure in this region are acceptable, other difficulties have emerged to hamper access. The most damaging to the counterdrug mission has been the expiration of the U.S. agreement with Panama to maintain its long-standing forward presence there. The counternarcotics mission effort had relied heavily on the Panama bases; their closure in 1999 greatly limited U.S. ability to monitor the area, cutting coverage by about two-thirds.\textsuperscript{30} While some of the resulting slack has been picked up by units operating from Key West and Puerto Rico as well as by the establishment of new facilities in Ecuador, Aruba, and Curaçao, the loss is significant, and the arrangements now in place are far from permanent.\textsuperscript{31} Additional difficulties emerged when it became questionable whether Venezuela would continue to grant the United States overflight rights, as loss of these rights would significantly limit the utility of the Ecuador base.\textsuperscript{32} The refusal of states such as Venezuela to cooperate on some fronts is indicative of the general ambivalence many in the region feel toward the United States. Costa Rica flatly refused access to its territory in support of counternarcotics operations, for example,\textsuperscript{33} and Brazil has avoided the sorts of cooperation agreements that the United States has signed with Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and Bolivia.\textsuperscript{34} While not openly hostile to the United States, Brazil is concerned that the drug mission could end up a cover for U.S. “imperialism” and fears that U.S. agreements with its neighbors could inadvertently push drug traffickers into its territory.\textsuperscript{35} Furthermore, government support of U.S. actions may or may not translate into favorable public opinion; Colombians are of mixed mind about U.S. involvement in their country.\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] Grossman (1999).
\item[33] Chacon (1999).
\item[34] “Armed Forces to Join Drug Enforcement Effort” (1996).
\item[35] Ibid.; Heyman (1999).
\item[36] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Although U.S. involvement in Central and South America is now heavily focused on drug enforcement, this has not always been the case, as evidenced by U.S. involvement in civil wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua. But both historical conflict and continuing distrust reflect the general uncertainty of this region, the mixed feelings many Latin Americans have about their massive “Yanqui” neighbor, and the difficulty of making clear predictions of the forms future U.S. involvement might take.

In terms of access, the United States has little to be concerned about as long as its efforts are focused north of the Equator. Bases in the southern United States and especially in Puerto Rico provide good coverage of Central America and the northern half of South America. Having lost the bases in Panama, U.S. presence further south is somewhat sporadic. In addition to the newly negotiated arrangements with Ecuador, Aruba, and Curaçao, the United States maintains facilities in Honduras (which were initially established in support of U.S. involvement in El Salvador in the 1980s), and Peru has agreed to host a radar surveillance site. But this presence is minimal compared with the forces that the United States long maintained in Panama. Whether countries that agree to assist the United States in drug interdiction will be as amenable to other undertakings is a question that has not yet been satisfactorily answered.

The danger that U.S. actions will be interpreted as imperialistic requires that particular care be taken in engagement in this region. Transparency of goals and structures is important here, but it is equally important to strengthen ties in peacetime and to continue to build economic relationships that can help foster trust. Military ties alone will likely not be sufficient to alleviate local concerns and may backfire in the long run, given the history of human-rights abuses associated with cooperation between U.S. and Latin American militaries.

Africa

Like South Asia, Africa is something of a void for U.S. engagement. During the Cold War, close military ties existed with Somalia and Kenya, mostly to facilitate access to Southwest Asia. Today, Somalia is in ruins and relations with Kenya have cooled, although they remain nominally friendly.
The lack of U.S. involvement in Africa has also created something of a vacuum in understanding the complex political realities that drive relations between states there. Furthermore, Europe, the United States’ most reliable security partner, is linked to Africa by a long and painful colonial and postcolonial history that further complicates the equation.

What the United States or anyone else can do in Africa is significantly constrained by the abysmal infrastructure and dearth of sophisticated local forces to contribute to operations, humanitarian or otherwise, on the continent. While South Africa maintains a highly modern and effective military, it is located at the southern tip of the continent and has shown little inclination to cooperate with the United States in ventures such as the building of a U.S.-sponsored African peacekeeping force.

The current outlook for Africa suggests that U.S. operations there will focus on peace enforcement, response to humanitarian crises, or both. However, large-scale operations of these kinds could be difficult to execute given the region’s woeful infrastructure and the long distances between where U.S. forces would come from and where they would need to go.

Continuing to support regional peacekeeping may be a means of limiting the need for substantial direct involvement in African conflicts; however, countries such as South Africa must be persuaded to take part if these endeavors are to bear much fruit. Efforts to engage Johannesburg are an important step forward in this regard. Such multinationalization of peacekeeping would also help temper the dangers of ethnic bias that native African peacekeeping efforts such as ECOMOG (West African Peacekeeping Force) have encountered in the past. Ensuring that such regional forces also have a capability to respond to humanitarian emergencies would be beneficial as well, although the need to move food and supplies large distances may still require the participation of more advanced Western forces.

---

37Some of those complexities are discussed in Chapter Four.
38Heyman (1999).
IMPLICATIONS

As can be seen, even this brief survey of the global access question has managed to raise a bewildering array of issues. And because of the fundamental reality of national sovereignty, many questions planners would dearly love to see resolved—such as “Will Japan give the United States access if China attacks Taiwan?” or “Can we rely on Saudi Arabia to permit USAF operations if Iraq fails to comply with this or that UN resolution?”—elicit responses that can at best be described as hedged. Nonetheless, we believe that our analysis of the past and present record of U.S. overseas access does allow for the elucidation of some general principles. In concluding this chapter, we therefore wish to put forth a set of six factors, three of which seem to increase a partner’s cooperation with the United States and three of which work against such cooperation. The three “pros” are

- Close alignment and sustained military connections;
- Shared interests and objectives; and
- Hopes for closer ties with the United States.

The “cons” are

- Fear of reprisals;
- Conflicting goals and interests; and
- Domestic public opinion.

We will briefly discuss each of these six in turn.

Close Alignment

It should come as no surprise that states with long-standing security relationships with the United States will, all other things held equal, be more likely to support U.S. actions. Probably the best example is Great Britain; the “special relationship” that London and Washington have cultivated over the past 60 years has paid great dividends for the United States. Alone among U.S. allies, for example, Britain supported the U.S. strike on Libya, and British forces flew alongside U.S. aviators in Operation Desert Fox.
At the same time, it must be noted that an alliance relationship is by no means a panacea. We have already noted that on many occasions NATO members have denied access to the United States, sometimes with serious consequences. Nonetheless, the United States’ worldwide web of security arrangements—alliances, treaties, and understandings—has been and will continue to be an integral part of any global access strategy.

Shared Interests and Objectives

Again, shared interests and objectives obviously favor cooperation with the United States. Even friends as notoriously prickly as the Saudis, for example, have extended a warm welcome to the United States when their understanding of both the situation at hand and the steps needed to deal with it has coincided with that of the United States. It should be noted, however, that agreement needs to cover both means and ends. Riyadh, for example, may want to see Saddam’s regime deposed even more than does the United States; however, if the Saudis see Washington’s desired strategy as ineffectual or counterproductive, they are unlikely to cooperate even in pursuit of a shared goal.

Furthermore, confluence of interests in a specific situation should not be seen as translating into congruent views in other instances. If nothing else, the preceding analysis should demonstrate that each government considers the granting of access on an immediate, case-by-case basis. Certainly access is more likely to be granted when interests coincide, but as a situation evolves, views may evolve as well, and perspectives once shared may thus be shared no longer.

Greater transparency and information sharing can be powerful tools of persuasion for the United States, just as they were when intelligence regarding Iraqi troop movements helped convince the Saudis to accept U.S. forces after Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Transparency and information sharing in general, even when no crisis is looming, can help ensure that states worldwide have a better

---

40 The events surrounding Operation Nickel Grass in 1973 indicate that even the UK will not automatically support U.S. actions.
understanding of U.S. goals and motivations. This can help remove suspicions of hidden American agendas and convince others that their interests are in harmony with those of the United States.

**Hopes for Closer Ties with the United States**

Our analysis suggests that the old adage about “friends in need” holds true in contemporary international politics. Countries looking to improve their relationships with the United States or perceiving their security to be closely dependent on U.S. support may be particularly prone to providing access.

While close friends like the UK may be inclined to support U.S. initiatives, mutual treaty commitments do not ensure such cooperation. In fact, actors like Greece may represent the opposite side of the coin. Confident that their actions will not compromise their position in an existing alliance that they know the United States prizes, they may have little incentive to respond affirmatively when the United States asks for assistance outside the narrow bounds of existing treaty commitments. Indeed, as was discussed earlier, Greece cooperated in only a limited fashion during Operation Allied Force.

At the same time, countries hopeful of improved relations with the United States appear somewhat likely to believe that their support of U.S. efforts now will help ensure U.S. military assistance later. Whether programs such as the PfP that promote ties with the Romanias and Philippines of the world actually translate into eventual U.S. assistance is an open question. In the meantime, these states may be likely to grant access and support for a range of operations.

---

43Kuwait since 1991, perhaps the Philippines today.
44It is likely that Greece’s response also had something to do with its interminable confrontation with Turkey over Cyprus. To the extent that the Greeks cannot count on U.S. support in resolving this immediate bone of contention, they had still less motivation to support U.S. actions outside the strict legal limits of NATO’s charter.
45India’s enthusiastic support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan in 2001–2002 almost certainly owes something to Delhi’s desire for improved ties with the United States, as
Fear of Reprisals

Among the factors that can work against other countries granting access to the United States is a fear of reprisals. Britain, Spain, and other European actors refused to provide access and overflight for the 1973 airlift to Israel because of concerns over economic retribution from Arab states. And Portugal, the one country that did support the U.S. airlift, was indeed subjected to a cutoff of oil from the Persian Gulf. In 1986, many of the same countries as well as France were concerned that a barrage of terrorism might be directed at them if they cooperated in El Dorado Canyon. Today, fears of possible reprisals certainly figure in many Gulf Arab states’ reluctance to support U.S. raids on Iraq.

In many cases there may be little or nothing that can be done to assuage these concerns, as the United States has had little enough success battling terrorism itself and is seldom in a position to insulate its partners from the effects of economic sanctions. At the same time, the United States can offer to help protect the host country from direct military retaliation such as air and missile strikes or outright invasion. And by sharing intelligence and threat assessments with the host government, Washington may be able to provide some reassurance that the consequences of cooperation will be relatively minor. That said, friendly countries’ fear that adversaries might strike back at them will remain a barrier to cooperation.

Conflicting Goals and Interests

Just as shared objectives can facilitate access, so too can interests that are not congruent destroy prospects for cooperation. This factor has played heavily in Saudi behavior since the Gulf War and contributed to Turkey’s reluctance to support proposed U.S. action when Iraq launched its offensive against the Kurds in 1996. Greece and Macedonia’s refusal to lend full support to NATO’s war over Kosovo and Serbia was similarly based at least in part on different images of “stability” in the Balkans. As was suggested earlier, trans-

well as to the opportunity the “global war on terrorism” presents to recast Indian operations against Kashmiri militants in a new and favorable light.
transparency and information sharing are the primary tools at the United States’ disposal in combating this problem.

**Domestic Public Opinion**

Even governments that are not true democracies are usually sensitive to the tides of public opinion; it is, after all, better to be a popular dictator than an unpopular one. And since most U.S. security partners have governments that are at least somewhat answerable to their populaces, grassroots opposition to cooperation with the United States can suffice to stymie even the best intentions of a friendly regime. It was Spanish popular opinion that resulted in the eviction of the 401st TFW from Torrejon, and it is the Okinawan people who have persistently agitated for the reduction or termination of U.S. presence on that Japanese island. And Saudis are sensitive to Islamist complaints that ongoing U.S. presence is inconsistent with Riyadh’s role as guardian of Mecca and Medina. Here again, maintaining clear lines of communication and upholding a reputation for honesty and plain dealing probably represent the best weapon the United States has against this impediment.

In sum, then, our survey suggests that there are two fundamental tools available to the United States that are particularly appropriate to help ensure access. The first—transparency and information sharing—can help convince friends and allies that their interests do not in fact conflict and that cooperation with the United States aligns with their own goals. The second, engagement—which is directed mainly at states where ties are less clear and less strong—helps establish the United States as a good friend to have in one’s corner and thus someone for whom doing an occasional favor may be wise. Maintaining an active program of military-to-military contacts and using U.S. “information dominance” to help shape the perceptions of partner countries and other aspects of engagement may be the best assurance that U.S. military forces can find adequate access to perform their missions both quickly and safely when need arises.

---

46The Shah of Iran, Anastasio Samoza, and “Baby Doc” Duvalier are just three of the former leaders who would attest to the truth of this.
That said, future access can never be guaranteed—for countries will in the end base their decisions largely on the constraints of the moment. Thus, while the United States can influence such views and make them more amenable to the granting of access—and, indeed, should seek to do so whenever possible—it must be prepared for the failure of even the closest relationships to provide the access it seeks for a given operation. As a result, exclusive reliance on friendships and extant relationships is an error. Rather, the policies of transparency and engagement should be accompanied by increased flexibility of operational and deployment options in order to broaden the choices available to the United States.

This analysis has shown that access is likely to be most troublesome in two regions that are critical to U.S. national security: the Persian Gulf and Asia outside the immediate vicinity of the Korean peninsula. In addition, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America—particularly in the far south—will pose serious operational challenges. In these areas and probably elsewhere as well, situations will almost certainly arise in which USAF forces will confront missions that must be undertaken with less-than-optimal access and basing. In the next chapter, we will discuss the operational constraints such circumstances can impose and will propose some ways of ameliorating them.