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## Why Behavior Can't be the Sole Arbiter of Foreign Policy Goodness: The Ghosts In and Out of the Machine and Yugoslavia

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Abstract. This article highlights a common fallacy in the critique of foreign policy initiatives.

Many opponents of the ongoing North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing of Yugoslavia have maintained that military action should not be taken against a sovereign country without United Nations (UN) sanction. Why is UN sanction vital? Bombing opponents state that otherwise any military alliance would have the right to intervene at will outside its borders.

This criticism of NATO bombing has its own intrinsic problems. First, it implies that NATO is not any military alliance, but one somehow superior in characteristics necessary and sufficient to make and take appropriate foreign policy initiatives. This may or may not be the case in specific situations, but is surely not the case across the board.

Secondly, the opponents imply that by taking action outside the UN umbrella, NATO ineluctably loses the combination of moral and ethical authority required to be in opposition to other alliances that take action outside of the UN. Yet such a stance discounts that the intent of an intervention, that intervention's consequences, and various characteristics of that to which intervention is applied can be relevant in the evaluation of a foreign policy initiative. The opponent's stance also reinforces the notion that certain decontextualized behaviors--e.g., an alliance's military intervention in a sovereign country--must always be right or always be wrong. Such a specious moral equivalence among behaviors would seem to straitjacket a reasoned judgment of data as well as wisdom.

Third, the opponents' exhortation for reliance on the UN ignores the latter's psychopathology of everyday life. The apathy, lethargy, corruption, nepotism, pomposity, and self-aggrandizement of what too often becomes an opera bouffe can lead to unwise sanctioning and non-sanctioning of military intervention. Is it legally, morally, or ethically just to leave ultimate questions of one's own life and death and that of one's allies in form or in spirit to such a political entity?

Behavior may be the most visible, detectable, and easily noted and measured aspect of foreign policy. It does not necessarily follow that it should in and of itself be so salient--almost reified--in foreign policy critique. Those who persist in this fashion might find that their own initiatives have but a ghost of a chance. (See Boone, J.L., & Smith, E.A. (1998). Is it evolution yet? A critique of evolutionary archaeology. *Current Anthropology*, 39, S141-S173; Hanisch, K.A., Hulin, C.L., & Roznowski, M. (1998). The importance of individuals' repertoires of behaviors: The scientific appropriateness of studying multiple behaviors and general attitudes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 19, 463-480; Locke, E.A., & Becker, T.E. (1998). Rebuttal to a subjectivist critique of an objectivist approach to integrity in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 170-175; Matlock, J.F. (April 20, 1999). The one place NATO could turn for help. *The New York Times*, p. A27.) (Keywords: Behaviorism, NATO, Yugoslavia.)