UNDERSTANDING THE U.S. – NATO RELATIONSHIP

IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

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by

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This project traces the evolution of the relationship between the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) through the events of the two decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It addresses four engagements: the 1999 Kosovo intervention, the 2001 U.S. war in Afghanistan, the 2003 Iraq War, and the 2011 intervention in Libya. The purpose of this research is to understand the causes for NATO’s persistence in the post-Cold War era. I posit the most overlooked explanation for the alliance’s evolution and persistence is the continued de facto leadership of the United States. Examination of each of the aforementioned cases, as well as the intra-conflict periods, reveals the reasons for continued U.S.-NATO relations. The U.S. pursues NATO in conflict for both military utility and political value – namely, the effect of NATO on perceptions of legitimacy. Finally, this research demonstrates from both a theoretical and policy perspective the implications of this relationship for future conflict engagement.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Military alliances are one of the most perplexing, least understood phenomena in international relations. Scholars have tirelessly sought explanations for the formation, cohesion, and continued development of these arrangements, as well as the role alliances play in conflict. Much is understood about the conditions under which states ally, and better explanations for alliance cohesion have emerged in recent decades. To date, there is no complete explanation for the persistence of military alliances in peacetime. Both realist and liberal theories have long asserted the improbable possibility of these arrangements lasting outside of war. Only recently have theorists developed better explanations for the reasons and conditions under which alliances persist. Still, theoretical explanations for alliances in peacetime are lacking.

The post-Cold War period is one of the first to have a military alliance persist in the absence of an imminent threat. In many ways, the persistence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is inconsistent with the frameworks for understanding military alliances. NATO is one of the longest-standing alliances of the contemporary period, with a “high degree of institutionalization unprecedented in military pacts.” Authorized under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and established by the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty (also known as the Washington Treaty), the alliance embodied the fundamental principles of collective defense: NATO membership required a commitment to support and defend other member states in the event of an attack. At best, previous explanations of NATO persistence are pieces to the larger puzzle – none of the existing theories of alliances are wholly satisfactory in explaining the

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alliance’s continuation. Thus, the case of NATO in the post-war period merits further investigation. This dissertation aims to answer the question: why has the NATO alliance persisted in the post-Cold War period?

NATO Persistence: The Sum of Unequal Parts

On September 2, 2013, the New York Times published an op-ed written by retired United States Navy admiral James Stavridis. Having served as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Commander of the US European Command (EUCOM), Stavridis called upon his experience and urged President Obama to use NATO resources for any possible international intervention in Syria. Despite intervention being widely unpopular amongst NATO members at the time, Stavridis insisted the crisis in Syria was “at the core of NATO’s role in the 21st century” and argued the threat posed to member-state Turkey made intervention a matter of “self-defense” as defined by the Washington Treaty. Stavridis believed the alliance could resolve the conflict between member states and end the Syrian conflict swiftly and successfully. He also justified NATO intervention by emphasizing Syria’s access to weapons of mass destruction and by NATO’s commitment to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine.

In just 900 words, Stavridis’s op-ed captured some of the most pressing questions about the future of the NATO alliance. The evolution of NATO has been hotly contested since the end of the Cold War. Russia insists NATO persistence is a direct threat to the possibility of longstanding peace between East and West, and fears the alliance will attempt to intervene in its own disputed territories. Although Russia has partnered with the alliance to address many issues pertaining to international security, Russian President Vladimir Putin’s annexation of Crimea and

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escalating hostility in Ukraine reignited the allies’ concerns regarding Russian aggression and the threat to European stability. Additionally, Russia regularly attempts to prevent NATO from using force by threatening to veto UN Security Council resolutions authorizing international intervention. Russia advocated against NATO intervention in the Balkans (both in Bosnia and later Kosovo) and in Libya, as well U.S. intervention in Iraq. Bashar al Assad, the Syrian president, has regularly relied on Syria’s relationship with Russia to prevent the United Nations, NATO, or individual states from intervening to stop ongoing humanitarian abuses.

Meanwhile, in the first two decades following the end of the Cold War, NATO expanded its membership from 16 to 28 members, and several other states – including former Soviet satellite states – strive to meet the recommendations of NATO’s Membership Action Plan (MAP) in the hopes of someday obtaining NATO membership. The original European allies also maintained their membership with the alliance. Many of the allies, however, regularly fail to meet the defense spending requirements mandated by the Washington Treaty, and NATO has suffered from the continuing decline in contributions. Several of the allies ended military conscription and deactivated thousands of troops, shrinking the size of their deployable forces. Only the United States, the United Kingdom, Greece, and Estonia have regularly met the required 2 percent of annual defense spending, while the United States contributes nearly three-

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quarters of NATO’s defense expenditures. Immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, some allies pushed for the establishment of a European-only collective defense mechanism similar to NATO, but interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo demonstrated Europe was unprepared to move forward without the United States.

In addition to the gap between U.S. and European defense spending and contributions to the alliance, many of the allies adopted divergent perspectives regarding European security and the role of NATO in future conflicts. France, Germany, and others continue to advocate for the development of non-U.S. led defensive measures while stressing the importance of diplomacy and the United Nations. As evidenced in the following case studies, some allies were reluctant or unwilling to engage in the United States and NATO’s interventions without explicit authorization from the UN Security Council. Despite these ongoing disagreements, the United States has remained committed to the alliance. However, as demonstrated in the following chapter, scholars have often questioned the long-term sustainability of the alliance, with many arguing the eventual demise of the arrangement in favor of any number of alternatives. This raises the question: why has NATO persisted in the post-Cold War period?

Research Question 1: Why has NATO persisted in the post-Cold War period?

To answer this question, I examine another important piece of the NATO puzzle: the role of the United States and its relationship to the alliance. Unlike the existing scholarship on NATO persistence, I posit that the relationship between the United States and NATO is the key explanatory variable to understanding NATO persistence after the Cold War.

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H1: The NATO alliance persists because the United States is a hegemonic power with a vested interest in the continuation of the alliance. Thus, it has exercised its political influence, asserted its military dominance, and contributed economic resources to ensure the alliance’s survival.

In some ways, the United States has struggled in its relationship with NATO and the rest of the international community. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the U.S.’s political, economic, and military power was unrivaled. This, coupled with the web of international institutions emerging out of World War II, created an unprecedented opportunity. The George H.W. Bush administration developed plans for a “New World Order” and pursued the proliferation of liberal democratic values, economic expansion, and increased multilateral cooperation via international organizations. Though war between the major powers seemed unlikely in the post-Cold War era, struggles between ethnic and nationalist groups challenged the international community’s ability to mitigate conflict.

At the same time, the United States has not wavered in its pursuit of multilateralism. Though it rarely attempted to act unilaterally, it sometimes altered its approach to engaging allies. During the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War, the United States pursued a large coalition and included requests for support from NATO. In the Balkans interventions in 1995 and 1999, the Clinton administration was more reluctant to act through NATO, and during the Kosovo intervention maintained its own separate command structure. The Kosovo operation, Operation Allied Force, was plagued by problems associated with the alliance’s consensus decision-making, command and control structure, and the capabilities gap between allies, and U.S. officials sharply criticized the alliance. Still, the United States continued to take a leadership role in developing new initiatives for the alliance, pushed for expanded membership, and stressed the
importance of new partnerships with non-NATO allies. The United States moved to engage the NATO alliance in stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan in 2001, unsuccessfully campaigned for NATO participation in Iraq in 2003, and spearheaded the transition of responsibility for the 2011 Libyan intervention from an ad hoc coalition to the alliance.

To understand the U.S.-NATO relationship and its evolution, I examine U.S.-NATO relations in four conflicts: Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. These four conflicts represent the major challenges the United States and NATO faced in the post-Cold War period. Additionally, each of these conflicts posed a different level of threat to the alliance and its individual members, and each conflict was met with a different response from the alliance. These engagements demonstrated the strengths and weaknesses of the alliance. Each conflict also made demonstrable impacts on the institution – during and after each engagement, the alliance altered its political agenda, military agenda, operational capacity, or some combination of these. Examining these events chronologically demonstrates the evolution of the alliance, as well as its capacity to adapt to the contemporary threat environment. These conflict engagements demonstrated to policymakers that the alliance was important to the United States, and led them to exercise U.S. political and military power to ensure the alliance’s survival.

Although NATO is an alliance comprised of 28 member states and structured on the principles of decision-making by consensus, the U.S.’s status as a global hegemon made it the de facto leader of the alliance. Evidence from each of the four cases illustrates why the United States has continued to pursue the alliance relationship and ensure its survival. NATO has evolved to serve a very specific role in conflict closely aligning with U.S. interests. Due in large part to this evolution, the alliance has persisted despite projections that either the United States or Western European states would abandon the alliance in favor of alternative arrangements. Thus,
NATO persistence is explained, at least in part, by the U.S.-NATO relationship and the U.S.’s leadership within the alliance.

However, this explanation raises other critically important questions: In what ways was the alliance beneficial or detrimental to the U.S.’s military or political objectives? How do the aforementioned conflicts illustrate the importance of the alliance to the United States? And, more broadly, why does the United States have a vested interest in ensuring NATO’s persistence? The second part of this project addresses these questions.

Research Question 2: Why is NATO persistence important to the United States?

H2: The alliance’s persistence allows the United States to pursue some conflicts multilaterally, and the pursuit of multilateral conflict with NATO engagement is important to the United States.

With an exceptionally well-funded defense apparatus that includes the most well-equipped, technologically advanced military in the world, the United States has demonstrated that it rarely needs the resources of its allies to prevail in war.\(^6\) At times, it also demonstrates its willingness and capacity for unilateral action, or to operate multilaterally but outside of the NATO alliance. However, it pursues NATO political support at all stages of conflict, and military or operational support as necessary to the U.S.’s goals. For example, in the 2001 war in Afghanistan, the United States pursued only a few allies at the outset of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), despite having overwhelming multilateral support and pledges of resources from several international organizations and individual states. Decisions about the participation of allies were based almost entirely on the state’s military ability to contribute to the mission.

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Concerns regarding NATO’s capacities and ability to act quickly led U.S. policymakers to operate with very limited NATO participation during OEF. As the war transitioned to stabilization and reconstruction efforts, U.S. officials then worked to engage more allies, including the NATO alliance. In the 2003 Iraq War, the United States pursued NATO support before the intervention but was unsuccessful in convincing the allies to act. After failing to secure an agreement for NATO participation, the United States undertook Operation Iraqi Freedom with an ad hoc coalition of the willing. However, policymakers continued to pursue support for from the alliance as well as individual member-states, with some limited success.

These examples broadly demonstrate how the United States pursues multilateralism through NATO, while indicating how the European allies retain the ability to prevent the United States from using the alliance as an unrestrained extension of its foreign policy objectives. NATO political support is sought at all stages of conflict engagement, while the United States pursues military resources on a case-by-case basis. To answer more specifically the second research question regarding the importance of the U.S.-NATO relationship, I propose the following hypotheses to explain why NATO persistence is important to the United States. These hypotheses fall into two categories. The first category addresses the legitimizing effects of NATO engagement, while the second category explains the utility of NATO engagement.

**Hypotheses on Legitimacy**

\[ H_{2a} \]: The United States values NATO as a vehicle for legitimacy enhancement.

\[ H_{2b} \]: The United States wants its conflict engagement to conform (or appear to conform) to international norms and expectations about war; thus, it seeks to act through multilateral organizations such as NATO.

At its most fundamental level, legitimacy concerns the relationship between the state and the citizen. Both political scientists and political and social philosophers explore this concept,
resulting in a vast literature on the definition, manifestation, and consequences of legitimacy. In this analysis, I adopt Ian Hurd’s definition of legitimacy: “Legitimacy...refers to the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed. It is a subjective quality, relational between actor and institution, and defined by the actor’s perception of the institution.”

Though the primary focus of the scholarship on legitimacy focuses on the relationship between the state and its citizens, more recent analyses examine the relationship between states and international organizations. Individual states derive legitimacy from the direct relationship between civil society and the government; however, no such relationships exist above the state level. States explicitly consent to the rules established by the international organizations. They accept the organization has the right to enforce compliance with the rules, either by creating incentives for cooperation or disincentives for defection. From this perspective, these organizations are legitimate because they serve the interests of the states comprising their membership. Because states are the source of legitimacy for the authority of the organization, they preserve their sovereignty and the right to circumvent the organization when deemed appropriate. International organizations are also believed to have the right to rule (sociological legitimacy) when they are perceived to enforce moral or legal norms outside of states’ self-interests. Thus, international organizations have the right to rule (authorized by states to govern)

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9 Coicaud and Heiskanen, *The Legitimacy of International Organizations*.
11 Coicaud and Heiskanen, *The Legitimacy of International Organizations*. 
as well as being perceived as having the right to rule (based on the moral and legal standards of
the international community).\textsuperscript{12}

When a state intends to use force against another state (or transnational non-state actors),
it will often appeal to the international community to legitimize its actions.\textsuperscript{13} Military alliances,
regional organizations, and the United Nations are able to confer legitimacy on the state’s actions
because participants recognize the authority of the organization. Even when a state is motivated
by altruism (to prevent crimes against humanitarianism, for example), applying force causes
other states to treat the use of force with a great deal of suspicion.\textsuperscript{14} However, the decision to
engage other states— and more importantly, with the support of international organizations – in a
multilateral intervention may demonstrate the state is not acting purely out of self-interest,
particularly when it employs force.

The relationship between international organizations and legitimacy for the use of force is
well understood.\textsuperscript{15} Just war theory provides a set of moral criteria for judging the legitimacy of
the use of force.\textsuperscript{16} The United Nations Security Council is integral in legitimizing intervention in
cases of external intervention (cases in which intervention occurs without the consent of the

\textsuperscript{12} Buchanan, \textit{Human Rights, Legitimacy, and the Use of Force}.
\textsuperscript{13} The motivations for seeking legitimacy through international organizations is not well understood. A contentious
debate exists between the major approaches of international relations theory as to why states would seek an
endorsement from these organizations.
\textsuperscript{14} J.B. Attanasio and J.J. Norton, eds., \textit{Multilateralism v Unilateralism: Policy Choices in a Global Society} (London:
The British Institute of International and Comparative Law, 2004).
\textsuperscript{15} Bjola, \textit{Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics}; Attansio and Norton, \textit{Multilateralism v
Unilateralism}; W. Michael Reisman and Scott Shuehart, “Unilateral Action in an Imperfect World Order,” in
The British Institute of International and Comparative Law, 2004); Armstrong and Farrell, “Force and Legitimacy in
World Politics”; Melanne A. Civic and Michael Miklaucic, eds., \textit{Monopoly of Force: The Nexus of DDR and SSR}
Force}.
\textsuperscript{16} Bjola, \textit{Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics}.
offending government). Other organizations, including regional organizations like NATO, can also enhance the legitimacy of the intervention and coerce states into compliance.¹⁷

Though the connection between international organizations and legitimacy is understood, scholars overlook the importance of this connection in explaining U.S.-NATO relations and NATO persistence. In each of the four cases, I demonstrate how the United States sought an endorsement from the international community for its actions, and pursued NATO support even when it intended to act unilaterally (or multilaterally without direct NATO participation). I present the domestic and international factors leading the United States to adopt policies that encourage some kind of multilateralism in the pursuit of legitimization, even when fighting capacity or efficiency was sacrificed. Additionally, the pursuit for legitimacy enhancement is driven by both practical (operational) and ethical considerations. I demonstrate the unique pressures for legitimacy in each case, and examine whether the U.S.’s behavior indicates a deeply entrenched need to legitimize its actions through multilateralism.

**Hypotheses on Alliance Utility**

H₂c: The alliance’s persistence allows the United States to improve its ability to engage in conflict.

H₂d: The historical legacy of U.S.-NATO relations, U.S. primacy after the Cold War, and U.S. leadership within the alliance allowed the United States to exert a high level of influence over the post-war development of the alliance.

Patricia Weitsman illustrates how the United States has sought power projection via a global web of institutions, and the importance of alliance arrangements like NATO to interstate conflict engagement.¹⁸ In the cases presented here, I expand on this analysis. Because the United States has a number of other resources – unparalleled military capabilities and the global combatant

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¹⁷ Attanasio and Norton, *Multilateralism v Unilateralism.*

¹⁸ Weitsman, *Waging War.*
command structure, for example – the ability of willing allies to provide substantial contributions at the outset of conflict is limited. However, as Sarah Kreps demonstrates, policymakers adopted a “hybrid approach” to multilateralism in the 1990s that has continued through today. This approach employs a few strong allies in the initial phases of conflict and incorporates more multilateral efforts during the later reconstruction phases.\(^{19}\) In other words, while it is politically advantageous to seek NATO support during the planning stages (because of legitimacy enhancement), the operational advantage is optimized during the later stages of the conflict, not the initial outset.

Research Design and Case Selection

This dissertation relies on a qualitative design to test each of the hypotheses. I use two primary sources of data – archival research and content analysis – to observe U.S. attitudes and actions toward NATO during each conflict. I supplement these sources with secondary sources, including elite interviews and polling data. I compare the four cases to determine patterns of behavior over time. Lastly, I measure the effect of U.S.-NATO relations on U.S. legitimacy (domestic and international), the balance of power, and interstate relations. This project focuses on three conflicts in which there was a substantial multilateral intervention including both U.S. and NATO participation: Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya. The fourth conflict, Iraq, demonstrates the effect of non-NATO participation on the legitimacy, fighting effectiveness, and perceived success of the U.S.-led multilateral intervention, as well as the impact of non-NATO participation on the alliance relationship.

Kosovo:

In the 1990s, NATO undertook two missions in the Balkans. The first, Operation Deliberate Force (ODF), was a twelve-day, very limited air campaign conducted during the

\(^{19}\) Kreps, *Coalitions of Convenience.*
1992-1995 Bosnian War. ODF was a key factor in convincing Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to negotiate a settlement at the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords. Despite ongoing human rights abuses across the former Yugoslavia, it was not until 1998 that NATO and the United States undertook a second, far more aggressive and sustained air war against Milosevic. When the Serbian police cracked down on the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and attempted to capture a KLA member in early March 1998, their efforts resulted in the killing of over 80 ethnic Albanians and injuring many more. As a result, the international community increased diplomatic sanctions against Milosevic, pushed to open access to UN and international observers (including the envoy led by U.S. diplomats Richard Holbrooke and Christopher Hill), and amped up negotiations between the KLA and Serbian leaders. The UN Security Council, despite the inability of these efforts to thwart the continued violence, refused to authorize an international intervention.

At the failed Rambouillet negotiations in February and March 1999, it became obvious to many allies that intervention was necessary, even in the absence of UN authorization. Thus, on March 24, 1999, NATO launched airstrikes against the Serbian military forces under Operation Allied Force (OAF). The airstrikes would last nearly three months and resulted in the NATO-led, post-war reconstruction operation Kosovo Force, or KFOR.\(^{20}\) Today, KFOR forces have been dramatically transformed but are still in place. Retrospective evaluations of NATO’s actions deemed OAF an “illegal but legitimate” intervention.

Many have argued about both the value and utility of NATO during the 1999 Kosovo intervention. Interest in the alliance had been declining since the end of the Cold War. It was

predicted a European-Atlantic partnership would be unnecessary, and states would become more and more reliant on loose arrangements rather than formal alliances.\textsuperscript{21} In addition, some argued NATO lost credibility because the nature of threats to member states had changed dramatically and there would not be an overriding threat that could be used to unite NATO members.\textsuperscript{22} The mission in Kosovo also seemed to signify a shift in strategic goals for NATO; the world was a less threatening place to the member states, and therefore the alliance could expand its goals and work in conjunction with organizations such as the UN in non-stability securing operations.

OAF exposed some of the U.S.’s concerns with NATO and its European allies, primarily in terms of military capabilities and efficient, united decision-making.\textsuperscript{23} Although President Clinton was extremely reluctant to intervene in the Balkans, the intervention in Bosnia led the United States to believe that if it wanted quick and decisive action in Kosovo, it would have to take a lead role in deciding the extent of NATO involvement.\textsuperscript{24} President Clinton’s reluctance reflected in his refusal to commit ground troops, which greatly influenced the alliance’s decision to pursue an air-only campaign. Operation Allied Force exposed NATO’s operational weaknesses and left the United States leery of employing NATO for future multilateral action.

Nonetheless, the United States would continue its participation and investment in the alliance. It would use its experiences in Kosovo and its political strength in the alliance to improve NATO’s decision-making structure, operational capacity, and utility in conflict. As the case of Kosovo demonstrates, the Clinton administration engaged NATO for both legitimacy and utility, confirming the hypotheses on the importance of NATO persistence to the United States.

\textsuperscript{22} Ellen Hallams, "The Transatlantic Alliance renewed: the United States and NATO since 9/11," \textit{Journal of Transatlantic Studies} 7, no. 1 (March 2009).
\textsuperscript{23} Williams, "Out of Area and Very Much in Business?"
\textsuperscript{24} Thomas S. Mowle and David H. Sacko, "Global NATO: Bandwagoning in a Unipolar World," \textit{Contemporary Security Policy} 28, no. 3 (December 2007).
Legitimacy was important to many of the allies because of the absence of a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the intervention. Adherence to international norms was also important to U.S. policymakers, particularly in regards to the use of force for humanitarian intervention. Although the Kosovo operation exposed the operational weaknesses of the alliance, NATO’s utility was also a deciding factor for the administration. During both the Bosnian and Kosovo interventions, the United States used its influence in the alliance to encourage political and operational changes that would allow the European allies to act without U.S. support if necessary.

Afghanistan
In the days following the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the Bush administration received overwhelming support from its international partners. Of the 2,977 people killed in the 4 assaults (excluding the 19 terrorists), 372 were foreign nationals, many from states such as Great Britain, India, South Korea, Canada, and Japan. In addition, over 7,000 people (including foreign nationals) were wounded. The United States quickly identified al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, as the perpetrators of the attacks and moved to present evidence of al Qaeda’s close ties to the Taliban, the governing party of Afghanistan. On September 12, 2001, NATO invoked Article V for the first time in its history, thus calling the allies to come to the U.S.’s defense. The United Nations, the European Union, the Organization of American States, and other multilateral organizations also expressed support for the US retaliatory strikes in the interest of self-defense.

Though the United States enjoyed significant international support, its initial combat plans for Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, did not include NATO. U.S. policymakers, including Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, instead devised a strategy that relied heavily on special operations forces for the groundwork in country, and utilized international support in

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other areas – such as patrolling U.S. airspace with Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACs) airplanes under NATO command. NATO would continue to provide auxiliary support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan until August 2003, when it assumed leadership of International Security Assistance Force Afghanistan (ISAF). In October 2006, the ISAF mandate was transferred from the UN to NATO, and in conjunction with the United States, NATO assumed a leadership role in the stabilization and reconstruction effort.

The evolution of NATO’s role in Afghanistan added to the ongoing story of U.S.-NATO relations and the post-Cold War persistence of the alliance. Because less than two years had elapsed since the 1999 Kosovo intervention, the alliance had not rectified many of the operational and technical difficulties experienced during OAF. The U.S.’s plans for the Afghanistan war were completely different from its strategy in Kosovo, and the alliance’s ability to contribute to an operation that relied heavily on special operations forces was untested. Additionally, whereas the United States was reluctant to engage in Kosovo, it led the charge for intervention in Afghanistan. These factors greatly influenced the U.S.’s decision to forego operational support from NATO during OEF.

Despite the decision to act outside of NATO’s command structure during Operation Enduring Freedom, U.S. policymakers recognized the importance of adhering to international norms regarding the use of force and multilateralism, thus assembling a large coalition and looking for opportunities to engage the alliance. The United States wanted to maintain the high levels of support from its international partners, as well as the perception of legitimacy for its actions. Policymakers also recognized the utility of NATO participation in the stabilization and reconstruction efforts under the UN-mandated ISAF. NATO’s leadership alleviated the necessity of having individual states lead ISAF on a rotating basis, opened new access to the alliance’s
resources and leadership, and created new opportunities for partnership between ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). NATO’s participation in Afghanistan also resulted in several changes within the alliance aimed at improving its ability to respond to terrorism, out of area missions, and the changing dynamic of the post-Cold War era. As demonstrated in later chapters, many of these changes were driven by the United States. Thus, the Afghanistan case confirms all four hypotheses regarding the U.S.’s interests in maintaining the alliance.

Iraq
While some policymakers urged President Bush to pursue an aggressive agenda toward Iraq in the aftermath of 9/11, planning for an offensive was delayed until early 2002 when in his State of the Union address, Bush identified Iraq as one of the three members of the “Axis of Evil.” The National Security Strategy (NSS) released later in the year made it clear the administration intended to vigorously pursue these states as part of its war on terror campaign. In late 2002, the U.S. repeatedly appealed to the international community for multilateral support. However, many states were suspicious of the U.S.’s intentions, leading to a very public, vociferous debate in both the United Nations and NATO. When the U.S. finally invaded Iraq in March 2003, it did so with a “coalition of the willing” comprised of over 40 states, but without the backing of both of the major organizations. Though major combat operations would be declared complete in May 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) would continue until September 2010. A new operation, Operation New Dawn (OND), would replace OIF as the U.S. transitioned forces out of Iraq, and all US military operations would cease in December 2011.

In the months following the initial invasion, the debate between the United States and allies opposed to the U.S.’s actions (namely France and Germany) continued in the Atlantic Council. The United States appealed to the alliance for support in training new Iraqi security
forces, and NATO complied with NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I), circumventing the objections of France. But, as Philip Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro argue, the short-term damage to the U.S.-NATO relationship was immediately evident. “By the time the war actually began in March 2003, the Iraq crisis was no longer just a result of transatlantic differences, but a significant cause of them. The crisis reinforced many of the worst transatlantic stereotypes – depicting the United States as unilateralist and militaristic in European eyes, and Europeans as unreliable and ungrateful allies in American eyes.”

The Iraq case provides valuable information about the effects of NATO’s non-participation on legitimacy. While the U.S. mission’s likelihood of success for finding weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) was uncertain at best, disputes between the allies and NATO’s absence in Operation Iraqi Freedom further damaged both the legitimacy of the operation and the perception of U.S. adherence to international norms. When the Bush administration acted without the alliance it was seen as aggressive and unilateral, despite having assembled a coalition for the Iraq effort, and continued to pursue NATO’s support throughout the operation. Policymakers also recognized the utility of the alliance and benefitted from the allies’ participation through the NTM-I. Thus, while the Iraq war did not result in a U.S.-NATO partnership or a major NATO undertaking, the hypotheses on the importance of the alliance to the United States are confirmed. Both legitimacy and utility led the United States to pursue the alliance.

Libya
Speculation of both U.S. and NATO intervention in Libya began with the protests in Benghazi in February 2011. Shortly after protesters stormed the city the United Nations Security

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Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 1970 condemning the government’s actions and applying sanctions. In the following weeks, the Security Council also passed UNSC Resolution 1973 authorizing international intervention. On March 19, 2011, one day after the UNSC Resolution 1973, the United States launched Operation Odyssey Dawn (OOD) to further enforce the no-fly zone. In the days following the initiation of OOD, NATO placed ships and aircraft in the Central Mediterranean to prevent the shipment of arms to Col. Qaddafi’s army. They also instituted a search and seizure order of all incoming ships. One week after the passage of UNSCR 1973, NATO agreed to take control of the multinational effort at the behest of several organizations, including the Arab League and other non-NATO partners. Beginning March 31, 2011, NATO air and sea assets deployed as NATO launched Operation Unified Protector (OUP). The mandate of OUP was threefold – to enforce an arms embargo, to maintain a no-fly zone over Libya, and to ensure the protection of Libyan civilians.

Through the two overlapping operations, the United States participated in the air campaign over Libya for eight months, first as the leader of the coalition effort (under OOD), and then as a vital component of the NATO-led OUP. Not only was the United States successful in enforcing these sanctions, but NATO also counted the operation as a “win.” The Libyan operation confirms all four of the hypotheses on the importance of U.S.-NATO relations. Although many states and international organizations – including the Arab League and other regional partners – agreed on the necessity of some kind of intervention, and the UN Security Council authorized the allies’ actions, the United States pursued NATO partnership of the operation to enhance its legitimacy as a multinational effort and adhere to international norms.

Furthermore, the Obama administration insisted on NATO leadership because of the utility of the alliance. Policymakers recognized the alliance’s capacities to coordinate the multinational coalition were unmatched by any other organization, and they wanted to ensure the successful handoff of responsibility for the mission. The United States also exerted its influence within the alliance to highlight NATO’s shortcomings in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, and pushed the alliance to acquire the necessary resources for ISR missions.

**Importance of Research**

At the most recent NATO Summit in Wales, held in September 2014, Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen summoned the heads of state and government for “one of the most important” meetings in NATO’s 65-year history. In addition to planning for the transition of the Afghanistan mission, the allies faced significant threats from ongoing conflicts. The extremist group known as the Islamic State (IS), or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), capitalized on instability in Iraq and Syria to establish a caliphate and declare jihad against the West. Although the NATO alliance ended its limited mission in Iraq in December 2011 and has refused to intervene in the Syrian civil war thus far, the ongoing conflict in both of these states threatened the allies’ interests and heightened concerns over the spread of violence. At the same time, the alliance also faced a growing and immediate threat from Eastern Europe, as Russia escalated its aggressive campaign in Ukraine. Although NATO’s original raison d’être - the threat of the Soviet Union and the spread of communism to Western security and liberal values - has long since faded, new threats continue to challenge the allies and their commitments to collective defense. It is important to understand the reasons for NATO’s evolution and

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persistence in the post-Cold War period to better identify the ways in which the alliance is engaged and how NATO engagement may impact future conflicts.

Whereas previous analyses overlook the importance of the United States to NATO persistence, in the proceeding chapters I demonstrate how much of NATO’s evolution and contemporary relevance is due to the U.S.’s continued leadership within the alliance. Despite the divergent perspectives of the United States and European allies, American officials have consistently pursued innovation and reform of the alliance, and the European allies have complied - though to varying degrees - while remaining committed to NATO. The ability of the United States to have such a dominant influence within the alliance is due not only to its sustained political and military contributions, but also to its hegemonic status. As previous analyses demonstrate, there are substantial political, military, and economic incentives for the European allies to remain connected to the United States though NATO. However, these analyses do not adequately explain why the United States remained committed to NATO because they do not fully consider two factors: the U.S.’s role as the de facto leader of the alliance, and the incentives for continued U.S. participation and leadership. By answering the question of NATO’s persistence, the U.S.’s motivations for maintaining the alliance are made obvious.

This research has significant implications for U.S. foreign policy. I demonstrate the legitimizing effects of NATO participation or nonparticipation, as well as the consequences of pursuing NATO membership during the four conflict periods. The evolution of the U.S.-NATO relationship in each of these conflicts indicates the United States remains the central power of the alliance in the immediate future. The United States will continue its participation in the alliance for as long as it derives some utility from the alliance, and pursuit of this relationship will lead foreign policymakers to look for opportunities beyond legitimacy enhancement. Currently, the
alliance’s utility is derived from its ability to contribute to stabilization and reconstruction efforts in conflict areas (both inside and outside NATO’s areas of interest). The refinement of its capacity to provide support in these areas through previous operations has demonstrated its utility and relevance in the post-Cold War period. Despite declining contributions from some members, all 28 NATO allies recognize the utility of NATO’s integrated command structure. Though the United States has at times found NATO negotiations to be time-consuming and arduous, U.S. policymakers recognize some benefits to the institutionalized decision-making process.

This research also furthers explanations as to the persistence of NATO in the post-Cold War period that are currently lacking in the theoretical literature on alliance behavior. As presented in chapter two, the literature on alliance persistence is incomplete: none of the posited theories fully explain NATO’s continuation and expansion in the absence of a Soviet threat. These cost-benefit explanations give heavier weight to other considerations such as capability aggregation, fighting effectiveness, proliferation of liberal-democratic values, and shared security interests, without a thorough understanding of the value of legitimization for both the United States and Europe. The existing explanations for NATO persistence also underestimate the importance of U.S. leadership. European states re-evaluated their security interests after the Cold War, and some called for an “Europeanization” of the alliance. As a result of changes to security policies, many states reduced monetary and material contributions to NATO. Yet there is no wholly satisfactory explanation as to why Western European states have not successfully developed alliance to replace NATO and end the U.S.’s role in European security. There is also great debate over the burden-sharing problems of the alliance. As my research concludes, there is little incentive for the United States to abandon NATO despite the European members’ shrinking
contributions to the alliance. The likelihood of the United States being drawn into a conflict in which it had little or no interest simply because of its NATO membership and/or withdrawing from the alliance is small. So long as U.S. primacy is maintained, the United States will still be able to selectively engage in unilateral and multilateral operations vital to its interests without threatening the longevity of the alliance.

Largely because of demographic changes and a shifting security environment, as well as U.S. leadership in the international system, the utility and role of NATO in combat has changed. Lower monetary and material contributions from European members have resulted in decreased fighting effectiveness, but not in opportunity for the alliance to contribute to the global use of force. Engagements in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya caused the alliance to realize the needs of the new security environment are changing, and to adapt to U.S. and international demands. This research analyzes the new obligations the alliance has undertaken, as well as how this evolution has impacted the alliance’s legitimizing effects.

**Project Outline**

In the next chapter, I present the relevant theoretical approaches to alliance behavior and participation. Additionally, I provide a review of the literature on NATO in the post-Cold War era, as well as the U.S.-NATO relationship. The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters trace the engagements in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. These four cases are a diverse representation of major U.S. operations in the post-Cold War period wherein NATO was an important actor (even if it did not directly participate, as in the case of Iraq). I confirm each of the hypotheses on U.S.-NATO relations for each case. The seventh chapter is a comprehensive assessment of the U.S.-NATO relationship and its evolution during and after the four cases. It includes an analysis of the U.S.’s responses to the post-Cold War period and shifts in the balance
of power. The evidence presented in the seventh chapter and the collective case evidence confirm the first hypothesis regarding NATO’s persistence after the Cold War as resulting from the U.S.’s role in the alliance. The eighth chapter discusses the implications of my findings.
Chapter 2: Alliances, NATO, and the Post-Cold War Era

Understanding theories of international relations as well as individual and state behavior provide a greater understanding of alliances. Within the traditions of international relations, structural realism served as the foundation for a large portion of the formative alliance literature. As the scholarship advanced, so too did the theoretical frameworks for understanding. The post-WWII development of liberal institutionalism advanced the scholarship on alliances, but explanations emanating from both of these traditions fell short in explaining the post-Cold War persistence of NATO. The following analysis will assess the theoretical frameworks from which a majority of the alliance literature emanates, demonstrating the strengths and weaknesses of each. Although there is no solid consensus on the best theoretical approach to alliances, scholars recognize the value of employing multiple approaches to create a more robust understanding of alliance formation, behavior, persistence, and state participation. In the last section of this chapter, more recent approaches to alliances will be explored through a review of the literature regarding NATO.

Structural Realism

Structural realism (or neorealism) shares with classical realism the same conventions regarding the nature of the international system: states are the most important actors; states are unitary actors and their behavior can be explained rationally; and the nature of the international system creates conditions under which states define their interests in terms of relative power, thus creating an international political system driven by states constantly vying for more power. In Politics Among Nations, Hans Morgenthau articulates theories about how the desire of states to accumulate power (relative to other states) creates a system of balancing. States act to prevent any one actor from becoming too powerful by either (internally) improving its capabilities or by
(externally) banding together with other states to limit or overtake the emerging power. He predicts the first behavior will most likely result in an arms race, and the latter in military alliances, thus creating a foundation from which realist scholars understand the emergence of alliances. In addition, states will engage in military arrangements with other states so long as there is an imbalance of power, because the perceived costs of the relationship is lessened by the greater benefit of participation. The relationship between states within an alliance may limit the ability of the state to act independently, and may make each state’s capabilities (military and otherwise) visible to other alliance members.30

The idea of states desiring to create a system under which no one or two states could amass a great amount of power – thus creating a “balance of power” among all participants in the international system – rose to prominence in the post-WWII era and drove much of the scholarship on alliance behavior. Prior to WWII, Morgenthau argues, states believed they were powerful enough without entering into formal or informal agreements, instead cooperating with those who desired a similar outcome. According to Morgenthau, this was the case with both the United States and Great Britain. Both states believed they were (1) powerful enough to counter any threat to their security, (2) disinterested in bolstering anyone else’s security, and (3) able to engage with one another without any kind of agreement because they wanted to achieve the same goals.31

However, in the aftermath of the war, there was a collapse of the pre-existing balance of power among multiple powerful states, and these changes led scholars to desire a more systemic understanding of state behavior than Morgenthau articulated – namely, they wanted to understand why and how the international system changed. Kenneth Waltz established the

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31 Ibid.
foundations of the systemic structural realist approach by seeking better understandings not only of state behavior, but also the international system and how changes to the system influenced state behavior. According to Waltz, even states that vary greatly in size, government structure, ideology, and other characteristics, are like units in the international system because they are autonomous actors seeking power. The fatal flaw of classical realism, Waltz asserts, is that while there are differences among states, no difference is great enough to explain their behavior in the international system – how they interact with others.\(^{32}\) At the core of structural realism is the assertion that the international system is anarchical (not hierarchical), and the relative size of a state will affect its behavior.\(^{33}\) For Waltz, in order to explain international politics it is essential to recognize state behavior rooted in the repeated interactions between states, and understanding how these interactions constrain behavior is the key to explaining the differences between states.\(^{34}\)

Structural realism posits that states engage with one another when they seek to balance the relative power of other states. Although states differ in many ways (and therefore will have different outcomes), they are all equally constrained by the anarchical structure in which they reside and are evaluated primarily on their capabilities. According to Waltz, the two conditions leading states to engage in balancing behavior – the anarchic world system and the desire of the state to survive – explain both domestic (or internal) behaviors such as improving military and economic capabilities and international (or external) behaviors such as military alliances.\(^{35}\)

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34 Waltz, “Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory.”
Theories of Alliances

The fundamental assertions of structural realism regarding the anarchical order of the international system and the desire of states to enhance their security relative to other states resulted in a better understanding of the conditions under which alliances emerge. Structural realists questioned the effect of alliance formation on the long-term balance of power, as well as the consequence of alliance behavior for both states and the international system. This inquiry led to two types of theories regarding the nature and purpose of alliances: balance-of-power theories and balance-of-threat theories. Balance-of-power theories addressed alliances from the Waltzian tradition, focusing on the aggregation of capabilities to counter threat as the primary motivation for alliance formation. Balance-of-threat theories looked to the conditions in the international system to explain the formation of alliances, addressing the calculations of trade-offs between internal security enhancement and alliance engagement by states.

Stephen Walt explains alliance formation in the Waltzian balance-of-power tradition. According to Walt, states engage in alliances when there is a significant external threat, and the type of alliance is determined by the relationship of the state to the threat. If the state allies with the aggressor state (the external threat) to prevent itself from becoming a target for hostility, it is bandwagoning. The idea of bandwagoning reflects ideas about relative power in the international system. When a state is seen as more powerful in comparison to other states (and is willing and able to show how powerful it is), those other states may seek to align with the growing hegemon because it does not want to become the target for aggression. If the state allies with other states to counter an aggressor state, it is balancing. When states balance against a threat, they are

interested in maintaining a good relationship with the (emerging) hegemonic power. Additionally, if states align with the weaker power, they may have more control over the alliance relationship.\textsuperscript{38}

Though bandwagoning does occur, balancing is much more likely to drive alliance formation, according to Walt. The stronger the state, the more likely it will have allied support, and the more threatening the opposition or aggressor, the more likely it is to engage in balancing behavior. Subsequently, the more certain an allied state’s support, the more likely smaller states will engage in free-riding. Balance of threat theory emphasizes the third condition – the threat intensity of the state. If only the first two conditions were met, posits Walt, NATO allies would have abandoned the United States in favor of bandwagoning with the Soviet Union. However, the danger of the Soviet Union was more threatening than the overwhelming power of the United States, leading states to balance with the United States.\textsuperscript{39}

Patricia Weitsman develops a more complex framework for understanding the conditions under which states ally, and establishes a means for understanding the commitment of states to the alliance based on the balance of power condition described by structural realism. Weitsman rejects Walt and Waltz’s linear relationship between threat and alignment, instead demonstrating the curvilinear relationship between the level of threat and a state’s willingness to align with others or remain committed to the organization. Of the four different behaviors Weitsman suggests, the behavior emerging from the lowest level of threat is hedging. When threats are low states seek to project influence and favor on both its allies and rivals. As threats escalate, states become prone to engage in tethering behavior to try to resolve conflict with their adversary. If the threat is not resolved at this level, states will seek to engage in alliances to balance against

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
possible attack. Lastly, at the highest level of threat, states will seek to ally with their adversary as a last-ditch attempt to prevent an attack.40

Structural realist scholars also devised theories of state behavior in alliances. They attempted to understand how threat – a necessary condition for propelling states toward alliance engagement, according to the realist tradition – affected the willingness of states to participate in alliances. Analyses of alliance participation led to several divergent models for explaining the behavior of states in alliances, including the capability aggregation model and the states trade-off model.41 This debate is particularly evident in the scholarship of Robert McCalla, James Morrow, Thomas Christensen, and Jack Snyder. The capability aggregation model focuses primarily on the objective of alliances to counter emerging powers or threats, suggesting state participation is only the result of a desire to enhance security (not, as others argue, the result of ideological objectives or shared characteristics between states).42 Additionally, McCalla addresses the implication (of the capability aggregation model) that a diminished level of threat may weaken states’ commitment to the alliance. This may lead to disagreements among states and the eventual dissolution of the alliance.43

Morrow also examines the relationship between alliance participation and state credibility. According to Morrow, states engage in alliance behavior because failure to do so would damage their credibility internally as well as outside of the alliance, thus affecting its

42 Morrow “Alliances and Asymmetry.”
43 Robert B. McCalla, “NATO’s Persistence after the Cold War,” International Organization 50, no. 3 (Summer 1996).
status in the international system. He challenges the assertion of the capability aggregation model that alliances are not vehicles for anything outside of security enhancement via capabilities. Instead, alliances provide an opportunity for states to make clear their national interests and engage with other states that share similar interests. This leads to a reduction of uncertainty about state motivations as well as an increased ability to engage in conflict jointly. A more cohesive alliance may also lead to increased costs to the state in times of peace; however, this cost may be offset by the increased transparency and greater fighting capacity in times of war.

Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder form an alternative model for understanding state participation in alliances, demonstrating how different perceptions of threat produce different alliance behaviors. Consistent with both the balance-of-threat approach to alliance formation and Robert Jervis’s articulation of the security dilemma, Christensen and Snyder argue that states perceive the need to act in one of two ways: offensively or defensively. This dichotomy leads to different alliance behavior, the former producing ‘chain ganging’ behavior and the latter ‘buck passing’ behavior. Additionally, Christensen argues that differences in alliance participation are

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44 Additional scholars have discussed how state reputation plays a pivotal role in alliance formation. See: Mark J.C. Crescenzi, Jacob D. Kathman, Katja B. Kleinberg, and Reed M. Wood, “Reliability, Reputation, and Alliance Formation,” *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no.2 (June 2012).
47 Chain ganging results when alliance partners perceive themselves as equals, thus producing a system of high security interdependence. When states decide to engage in offense behavior, their allies feel obligated to engage as well because their security is tied to their allies’ – thus, if the aggressor state is unsuccessful, it will weaken or jeopardize the other states. Conversely, buck passing occurs when states are forced by changes in the international system to behave defensively. Instead of trying to balance the threat, states sometimes attempt to free-ride off of the efforts of other states, either because they think that the cost is too high or because they perceive their non-participation as strategically advantageous. See: Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity,” *International Organization* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1990).
in part explained by the perceptions and misperceptions of state leaders. When leaders misperceive the distribution of power within the international system, or when they misperceive the utility of offensive or defensive strategy, their misperceptions result in different alliance behavior ranging from tight prewar alliances (chain ganging) to altogether avoidance of prewar alliance commitments.

Structural realism provides a solid foundation for understanding alliance formation. The level of threat and the distribution of resources determine the conditions under which states ally and with whom they ally, as well as how alliance relationships augment state power. But when applied to the case of NATO, structural realism does not fully explain several phenomena, especially in light of U.S. primacy in the post-Cold War period. For example, Weitsman’s curvilinear model suggests U.S. participation in the alliance during this period is hedging behavior - in other words, the United States is seeking to project and curry favor with both its allies and adversaries. However, Russia has repeatedly cited the threat posed to positive U.S.-Russian relations by the continued expansion of the alliance. Additionally, the model cannot explain why the United States does not abandon its costly NATO relationship (with no obvious capability enhancement) in favor of potentially less costly bilateral arrangements. While the capability aggregation model may provide an explanation for the reduction of European contributions to NATO, it cannot adequately explain the continued existence of NATO in spite of weakened commitments and divergent interests.


49 Morrow directly disputes the claims made by Christensen and Snyder by suggesting that leaders do not treat alliance engagement as incompatible with other types of military allocations, illustrating another key discussion in the structural realist stream. For each conflict, Morrow asserts states weigh the costs and benefits associated with alliance participation, choosing the latter when they believe it will be the more effective path to security. See: James D. Morrow, “Arms Versus Allies: Trade-Offs in the Search for Security,” *International Organization* 47, no. 2 (Spring 1993).
Liberal Institutionalism

Perspectives about the international system changed in the wake of the Second World War, giving rise to theories outside of the traditions of realism. The shifts in power, the ineffectiveness and dissolution of previous wartime commitments, the development of international institutions meant to foster cooperation and maintain peace through collective security – all of these changes led scholars to reassess the formation, utility, and longevity of alliances. The 1948 Washington Treaty, the prelude to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), only furthered this debate, especially at the end of the Cold War. Despite the re-emergence of realism as the dominant theory in political science as a result of the collapse of the pre-war balance of power system, primary assumptions about the international system were challenged by more liberal approaches, including those aimed at understanding the development of institutions. According to Waltz, an organized international system created incentives for increased internationalism. But liberal institutionalists challenged the assertion that the persistence of the self-help system and the structure of international politics constrained states and limited their desire for cooperation. These scholars pursued explanations of how changes to the international system could foster increased cooperation between states outside of the balance of power theories advanced by realism.

The primary difference between the structural realism and liberal institutionalism is how they value institutions and their ability to facilitate the flow of information between states. For realists, information is consistently scarce and of low quality, and there is little that alliances do

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51 Waltz, “Anarchic Orders and the Balances of Power.”
to change the information problem in the international system. For liberal institutionalists, however, information becomes embedded in institutions out of utility and the desire of states to reduce transaction costs and improve the information environment. Liberal institutionalism shares theoretical elements with classical liberalism by placing a high value on understanding how collective decisions are made, as well as how (and for what reasons) political processes change. However, liberal institutionalism diverges with its classical counterpart in other issue areas; namely, institutions do not cause states to behave peacefully or cooperate but instead encourages them to do so.

The institutionalization of international politics influences state behavior; therefore, understanding how states engage with one another can only be done if the role of institutions in the engagement is also understood. Scholars such as Robert Keohane advance the liberal institutionalism perspective by studying how regimes, conventions, and other types of institutional arrangements augment states’ influence. Institutions facilitate the flow of information between states, giving them the opportunity to monitor compliance with international agreements as well as bolster their own credibility. Because international agreements are difficult to keep, Keohane argues, the desire of states to uphold their commitments suggests how institutions shape behavior. For Keohane and other liberal institutional scholars, the value of studying alliances is the ability to understand how these alliances influence state behavior.

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52 Structural realism identifies alliances as tools for increasing transparency and bettering communication; however, this increased transparency only applies to alliance members – not the international system as a whole – and dissipates when the alliance successfully counters the threat for which it was created to counter.
54 Keohane, International Institutions and State Power.
55 Ibid.
arrangements serve as a mechanism to routinize and institutionalize conventions regarding state behavior, as well as how they influence states to behave.

**Theories of Alliances**

Liberal institutionalism scholars sought a more comprehensive understanding of alliance formation and behavior than the explanations provided by structural realists. David Lake argues that the real question liberal institutionalism seek to answer is how states decide to ally: when states are given the option to appease an enemy, arm themselves, become a superpower themselves, form coalitions of the willing, or any other number of options, why do they choose alliances? Institutional frameworks provide an opportunity to understand the independent effects of formal arrangements (such as alliances) on states, as well as how they become embedded into international society. A portion of the literature on alliance formation addresses the conditions (outside of security enhancement) leading states to ally, particularly when there is a great disparity of military capability and size amongst potential member states. This ‘burdensharing’ debate focuses on the motivations of states to engage in alliances when they did not receive as much security enhancement as other courses of action (i.e., building up military capability internally), instead highlighting the cost-benefit analysis of states and the political and economic consequences of alliance participation. Although many liberal institutional scholars argue that alliances created institutional mechanisms for transparency and cooperation, others argue that the continued institutionalization of alliances – particularly under multipolarity – could result in the

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increased likelihood of war; at the very least alliances could impact the magnitude and longevity of conflict.\textsuperscript{58}

In addition to alliance formation and cohesion, liberal institutionalism developed theories regarding state behavior and alliance persistence. In disputing Christensen and Snyder’s ‘chain ganging’ and ‘buck passing’ hypotheses, Thomas Morrow argues that alliances are seen by states as tools in their foreign policy toolboxes, a perception that results from the value states give to the institutional structure and its ability to negate conflict. When states decide to engage in alliance participation, Morrow argues, they do so because the perceived benefits (relative to the expected costs) outweigh other courses of action.\textsuperscript{59} Additionally, as Christopher Gelpi asserts, alliance participation enhances the ability of states to reduce the likelihood of aggression between members.\textsuperscript{60} Daniel Deudney and John Ikenberry argue that alliances allow states to engage in co-binding, or creating institutions that would effectively constrain the behavior of member states (and reduce threat). In the post-WWII era, Deudney and Ikenberry posit the United States used its superpower status to create an environment with conditions favorable to themselves, and then institutionalized the practices and principles most important to their objectives, thus creating a ‘Western order’.\textsuperscript{61}

As the end of the Cold War approached, liberal explanations for alliance participation in the newly-emerging world order prevailed. As Deudney and Ikenberry point out, the post-war environment was characterized by Western idealist philosophy: “co-binding security institutions, penetrated American hegemony, semi-sovereign great powers, economic openness, and civic

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{59} Morrow, Arms Versus Allies.”


identity.” Even before the end of the war, liberal institutionalists argued that NATO’s mission had developed from an instrument intended to enhance security to a vehicle for conducting transatlantic relations. Liberal institutionalism shifted its focus away from the causes of alliance formation, arguing that alliances remained cohesive because of a more cooperative international environment. Additionally, they sought new understandings of how alliances affected the likelihood of war, lessening the emphasis on security enhancement and centering the debate on the promotion of cooperation. According to liberal institutionalism, the ability of alliances to stabilize relations, increase transparency, and reduce transaction costs cemented its value to member states, thus ensuring its long-term viability. This, in combination with the expanded mandate the alliance pursued after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, directly contradicted the assertions of structural realism that the absence of an immediate threat would result in the disbanding of the alliance.

Liberal institutionalism approaches to alliances augment the understanding of how and why states ally, filling some of the gaps left by structural realism. Namely, it seeks explanations as to the conditions under which states are compelled to ally instead of pursuing alternative security-enhancing arrangements. Liberal institutionalism also explains the institutionalization of norms regarding the use of force, and why states are compelled to share both resources and information with their allies. Understanding the conditions under which information can be

62 Ibid, p. 179.
63 Duffield, “Transatlantic Relations after the Cold War”; John S. Duffield, “NATO’s Functions after the Cold War,” Political Science Quarterly 109, no. 5 (Winter 1994).
65 This hypothesis emerged out of the ‘contractual approach’ to institutions, which argues that when institutions are successful at reducing uncertainty and limiting the transaction costs of international cooperation, states will demand that the institutions remain, even if the cost of participation remains high. See: Robert O. Keohane, “Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research,” International Journal 45, no. 4 (Autumn 1990).
66 McCalla, “NATO’s Persistence after the Cold War.”
shared (and the embedding of these conditions into international institutions and norms) amongst states and the motivations for doing so provides a more thorough understanding of how and why states ally. Thus, liberal institutionalism provides a better framework for understanding alliances at the state level. The actions of the state can be better explained by understanding the conditions under which it operates, and the desire of actors to normalize and institutionalize expectations for state behavior explains the resulting international system.

However, it too falls short of a comprehensive theory for understanding alliances and, in particular, U.S.-NATO relations in the post-Cold War period. The impact of alliances on the likelihood of future conflict remains unclear. Though NATO member states have refrained from leaving the alliance to fight one another, the alliance has engaged in more conflict in the post-war period than it did when its primary purpose was to defend member states from the Soviet threat. Morrow asserts the role of alliances as tools in states’ foreign policy toolboxes, and this model is evident in U.S.-NATO relations; however, the alliance’s impact (as well as the impact of the institutionalization of force) on state behavior is not well understood. Liberal institutionalism does little to solve the problem of burden-sharing: though it acknowledges the participation of states even when there are costs associated with allying, it is not able to adequately explain why some states (namely, the U.S) are more willing than others to bear a higher cost. This approach also fails to explain why a superpower such as the United States would pursue the use of force outside of the alliance – either with coalitions, bilateral arrangements, or unilateral action – when it was presented with an opportunity to set precedents for the use of force by other states.
*Filling in the Gaps*

Analysis of U.S.-NATO relations in each of the four cases contained in the proceeding chapters suggests that NATO persistence is best explained by the traditions of structural realism. The NATO alliance persists because external threats to transatlantic security continue; however, the ways in which NATO evolved in the post-Cold War period and the types of threats it identifies as important to the alliance is largely the result of the U.S.’s continued participation and leadership in the alliance. Whereas the existing scholarship on NATO persistence emphasizes the global balance of power and the external conditions, I examine the balance of political influence, economic resources, and military capabilities *within* the alliance, as well as external factors to understand NATO’s persistence and the effect of the United States on the alliance. Additionally, the existing literature on NATO persistence treats the U.S.’s leadership of the alliance as haphazard and an unintended consequence of the U.S.’s hegemonic status. However, I demonstrate that the United States deliberately uses its hegemonic status to shape the alliance in order to achieve its foreign policy objectives, and that U.S. leadership within the alliance is much more intentional than detailed in previous scholarship. Subsequently, I demonstrate the impact of the U.S.’s hegemonic status on the European allies’ willingness (or their occasional unwillingness) to comply with the U.S.’s demands for the alliance.

Although structural realism is useful in explaining NATO persistence, it is not wholly useful in explaining why the United States, given its hegemonic status, remained committed to the alliance and willing to bear a more substantial burden than the European allies. As predicted, the absence of the Soviet threat led to a less cohesive alliance overall; though all of the allies recognize common interests, the United States and the European allies often disagree on which issues should take precedent, as well as the role of NATO in contemporary conflict engagement.
However, not all of the NATO allies have devoted less attention and resources to common defense in the absence of the Soviet threat. Many of the European allies have decreased alliance contributions, but these reductions resulted not from a weakened commitment to the alliance, but rather domestic conditions and cuts to defense budgets. Conversely, the United States maintained its contributions to the alliance, while serving as the de facto leader in the alliance’s conflicts. The European allies have remained committed to the alliance, and NATO has evolved and persisted because of the United States’ hegemonic status and leadership within the alliance.

To explain the United States’ continued participation in the alliance, I examine the motivations for the United States to engage the alliance in each of the four conflicts. Whereas structural realism best explains NATO’s persistence, the development of U.S.-NATO relations after the Cold War is consistent with and advances the fundamental assertions of liberal institutionalism. In each of the four cases, I demonstrate the military utility of NATO as well as its political value for the United States. The alliance has evolved beyond a collective defense mechanism designed to augment member-states’ capacity to ward off direct threats (hard power), but it does not exist simply to deter attacks, compel compliance with international norms, or legitimize the use of force (soft power).

As each of the four cases demonstrates, the United States uses its NATO relationship for hard and soft power purposes. NATO participation in conflict engagement was paramount in lending legitimacy to operations, as demonstrated by U.S.-NATO operations in Kosovo in 1999. The alliance also provided the United States with valuable resources for stabilization and reconstruction in conflict areas, as was the case in the 2001 war in Afghanistan. Though it was unable to provide substantial resources to augment the U.S.’s capacity to wage war, the resources provided by the alliance as well as its internal response (via initiatives like the NATO Response
Force and the Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism, or PAP-T) demonstrated the recognition by European allies of the threat posed from terrorism and the necessity of the alliance. Conversely, the absence of NATO support in the U.S.’s 2003 Iraq War damaged the U.S.’s credibility. The international community’s willingness to accept the preemptive measures as legitimate compounded the controversy surrounding the war, despite the U.S.’s pursuit of multilateralism in the absence of NATO endorsement.

NATO’s evolution and persistence is not by accident, nor is it a reflection of a more peaceful international system in the post-Cold War period. Although the United States is one of twenty-eight member states (and numerous non-member partners), NATO’s agenda clearly reflects U.S. interests. Thus, the persistence of NATO is best explained by U.S. primacy. My findings, though specific to one case, test and confirm principle assumptions of both structural realism and liberal institutionalism. Firstly, alliances persist when they serve state interests (even when there is no capability enhancement), not as a result of the level of threat in the international system. Secondly, alliances can remain cohesive and evolve in the absence of immediate threat. The likelihood of alliance persistence is not predicated in the presence or absence of conflict, but rather in the interests of states and the value of the alliance to the most powerful members.

**Literature Review**

From these different theoretical approaches to alliance behavior, a robust literature on NATO and U.S.-NATO relations emerged. Of particular importance to all of these scholars was whether NATO would persist in the absence of the Soviet threat, whether new alliances would emerge to counter the continuation of NATO or to challenge U.S. primacy, and why states continued to engage in the alliance. Institutionalists continued to study how states came to value the organizational frameworks provided by NATO, as well as how they employed their alliance
relationship to achieve their military and political goals. The following section highlights some of the important literature emerging from these traditions.

The Next Great Challenge: NATO

Conversations regarding the new world order inevitably led alliance scholars to question the practicality of maintaining wartime organizations such as the NATO—what Wallace Thies calls the “alliance crisis syndrome.” Proponents of NATO argued the alliance created an environment that fostered strategic cooperation and lessened the perception of threat between and amongst member states, and that the alliance could be expanded to incorporate more member states. In addition, NATO supporters asserted the possibility of a more robust agenda for the alliance, believing its success as a military organization would translate into political and economic success as well. Despite the absence of a new imminent threat, NATO would maintain its military and political capabilities with the objective of furthering international cooperation and security, not just the security of member states.

However, a number of critics called for NATO to either reduce its military capabilities and expansionist agenda, or for the alliance to disband altogether. Advocates of a reduced NATO asserted that the alliance threatened other states in the international community (namely, Russia and former Soviet satellite states that had yet to fully ascribe to the Western ideologies of free market economies and democratic governance). Additionally, they supported the transition of European security to institutions not dominated by the United States, and believed political-economic institutions such as the European Union (EU) would be capable of creating a military

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mechanism similar to NATO, but would maintain its autonomy and be outside the influence of the U.S.\textsuperscript{69}

In the twenty years that followed, neither side of the NATO debate reigned supreme. In reality, NATO persisted with both an expanded membership and agenda, but with limited successes both politically and militarily. As each engagement waxed and waned, both sides maintained their positions on the future of NATO. Similar to NATO in the Cold War, much of its success was seen primarily as the result of U.S.’s superpower status. A body of literature on post-war conflict engagement (presented in the following pages) assessed the role of the United States in the alliance, as well as the political and military support of the U.S. outside of the alliance. Each side of the debate maintained their position, looking even harder at the U.S.-NATO relationship for evidence of the alliance’s demise. Many took the U.S.’s decision to act outside of the alliance in the early months of the war in Afghanistan as evidence that it no longer valued the institutional framework of NATO and instead preferred to operate via more fungible coalitions of the willing.\textsuperscript{70} Others argued that the United States maintained its relationship with NATO to maintain its status in Western Europe but engaged outside of the alliance to expand its sphere of influence.

This section serves to introduce the literature addressing many of these topics. Though not exhaustive, the literature provided below is a comprehensive look at the debates surrounding both NATO’s persistence and the U.S.-NATO relationship. Additionally, it looks at how this literature supports and contradicts the theoretical models of alliances provided in the previous

\textsuperscript{69} Michael E. Brown, “Minimalist NATO: A Wise Alliance Knows When to Retrench,” \textit{Foreign Affairs} 78, no. 3 (May 1999).
\textsuperscript{70} Patricia Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}. 
section, and explains how the subsequent chapters of this project fill a void in the NATO scholarship.

**NATO and the New Security Environment: Long Term Viability**

Questions about the new security environment and the role of a collective defense alliance such as NATO abounded in the early 1990s. Many argued the new U.S.-dominated world order resulting from the end of the Cold War was unlike previous periods of unipolarity because of the manner in which the Soviet Union met its demise and the institutions that had come about in the post-WWII era.  

Stephen Walt argued the debates over U.S. foreign policy were based “on disagreements about the causes of alliances,” and the winner of these debates was dependent on which hypothesis of alliance formation was most accepted.  

Though the Cold War ended in 1991, debates over the utility of alliances in times of peace, as well as the U.S.’s role in Western Europe, continued. As NATO engaged in new types of military and political behavior and expanded its membership, traditional neorealist and liberal institutional theories on alliances were challenged. Not only did NATO engage 16 new member-states (increasing its size from 12 original members to 28, with initiatives aimed at drawing in more states in the future), it also adopted new, “non-traditional” missions such as securing the cyber technologies of alliance members and combatting terrorism. Each consideration for conflict engagement was met with resistance from different member states arguing these were “out-of-area” conflicts that did not directly challenge alliance members.  

Nonetheless, NATO persisted and flourished and U.S.-Western European relations were maintained.

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71 See for example the argument presented by Deudney and Ikenberry in “The Nature and Origins of the Liberal International Order” regarding the inability of realism in explaining the stability and high institutionalization of Western values in creating a liberal international world order post-WWII.  
72 Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.  
Although the longevity of sustaining the alliance was continually challenged, a number of explanations were provided by scholars to explain NATO’s persistence and evolution. Scholars Celeste Wallander, Helene Sjursen, John Duffield, Strobe Talbott, Bradley Klein, Ronald Asmus et al., and others examine the institutional character of the alliance. Wallander asserts the purpose of an alliance like NATO goes beyond the aggregation of capabilities, and the persistence of these alliances is not wholly explained by the institutionalist explanations of sunk costs. She identifies the cost-benefit calculation of states in explaining prevailing institutions, explaining that if the cost of maintaining the existing organization is lower than the cost of creating a whole new institution, states will support the existing establishment. When alliances are successful, they become “security institutions” and persist so long as there is some perceived utility to member states.\footnote{Celeste A. Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War,” \textit{International Organization} 54, no. 4 (Autumn 2000).} In addition, the rules, norms, and operating procedures resulting from decades of alliance interaction are not only institutionalized but can also be adapted for use in other types of conflicts and, Sjursen contends, allows the alliance to move from a collective defense mechanism to a security arrangement “governed by the principles of multilateralism”.\footnote{Helene Sjursen, “On the Identity of NATO,” \textit{International Affairs} 80, no. 4 (July 2004): 688.}

John Duffield looks to both the institutional structure of NATO and the persistence of external threats to member states to explain the alliance’s post-war place in the international system. The enduring nature of NATO, according to Duffield, is enhanced by its role in neutralizing threats in Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally, NATO’s institutional structure fosters transparency and prevents a re-nationalization of militaries in Western Europe. Maintaining the United States as a pivotal player keeps the balance of power in a favorable
Strobe Talbott expands the institutional approaches to NATO by looking at it as part of a greater international network of institutions, arguing the institution’s longevity is explained by a combination of U.S. leadership and a strategic expansion of its primary objectives. However, these characteristics simultaneously threaten the future of the alliance by disrupting the balance within the institutional network as well as damaging the cohesion between member-states.

Bradley Klein furthers the institutional explanations for NATO, arguing its persistence is likely because of its shift from the traditional threat of the Soviet Union to an emphasis on preserving and spreading traditionally Western ideas. “NATO’s success resides in having provided a network of intertextual representations for the articulation of global political space” writes Bradley, suggesting that NATO cultivated the Soviet threat into a broader set of social practices. This led member-states to develop a set of ideologies that they then ascribed to – “the Western way of life.” Ronald Asmus, Richard Kugler, and Stephen Larrabee argue that the traditional threats that NATO was intended to combat still exist, but instead of coming from the Soviet Union, they emerge from two new arcs of crisis: the Eastern arc (northern Europe between Russia and Germany, Turkey, the Caucases, and middle Asia) and the Southern arc (northern Africa and the Mediterranean, the Middle East and southwest Asia). They argue that if the West wishes to be successful against these threats it must reorganize its grand strategy. NATO is the most obvious tool, they suggest, because of its “tested leadership structure,

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76 Duffield, “NATO’s Functions after the Cold War.”
77 Strobe Talbott, “From Prague to Baghdad: NATO at Risk,” Foreign Affairs 81, no. 6 (November 2002).
78 Bradley S. Klein, “How the West was One: The Representational Politics of NATO,” International Studies Quarterly 34, no. 3 (September 1990): 311.
functioning logistics and…effective arsenal”. Provided the alliance reevaluates its relationships and expands its geographic and political horizons, Asmus et al. argue that its institutional value remains.

Other explanations for the persistence of NATO revolved around the shared histories and identities between member-states. Helene Sjursen suggests NATO members, even in the absence of the Soviet Union as a primary threat, have been bound for such a long period and with such intensity of purpose that the shared history of its members will allow the alliance to persist. Sjursen builds on the analysis of Thomas Risse-Kappen, who suggests the shared histories of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France in particular resulted in the North Atlantic Treaty. By understanding its characteristics as an institution and its role in institutionalizing cooperation among states, Sjursen argues that the continued existence of NATO is unsurprising. Michael Howard equates post-war NATO to an unhappy marriage, declaring that even if member-states were dissatisfied with the benefits they received from alliance participation, the alliance remained in place because they were both familiar with one another and because the consequences of disbanding (even to create a new organization) extended to states both inside and outside of the alliance.

There is a clear divergence in the literature in explaining the persistence and long-term viability of NATO. Structural realists emphasized the potential of the alliance to enhance member states’ responses to threats and the institutionalization of decision-making mechanisms. Liberal institutionalists noted the shared values and histories of member states, attributing the

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80 Sjursen, “On the Identity of NATO.”
persistence of NATO to a shared interest in the perpetuation of Western values. Liberal institutionalism also argued the continued expansion of the alliance as further evidence of the rising importance states gave to multilateralism. In reality, NATO’s persistence is best explained by the current balance of power, nature of contemporary security threats, and the importance of multilateralism to NATO’s most powerful member, the United States.

**Internal Dynamics of NATO**

A body of the existing NATO literature also examines the changing internal dynamics of the alliance, focusing on the debates surrounding expansion, crisis management, renewed missions and purpose, decision-making mechanisms, and burdensharing. Questions also arose regarding who would assume leadership of the alliance moving forward. A number of scholars and policymakers weighed the consequences of transitioning NATO responsibility to Europe (most likely through other existing organizations, such as the European Union and Western European Union). Additionally, scholars addressed the utility of NATO as an actor in issue-specific cases to assess both the adaptability of the alliance and its long-term viability.\(^{83}\) Michael Brown, Stuart Croft et al., Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier, Philip Jones, Todd Sandler and James Murdoch, Marten van Heuven, Jack Vincent et al., Jeffrey Simon, Charles Barry and Hans Binnendijk, Marie-Theres Beumler, Graeme Herd and John Kriendler, Gülñur Aybet and Rebecca Moore, and Sean Kay all illustrate the debates within NATO and between member-states.

Michael Brown addresses the expansionist discussions within NATO, arguing that it is the EU and not NATO that should look toward expansion. He rejects the notions that NATO should expand its membership to promote democracy amongst non-member states, suggesting

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\(^{83}\) For examples of these debates, see: Hans Binnendijk and Catherine McArdle Kelleher, “NATO Reassurance and Nuclear Reductions: Creating the Conditions,” *Transatlantic Current* 2 (January 2012); Ulf Haeussler “NATO and the ICC: Time for Cooperation?” *Transatlantic Current* 4 (March 2012).
that the criteria for selecting new member states is designed in such a way that those states would be forced to adopt democratic practices long before their acceptance into NATO. Additionally, Brown argues that it is unlikely that Western European states will want to be continually drawn into ethnic conflicts, thereby lessening their participation and the effectiveness of the alliance as a whole. Enlargement, he argues, not only lessens the capability of the alliance but also poses a threat to non-member states like Russia, who has long been concerned over NATO’s missions.84

Stuart Croft, Jolyon Howorth, Terry Terriff and Mark Webber examine how in the ten years following the end of the Cold War, the alliance was weakened by each crisis engagement undertaken. They argue that the three challenges NATO needs to overcome to strengthen its crisis-management ability include setting a definitive expansion agenda, settling the Europeanization debate, and addressing the military challenges NATO is likely to face going forward.85

Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier advance the debate surrounding NATO’s post-war agenda through a discussion of the utility of NATO for democracy promotion. They suggest that NATO’s future success is embedded in the ability of the alliance to serve as a peace-spreading mechanism, and the best way to do so is to incentivize states into adopting democratic practices by extending membership offers to any state seeking to join NATO. Additionally, Daalder and Goldgeier address the debate over whether an expanded membership would tax the existing capabilities and decision-making structure.86

Philip Jones utilizes a public goods model to understand the relationships between NATO members. His is particularly interested in the decision-making process of domestic policy-

84 Brown, “Minimalist NATO: A Wise Alliance Knows When to Retrench.”
85 Stuart Croft et al, “NATO’s Triple Challenge,” International Affairs 76, no. 3 (July 2000).
86 Ivo H. Daalder and James Goldgeier, “Global NATO,” Foreign Affairs 85, no. 5 (September 2006).
makers. Jones finds that individuals are inclined to support NATO policies when there is a significant benefit for doing so – for example, policymakers who represent the interests of defense good manufacturers are prone to support NATO because of the trade relationships that exist as a result of the alliance. 87 Todd Sandler and James Murdoch look at burdensharing within the alliance in the first decade after the war to test whether larger members bear more of the defense burden (and to predict whether this relationship will erode the alliance). Sandler and Murdoch find that there is no evidence to support uneven burdensharing claims, but a small uptick toward the end of the decade suggests that burdensharing may become unequal in the future. 88 Marten van Heuven argues that there is equality in many aspects of the alliance, including in enlargement goals, risk sharing, organization and leadership, and influence on NATO-Russia relations. He acknowledges an unequal distribution of capabilities but explains that the inequality has always been present and subsequently, does not impact the discussion on whether NATO is in decline. 89 Additionally, van Heuven looks to both the United States and Germany as leaders in the alliance, suggesting that so long as continued or increased participation from both will ensure the long-term viability of the organization as well as shaping the agenda. 90

Jack Vincent, Ira Straus, and Richard Biondi utilize capability theory to understand member-states attitudes toward decision-making in NATO. As a result of the changes NATO underwent in the 1990s, Vincent et al. argue that different member-states have different

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preferences for the future of the alliance based on their ability to contribute to the alliance and their outside influence on the international system. Based on survey data and information about the capabilities of states, they find that states with the highest capacity are also more likely to support changes to the NATO decision-making structures.91

Jeffrey Simon, Charles Barry and Hans Binnendijk, and Marie-Theres Beumler address different elements of the U.S.-Western Europe dichotomy within NATO. Simon analyzes the demographics of states to understand how both attitudes and capabilities differ. His findings show that an aging European population, shrinking military size and de-conscription in Western Europe, divergent priorities regarding internal security and defense, different immigrant populations, and demographic and economic marginalization are some of the most pressing issues facing NATO. He argues that these issues will not only affect the operational capacity of the alliance, but also will increase tensions between the United States and Western Europe and will challenge the transatlantic partnership.92 Barry and Binnendijk explain the growing gap in capabilities between member-states through an economic lens, suggesting that protectionism and sovereignty concerns in Europe could lead member-states to become less cooperative and more apathetic to U.S. demands for better interoperability and an overall stronger alliance.93 Beumler draws on the difference in historical identities between the United States and its European counterparts to suggest that younger generations of Europeans will come to value NATO less over time. Not only do European member-states lean toward pacifism, Beumler asserts, but

supports Simon’s assertions that terrorism is primarily a domestic problem for these states, not a threat to international stability as argued by the United States.94

Graeme Herd and John Kriendler emphasize a growing heterogeneity amongst NATO members, arguing that the premier example of this divergence is the utility of the alliance for U.S. foreign policy. They suggest that Europe is becoming less strategically important to the United States as it shifts its focus to Asia and the Middle East. In addition, conflict between the two over efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq changed the perception of NATO for U.S. policymakers. Herd and Kriendler suggest further that with NATO expansion came a new set of priorities for alliance members: instead of focusing on collective security and crisis management, these smaller states sought a “regionally anchored deference and defense policy,” particularly in regards to Russia.95 Gülnur Aybet and Rebecca Moore argue that as a result of engagements after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, NATO has increasingly become crisis-driven and as a result lacks a coherent strategic, purpose-driven mandate. While some members questioned the military readiness of NATO, others looked to the challenges posed by Russia and the internal divisions of the alliance. Additionally, the U.S.’s desire to expand outward from Europe and the post-9/11 security environment has led to a problematic (in terms of the alliance’s longevity) trend of disparate NATO members looking for short-term solutions to long-term challenges without any underlying purpose.96

Sean Kay looks to internal, institutional changes to understand NATO in the post-war era. He highlights the importance of NATO’s relationships with states like France and Germany,
as well as the changing relationships between NATO and the Western European Union as well as the EU. He argues that even with the institutional changes undertaken by NATO (such as the establishment of European Security and Defense Identity – ESDI – within NATO, and the creation of Combined Joint Task Forces – CJTFs), NATO’s greatest challenge would be to recreate conditions under which it could deal with immediate security challenges as well as addressing demands from both member and non-member states in neighboring regions.\(^7\)

Robert Jervis writes of the likelihood of a sustained security community between the United States and Western Europe. He argues that the post-Cold War era presented an unprecedented opportunity for a security community to endure, as “the states that constitute this (community) are the leading members of the international system and so are natural rivals who in the past were central to the violent struggle for security, power, and contested values.”\(^8\) However, he suggests that “no one state can move away from the reliance on war itself lest it become a victim, they can collectively do so if each forsakes the resort to force.”\(^9\) Robbin Laird suggests that there is a necessity for organizations like NATO to persist in order to nurture a “Western European identity” and ensure the stability of Europe. Additionally, NATO needs to look to its institutional partners to work effectively instead of becoming the only organization for promoting collective defense. He highlights three issues for post-Cold War Europe that signify the importance of a Western collective defense effort spanning far beyond NATO: the residual threat of Russia, the range of threats that exist outside of Europe, and the continued dynamics between European states.\(^1\)

\(^9\) Ibid., p.1.
Sean Kay challenges the notion that NATO provides its member-states with collective security in the post-war era, suggesting that if the alliance wishes to enhance European security it has to maintain the military and political engagement of the U.S., while simultaneously enhancing the ability and credibility of European allies in regional crises. Though NATO operates through a set of institutionalized norms, rules, and behaviors, there is no measurable independent impact of NATO on the security of Europe and therefore states cannot and will not rely on NATO when their survival is at stake. History has shown that any attempt to institutionalize security in Europe (namely, the Concert of Europe, the League of Nations, and the coalitions of the early 1990s in the Balkans) has failed, writes Kay, and maintaining any institutionalization of security cooperation through NATO will be one of the greatest challenges moving forward.\(^{101}\)

Robert Hunter addresses the debates surrounding the transition of security responsibilities to exclusively-European organizations such as the Western European Union (WEU). Like Kay, Hunter argues that the United States does and should still play a pivotal role in NATO. However, Hunter sees the WEU as an opportunity to supplement NATO and fill the voids when there is no consensus within NATO – namely, when the U.S. does not wish to engage. The formulation of the European Security Defense Policy (ESDP), argues Hunter, should be supported by both the United States and Europe. For the United States, the ESDP reduces the fears of abandonment, increases the incentives for European states to spend more on defense (thus easing disagreements over burdensharing and interoperability), and gives both NATO and European institutions improved crisis management resources. Hunter’s prescriptions for a better European defense system does not call for the eventual phasing out of the United States or NATO, but rather

\(^{101}\) Kay, *NATO and the Future of European Security*.  

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support for a “NATO First” network with shared risks, cooperative planning, increased defense spending by European partners, a concentration on interoperability between organizations, and most important better dialogue between NATO and exclusively-European partners like the WEU, ESDP, and EU.  

Alfred Cahen furthers the debate over the transition of responsibility from NATO to the WEU. Cahen notes that debates over burdensharing, which are driven by emotion and not rationality, have intensified in recent years. However, these burdensharing debates are rooted in a much more difficult argument over the loyalty of European allies to one another and doubts about the capacity and willingness of American leadership. Cahen argues that a more substantial transition to institutions like the WEU – an organization founded by the Brussels Treaty, which was said to have eased the U.S.’s ability to obtain support for the Washington Treaty – will not only lessen the intensity of these debates, but also clarify the criteria on which European security is based, and the responsibilities of European states in regards to securing themselves and the larger Atlantic community.

Analyses of the internal dynamics of NATO resulted in a better understanding of alliance politics after the Cold War, but no cohesive explanation for NATO persistence emerged. Scholars pursued much more systematic examinations of domestic political conditions to understand why states chose to remain in the alliance, as well as the different types and levels of contributions. This gave rise to the extensive debate over burdensharing, guided by the fundamental assumptions of structural realism that the alliance would persist so long as there was a threat to member-states and a perceived benefit for continued participation. Many liberal

103 Alfred Cahen, The Western European Union and NATO (McLean: Brassey’s Ltd, 1989).
institutionalists explored the possibility that in the post-Cold War era, NATO could be transformed into a vehicle for the preservation of the Western identity and the promotion of liberal democratic values. Additionally, scholars disagreed on the necessity and significance of NATO persistence: while some argued an expanded membership and agenda spoke to the enduring nature of the alliance, others believed continually pursuing new members and new missions would cripple the alliance’s ability to act efficiently and effectively.

The Future of the U.S.-NATO Relationship

The debate about the transition of responsibilities between NATO and other Western European organizations focused primarily on whether the United States should be at least partially committed to securing Western Europe, as well as reducing Europe’s dependence on the U.S. should it elect to become more isolationist. However, a substantial body of literature on the U.S.-NATO relationship emerged in the post-Cold War era as well, focusing on a number of domestic (for the U.S.) and international issues. This literature centered around a number of themes, including: the (domestic) political and economic consequences of sustained U.S. involvement as a primary ‘defender’ of Europe; the possibility of increasing the burdensharing disparities between larger and smaller states (particularly in light of membership expansion); the changing nature of conflicts that could result in NATO intervention (and how the success or failure of intervention could damage the alliance); and the need for both the United States and NATO to adapt its institutionalized leadership and decision-making capacities in the new security environment. Stanley Sloan, Michael Brown, Andrew Bennett, Joseph Lepgold and Danny Unger, Jason Davidson, Gale Mattox, and Matthew Rhodes illustrate different elements of the U.S.-NATO relationship and the challenges of the post-war era.
Stanley Sloan writes of the perpetual tension between pro-NATO foreign policymakers and Congress. It is unlikely that Congress will ever feel as though there is an equal distribution of burdensharing between the United States and other NATO members, Sloan writes, in spite of all member-states’ desire to reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons. Even in the period leading up to the end of the Cold War, Congress was reluctant to accept policymakers’ calls for large troop commitments in Europe, despite their acceptance of the U.S.’s obligations to NATO.\textsuperscript{104}

Michael Brown adds to this debate, suggesting that as NATO expands its membership, the cost of U.S. commitments in Western Europe could become too high. If NATO’s purpose is to promote security, and this is still the greatest benefit in terms of U.S. participation, membership expansion is counterproductive to both the alliance as incoming member states have already achieved a high level of stability and may further tax NATO’s resources. Additionally, membership growth only further promotes free-riding problems for the United States.\textsuperscript{105}

Bennett, Lepgold and Unger, and Davidson further explore the alliance relationship and burdensharing debates between the U.S. and its European allies in the post-war era. Bennett, Lepgold, and Unger examine burdensharing during the Persian Gulf War, arguing that the conflict was the first challenge to collective action mechanisms in the post-Cold War era. Additionally, the authors challenge traditional measures of burdensharing in the literature, in part because of an underestimation of the new security environment. According to Bennett et al, the leadership role of the U.S. in the new system meant it had less of a strategic interest in protecting smaller allies (than in bipolarity), but that the U.S.’s decision to do so anyway could be attributed to concerns regarding the future security environment. Small states, conversely, are incentivized


\textsuperscript{105} Brown, “Minimalist NATO.”
to participate because they maintain a fear of abandonment. If a new multipolar order were to emerge, the authors assert that coalitions would need to continue to become more fluid to maximize benefit and reduce sunk costs. Jason Davidson furthers the burdensharing debate, arguing that states are incentivized to contribute to U.S. alliance relationships because they seek to maintain or improve their standing in the international system as well as their relationships with the U.S.. Even when states could free ride, they engage in allied efforts because participation and a more equal burdensharing enhances states’ prestige, which according to Davidson outweighs both the value from and cost of participation in the alliance.\(^{106}\)

Gale Mattox explores the impact of NATO membership expansion on U.S. attitudes regarding the alliance, highlighting the rigorous debate that U.S. policymakers undertook in considering how to engage with the alliance on issues of expansion. At the end of the war, the NATO alliance as well as the U.S. attempted to operate within the existing security structures of Europe, without any adaptation for the new security environment. Many policymakers called for the U.S. to distance itself from NATO, seeing the alliance as a Cold War relic incapable of adaptation and in the hopes that Europe would establish its own defense mechanism. However, this strategy was quickly abandoned when Russia supported German reunification and the United States (and other NATO allies) saw that NATO may serve a future purpose. The debates over enlargement led not only to consensus between the U.S. and NATO, but also led to a renewed sense of purpose for the alliance and for the U.S.-NATO relationship.\(^{107}\)

Matthew Rhodes analyzes how the 2008 global economic crisis led to a renewal of the debate in the United States regarding the utility of the NATO relationship. In addition to


challenging the global power status of the U.S. and Western European states, the economic crisis also highlighted the disparity in defense spending between the U.S. and Europe and renewed debates over the capability of NATO allies to contribute to future missions and the possibility that the U.S.’s European partners would free ride. These conditions, in combination with domestic constraints and socioeconomic changes, could result in the United States finding that both its capacity and desire to lead have decreased. Additionally, the changed global environment may leave European NATO allies unwilling or unable to participate. Rhodes asserts that it is NATO’s relationship with the U.S. that has fueled its reputation as a legitimate and useful actor and has allowed for the alliance to persist. American attitudes regarding the utility of military force have maintained the alliance, writes Rhodes, but even the high value given to NATO by the U.S. is not enough to ensure its long-term durability.\(^\text{108}\)

Philip Gordon assesses the U.S.-NATO relationship in the context of the U.S.’s more recent military engagements: Afghanistan and Iraq. Gordon looks at the initial decision-making process of the U.S. in Afghanistan and the decision to not engage NATO at the outset, despite the invocation of Article V by NATO members. He argues that this decision reflected the alliance’s perceived inability to properly deal with the new threat of terrorism and the concern that European allies were not generally supportive of the idea that terrorism posed a global threat (as opposed to a domestic problem) and therefore needed to be handled through international channels. Additionally, the U.S. addressed a number of concerns over the interoperability of NATO forces and the continued decline of European defense spending. Gordon asserts that were the NATO alliance to endure, it would have to adapt itself to better deal with these threats because they are a priority to the United States and because of the U.S.’s pivotal role in the

Ellen Hallams takes a similar position in her discussion of the 2003 Iraq invasion, suggesting that the crisis not only reflected U.S. attitudes about NATO’s capacity, but also revealed weaknesses in NATO’s adaptability.\(^{110}\)

Charles Barry examines how the U.S.-NATO relationship has manifested in operational terms, focusing primarily on issues of interoperability. Advocating for sustained participation in the alliance, Barry asserts that NATO is beneficial to the U.S. military because it provides an overwhelming advantage in overseas engagements, ranging from cultural knowledge and language skills, to number of troops deployed, to political and diplomatic benefits as well as financial incentives. Additionally, the U.S. has devoted a number of resources to standardizing operations within NATO – the “NATO way” – and ideas about interoperability establish the foundation on which contemporary U.S. doctrine is based. Barry asserts that it is these military advantages that not only prove the NATO relationship beneficial for the U.S., but also show the opportunity for the alliance to adapt to the contemporary threat environment and persist (with U.S. leadership).\(^{111}\)

The literature on U.S.-NATO relations addressed a number of important issues in the post-Cold War period. Domestically, scholars assessed the consequences of NATO expansion and observed the growing debate in Congress over the necessity of continued military and financial contributions. Some believed that with an expanded membership, the cost of contributing to Western European security would be too high and lead to the U.S. abandoning the alliance. Concerns over Others maintained that the value of alliance participation for the U.S. went far beyond its commitment to maintaining peace and security in the NATO sphere of

\(^{109}\) Gordon, “NATO and the War on Terrorism.”
\(^{110}\) Hallams, “The Transatlantic Alliance Renewed.”
influence. None of these theories fully realized the importance of the alliance to the United States, or the importance of the alliance to U.S. interests outside of capability enhancement. The role of the U.S. in sustaining the alliance was all but ignored, and many argued that if the alliance continued to suffer from problems associated with burden-sharing, free-riding, and divergent perspectives between European and U.S. partners, it would not persist.

Conclusion

The theoretical approaches to alliances advance the alliance literature and provide more explanatory power as to how and why the alliance continues to grow and is utilized in both peace and war time. These theories will be revisited in subsequent chapters to explain the United States behavior both in the international system and within NATO. I demonstrate the utility of structural realism and the effects of the balance of power on the alliance’s persistence. Contrary to the existing literature presented here, evidence from the four case studies illustrates the fundamental role of the United States in sustaining the alliance in the post-Cold War period. Additionally, the proceeding chapters identify the motivations for the U.S.’s relationship with the alliance. Whereas previous analyses were divided about the importance of the alliance to the United States, I determine four distinct reasons for U.S. policymakers to support the persistence of NATO: legitimation of the use of force, adherence to international norms, the utility of multilateralism, and preservation of ability to exert high level of influence over the alliance. These four hypotheses expand beyond the structural realist understanding of alliance behavior, drawing from institutionalist approaches and expanding the existing scholarship on U.S.-NATO relations.
Chapter 3: The 1999 Kosovo Intervention

At the end of the Cold War, NATO lacked an explicit purpose for keeping the allies together: while threats to European security persisted, the collapse of the Soviet Union meant there was no major power for the alliance to balance against. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, some scholars and policymakers believed the alliance would dissolve in the Soviet Union’s absence. Alliance leaders also struggled to understand what role NATO would play in the new environment. Conflict in the Balkans posed serious challenges for U.S. foreign policymakers, but provided an opportunity to strengthen the United States’ relationship with the NATO alliance and pursue its goals in the post-Cold War environment. The 1999 Kosovo operation, Operation Allied Force (OAF), allowed the allies to realize the utility of maintaining the alliance, as well as the challenges associated with changing perceptions of European security at the end of the Cold War.

The following chapter details the circumstances leading to the 1999 intervention in Kosovo. Although OAF was the first major NATO operation in the post-Cold War period, it was not the alliance’s first foray in the Balkans region - in the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia, the U.S. and NATO coordinated a two-week aerial campaign known as Operation Deliberate Force (ODF). ODF was a key force in bringing the conflicting parties, including Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, to the table to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the disputed Bosnian state. The military and political outcomes of ODF set a precedent for the 1999 Kosovo intervention, which is divided into three phases in this chapter. The pre-war phase began with the Drenica massacres in February and March 1998. The conflict phase addresses the period of March 24, 1999 to June 10, 1999, which were the dates of the NATO Operation Allied Force. Finally, I address the post-
conflict phase, including the stabilization and reconstruction effort known as Kosovo Force (KFOR).

Examination of each of these three phases illustrates several key components of U.S.-NATO relations during the Kosovo conflict, as well as the impacts of the conflict on the NATO alliance. As the case of Kosovo demonstrates, the United States pursued NATO participation for political, military, and legal reasons. These motivations are consistent with the four hypotheses regarding the importance of NATO to the United States. Despite the Clinton administration’s reluctance to engage in the Balkans conflicts – both the war in Bosnia and the Kosovo conflict – the U.S. exerted a tremendous amount of influence on the alliance’s strategy for OAF, confirming the U.S.’s belief in the utility of NATO. As OAF operations progressed, policymakers used the U.S.’s leadership in Kosovo to pressure the allies to improve their military capabilities and alliance contributions. This is consistent with the hypothesis that U.S. policymakers use the U.S.’s status in the alliance to its advantage – in this case study, the motivation for exerting pressure on the other allies came from both operational needs in Kosovo and for future engagements. Because the UN Security Council failed to pass a resolution authorizing a direct intervention, the U.S. and its European allies sought legitimization through alternative channels, including NATO. Many allies hoped the Kosovo operation would force a change to the international norms regarding intervention in ethnic conflicts. Executing the operation through the NATO alliance conferred retrospective legitimacy on the intervention – in the years following, Kosovo operations were deemed by much of the international community to be “illegal but legitimate.”
Background

The history of conflict in Kosovo spans centuries and results from religious, cultural, and ethnic divisions endemic to the entire Balkan region. Under Ottoman rule, ethnic Albanians, believing the land to be that of their forefathers, returned to occupy Kosovo.\textsuperscript{112} Serbians in the surrounding territories, also believing Kosovo to be integral to its history, took issue with the Albanian occupation and asserted control over the territory as part of the greater Serbian nation. During World War II, Serbia lost control of both the Albanian-occupied Kosovo and its own state. At the end of WWII, Serbia was integrated into the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), led by Josip Tito. Despite several attempts to expel the Albanians from Kosovo during Tito’s regime, the regional Serbian government became more accepting of Kosovo’s autonomy. When the Yugoslav constitution was written in 1974, it included a provision establishing Kosovo as an autonomous territory with rights of self-governance.\textsuperscript{113}

The historical legacy of Kosovo underlined what happened leading up to the 1999 NATO intervention, but it was the death of authoritarian leader Josip Tito that opened the door for war in the Balkans. When Tito died in 1980, authority in the SFRY was dispersed to regional leaders in each of Yugoslavia’s eight provinces, as per the 1974 constitution. The federal government was left with very little influence over regional affairs and local leaders capitalized on longstanding ethnic tensions to increase their power. This was the case in Kosovo, where rising politician Slobodan Milosevic gained favor with the Serbian minority after hearing complaints of harassment, discrimination, and poor representation by the Albanian majority in Kosovo. In 1989, Milosevic was elected president and quickly moved to strip Kosovo of its autonomy, decree it subject to the authority of the Serbian government in Belgrade, and institute

discriminatory measures against Albanian Kosovars. These efforts allowed Milosevic to fulfill his campaign promises and consolidate power in Belgrade.\textsuperscript{114}

In addition to Milosevic’s rise to power in Serbia, changes to international system led to the demise of the SFRY. The reunification of Germany in 1990 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union one year later exacerbated longstanding ethnic and religious differences throughout all of Yugoslavia. In 1991, the SFRY disintegrated when amidst political, economic, and ethnic conflict both Croatia and Slovenia declared independence, followed soon thereafter by Serbia.\textsuperscript{115} These declarations resulted in violence and conflict throughout the region, but inspired the remaining provinces to follow suit. In early 1992, Bosnia declared its independence, and the violence escalated between Serbians, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims. War broke out as the Croats pushed to integrate Bosnia into Croatia, Bosnian Muslims fought for an independent Bosnian state, and Serbians fought to retain Bosnia as part of a greater Yugoslav regime. Milosevic supported the Serbian effort by instituting policies aimed at ethnic cleansing, forcing thousands of Muslims from their homes and sparking the Bosnian war.\textsuperscript{116}

Changes to the international landscape, the dissolution of the SFRY, and the war in Bosnia affected Kosovo in a number of ways. Motivated by the independence votes in Croatia and Slovenia, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo staged a secret ballot for independence in 1991. The international community, however, was reticent to recognize Kosovo as more than an autonomous region with the right for self-governance conferred by the 1974 constitution.

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\textsuperscript{115} “The Breakup of Yugoslavia.”
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International actors such as the UN and the OSCE pushed Milosevic to reinstate Kosovo’s autonomy, including it on the agenda of peace talks after the dissolution of the SFRY and inviting Kosovar representatives to the 1992 London Conference. In January 1992, the international community recognized Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina as independent states, but did not include any recognition of Kosovo. Undeterred, Kosovar Albanians held a second secret election in May 1992 to elect Ibrahim Rugova president and begin establishing its new government.

As the war waged on in Bosnia and Milosevic continued his ethnic cleansing campaign throughout the region, Kosovo’s claim to self-governance and independence was pushed aside on the international political agenda. By the time the major parties in the war – representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, members of the Contact Group nations (United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Russia), and European Union officials – convened in Dayton, Ohio, to negotiate a peace treaty for Bosnia in November 1995, the situation in the Balkans was so dire that negotiators did not believe the Kosovo issue could be resolved. In order to get the necessary concessions from Milosevic, U.S. negotiator Richard Holbrooke was forced to abandon any real discussion on Kosovo for the sake of reaching a settlement.

Though the Dayton Accords effectively ended the Bosnian War, it did little to end Milosevic’s campaign of violence in Kosovo. As the war in Bosnia ended, the Milosevic regime refocused its attention on Kosovo, where Rugova and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) were establishing an independent Kosovo government. As the Serbian authorities became more aggressive toward the ethnic Albanian population, the LDK’s policies of nonviolence could not

118 “The Breakup of Yugoslavia”; “A Kosovo Chronology.”
successfully address the continued attacks and the Albanian population grew increasingly unsupportive of the LDK. This gave rise to a number of separatist groups willing to engage in violent counterattacks against the authorities. As the separatist movement grew, several of these groups united under the flag of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began carrying out guerilla attacks. In February 1998, Serbian attacks on two towns – one in Prekaz, which left 58 people dead, and the other in Qirez and Likosane, in which over two dozen people were killed – drastically escalated hostilities between the Serbians and the LDK and KLA. The Serbian authorities justified the attacks as a response to “a terrorist organization,” but the high numbers of women and children killed mobilized the Kosovar population to throw even more support behind the KLA. The attacks also prompted the international community to once again begin preparing for a possible war in the Balkans.

U.S. Response to Conflict in the Balkans

The U.S.’s response to the dissolution of the SFRY, the war in Bosnia, the oppressive regime of Slobodan Milosevic, and increasing violence in Kosovo was inconsistent throughout two different presidential administrations. Under the George H.W. Bush administration, the U.S.’s foreign policy objectives centered on the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, and the establishment of a new world order. The U.S.’s military operations were aimed primarily toward the Middle East, where Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait sparked the Persian Gulf War. Because of this, the U.S.’s focus on the independence movements in the SFRY was minimal. Prior to Slovenia and Croatia’s declarations of independence, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker traveled to the SFRY in an attempt to encourage a peaceful settlement of

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ethnic and territorial disputes. When the violence erupted in Bosnia in 1992, the United States hoped its Western European allies would demonstrate their ability to act without the leadership or participation of the United States. The allies, however, saw the Balkans conflict as a civil war and believed the most effective solution was to act as neutral parties in support of the UN’s humanitarian missions. Thus, France, Great Britain, Germany, and others refrained from intervention even as the violence escalated.\textsuperscript{123}

When President Clinton took office in 1993, the issues of the Balkans – including Kosovo’s autonomy – posed significant challenges for the new administration. During the presidential campaign, Clinton was vocal of his support for the Muslim population in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{124} In the post-Cold War era, the United States was more willing to consider using force abroad, and President H.W. Bush’s deployments of troops to Panama (1989) and the Persian Gulf (1991) set a precedent for U.S. intervention. As violence in the Balkans escalated, the American (and European) press inundated the public with images of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{125} Members of the Clinton administration were divided on the appropriate response – while U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright vehemently advocated for some kind of humanitarian intervention, military advisors in the Department of Defense were concerned about the possibility of a long-term commitment.\textsuperscript{126}

President Clinton was reticent to intervene militarily, and his administration looked for non-intervention strategies to maximize the likelihood of peace in Bosnia while minimizing the threat to American forces. The administration also continued to advocate a “lift and strike”

\textsuperscript{124}Kaplan, \textit{NATO Divided, NATO United}; “A Kosovo Chronology.”
policy to remove the arms embargo against the SFRY and allow separatist fighters access to weapons, then support the newly armed fighters with aerial strikes. However, this plan was not well received by the U.S.’s allies – particularly France and Great Britain – who did not want to lift the UN Security Council’s arms embargo or commit troops for any kind of engagement outside of supporting the UN’s mission.127

The escalating violence in Bosnia in late 1994 forced the Clinton administration to reconsider its willingness to engage in the Balkans and cooperate with its allies. The U.S. assisted NATO’s no-fly and safe zone missions over Bosnia, as well as its limited airstrikes against Bosnian Serbs in November 1994. The Serbs retaliated against the NATO airstrikes by attacking UN forces on several occasions, and continued its campaign against Bosnian Muslims.128 In December, the U.S. also pledged to deploy up to 25,000 ground troops in support of the UN mission. The violence in Bosnia continued, however, and in July 1995 the Serbs attempted to capture the city of Srebrenica. When met with resistance from locals, the Serbian forces massacred thousands of Muslims. This was a turning point for the U.S. and its allies, and after a conference of the NATO ministers in London, the allies agreed to conduct airstrikes in order to stymie the Serbs’ advances and protect the UN-designated safe zone cities.129 On August 25, NATO launched Operation Deliberate Force (ODF), led by the United States. The operation

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consisted of twelve days of intensive aerial strikes against the Serbs and finally brought all of the parties to the negotiating table for peace talks.\textsuperscript{130}

In addition to its participation in the military operation, the U.S. led the diplomatic efforts in 1994 and 1995. In 1994, the U.S. spearheaded the creation of the Contact Group, bringing together the major Western allies and Russia to address the violence. Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, became the point person in the peace process during Operation Deliberate Force. Holbrooke was largely credited for the success of the negotiations leading to the November 1995 signing of the Dayton Peace Accords.\textsuperscript{131}

Though the Contact Group was successful in negotiating a peace settlement for Bosnia at the Dayton conference, the conflict between the Belgrade government and ethnic Albanians in Kosovo continued unabated. The previous H.W. Bush administration had done very little to stop the campaign against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and, as previously demonstrated, Holbrooke and other key members of the Clinton administration felt the situation in Bosnia during the 1992-1995 war was too dire and too dependent on Milosevic’s cooperation to broach the issue of Kosovo when the Dayton negotiations took place. After the peace agreement, Clinton turned his attention away from the Balkans and back to domestic issues as Republicans gained control of both houses of Congress.

In 1996, Clinton selected UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright to replace Warren Christopher as Secretary of State. Secretary Albright, who had vehemently supported Bosnian intervention as UN Ambassador, began pushing for U.S. leadership in addressing the violence in

\textsuperscript{131} Kaplan, NATO Divided, NATO United.
Kosovo. Other political leaders posited the Kosovo conflict as outside the U.S.’s vital interests, and they hoped the European allies would take responsibility for stability in the former Yugoslavia. In the years after the Bosnian intervention, President Clinton maintained the U.S. was only prepared to use airpower – not ground forces – should it intervene in the Balkans again, and despite domestic discontent with his leadership on other foreign policy issues (inaction in Rwanda, for example), held his position even as hostility in Kosovo escalated.

International Response to Conflict in the Balkans

The United Nations and NATO were divided on the issue of Kosovo in the period leading up to the 1999 intervention. Instability in the SFRY posed a direct threat to European stability, and the United Nations was undecided on the appropriate response to Milosevic’s increasing aggressiveness. In September 1991, the Security Council passed UNSCR 713, placing an arms embargo on Yugoslavia in response to its failure to maintain a ceasefire. In November, the Security Council passed a second resolution, 721, urging the creation of an UN-led peacekeeping mission in Yugoslavia. This led to the creation of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in February 1992. UNPROFOR began its mission in Croatia but quickly expanded to other areas, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. The peacekeeping force was comprised of nearly 39,000 military personnel, as well as civilian police, international civilian staff, and local

132 Wallack, “From Compellence to Pre-Emption.”
staff, and was the largest peacekeeping operation in the UN’s history. Of the 37 participating states, 11 were NATO members.\textsuperscript{136}

The UN Security Council’s diverse membership led to disagreement over the appropriateness of further intervention in Bosnia. Russia was a principle member of the Contact Group and President Boris Yeltsin continually reiterated Russia’s support of UN peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{137} Russia also joined NATO’s Partnership for Peace program in June 1994, and worked to mediate conflict in the Balkans. Still, Russia struggled to reconcile its commitments to the international community with concerns over the possibility that a Bosnian intervention could set a precedent for UN intervention in its own conflicts, such as the ongoing tensions in Chechnya. President Yeltsin took issue with NATO’s continued and expanding presence in the post-Cold War period and was outspoken in his disapproval of NATO airstrikes conducted as part of Operation Deliberate Force.\textsuperscript{138} Russia continually clashed with both the U.S. and European states over their policies toward the Balkans, arguing the West was displaying favoritism for the Muslim population. Its shared history with the Orthodox Christians in the region led it to side with the Serbians.\textsuperscript{139}

The European Security Council members quickly recognized Croatia and Slovenia as independent states in early 1992, four months before the U.S. and five months before the United

\textsuperscript{136} The 11 NATO members were: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Four future NATO members – the Czech Republic (1999), Poland (1999), Lithuania (2004), and Slovakia (2004) also participated.


They also recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina’s independence in April 1992. Despite their eagerness to recognize the newly independent states, the United Kingdom was reluctant to send troops for the UN missions. France was one of the most active contributors to the UN relief mission, but French President François Mitterrand was adamant that French troops would not be used for anything other than the provision of humanitarian aid. Neither the French nor the British supported the U.S.’s call to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia or its “lift and strike” strategy.

When the Bosnian Serbs began attacking the UN designated “safe zones”, UNPROFOR troops were targeted. Though they were authorized to use force in self-defense, fighting back against the Bosnian Serbs threatened their credibility as a neutral peacekeeper. The United States urged the UN to strike back, but the European allies – especially those who had contributed ground troops to the UNPROFOR mission – did not support the U.S.’s insistence on the use of force.

Thus, the UN’s ability to respond to the conflict in Yugoslavia, first in Bosnia and later in Kosovo, was hampered by divergent perspectives among Security Council members. Though they mostly agreed the UN had some responsibility to the citizens of the SFRY, there was widespread disagreement as to the nature of UN intervention and unwillingness by some to

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contribute the resources necessary for a full-scale military or peacekeeping operation. After Operation Deliberate Force and the Dayton Peace Accords, the UN turned its attention to Kosovo and pressured Milosevic to deescalate the violence.\textsuperscript{144}

In addition to the UN’s efforts, NATO also enacted measures to stem the conflict in the SFRY. NATO’s involvement in the former Yugoslavia – both in the Bosnian conflict and Kosovo in 1999 – was slow to take shape and caused friction between the allies. Ultimately, its execution of Operation Deliberate Force was integral to ending the war in Bosnia and setting a precedent for Operation Allied Force (OAF) in Kosovo. NATO began very limited operations in June 1992, focusing solely on supporting the UN’s peacekeeping mission under UNSCRs 713, 757, and 781. In 1993, NATO enforced a no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in February 1994 it engaged four warplanes violating the no-fly zone.\textsuperscript{145} Though the alliance was tasked with providing the necessary protection for UNPROFOR troops, the allies could not reach a consensus over how to respond to attacks on the UN-designated safe zones. The U.S. pushed its unpopular “lift and strike” strategy while allies Canada, France, and the United Kingdom worried about the potential backlash of a NATO operation on its deployed UNPROFOR troops. NATO’s indecisiveness sent a message to Milosevic that the U.S., the UN, and NATO were not united in their decision-making, which only further encouraged attacks against the safe zones.\textsuperscript{146}

Though it executed limited air strikes against the Serbs in November 1994 and May 1995, the Srebrenica massacre forced the alliance to take a more active role in conducting air strikes. On August 30, 1995, two days after an attack on Sarajevo that killed 38 civilians, NATO

launched Operation Deliberate Force. France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, and the United States all contributed combat support and aircraft for the two-week Operation Deliberate Force. The operation bolstered Holbrooke’s negotiations at Dayton, and once the peace settlement was reached, the UNSC passed Resolution 1031, establishing the framework for the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR). IFOR oversaw the transfer of territories and other military aspects of the peace agreement until UNSCR 1088, which created its successor the Stabilization Force (SFOR).

The events that occurred in the early- to mid-1990s in the Balkans – and in particular, the Bosnian intervention – set a number of precedents for intervention in Kosovo. Disagreement between the European allies led to the European Union’s inability to manage threats to European stability and security. NATO intervention also signaled to the EU that a European security mechanism without U.S. participation and leadership, which some member states advocated for in the post-Cold War period, was unfeasible. Some argued that the Bosnian operation breathed life into the alliance: after the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO had to either reinvent itself or become irrelevant. However, NATO’s future role in the Balkans was uncertain, as the Clinton administration only reluctantly intervened in Bosnia when the possibility of a sustained ethnic cleansing campaign became evident. Clinton’s reluctance to commit to a ground war in Bosnia also indicated to Milosevic that the U.S. would likely be reluctant to intervene in Kosovo or elsewhere in the Balkans. Lastly, the Clinton administration believed another humanitarian

147 Owen, “Operation Deliberate Force.”
148 “Peace Support Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”
150 Deighton, “The European Union and NATO’s War Over Kosovo.”
151 Allin, “NATO’s Balkans Interventions.”
152 John Norris, Collision Course: NATO, Russia, and Kosovo (Westport: Praeger, 2005).
intervention in the Balkans that was limited to air strikes would be just as successful as Operation Deliberate Force.153

Analysis: U.S.-NATO Relations During the Kosovo Intervention

Unlike the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. did not spearhead the initial campaign for intervention in Kosovo in 1998-1999. In its recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina sovereignty, the U.S. did not acknowledge the status of Kosovo or recognize its 1991 secret ballot, much like the rest of the international community. However, in late 1992 President Bush addressed the issue of Kosovo in a private letter to Milosevic. “In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against the Serbians in Kosovo and in Serbia proper.”154 President Bush’s threat of U.S. intervention became known as the Christmas Warning, and was reiterated by both President Clinton and officials in his administration in the years leading up to the 1999 intervention.

The Clinton administration was willing to use force for a humanitarian mission in Kosovo as it had in the earlier Balkans campaign, but was adamant in its unwillingness to commit ground forces. Clinton and his advisors believed that air strikes would be sufficient and less costly politically.155 Writes John Norris, “The Clinton administration’s faith in air power reflected the American public’s ambivalence toward the war. While most Americans found Milosevic despicable, they were less certain dealing with him should fall to the United States. Clinton’s approach was measured, incremental, and fundamentally cautious.”156 Members from

155 Dunn, “Innovation and Precedent in the Kosovo War.”
156 Norris, Collision Course, 8.
both political parties insisted Kosovo was not a “vital interest” of the Unite States and thus Europe should be tasked with taking control of any operation to end the conflict.\textsuperscript{157}

The United States and its NATO allies also faced another major obstacle in formulating a Kosovo intervention: there was no UN Security Council resolution authorizing an intervention. Though there were several resolutions condemning the actions of Milosevic, none of the resolutions expressly authorized the use of force due in large part to Russia and China’s threat of veto for any authorization of international intervention. After the Bosnian peace settlement, Russia’s relationships with the Western allies deteriorated further as it faced domestic political turmoil, economic crises, and continued ethnic conflict. As NATO pushed eastward, extending membership to three former Soviet satellite states – Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic – in 1997, Russia struggled to regain its international political capital in the United Nations. President Yeltsin saw the Kosovo debate as an opportunity to improve its international reputation and ensure its influence global politics.\textsuperscript{158} Though Clinton and Yeltsin’s working relationship was much improved from U.S.-Soviet relations during the Cold War, NATO’s intervention in Bosnia increased tension between the two states. As demonstrated earlier, Russia struggled with how to address the Balkans conflicts: while it was a principle member of the Contact Group and held discussions with Milosevic on behalf of the international community, its shared history with the Orthodox Christian population and concern over a possible precedent for intervention in its own disputed territories led Yeltsin to oppose NATO airstrikes.

Additionally, NATO’s earlier intervention in Bosnia demonstrated to the United States a growing capabilities gap between the U.S. and its allies, and an inability by the European Union (or any other non-U.S. involved organization) to act effectively. The U.S. provided more than 50

\textsuperscript{157} Kupchan, “Kosovo and the Future of U.S. Engagement in Europe.”
\textsuperscript{158} “Bill Clinton, Boris Yeltsin, and U.S.-Russian Relations”; Norris, Collision Course.
percent of the aircraft used in NATO’s Bosnia operation, Operation Deliberate Force, and only three other allies – Great Britain, France, and Spain – deployed precision munitions. Additionally, ODF sparked tension between the allies regarding U.S. leadership of the operation and decision-making at the operational and tactical level.\textsuperscript{159} Despite a declaration of the mission’s success, it was the diplomatic efforts that had a greater impact on the Dayton Peace Accords – ODF bolstered Holbrooke’s negotiations.\textsuperscript{160}

However, a number of factors influenced the United States to lead the negotiations in the pre-war phase and eventually make a substantial contribution to Operation Allied Force. As Michael Wallack writes,

Clinton did not come into office with a policy of using force against Serbia. After Dayton, however, the enthusiasm of Secretary of State Albright and NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Wesley Clark for using compellence against Milosevic, as well as the willingness of the new Secretary of Defense William Perry, and the new Chair of the JCS John Shalikashvili to use force in the Balkans – particularly air power and precision weapons – together with the distraction of Congress in the midst of the Clinton impeachment, combined to make a new policy possible.\textsuperscript{161}

The success of Holbrooke and the Dayton negotiations also led Clinton to believe that if NATO and the U.S. made a credible threat, Milosevic would be deterred in continuing to attack Kosovar


\textsuperscript{160} Daalder, “Decision to Intervene: How the War in Bosnia Ended.”

\textsuperscript{161} Wallack, “From Compellence to Pre-Emption,” 115.
Albanians.\textsuperscript{162} However, to appease his political opposition, Clinton refused to commit ground troops, authorizing only an air campaign and repeatedly refusing to engage in a ground war.\textsuperscript{163}

**Phase 1: Pre-Operation Planning**

Conflict in Kosovo began before the breakup of the SFRY, but an escalation of violence in February and March 1998 by the Serbian authorities marked a turning point. After the Bosnian peace settlement, Milosevic was concerned about additional threats from other groups seeking autonomy and ordered a crackdown on Kosovo. Milosevic sought to reignite nationalist sentiment among the Serbians while the Belgrade government continued to enact discriminatory policies directed toward ethnic Albanians. President Clinton received intelligence regarding the crackdown and the buildup of Serb forces around Kosovo in January and February 1998. For many, the February 1998 attack in the Drenica region in which 80 civilian Albanians were killed denoted the beginning of the full-scale conflict necessitating international attention and possibly intervention. In late February, the administration sent Robert Gelbard, senior envoy for the region, to Belgrade to warn both sides against escalating violence. When word of the Drenica massacre reached the United States, Secretary Albright traveled to Europe to initiate action by the Contact Group. Albright emphasized the necessity of a unified response, and the other Contact Group members largely agreed.\textsuperscript{164}

On March 9, the Contact Group issued a condemnation of Milosevic’s strikes in Drenica. The Contact Group’s statement formed the foundation for UNSCR 1160.\textsuperscript{165} Resolution 1160, adopted on March 31, urged the SFry to with the Kosovar Albanians to reach a political solution, expressed support for “an enhanced status for Kosovo which would include a

\textsuperscript{162} Weller, “The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo.”
\textsuperscript{163} Kupchan, “Kosovo and the Future of U.S. Engagement in Europe.”
\textsuperscript{164} Daalder and O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly.*
\textsuperscript{165} Bjola, *Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics.*
substantially greater degree of autonomy and meaningful self-administration,” and established the arms embargo suggested by the earlier Contact Group statement.166 In late April, the United States and its European allies agreed to implement new measures against the Serbian government, including a freeze on Serb funds and a ban on new investments.167

In the summer of 1998, the United States and its allies began contingency planning in the event that the situation in Kosovo worsened. In May, the NATO foreign ministers met in Luxembourg, and shortly thereafter announced that the alliance was commissioning military advice on how to support the UN and OSCE monitoring of Albania and Macedonia – two states that, in addition to their own domestic issues and ethnic tensions, could be destabilized by a heavy flow of Kosovar refugees if fighting escalated. Negotiations between two U.S. officials, U.S. ambassador Christopher Hill168 and special envoy leader Richard Holbrooke, and the Belgrade government led to the first ever meeting between President Milosevic and the unofficial president of Kosovo, Ibrahim Rugova, on May 15, 1998. But the talks broke down quickly, as no settlement could be reached regarding the political solution for Kosovo.169

As a result of the continued violence, the United States developed several plans for air operations over Serbia in June and July 1998. The first operation, Operation Nimble Lion, targeted some 250 sites with U.S. and allied aircraft. Two more operations, Operation Flexible Anvil and Operation Sky Anvil, were developed as joint task force (JTF) efforts. These plans were placed on temporary hold in the fall of 1998 when Holbrooke successfully negotiated a

167 Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly.
168 Hill was the U.S.’s ambassador to Macedonia from 1996-1999.
169 Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly; Bjola, Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics; “A Kosovo Chronology”.

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ceasefire, but later became the basis for NATO’s Kosovo operations planning.170 Publicly, U.S. defense officials continued to refute claims that an intervention was imminent.171

In June, while U.S. and NATO officials continued to explore its options, Russian President Boris Yeltsin met with President Milosevic and convinced him to allow international observers and humanitarian organizations to monitor the human rights conditions in Kosovo.172 A lull in strikes initiated by the Serbian authorities was perceived as an opportunity for the KLA, who intensified its attacks and raised concerns for the rest of the international community about how an intervention could strengthen the KLA and actually escalate the conflict. In response to the increased KLA attacks, Belgrade ordered a major offensive in late July that, when completed, destroyed thousands of homes and displaced nearly 250,000 Kosovar civilians.173

Talks between Ambassador Hill, Holbrooke, President Milosevic, and Kosovo leader Rugova continued into the fall. In early September, Ambassador Hill announced that Milosevic and Rugova agreed to negotiate a temporary settlement for Kosovo. However the KLA, perceiving Rugova to be too pacifist to effectively counter the brutal attacks against Kosovars, was dissatisfied with the temporary arrangement. It wanted a final decision regarding Kosovo to be made as soon as possible, much sooner than the 3-5 years allowed under the agreement.174 Thus, violence between the Serbian authorities and the KLA continued.

On September 23, 1998, the Security Council passed another resolution regarding Kosovo. Sparked by humanitarian concerns regarding the growing number of civilian casualties and the flow of refugees into Albania, Bosnia, and other European nations, UNSCR 1199

170 Lambeth, NATO’s Air War for Kosovo.
171 Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly.
172 Bjola, Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics.
173 Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly.
174 Ibid.
demanded a ceasefire, called all parties back to the negotiating table, and insisted on the safe return of the refugees. The resolution also urged states to “make available personnel to fulfill the responsibility of carrying out effective and continuous international monitoring in Kosovo until all of this resolution and those of resolution 1160 (1998) are achieved” and asked them to continue providing humanitarian resources, but did not explicitly authorize an intervention or the use of force. Nonetheless, the U.S. and its European allies continued planning for a possible NATO mission. The day after the Security Council approved UNSCR 1199 the North Atlantic Council (NAC) issued an activation warning (ACTWARN), allowing NATO’s military commanders to prepare both a limited air option and a phased air campaign, and identify what resources would be necessary for either operation. The statement issued by NATO Secretary General Javier Solana also expressed NATO’s explicit support UNSCR 1199. U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen reaffirmed Secretary General Solana’s statements regarding the importance of NATO action to protect innocent Kosovars and uphold NATO’s credibility if the use of force became necessary.

Within days of UNSCR 1199 and the NATO ACTWARN, reports of another massacre by Serb forces surfaced. Twenty-one women, children, and elderly civilians were killed in a September 29 attack on Gornji Obrinje, while another thirteen from a neighboring village were also killed. This attack, paired with concerns about returning the refugees to their homes before the harsh winter, prompted the Balkans envoy led by Holbrooke to travel to Belgrade for further negotiations with Milosevic. In support of the envoy, the NAC issued an activation order

177 Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly.
178 Ibid.
(ACTORD), giving the Secretary General the authority to launch air strikes. Holbrooke’s negotiations led to the “October Agreement,” under which President Milosevic agreed to allow 2,000 unarmed OSCE observers to monitor a ceasefire and a noncombatant, NATO-led aerial observation operation. Though NATO upheld its ACTORD, it agreed to allow Milosevic more time to meet the terms of the agreement, with a firm deadline of October 27, 1998.

On October 24, the Security Council passed another resolution, UNSCR 1203, which endorsed the October Agreement and demanded Milosevic’s compliance with the agreement and the earlier Security Council resolutions. Out of concern that the resolution would be seen as an endorsement for the use of force, and per the objections of Russia and China, the resolution was vague and included no mention of what would happen if Milosevic did not comply. France, the United Kingdom, and the United States asserted that the resolution did not explicitly address the use of force but it did allow for the enforcement of the ceasefire and the protection of civilians in and around Kosovo. In addition to the dispute over intervention, the resolution was problematic in that it did not address the possibility that if the Serbian authorities obeyed the ceasefire, the KLA might try to take advantage.

Despite the actions of the United Nations, the special envoy led by Holbrooke, and NATO, the violence in Kosovo persisted through the end of 1998 and into 1999. On January 15, 1999, Serb security forces attacked the Albanians in Račak in retaliation for an earlier attack that killed four policemen. Journalists in the area later discovered the bodies of 45 civilians executed at close range by the Serbian forces. The authorities defended its actions as necessary to defeat

179 Hendrickson, “The Constraint of Legitimacy.”
180 Hendrickson, “The Constraint of Legitimacy”; Bjola, Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics.
the “terrorist” KLA, but the attacks were carried out against civilian areas, not KLA strongholds.181

The Račak massacre marked another turning point for the Kosovo conflict. Milosevic quickly ordered the OSCE monitors to leave the country after the director of the mission, American Ambassador William Walker, publicly blamed Serbia for the attack. Milosevic also refused a visit from ICTY prosecutor Judge Louise Arbour to investigate possible war crimes.182 In response to Račak, U.S. officials urged NATO to respond, prompting a meeting between NATO SACEUR General Wesley Clark, NATO military council chairman Klaus Naumann, and President Milosevic. In late January 1999, NATO issued a “solemn warning” to the leadership of both sides warning that continued hostilities would result in NATO action and demanding that both the KLA and the Belgrade government work with the Contact Group to reach a political settlement. The Contact Group also met and issued a statement and summoning the groups to meet in Rambouillet, France by February 6. Following the Contact Group’s statement, NATO issued a second statement that Secretary General Solana was authorized to initiate airstrikes if the parties did not agree to meet at the Rambouillet Conference and the violence continued.183

On February 6, 1999 the Rambouillet Conference began under rules established by the Contact Group. After several extensions and weeks of negotiations, the Kosovo delegation accepted the final draft of the peace settlement and confirmed it would sign the document. However, the Serbian delegation did not agree that the negotiations were complete and would not agree to the settlement in its entirety. They did, however, agree to reconvene in Paris on

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181 Weller, “The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo.”
182 “A Kosovo Chronology”.
183 Weller, “The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo.”
March 15 to discuss the settlement further. During the break in negotiations, the Belgrade government deployed additional troops in and around Kosovo. When the talks resumed in Paris on March 15, the Kosovo delegation indicated its willingness to sign the agreement, but the Serb delegation continued to refuse and instead offered a counterproposal. On March 18, Serbian forces began conducting “winter live fire” exercises in Kosovo using the previously deployed troops. This prompted Holbrooke and other negotiators to return to Belgrade in the hopes they could convince Milosevic to stop the exercises and accept the Rambouillet agreement. Several Western states closed their embassies in Serbia, and the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission personnel left as Holbrooke warned Milosevic NATO attacks were imminent. Undeterred, Milosevic refused to sign the agreement. On March 24, 1999, NATO commenced Operation Allied Force (OAF), a 78-day air campaign against Serbian military forces.

International and NATO Support in the Pre-War Phase

Unlike the U.S.’s major interventions in the early 2000s, the international community and NATO were an integral part of the pre-war planning phase in Kosovo and, at times, it was only through the actions of these bodies that the U.S. was prompted to act. The war in Bosnia threatened the European allies not only because of its geographical proximity, but also because continued humanitarian abuses challenged the alliance’s values – values that were particularly important in the post-Cold War era when member states were looking to reimagine NATO’s purpose. The reluctance of the Clinton administration to respond to the Bosnian war frustrated its European allies, and these frustrations directly impacted the 1999 Kosovo intervention. Writes Dana Allin,

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184 Ibid.
185 Weller, “The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo”; “A Kosovo Chronology”.
186 Allin, “NATO’s Balkans Interventions.”
Increasingly bitter recriminations about where and how to draw the line against wartime atrocities underscored NATO’s fragility. The divergence in views – especially between the United States on the one hand and Britain and France on the other – provoked a crisis of alliance relations reminiscent of the 1956 Suez debacle. The Bosnian war’s corrosive effect on transatlantic unity was one important factor that led to a more effective American and NATO intervention in late 1995. Thereafter, in the second phase of the crisis, a determined effort was made to preserve alliance unity on Balkan matters.

NATO’s European allies had another good reason to want a quick resolution to the Kosovo crisis: most of the thousands of peacekeeping troops still on the ground in Bosnia in 1998 and 1999 were European, and there was the possibility that the Serbs would retaliate against them if NATO intervened.

The violence in February and March 1998 in Kosovo prompted the allies to recognize the importance of a unified response to the escalating violence. They also agreed American participation would be paramount to stopping Milosevic. This was troublesome to some allies who hoped Europe would develop its own security mechanisms without U.S. participation. Some states also insisted NATO needed explicit authorization for any operation in Serbia. The decision to intervene in March 1999 made France uncomfortable because it required the alliance to bypass the United Nations. The British, conversely, did not oppose an intervention without UN authorization and were supportive of U.S. participation. Though Great Britain too supported the

188 Kaplan, NATO Divided, NATO United.
189 Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly.
establishment of European security mechanisms that did not rely on the U.S., British officials hoped to act as a bridge between Europe and the U.S. They strongly disagreed with Clinton’s refusal to commit ground troops, however, having been disappointed by the U.S.’s response to Bosnia in 1995.\textsuperscript{191}

While the American public seemed relatively indifferent about the possibility of an aerial war in Kosovo, European publics were divided about whether and how to intervene. Greece shared its history with the Orthodox Christians (similar to Russia) and the Greek public was overwhelmingly opposed to intervention. The Italian and German publics also opposed intervention, though the newly elected German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder felt Germany should intervene. The British were steadfast in supporting an intervention, while other allies believed an intervention was necessary but worried whether it would benefit the right side of the conflict, especially as the KLA took advantage of lulls in Serbian aggression to attack police and military authorities.\textsuperscript{192}

Just as the United States began developing its war plans in the summer 1998, so too did NATO. The U.S.’s Concept of Operations Plan (CONOPLAN) 10601, which called for a phased attack against Serbian targets, served as the basis for NATO’s Operation Allied Force. The NATO alliance ruled out using ground forces, due in large part to the unwillingness of the United States to commit to ground operations. NATO also authorized an operation over the Macedonia and Albania borders in June 1998 to prevent the conflict from spreading further. Operation Determined Falcon involved eighty warplanes from thirteen NATO countries, and was

\textsuperscript{191} Kupchan, “Kosovo and the Future of U.S. Engagement in Europe.”
\textsuperscript{192} Norris, \textit{Collision Course}. 

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seen as an attempt by the alliance to demonstrate its unity and power to the Belgrade government.\textsuperscript{193}

While the Security Council continued to avoid authorizing a NATO intervention because of Russia and China’s threat to veto, much of NATO’s actions in the pre-war period paralleled those of the UN. NATO faced substantial challenges gaining the consensus of all nineteen members for the September 1998 ACTORD.\textsuperscript{194} In a meeting of the defense ministers in Portugal on September 23-24, 1998, Secretary General Solana repeatedly referred to the potential damage to NATO’s credibility if it threatened to attack but did not follow through. Still, even after the September 29 massacre at Gornji Obrinje, the allies would not agree on the use of force for anything other than self-defense. In October, Secretary General Solana announced that there was legal justification for NATO to threaten and execute air strikes, which opened the door for the ACTORD on October 13, 1998.\textsuperscript{195}

Planning for a possible intervention continued through the end of 1998, but indecisiveness plagued the alliance. Ivo Daalder, former U.S. permanent representative to NATO, characterized both the U.S. and NATO’s response to Kosovo as “haphazard and marked by a tendency to avoid making difficult decisions.”\textsuperscript{196} Daalder characterized the plans that emerged as fitting one of two categories: preventative deployments and intrusive measures. The different preventative measures included troop deployments in Albania and Macedonia for monitoring and protective missions (to prevent spillover), while the more intrusive options considered both aerial strikes and the deployment of ground troops. Additionally, plans for the use of ground forces included options for consensual deployments (agreements from all parties

\textsuperscript{193} Lambeth, \textit{NATO’s Air War for Kosovo}; Daalder and O’Hanlon, \textit{Winning Ugly}.
\textsuperscript{194} Hendrickson, “The Constraint of Legitimacy.”
\textsuperscript{195} Daalder and O’Hanlon, \textit{Winning Ugly}.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid, 23.
to allow troops for enforcement of ceasefire and peace settlement) and forced entry (into both Kosovo and the greater Yugoslav territory).\footnote{Ibid.} By the time Operation Allied Force was launched in March 1999, the U.S. and NATO had considered more than forty air campaigns.\footnote{Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}.} Despite having developed plans for ground forces, the allies were greatly influenced by the U.S.’s refusal to commit troops and thus plans for a ground offensive were tabled.

**Phase 2: Operation Allied Force**

NATO launched Operation Allied Force at 7pm GMT (8pm local time) on March 24, 1999. Of the nineteen NATO allies, thirteen states – Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States – committed aircraft for the operation. The first night of the operation, NATO targeted 53 different sites, mostly air defenses and radar sites, using planes from eight states.\footnote{“The Crisis in Kosovo,” Human Rights Watch, accessed September 7, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/nato/Natbm200-01.htm} Writes Michael Williams, “the alliance started the bombing with one objective – to get the Serbs back to the negotiating table – and then added countless other objectives, including stopping ethnic cleansing, the withdrawal of Serb forces and return of refugees, as well as the insertion of NATO forces in the country and a political settlement.”\footnote{M.J. Williams, \textit{NATO, Security, and Risk Management}, 48.} In the first month of the operation, NATO was flying roughly 130 attack sorties and 350 total sorties per day.\footnote{“The Crisis in Kosovo.”} Because of the consensus decision-making process in NATO, it took a substantial length of time approve targets – at the beginning of OAF operations only 51 targets had been approved. This resulted in some targets being bombed repeatedly.\footnote{Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}.}
President Clinton addressed the U.S. public the first evening of bombing, calling the intervention “a moral imperative” and declaring that stability in Kosovo was “important to America’s national interest.” He went on, saying

Do our interests in Kosovo justify the dangers to our Armed Forces? I’ve thought long and hard about that question. I am convinced that the dangers of acting are far outweighed by the dangers of not acting – dangers to the defenseless people and to our national interests. If we and our allies were to allow this war to continue with no response, President Milosevic would read our hesitation as a license to kill. There would be many more massacres, tens of thousands more refugees, more victims crying out for revenge…Imagine what would happen if we and our allies instead decided just to look the other way, as these people were massacred on NATO’s doorstep. That would discredit NATO, the cornerstone on which our security has rested for 50 years now.\(^\text{203}\)

However, Clinton also made his commitment to an air-only effort clear: “I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war.”\(^\text{204}\) The American public responded to Clinton’s statements, largely supporting the U.S.’s participation in the opening days of the campaign. A Pew poll conducted March 24-28, 1999 indicated that 60 percent of those polled approved of the NATO air strikes. However, only 47 percent agreed that the U.S. should be responsible for ending the conflict, and only 38 percent thought Kosovo was of serious importance to U.S. interests.\(^\text{205}\)


\(^{204}\) Ibid.

Congress was less supportive: while the Senate voted on March 23 to authorize the president to use force, the concurrent measure stalled in the House before failing in April.\footnote{206}

When the OAF campaign began on March 24, many Kosovars had already fled the area, but NATO’s airstrikes resulted in 30,000 refugees fleeing to Albania and Macedonia within the first two days of the operation. By April 4, there was an estimated 48,000 refugees in Montenegro, 104,000 in Albania, and 30,500 in Macedonia. An additional 31,000 fled to Bosnia in the beginning weeks. By April, nearly 600,000 civilians had fled Kosovo.\footnote{207} Writes Benjamin Lambeth, “By the third week (of OAF), NATO’s strategic goals had shifted from seeking to erode Milosevic’s ability to force an exodus of Kosovar Albanian civilians to enforcing a withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo and a return of the refugees home...Up to that point, President Clinton had merely insisted that the operation’s goal was to ensure that Milosevic’s military capability would be ‘seriously diminished.’”\footnote{208}

NATO continued to execute hundreds of sorties each day and expanded its targets list. On April 6, the Belgrade government announced that it would implement a ceasefire in Kosovo and was open to negotiations with Rugova but NATO rejected the offer. The NATO strikes continued unabated through April. On April 20, Secretary General Solana ordered NATO military advisors to begin updating plans for a potential ground force following an OSCE report of gunfire exchange between Serbian forces.\footnote{209}

\footnote{206}{A concurrent resolution authorizing the President of the United States to conduct military air operations and missile strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), S.Con.Res. 21, 106th Cong. (1999).}
\footnote{207}{“Kosovo Chronology”.
\footnote{208}{Lambeth, NATO’s Air War for Kosovo, 32.
\footnote{209}{“Kosovo Chronology.”}
On April 22, 1999, the NATO summit in Washington commenced. Though the original focus of the summit was to celebrate the alliance’s 50th anniversary, the agenda was dominated by discussions of Kosovo. Up to that point, Milosevic was betting on attrition— he did not believe the alliance was capable of maintaining its unity to continue operations. However, when they came together in Washington, the allies agreed an intensification of the air campaign was necessary to achieve NATO’s objectives. Despite growing pressure to commit to a ground campaign, the allies agreed before the summit to leave any discussion of ground troops off of the agenda.  

During the three days of the meeting, officials elected to expand the target list, deploy more aircraft and weapons, and move from an eight-hour day to a twenty-four-hour campaign. This intensification marked a shift in the execution of the campaign and sent a signal to Milosevic that the allies were committed to ending the violence in Kosovo.

The American public generally remained supportive of the U.S.’s efforts. A Pew poll conducted in April 1999 showed that 62 percent of those polled approved of the air strikes. The poll did, however, indicate a growing concern about the possibility of casualties, the financial costs of a sustained operation, and the likelihood of successfully defeating Milosevic. Although 65 percent of those polled thought a ground force would be necessary, only half of respondents approved of sending troops into Kosovo. A report issued by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) in late May indicated a slight decline in support for the air strikes as more of the public began to doubt the success of the mission. Whereas earlier polls indicated more than 60 percent of people supported the air strikes at the beginning of the operation, later

211 “The Crisis in Kosovo.”
polls conducted by ABC/Washington Post, Gallup, CBS, and PIPA found that support dropped to 48-59 percent. This coincided with a decline in the belief that Milosevic would concede, from 53 percent at the beginning of operations to 25-30 percent in April. Only 33 percent of those polled by PIPA supported the use of ground troops in May, though almost 60 percent agreed to support a ground force if conditions in Serbia continued to deteriorate and the air strikes proved ineffective.\footnote{“Americans on Kosovo: A Study of US Public Attitudes,” Program on International Policy Attitudes, May 27, 1999, accessed April 5, 2015, http://www.pipa.org/OnlineReports/Kosovo/Kosovo_May99/Kosovo_May99_rpt.pdf}

Though military officials believed OAF would only last a few days, the campaign continued into May. As it became evident that Milosevic would not capitulate, officials in both the United States and NATO began to reconsider the use of ground troops. The British were adamant in their support for a ground operation, and pressured the United States to advocate for a NATO ground force.\footnote{“A Kosovo Chronology.”} On May 18, President Clinton subtly indicated a possible shift in his refusal to deploy ground troops, stating “NATO will not take any option off the table.”\footnote{Smith, “The Kosovo Conflict.”} On March 25, NATO announced it would increase the size of its peacekeeping force in Macedonia to 48,000 troops. Because of the increased discussion of a ground force in Kosovo, the peacekeeping force’s increase was seen as strategic: some of the 48,000 troops could be quickly dispatched into Kosovo if the NATO Secretary General later approved a ground force order and the allies agreed. NATO SACEUR General Wesley Clark and others warned that if NATO was going to approve a ground force, it should do so quickly so that the mission could be executed before the long, harsh winter.\footnote{Independent International Commission on Kosovo, The Kosovo Report.} On May 27, Secretary Cohen met with NATO defense ministers in a secret meeting in Bonn to discuss a possible invasion, the same day the International War
Crimes Tribunal indicted Milosevic and four other Serbian leaders.\textsuperscript{217} It was later reported that by early June, President Clinton was ready to deploy ground troops unless the war ended.\textsuperscript{218}

Parallel to the discussions in the NATO alliance, the Group of Eight (G8) worked to forge a political settlement to end the air campaign. In April, the North Atlantic Council laid out five points for Milosevic to meet in order to end the bombing campaign. These included: verification of the end of military action and minority oppression in Kosovo, the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo, the allowance of international observers, the safe and unhindered return of the hundreds of thousands of displaced refugees, and an agreement to work toward a political solution for Kosovo. Building on these, the G8 convened in Bonn, Germany in early May to forge a peace plan.\textsuperscript{219}

Immediately following the commencement of OAF, Russia pressured the UN Security Council to stop the NATO airstrikes, but UN Secretary General Kofi Annan insisted that responsibility for peace negotiations would fall to the Contact Group.\textsuperscript{220} Russia also cut its ties with NATO. It condemned the NATO operation and on April 9, President Yeltsin publicly warned that Russia could be led into a European or even global war. A week later, Viktor Chernomyrdin was appointed as a special envoy to the region. In late April, following NATO’s Washington Summit, President Yeltsin initiated contact with President Clinton to reopen negotiations on Kosovo, ordering Chernomyrdin to represent Russia in talks with Vice President

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Al Gore. In early May, Chernomyrdin traveled to Washington, and in the following days Russia began cooperating with the allies at the G8 meeting in Germany.221

The intensification of the aerial campaign in late May followed by the continued planning efforts of the G8 and Russia’s growing participation marked a second turning point in Operation Allied Freedom: by late May the weather conditions had improved, NATO had increased its air assets, the KLA was becoming more effective on the ground, and Serbia was suffering from damage to its electric grids and water supply, as well as damages to businesses. Additionally, the risk to Serb soldiers was high and the amount of damaged equipment continued to increase as operations intensified.222

With Russia acting as a go-between for the G8 and Milosevic, President Yeltsin pressured Milosevic to accept the G8’s peace plan. The evidence of his efforts became clear on June 1, when Belgrade informed Germany that it was ready to accept the terms of the G8 peace plan if the NATO bombing is brought to an end.223 On June 2, both Chernomyrdin and the Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari (who had been appointed by the EU as a neutral delegate for the Kosovo conflict) traveled to Belgrade and met with Milosevic. Both Milosevic and the Serbian Parliament agreed to the conditions of the G8 and the NATO peacekeeping force.224 However, a failure of the Yugoslav commanders in the days to pullout from Kosovo led NATO to temporarily intensify the campaign. After several more days of negotiations, NATO reached a Military Technical Agreement with the Serb forces on June 9. On June 10, Secretary General Solana suspended Operation Allied Force.225

221 “A Kosovo Chronology.”
222 Daaldor and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly.
223 “Kosovo Chronology.”
224 Norris, Collision Course.
225 “Kosovo Chronology.”
International and NATO Support for OAF

Though the participation of the NATO is well documented in the preceding pages, there are several other important factors to consider regarding international support during Operation Allied Force. Broadly speaking, before OAF there was widespread agreement among the allies that Milosevic was violating the basic human rights of Kosovar Albanians by violent oppression, segregation, and a campaign to expel as many Albanians as possible from Serbia. There was also general agreement that the Kosovo conflict could spill over into other European states. In addition to the potential for spillover, the mass exodus of thousands of refugees threatened the stability of neighboring states. Still, there was widespread disagreement regarding the appropriateness of a NATO intervention as well as the type of intervention that would most likely result in success.

These disagreements stemmed from two factors. Firstly, the alliance lacked an authorization for intervention from the United Nations Security Council. Former U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, Ivo Daalder, characterized the organization of the allies as fitting one of three categories. The “Catholics” (such as France and Italy) demanded that every attempt must be made to obtain authorization and argued the alliance could only act without the support of the UNSC in the most extreme circumstances. The French in particular were concerned about the possibility that NATO’s actions, absent the authorization, would set a dangerous precedent for both NATO and the United States. The second group of states, the “Lutherans” (states such as Great Britain and Germany), looked for justification to bypass the UN Security Council in other areas of international law, such as UN conventions. They too pressed the urgency of the situation and the potential effects of nonintervention. The last group, which included the United States, were the “Agnostics”. For the third group, a UN authorization would enhance the legitimacy of
the operation and provide additional resources for the alliance but was not imperative for NATO to act.\textsuperscript{226}

Secondly, although the European allies recognized the necessity of the U.S.’s participation, some states were unnerved by the Clinton administration’s repeated refusal to engage in a ground effort in Kosovo. As demonstrated earlier, the British in particular stressed the importance of maintaining the possibility of ground forces, and were frustrated by the U.S.’s vocal unwillingness to contribute to a contingent in Kosovo.\textsuperscript{227} Then-British Defense Secretary George Robertson repeatedly stated the British’s position that NATO should retain the option to send ground troops in the event the air strikes were unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{228} Though the U.S. was the most vocal opponent of a ground force, it was not the only ally to refuse participation. Greece also opposed participation because of its historical ties to the Orthodox Christian population in the former SFRY, and others expressed disinterest in committing ground troops. Thus, as David Dunn asserts, an air campaign was likely the only strategy that would have received consensus from all of the allies.\textsuperscript{229}

Political and public support for NATO operations also varied widely amongst the allies. Polls conducted at the beginning of the OAF campaign demonstrated high levels of support in Great Britain and France. In Great Britain, polls indicated that 55 percent of the public supported Britain’s participation in the NATO operation, while nearly 60 percent of the public supported France’s decision to participate. Support in France remained high throughout the operation, as a poll conducted in late-May showed that 67 percent still supported France’s actions. Chancellor

\textsuperscript{226} Daalder and O’Hanlon, \textit{Winning Ugly}, 45. \\
\textsuperscript{227} Dunn, “Innovation and Precedent in the Kosovo War.” \\
\textsuperscript{228} Karen Donfried, “Kosovo: International Reactions to NATO Air Strikes,” CRS Report for Congress, April 21, 1999. \\
\textsuperscript{229} Dunn, “Innovation and Precedent in the Kosovo War.”
Schroeder also enjoyed high levels of support for Germany’s participation – 60 percent of those polled in early April supported Germany’s participation. Conversely, polls in Italy showed that the public did not support Italian participation: only 25 percent believed the operation was justified.\textsuperscript{230} Polling conducted in mid-April in Greece showed that 96 percent of the population opposed the air strikes.\textsuperscript{231}

However, the statements of public and military officials from several states – including states whose publics did not support the NATO airstrikes – indicate their relationship to both the United States and to the NATO alliance made them maintain their commitment to OAF even as public support started to decline and domestic opposition became more vocal. Many of the allies saw it to be in their national interests to ensure a settlement of the Kosovo conflict, either because of the potential for spillover or because of the possible humanitarian crisis, which would be politically, economically, and militarily expensive. Importantly, the allies also agreed with Secretary General Solana and U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen’s repeated assertions regarding NATO’s reputation: if NATO threatened the use of force (as it did in the pre-war period), its failure to follow through would destroy the credibility of the alliance and jeopardize any future NATO deployment.\textsuperscript{232}

A major source of tension arose between the U.S. and the Europeans participating in the air strikes in the early days of OAF. When Milosevic persisted despite the U.S.’s belief he would capitulate after only a few days of an aerial campaign, it became obvious NATO had not established a proper approval mechanism for target selection. U.S. commanders struggled to expand the target list, and even when they did, the alliance’s approval process was slow and

\textsuperscript{230} Davidson, \textit{America’s Allies and War}.  
\textsuperscript{231} Donfried, “Kosovo.”  
\textsuperscript{232} Davidson, \textit{America’s Allies and War}; Daalder and O’Hanlon, \textit{Winning Ugly}. 

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burdensome.\textsuperscript{233} Despite this, the NATO allies remained committed to OAF and became more unified as the operation continued, which severely weakened Milosevic’s ability to counter the air strikes. Writes Jason Davidson, “Milo\v{e}vic knew that NATO had him outgunned by a massive margin. If the leading NATO member countries committed their capabilities and kept them engaged, Serbia would have to accept NATO’s terms or be destroyed.”\textsuperscript{234} The Washington Summit provided political and military leaders to reassess its actions in Kosovo and reaffirm its commitment to unity throughout the operation, which proved key to the alliance’s success. In a statement on the After Action Report (AAR) on Kosovo, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Henry Shelton said, “…(authors’ emphasis) the solidarity of the alliance was central in compelling Belgrade to accept NATO’s conditions. Because Milosevic could not defeat NATO militarily, his best hope lay in splitting the alliance politically. Thus, it was not enough for NATO simply to concentrate on winning a military victory; at the heart of allied strategy was building and sustaining the unity of the alliance.”\textsuperscript{235}

**Phase 3: Post-OAF Assessment and the KFOR Mission**

Over the entire OAF operation, which lasted 11 weeks, the U.S. and NATO flew a combined total of 38,000 sorties.\textsuperscript{236} The United States flew the highest number of both strike and non-strike sorties, with a total of 29,000 sorties flown using 700 aircraft. Of these, the U.S. conducted nearly 80 percent of the air raids. Of the non-U.S. allies, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Italy flew the highest totals of sorties. The United Kingdom also flew a higher number strike sorties (62 percent of all sorties flown by the UK) than any other non-U.S. ally (who averaged 28 percent of total sorties flown). No friendly-fire incidents were reported

\textsuperscript{233} Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo.*
\textsuperscript{234} Davidson, *America’s Allies and War,* 75.
\textsuperscript{236} Weitsman, *Waging War.*
throughout the entirety of the operation. During the operation two alliance jets were shot down but the pilots survived. The alliance suffered just two casualties as a result of a training exercise accident in Albania. Fourteen of the nineteen NATO allies participated in Operation Allied Force.\footnote{Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}; Daulder and O’Hanlon, \textit{Winning Ugly}; Davidson, \textit{America’s Allies and War}; Deighton, “The European Union and NATO’s War Over Kosovo.”}

The air campaign revealed the tremendous capabilities gap between the U.S. and the European allies – not only was the U.S. better equipped with weapons and aircraft, it was also superior at intelligence gathering and research and development.\footnote{Kaplan, \textit{NATO Divided, NATO United}; Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}.} Disparities in communication systems were also problematic, particularly in regards to precision strikes. Because of this, the United States executed the highest number of strike (precision) sorties because many of its allies were incapable of doing so, especially in the early stages of OAF. Only 10 percent of the European aircraft were capable of precision bombing, and 70 percent of the total firepower was American. Only a few could contribute laser-guided munitions, and France was the only non-U.S. ally capable of bombing raids at night.\footnote{Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}.}

In addition to the absence of a UN authorization for the intervention and the technical and operation difficulties of executing the air campaign, OAF became increasingly problematic because of a number of non-hostile targets being struck and the deaths of over 500 civilians by NATO munitions.\footnote{Independent International Commission on Kosovo, \textit{The Kosovo Report}.} An early mishap at the beginning of April 1999 in which three missiles struck a residential neighborhood in Alksinac, killing five civilians, prompted Milosevic to declare a ceasefire and request NATO to do the same. However, NATO officials refused, citing the lack of political settlement for Kosovo. On April 12, NATO bombs hit a passenger train
south of Belgrade, killing thirty civilians. Two days later, NATO struck a civilian convoy of Kosovar Albanians, killing another sixty people. One of the most publicized, controversial accidental strikes occurred on May 7, when NATO planes mistakenly targeted the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. Three people were killed and another twenty were wounded. The Security Council convened in an emergency session the next day, while NATO and the United States combatted rumors that the targeting was intentional.241

Because only 2,500 civilians were killed by Serb authorities before NATO intervened, some argued that OAF encouraged Milosevic to escalate the violence and implement more oppressive policies. The Independent International Commission determined that 10,000 civilians were killed during Operation Allied Force; however, an investigation conducted by Human Rights Watch determined that only 489 to 528 were killed by the NATO operation. The majority of those killed were ethnic Albanians deliberately targeted by Serbian authorities. Civilians were subjected to rape and torture as well. Over 860,000 Kosovars left Kosovo as refugees, and another 590,000 were “internally displaced.” These two groups constituted over 90 percent of the total population.242 Still, Hungary, Germany, and France were among those who asserted that Kosovo was not better off than it was before the strikes.243

On June 10, 1999, the UN Security Council passed UNSCR 1244. The resolution detailed all of the terms of the G8/NATO peace agreement with Milosevic. As a condition of the agreement, the UN Security Council established the mandate for an immediate peacekeeping force consisting of both military and civilian personnel in Kosovo to ensure adherence to the

241 “A Kosovo Chronology”; “Kosovo Chronology.”
243 Weitsman, Waging War.
peace principles. Operating under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) entered Kosovo on June 12, as Serb forces moved out of the region. Nearly 50,000 troops were deployed at the beginning of the KFOR mission. Although the European allies contributed significant less than the U.S. to Operation Allied Force, it took the lead on the KFOR mission, contributing thousands of troops and billions of dollars to stabilization and reconstruction efforts. Additionally, thousands of civilians joined the KFOR mission to help rebuild various programs.

The UN also established the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), a civilian mission to assist the Kosovars and the KFOR operation. By June 20, 1999, all of the Serb forces had moved out of Kosovo, and Operation Allied Force was officially ended. Within a few months of the end of military operations, nearly all of the refugees – 810,000 of the estimated 863,000 total displaced – returned to Kosovo.

Today, the KFOR mission continues, with 4,651 NATO forces currently deployed. Of these, the U.S. is the second largest contributor with 712 troops deployed.

**Legitimacy, Multilateralism, and the Utility of NATO**

President Clinton’s decision to engage in a multilateral intervention in Kosovo was the sum of his personal preferences, domestic politics, the U.S.’s relationship with its European partners and the NATO alliance, and the international political climate. Like the Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya interventions, NATO’s participation in Kosovo conferred legitimacy on the intervention. The legitimacy conferred by NATO participation was particularly important because the allies lacked an explicit authorization for the use of force in Kosovo. However,

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245 Weitsman, *Waging War.*
247 “Kosovo Force: Key Facts and Figures”.

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unlike the aforementioned cases, NATO’s role in Kosovo also validated the alliance’s existence for both political legitimization and military capability: the unity of the allies and their ability to execute the ‘out-of-area’ operation demonstrated the alliance’s relevance in the post-Cold War environment. The lessons learned during Operation Allied Force also presented an opportunity for NATO to improve its utility for future operations, and gave the United States leverage to press the European allies for more defense spending and alliance contributions.

Legitimacy

The need to legitimize any operation in Kosovo was enhanced by the absence of a UN Security Council resolution authorizing an intervention. Because the United Nations Security Council did not authorize international intervention in any of the resolutions it passed on Kosovo, Russia repeatedly insisted that NATO’s actions were illegal, and China expressed concerns over the alliance using humanitarian grounds to intervene. However, as noted earlier, both states’ objections likely resulted from the potential precedent for future intervention in their own territories, not the legality of action.  

Clinton administration officials did not believe the missing UN’s endorsement to be a sufficient reason to forego the intervention, but they recognized the difficulties of obtaining the international community’s blessing for a unilateral effort and the need to engage the allies. President Clinton believed the United States had to act: the earlier Bosnian war demonstrated that the Europeans were not equipped to act on their own, but the Balkans instability threatened their security interests and the stability of other areas in Central and Eastern Europe. The administration was also concerned its inaction in places like Rwanda, where an extensive ethnic cleansing campaign in 1994 resulted in nearly 1 million civilian deaths, and slowness to act in Bosnia threatened the legitimacy of the Kosovo operation, particularly because the intervention

248 Bjola, Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics.
was justified by similar concerns of humanitarian abuses. Still, there was no guarantee the alliance would act. Defense Secretary William Cohen and others thought the allies could be too reluctant to mount an intervention without the UN endorsement. Although UN Secretary General Annan refused to interfere in the dispute between the Security Council members, he expressed concern that if the U.S. mounted an allied operation and staged the intervention, the values of the United Nations and the Security Council would be undermined.249

Prior to the commencement of Operation Allied Freedom, NATO leaders searched the precedents of international law to legitimize NATO’s intervention. They referred to the obligations of 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights and the 1949 Geneva Convention, and the two Security Council resolutions, UNSCR 1160 and 1199, claiming military intervention in the event Milosevic did not adhere to the UN guidelines was in the “sense and logic” of the resolutions. At the same time, some allies tried to minimize the importance of an authorizing Security Council resolution, especially given the necessity of immediate response to the urgent humanitarian crisis.250 There was also some indication that U.S. and other Western European officials hoped the NATO intervention would set a precedent for future humanitarian crisis wherein the Security Council could not reach a consensus on the necessity of international participation. They believed the NATO intervention in Kosovo could be deemed an illegal action after the engagement ended, but hoped the operation’s success would lead to important improvements in the legal system for humanitarian concerns and thus supersede any violation of international law.251

249 Weitsman, Waging War; Hendrickson, “The Constraint of Legitimacy.”
250 Hendrickson, “The Constraint of Legitimacy.”
In post-war assessments, the operation in Kosovo was deemed by the Independent International Commission on Kosovo to be illegal but legitimate. In its report, the Commission wrote, “It was illegal because it did not receive prior approval from the United Nations Security Council. However, the Commission considers that the intervention was justified because all diplomatic avenues had been exhausted and because the intervention had the effect the liberating the majority population of Kosovo from a long period of oppression under Serbian rule.”

Although OAF violated Serbia’s sovereignty and lacked a Security Council resolution authorizing the intervention, the operation was conducted to prevent a humanitarian crisis. As Susan Rice and Andrew Loomis posit, this was in “the spirit of the UN Charter.” Some believed the dispute between the Security Council members reflected that it was ill equipped to be the sole arbiter of conflict and the only body able to determine the legitimacy of international intervention.

In the years following the Kosovo crisis, there have been no substantial changes to the Security Council itself; however, as a result of the crises in Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo, and elsewhere, the United Nations undertook a series of reforms aimed at preventing future human rights abuses. In 2000, Canada convened a special panel, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, to determine whether there are conditions under which states may supersede the sovereignty of another state in order to protect civilian populations. The panel’s findings became the basis for the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine adopted by the UN at the 2005 World Summit. The R2P doctrine mandates that states have a moral and legal imperative to protect their populations from crimes against humanity. If the individual state is

254 Bjola, *Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics*.
unable or unwilling to ensure these protections, R2P dictates that the international community “has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”

The R2P doctrine would later be cited as justification for NATO’s intervention in the 2011 Libyan crisis.

**Multilateralism and the Utility of NATO**

Although U.S. military officials developed plans to act that did not rely on widespread multilateral participation, there is little evidence that the U.S. intended to act unilaterally in Kosovo. President Bush’s Christmas Warning threatened U.S. action if the violence in Kosovo continued, but made no mention of unilateral action. As Benjamin Lambeth asserts, most of the U.S.’s proposals during the Clinton administration used overwhelming air power at the beginning and then tapered off, but the Europeans wanted a much more gradual approach. The resulting OAF strategy reflected the Europeans’ interests much more than the U.S.’s. However, as demonstrated earlier, NATO’s decision to conduct an air-only campaign was driven by the U.S.’s unwillingness to contribute ground troops. Although some allies, such as Great Britain, thought the U.S. was too quick to rule out the use of ground forces, most allies recognized an air campaign was likely to gain much more domestic support from their respective constituencies, as well as the consensus of the alliance as a whole. The Clinton administration was able to maintain political support for Kosovo operations not only because of the air-only strategy, but also because it was ultimately endorsed by the allies and employed as part of a multilateral campaign.

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256 Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*. 
The international political climate and the U.S.’s relationship with its NATO allies in the post-Cold War period was a contributing factor to the decision to act multilaterally. The Clinton administration repeatedly expressed its disinterest in the intervention in Bosnia: officials hoped the European allies would develop their military power enough to be able to combat Milosevic. Several European states hoped to develop the appropriate security mechanisms for addressing the crisis as well: in 1991, twelve European nations signed the Maastricht Treaty, effectively creating the European Union (EU). The treaty established a common foreign and security policy and gave the EU an unprecedented role in security affairs, but it did not directly address EU military capability; instead, it allowed the European Council to request military assistance from the Western European Union (WEU). Though both the French and the Germans were eager to create a military structure similar to NATO’s, Great Britain was reluctant to do so on the basis that it would undermine NATO. As a result, the EU’s ability to engage in Bosnia in 1995 was limited. In late 1992, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)/Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) coordinated an observer mission in Kosovo, Sandjak, and Vojvodine, but the SFRY only allowed its mission to continue until mid-1993.257

The EU’s inability to act in a more substantial role in Kosovo made it evident to both the Clinton administration, the European allies, and to some extent, foreign policy elites and the American public, that U.S. leadership in the alliance was paramount to success in Kosovo. Additionally, NATO allies – as well as decision-makers within the UN – realized there was no alternative alliance or organization that could act in a way NATO could and ensure a successful

operation. NATO had a substantial arsenal of pooled resources, the necessary funding, and an integrated command and control structure that could facilitate a multilateral response to Milosevic’s actions.

Even so, the execution of Operation Allied Force highlighted weaknesses in both the alliance’s ability to act effectively and the U.S.-NATO relationship. Following the end of operations, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution “bemoaning the ‘glaring shortcomings’ in European defense capabilities, and urging the European Union to rectify the ‘overall imbalance’ within the alliance.”\textsuperscript{258} The Defense Department’s After Action Review of Kosovo identified several areas for the U.S. to improve in its relationship with the NATO alliance, including: better planning for non-Article 5 operations, better command and control policies, and strengthening the relationships between the political and military sides of NATO. The OAF operation identified a technological gap between the United States, which sustained a 3-4 percent defense spending rate (as a proportion of GDP), and the European allies, many of whom dramatically shrunk their defense budgets after the end of the Cold War and regularly failed to meet the 2 percent threshold set by the Washington Treaty. The United States was the only state able to deploy strategic bombers and stealth aircraft (including unmanned aerial vehicles), in addition to being one of only a few with laser guided bombs, resources for nighttime strikes, and cruise missiles. Additionally, the United States’ ability to conduct intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) was unparalleled by the European allies.\textsuperscript{259}

During OAF, the United States maintained control over its troops by establishing a parallel command structure to NATO’s command and control structure, resulting in tensions between allies as well as “unsuitable organizational structures and insufficient staff

\textsuperscript{258} Kupchan, “Kosovo and the Future of U.S. Engagement in Europe.”
\textsuperscript{259} Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}. 
integration.” U.S. resources using “special sensitivities” such as the B-2, F-117, and cruise missiles, remained under the control of the European Command (USEUCOM) and the Air Operations Center co-operated by the U.S. and NATO maintained separate targeting teams for operations based on USEUCOM’s commands. Because the U.S. anticipated the air strikes would only last a few days, it did not have an effective method for selecting and approving targets, which led to tension between the air component commander, Lieutenant General Michael Short (USAF), and General Wesley Clark (USA), who was serving in a dual capacity as both commander of USEUCOM and NATO Supreme Allied Commander.  

Although the U.S. was required to take a leading role in the Kosovo intervention, Clinton administration officials recognized the benefits of a NATO operation. While some allies lacked the necessary technology and resources needed to mount an effective air campaign, access to bases, airfields, and airspace were critical to Operation Allied Force’s success. In a statement on the After Action Review (AAR) of Kosovo, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Henry Shelton said, “Operation Allied Force could not have been conducted without the NATO alliance and without the infrastructure, transit and basing access, host-nation force contributions, and more importantly, political and diplomatic support provided by the allies and other members of the coalition…If NATO as an institution had not responded to this crisis, it would have meant that the world’s most powerful alliance was unwilling to act when confronted with serious threats to common interests on its own doorstep.”

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260 Ibid, 78.  
261 Lambeth, NATO’s Air War for Kosovo.  
262 Weitsman, Waging War.  
263 Cohen and Shelton, “Joint Statement on the Kosovo After Action Review.”
U.S. officials used the 1999 Washington Summit to press the allies to strengthen their commitment to the alliance both politically and militarily. The U.S. insisted the alliance develop better command and control mechanisms and pushed the allies for more operational resources, citing the ongoing Kosovo operation as evidence of the alliance’s shortcomings. As a result, the allies revised its Strategic Concept and, in following the end of OAF, established the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) in December 1999 to overcome some of these challenges. The DCI worked to improve interoperability between the allies, ensure the rapid deployment of resources in emergencies, strengthen the alliance’s ability to engaged in sustained warfare over a longer period of time, and address the command and control difficulties experienced during OAF.\footnote{264}

The United States also benefited from its status as a hegemonic superpower in its relationship with NATO during the Kosovo intervention. When the NATO was founded in 1949, the United States used its status in the post-WWII era to establish itself in highly influential positions within the alliance. For example, the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) has traditionally been a four-star American officer who serves in dual role as NATO SACEUR and Commander, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM). The NATO SACEUR is the head of the Allied Command Operations (ACO) and is responsible for the conduct of all NATO military operations.\footnote{265} Thus, even though the U.S. maintained a parallel command structure (under the direction of Lt. Gen. Short), the U.S. exerted influence through NATO SACEUR and USEUCOM Commander General Clark. In addition to tensions between Lt. Gen. Short and Gen. Clark, Clark’s dual position caused tension between the allies at times, as some


challenged whether he had the authority to make some operational decisions. However, these tensions quickly subsided.\textsuperscript{266}

\textit{Conclusion}

The dissolution of the Soviet Union left NATO searching for a purpose in the post-Cold War era. The Balkans conflicts reinvigorated the alliance, and both the U.S. and the European allies recognized the utility of the alliance, albeit for different reasons. For the European allies, NATO kept the United States actively involved in European security. Years of cuts to defense budgets, fewer reserve capabilities, and depletions in active duty troops left many states with large gaps in their ability to address threat to national security. The United States was capable of filling those gaps, and committed to the allies by the Washington Treaty. Conversely, the United States enjoyed the legitimacy enhancement of NATO support for the air campaign. Although the intervention in Kosovo was ultimately deemed legitimate by UN officials and the international community, the success of the air-only campaign enhanced the U.S.’s reputation within the alliance and set a precedent for future engagements and the U.S.-NATO relationship: U.S. officials could now justify using an air-only campaign to its fellow allies. By citing the success of both Bosnia and Kosovo air operations and the minimal numbers of friendly-fire incidents and civilian casualties, the United States could use its influence to push NATO into future interventions to prevent or halt crimes against humanity.

NATO’s first major operation in the post-Cold War period revealed the complexities of the U.S.-NATO relationship, as well as the relationship between multilateralism, legitimacy, and the alliance’s persistence in the absence of threat from the Soviet Union. There is strong evidence supporting each of the hypotheses regarding why NATO persistence is important to the United States. As previously demonstrated, NATO’s role in Kosovo conferred a high degree of

\textsuperscript{266} Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}. 
legitimacy on the operation, despite the absence of an authorizing UN Security Council resolution. This benefited the operation – which, in retrospect, was deemed “illegal but legitimate” – while also benefitting the alliance for future operations. The possibility of NATO missions outside of the United Nations’ mandate influenced the U.S.’s later decision-making – especially in Iraq, where the U.S. and others believed its actions would be retrospectively validated in a similar manner. U.S. policymakers demonstrated both the U.S.’s commitment to international norms and the allies’ desire to transform norms concerning humanitarian interventions (as evidenced by the development of the R2P doctrine), confirming the second hypothesis on the importance of NATO persistence. From the perspective of the Clinton administration, a multilateral operation in Kosovo prevented some of the domestic political fallout of a unilateral strategy while still allowing the United States to exert a substantial influence on the alliance and take a leadership position over military operations.

The following chapters on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq also provide some insight into what could have happened in Kosovo if the U.S. chose an alternative to Operation Allied Force. If the U.S. acted unilaterally in Kosovo, successfully convincing the European allies to undertake the necessary stabilization and reconstruction efforts would have been difficult, even if the combat operation was faster and more successful than OAF. Thus, the decision to stage a multilateral operation may have paid off, as European forces remain committed to stability in the Balkans today.

Operation Allied Force reinforced the importance of maintaining the alliance and provided opportunities to ensure its utility as predicted by the third hypothesis. The United States recognized the importance of NATO resources to its operations, despite the inability of all allies to contribute the necessary resources. Many allies still pushed to develop European security
mechanisms that did not rely on the United States’ participation, but because of the Balkans conflicts understood the importance of the U.S.’s role in the short term. The European allies also recognized the growing technology gap and operational challenges facing the alliance. These initiatives affected the alliance’s ability to respond to the Afghanistan war, as demonstrated by the following chapter. While NATO participation was important to the United States because of its operational contributions, there was an additional impetus for NATO leadership in Operation Allied Force: the alliance’s credibility as a willing and capable mechanism for action was threatened if the allies did not act in unison and engage the alliance.

Finally, as evidenced here and in chapter seven, the United States used its role as a leader in the alliance and its hegemonic status to influence the alliance’s decision-making, consistent with the fourth hypothesis on NATO’s importance to the United States. The decision to act without UN authorization, to refrain from a ground campaign at the outset of OAF, and to undertake major initiatives in light of the alliance’s shortcomings in combat operations were influenced (and in some cases initiated) by the United States. NATO planners used American combat plans to formulate the OAF strategy, which was directed by U.S. officers serving in dual U.S./NATO capacities. The Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) reforms were spearheaded by the United States to adapt the alliance and overcome the shortcomings experienced in Kosovo.
Chapter 4: September 11, 2001 and the War in Afghanistan

The narrative of September 11, 2001 is etched into the minds of millions of Americans who witnessed the tragic events of the day, beginning when American Airlines Flight 11 struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center (WTC) at 8:46 a.m. Nineteen al Qaeda operatives hijacked a total of four flights that day – Flight 11, United Airlines Flight 175, American Airlines Flight 77, and United Airlines Flight 93. Two planes flew into the two WTC buildings and a third crashed into the Pentagon. Passengers on the fourth flight overtook the hijackers and prevented the plane from striking its intended target, instead crashing into a field in rural Pennsylvania. The attacks killed 2,977 people, injured 7,000 more, and caused over $100 billion in direct economic damage to the U.S. economy. In the days and weeks that followed, Americans felt an unprecedented sense of vulnerability and rallied around President George W. Bush, New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and the first responders of the NYC fire, police, and EMT departments. They sought answers as to why and how these attacks occurred.²⁶⁷

Americans were not the only to suffer the consequences of the September 11 attacks. Nearly 400 civilians from outside of the U.S. perished in the four strikes, and support from the international community abounded in the days and weeks that followed. The United Nations Security Council permanent members contacted President Bush to express their condolences and, in many cases, pledge their support for a U.S.-led response to the attacks.²⁶⁸ The Security Council also immediately passed a resolution explicitly condemning the attacks and pledging support for the United States, while NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time in alliance history. Despite an outpouring of support from the United Nations, NATO, other international organizations, and individual states, the U.S. quickly decided that once the

²⁶⁷ Lansford, 9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
²⁶⁸ Weitsman, Waging War.
responsible parties were identified, it would engage in military operations with limited allied participation.

The following chapter examines how the war in Afghanistan impacted U.S.-NATO relations, and how those impacts changed the NATO alliance. I divide the war into three phases. The first phase began on September 11, 2001. During the first phase, the U.S. had a tremendous amount of support from its allies and much of the international community. Some of the U.S.’s allies disagreed with the operational strategies of the U.S., including the decision to engage only a small contingent of international forces, but few challenged the necessity of a military intervention against the perpetrators of the attacks. The second phase is denoted by the commencement of the U.S. mission, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), on October 7, 2001. This operation was unique in a few important ways: the U.S. acted largely alone, and instead of engaging hundreds of thousands of ground troops, relied heavily on special operations forces (SOFs). Additionally, the U.S.’s primary ally was the Northern Alliance, which posed a number of challenges to the mission’s success. The third phase began in December 2001 with the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF underwent several changes in the proceeding years, including a transition of leadership from individual states to the NATO alliance, and operated in conjunction with OEF operations.

Examination of each of these phases reveals important indicators of U.S.-NATO relations. Four factors led the United States to prefer limited military contributions from allies during OEF: the difficulties with command and control during the 1999 Kosovo operation, a

Sarah Kreps conducts an analysis of the war in Afghanistan by dividing it into phases as well: the post-9/11 period and Operation Enduring Freedom as a first phase, and the second phase beginning with the establishment of ISAF. This is a useful model for understanding the transition from very limited multilateralism to a more traditional multilateral engagement. Building on her analysis, I adopt a three-phase model to understand not only U.S. policymaking and multilateralism, but also U.S.-NATO relations. See: Kreps, *Coalitions of Convenience.*
growing divide of capabilities between the U.S. and NATO members, the preferences of members of the Bush administration – and in particular Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld – in combatting international terrorism, and a widespread belief that the actions of the U.S. were both morally and legally legitimate. The U.S. did not perceive a need to campaign for legitimacy prior to Operation Enduring Freedom. Unlike the Kosovo and Iraq interventions, both the United Nations and NATO supported the U.S.’s decision to act in response to the 9/11 attacks. Thus, U.S. policymakers believed the U.S.’s military operations would be widely accepted as legitimate.

Scholars used the U.S.’s decision to limit NATO engagement in the early stages of Afghanistan as evidence of the relationship’s decline.\textsuperscript{270} However, these factors resulted in important changes to NATO to make the alliance more capable of responding to threats and supporting the United States. When the United Nations established the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in December 2001, the necessity of NATO participation was almost immediately evident. The U.S. advocated for NATO’s leadership in ISAF in 2003, allowing the alliance to take responsibility for outreach, stabilization, and reconstruction. This led to the development of both military and non-military resources within the alliance. On the military side, NATO developed much more aggressive anti- and counter-terrorism policies, including: improving intelligence sharing to prevent terrorism, advancing technology to defend against and counter terrorist attacks, improving the alliance’s chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defense systems, and ensuring the alliance had the necessary military equipment and interoperability for any threats faced by member states. On the non-military side,

the alliance worked to improve its relationships with non-NATO members through programs such as the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative to further enhance information sharing and anti-terrorism efforts. In Afghanistan, the alliance worked to build community relationships, engage nongovernmental actors, and bridge military and civilian relations. It implemented literacy and education campaigns, worked to strengthen the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), re-established a judicial system, and provided support for many other humanitarian missions within the country.

Thus, the Afghanistan conflict provided two unique opportunities to NATO. Firstly, it was able to demonstrate its utility to the United States and have an impact on the conduct of the war. Secondly, its ability to evolve to meet the demands of the new threat environment ensured that it would remain relevant and persist in the post-Cold War period. While the U.S. decided to largely forgo NATO participation in the first two phases of the war, it continued to contribute to the alliance to improve NATO’s ability to engage in conflict. In the third phase of the war, the United States recognized the necessity of NATO engagement and advocated the alliance take a leading role in the ISAF mission, thus demonstrating both its interest and its role in the alliance’s persistence.

*Background: al Qaeda and the Rise of International Terrorism*

During the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Saudi-born Osama bin Laden began traveling throughout the Middle East and parts of central and southern Asia to rally support for the Afghans. A devout Sunni Muslim, bin Laden was enraged by the actions of the Soviets and sympathized with the anti-Soviet fighters known as the mujahedeen. In 1982, he took his first trip into Afghanistan to give money and resources to the efforts, and by the mid-1980s joined the fighting. First, bin Laden established camps of Arab fighters (who came from other states to
assist their Muslim counterparts). Later, he would engage directly in battle. In the late 1980s, inspired by his experiences in the war, bin Laden established a new Islamic fundamentalist organization: al Qaeda. Though the organization – which, translated from Arabic means “the base” – was intended to create a centralized system for documenting the mujahideen, visitors, and family members of the camps, bin Laden’s vision for the future quickly morphed the organization into a global network for Islamic groups to focus attention on international jihad and engage in well-orchestrated acts of terror.  

When Pakistan and Afghanistan signed the Geneva Accords in April 1988, the Soviet Union began to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan to finally end the war. Bin Laden perceived the Soviet withdraw to be a victory for al Qaeda and sought to expand the organization’s capacity to conduct global jihad in places like South Yemen, Somalia, Chechnya, Kosovo, and Kashmir. Bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia, but was placed under house arrest and eventually fled his home country, travelling through Pakistan to Afghanistan and eventually settling al Qaeda operations in Sudan. Al Qaeda planned and orchestrated attacks alongside other anti-West groups, and a series of attacks including strikes in Yemen (1992), the United States at the World Trade Center (1993), and Mogadishu during the Somalia civil war (1993) led the Saudi kingdom to revoke bin Laden’s citizenship in 1994. Additional attacks, including a foiled plot to assassinate the Pope and down a dozen airliners in 1995, and an attack at a military training facility in Saudi Arabia in 1996 were also attributed to al Qaeda. Pressure mounted for the Sudanese government to address the threat of al Qaeda, and after an attack on the Khobar

Towers in Saudi Arabia which killed 20 people (including 19 Americans) and injured 370, Sudan officially expelled bin Laden in 1996.\textsuperscript{273}

Bin Laden’s expulsion from Sudan forced him to relocate to Afghanistan, but when he returned in 1996, Afghanistan was much different than the state he left five years prior. The Taliban, a Sunni group comprised primarily by ethnic Pashtuns seeking to install a system of sharia law, was the most powerful entity in Afghanistan and controlled a majority of the land. Although its legitimacy and authority as a governing body remained unrecognized by almost every state in the international community, its newfound partnership with al Qaeda allowed it to implement strict laws, take control of the poppy (opium) industry, and assert a high level of control over most of the country. It also allowed bin Laden to amass a tremendous amount of wealth and resources for waging jihad against the U.S. At the end of 1996, the Taliban controlled over two-thirds of the country, and expands its control to over 90\% by the time of the 9/11 attacks.\textsuperscript{274}

U.S. Response to bin Laden and Terrorism Before 9/11
Bin Laden believed the United States was responsible for the plight of Afghanistan after the Soviet war and representative of “the forces of evil that are bringing corruption and domination into the Islamic world.”\textsuperscript{275} When the Taliban and al Qaeda conquered Kabul (the Afghanistan capital) in September 1996, the U.S. and other Western nations continued to recognize the Afghanistan president, Burhanunddin Rabbani, as the legitimate leader of the country. The U.S.’s sustained intervention in Afghanistan and other Islamic countries enraged bin Laden. In

\textsuperscript{273} Lansford, 9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; “A Biography of Osama bin Laden”; Scheurer, Osama bin Laden.
\textsuperscript{274} Lansford, 9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
\textsuperscript{275} Michael Dobbs, “bin Laden: A ‘Master Impresario’” The Washington Post, September 13, 2001, accessed April 5, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/12/AR2010031201552.html. The quote is from Joshua Teitelbaum, a Senior Research Analyst at Tel Aviv University, who was interviewed in the article.
August 1998, al Qaeda-linked terrorists detonated two truck bombs at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 234 people and injuring several thousand. The U.S., believing al Qaeda to be supporting the group behind the attacks, issued an indictment for bin Laden and demanded the Taliban surrender him. Still, bin Laden eluded capture and continued to lead al Qaeda, coordinating additional attacks including the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole, which killed seventeen sailors and injured dozens.276

During the Clinton administration, the response to the threat of al Qaeda was mixed. In Afghanistan, the U.S. provided support for one of the largest anti-Taliban groups, the Northern Alliance, and initiated a secret plan to purchase anti-aircraft missiles and other weaponry from the Afghans.277 It used its diplomatic relationships with Saudi Arabia and Sudan to push both states to end their relationship with bin Laden. When the Taliban refused to turn over bin Laden after the Khobar Towers attack, the United States carried out airstrikes against known al Qaeda training facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan.278 In 1999, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13129, which declared the threat posed by al Qaeda a national emergency and established sanctions against the Taliban because of its ties to bin Laden and al Qaeda.279

However, the U.S.’s policies for combatting terrorism were slow to change. In early 1995, President Clinton introduced to Congress the “Omnibus Counterterrorism Act (OCA) of 1995” to establish clear federal jurisdiction over international terrorism, but the bill was never

On April 19, 1995, the U.S. experienced the worst domestic terrorist attack in its history: the Oklahoma City bombing. Because of this attack, which killed 168 people and injured hundreds more, the administration pushed again for stronger legislation, this time proposing the “Antiterrorism Amendments Act (AAA) of 1995.” The OCA and the AAA were combined and passed into law under the “Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.” The legislation drastically expanded the authority of law enforcement officials to collect information and conduct electronic and financial surveillance.

International Response to bin Laden and International Terrorism Before 9/11

The Clinton administration also pushed the international community to become more aggressive in their anti- and counterterrorism measures, as well as to strengthen policies regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). After the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, the G-7 convened in Lyons and pushed terrorism to the top of the agenda. The European Union consulted closely with the U.S. to develop extradition and mutual legal assistance programs, restrict fundraising opportunities for terrorist organizations, and engage in intelligence sharing. In response to the 1998 embassy bombings, the United Nations undertook efforts to locate and prosecute bin Laden. Under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the UN Security Council

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established a sanction regime against al Qaeda beginning with UNSCR 1267 (1999).\textsuperscript{285} The resolution demanded the delivery of bin Laden within 30 days, citing the U.S.’s indictment of him for the 1998 embassy bombings. If the Taliban failed to deliver him, the resolution authorized a number of sanctions, travel restrictions, and trade embargos (similar to those in Clinton’s executive order 13129) to be implemented.\textsuperscript{286}

The United Nations also worked to establish stability in Afghanistan after the 1989 Geneva Accords. In addition to the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA), the UN provided financial and food aid, construction materials to rebuild homes, basic healthcare provisions such as immunizations, and assistance with limiting the production of opium. After the U.S. embassy attacks in 1998, the Security Council adopted resolutions 1193 and 1214, condemning the Taliban and demanding the immediate end of ties with international terrorist organizations.\textsuperscript{287}

Prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks, there was very little momentum for enhanced anti-terrorism and counterterrorism planning in the NATO alliance. There are two explanations for this. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the allies were preoccupied by conflict in the Balkans, culminating in the 1999 Kosovo intervention. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, changes to the alliance, such as the 1999 Defense Capabilities Initiative, were in large part because of the challenges resulting from the command structure, capabilities disparity, and operational


execution during the Kosovo intervention. In addition, though several allies experienced terrorist attacks in the 1990s, terrorism was considered a domestic problem, not an international one. In some instances, this was because the organization was located inside the state. These groups – such as the IRA in the United Kingdom and the ETA in Spain – were not radicalized Islamic fundamentalists, and operated largely within the state they threatened. Though bin Laden continued to grow the al Qaeda network of Islamic extremist groups, it was not immediately clear that there was an imminent global threat. Thus, most states (including the U.S.) worked to strengthen domestic surveillance and law enforcement efforts, as well as further securing infrastructure likely to be targeted (such as airports). Efforts to work with allies on anti-terrorism networks were aimed primarily at information sharing and limiting the access of non-state actors to weapons of mass destruction.

The September 11 Attacks

When President Bush entered into office in January 2001, there was no evidence that his administration intended to change its policies toward Afghanistan, the Taliban, or al Qaeda. Within the CIA Counterterrorism Center, the unit assigned to tracking bin Laden known as “Alex Station” continued to work with Afghani and Uzbek liaisons to collect intelligence. It appeared as though many of President Bush’s closest foreign policy advisors lacked an intimate knowledge of the region, and this may have contributed to his decision to retain the Clinton administration’s Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet. Director Tenet regularly voiced his concerns about al Qaeda, briefing National Security Advisor (NSA) Condoleezza Rice and others in the months prior to the attacks about his concerns over al Qaeda’s growing network.288 A few months before the 9/11 attacks, Tenet penned a presidential brief of top secret classified material titled “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S.” The report argued a future attack was

288 Coll, Ghost Wars.
not only likely but also imminent. This information, however, did not travel up the chain of command.\footnote{Bob Woodward, \textit{State of Denial} (New York: Simon \& Schuster, 2006).} Domestic issues on the administration’s agenda took priority, forcing concerns over Bin Laden, al Qaeda, and international terrorism to the back burner.

But on September 11, 2001, the United States was again under attack by international terrorists. Writes Sarah Kreps, “As individuals in the CIA and executive branch quickly and assertively concluded, the magnitude of the 9/11 attacks called for a considerably stronger response…” President Bush and officials from the Department of Defense, the FBI, the CIA, the Justice Department, and numerous other organizations worked in the hours and days following the attacks to ascertain the information necessary to mount a counterattack. News quickly spread of the likely connection between the attacks and al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden. For the most part, the American public was unaware of threat from al Qaeda prior to now; though videotapes of bin Laden calling for a holy war against the United States had been circulating for months and he was suspected in the 1998 embassy bombings and the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole, the organization never explicitly admitted any direct responsibility for previous attacks. Bin Laden denied responsibility for the attacks on the WTC buildings and the Pentagon, but praised the attackers’ actions.\footnote{“Bin Laden Says He Wasn’t Behind Attacks,” CNN, September 17, 2001, accessed October 20, 2014, http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/inv.binladen.denial/index.html?iref=storysearch.}

In the days following the attacks, President Bush and others publicly asserted the likelihood that bin Laden orchestrated the attacks and their investigation into al Qaeda’s role.\footnote{Dan Balz,“Bush Warns of Casualties of War,” \textit{The Washington Post}, September 18, 2001.} In his address to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, the president confirmed these suspicions and announced the U.S.’s intentions to go to war in Afghanistan. In the address,
Bush made it clear that the intentions of the U.S. were to find bin Laden and bring him to justice, as well as eliminate the threat posed by al Qaeda. He issued demands to the Taliban:

Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of Al Qaida who hide in your land…Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist and every person in their support structure to appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training caps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating. These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate.  

The administration immediately undertook a number of domestic initiatives aimed at strengthening the U.S.’s ability to track and prevent future terrorist attacks. In the aforementioned speech, President Bush announced that he issued an executive order establishing the Office of Homeland Security, which would become a permanent part of the Cabinet in later years as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The DHS’s mission would be to bring together all of the agencies relevant to the war against terrorism. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was established to secure transportation systems and monitor the transport of people and goods via land, air, and sea. The administration underlined the authority of the National Security Administration (NSA) and worked to create legislation that would expand the domestic and international monitoring capabilities. The administration worked with Congress to

draft several pieces of legislation as well, including the “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism” Act, or USA PATRIOT Act, to strengthen law enforcement officials’ ability to use surveillance, money tracking, and information sharing technology.295

One of the most important pieces of legislation during this time was the 2001 Joint Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). The AUMF authorized President Bush to “use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.”296 The bill passed the Senate 98-0, with vote abstentions from Senators Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and Jesse Helms (R-North Carolina). Only one representative – Barbara Lee (D-California) voted against the bill in the House of Representatives.297 It was signed into law on September 18, 2001. In some respects, the AUMF and the additional legislation was a contemporary manifestation of the 1964 Tonkin Gulf Resolution: the president had the overwhelming support of both Congress and the American public to prosecute the war on terror.

In addition to reaffirming the U.S.’s resolve to bring those responsible to justice, President Bush and others worked to reassure the American public, shore up congressional and public support, and strategized ways to engage al Qaeda and the Taliban in a war in Afghanistan. As indicated by the 2001 AUMF, the administration enjoyed high levels of congressional

support. Policymakers also enjoyed high levels of support from the public. Polls indicated 65 to 71 percent of those questioned supported military action, and when asked in later September 2001, 64 percent of respondents supported the use of ground troops in Afghanistan. This was due in part to the feelings of vulnerability after the attacks: prior to Operation Enduring Freedom, nearly 80 percent of Americans surveyed by CBS/NYT polls believed the U.S. was likely to experience terrorist attacks in the future.\textsuperscript{298} President Bush’s approval ratings skyrocketed to 86 percent after 9/11 as a result of both the attacks and the bipartisan congressional support for action.\textsuperscript{299}

\textit{Analysis: U.S.-NATO Relations During the War in Afghanistan}

The division of the war in Afghanistan into three phases – the pre-war period, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the International Security Assistance Force – reveals the true impact of U.S. decision-making on the NATO alliance, as well as how the war affected U.S.-NATO relations. During the pre-war period, the United States attempted to increase multilateral support for its larger war on terror, but did not consider multilateralism as necessary to combat operations. Still, support for Operation Enduring Freedom remained high and the U.S.’s plans were generally accepted as both legally and morally legitimate. The second phase of the war, Operation Enduring Freedom, largely excluded the NATO alliance but did include support and participation by many NATO allies. The third phase of the war, the International Security Assistance Force, included a significant role for the NATO alliance. As ISAF continued, NATO became so integral to the mission’s success that it would eventually take full responsibility for

the ISAF mandate. Its operations would eventually span the entire country, with plans for completion at the end of 2014.

**Phase 1: Pre-War Planning**

Within days of the September attacks, CIA teams and Operational Detachment Alpha teams deployed to Afghanistan. President Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld ordered military planners at the Pentagon to develop several plans for moving forward in Afghanistan. After beginning his second term as Secretary of Defense in January 2001, Rumsfeld emphasized the need for a complete reconfiguration of the U.S.’s military. The defense establishment had grown to be practically unmanageable and wholly inefficient. In the months before the 9/11 attacks, he commissioned numerous reports from officers and civilian advisors about ways in which the U.S. could refine its military to create a smaller, more efficient and agile force. This became known as the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Rumsfeld pushed for the U.S. to adopt a strategy in Afghanistan that was consistent with the RMA.

Prior to 9/11, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), one of the nine unified commands created under the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, was responsible for developing strategies for any kind of event in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, including Afghanistan. In the wake of the 1998 embassy bombings, CENTCOM developed options for striking bin Laden, including Delta Force-led covert operations, aerial bombing campaigns, and a land invasion. However, CENTCOM lacked a plan for dealing with both the Taliban and al Qaeda, and the absence of a cohesive strategy was attributed to operational roadblocks such as

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300 Kreps, *Coalitions of Convenience.*
lack of available airfields in the region, poor infrastructure such as roads and electrical networks, as well as poor communications systems and inadequate water supplies.\textsuperscript{304}

Because CENTCOM did not have an existing plan for Afghanistan, its commander, Army General Tommy Franks, scrambled to meet the condensed timeline set by policymakers. This timeline, as well as the resulting CENTCOM strategy that called for thousands more troops than Secretary Rumsfeld preferred, caused significant tension between General Franks and Rumsfeld.\textsuperscript{305} Rumsfeld and others advocated for a strategy that limited the number of ground troops and utilized other resources to engage in conflict, consistent with the RMA. Their argument was augmented by other strategists’ concerns about the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan, and the nature of finding al Qaeda operatives (in areas that were predominately civilian). Thus, the “Afghan model” was born. U.S. planners devised a plan that relied heavily on U.S. airpower, intelligence assets, and special operations forces (SOFs).\textsuperscript{306} The SOFs would work with indigenous allies to build relationships with village officials and locate suspected al Qaeda affiliates.

International and NATO Support in the Pre-War Phase

The international community expressed widespread support in the wake of the attacks, and this support continued in the initial pre-war planning stage. In addition to calls from members of the UN Security Council expressing their condolences and pledging their support, there was a public outpouring of support for the United States. From the now iconic headline in the French newspaper \textit{Le Monde} declaring “We are all Americans!” to the playing of “The Star Spangled Banner” at Buckingham palace, the international public mourned with the United

\textsuperscript{304} Benjamin S. Lambeth, \textit{Air Power Against Terror: America's Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom} (Pittsburg: RAND Corporation, 2005).
\textsuperscript{305} Ibid.

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States in the wake of the attacks.\textsuperscript{307} On September 12, 2001, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1368, condemning the attacks and expressing “its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations.”\textsuperscript{308} A second resolution, UNSCR 1373, was signed on September 28, 2001. UNSCR 1373 reaffirmed the rights of UN members to act in self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

For the first time in its history, NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which states

\begin{quote}
...an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.\textsuperscript{309}
\end{quote}

In his address to Congress on September 20, President Bush spoke to the role of other states, saying that the threat posed by terrorism was not a problem unique to the United States, but rather threatened the international community. “The United States is grateful that many nations and many international organizations have already responded with sympathy and with

\textsuperscript{307} Lansford, 9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
support, nations from Latin America to Asia, to Africa, to Europe, to the Islamic world. Perhaps the NATO Charter reflects the best attitude of the world: an attack on one is an attack on all.”

In addition to the support pledged by both the United Nations and NATO, several individual states approached the U.S. to offer resources for the U.S.’s global war on terror. The United Kingdom, Australia, France, Italy, Turkey, Canada, Germany, and others offered troops, aircraft, and other necessary support to U.S. operations. While Secretary of State Colin Powell continued to work with the UN and NATO, President Bush personally rallied support from state leaders by contacting over 80 countries, gaining pledges of assistance from dozens of states. Because of CENTCOM’s pre-9/11 difficulties planning for Afghanistan due to limited airfields, Bush also convinced 27 states to provide overflight and landing rights for U.S. operations.

Interestingly, Russian President Vladimir Putin pledged support for both the U.S. and NATO efforts. Noting their own experiences with terrorism, Russian policymakers pledged to share any pertinent intelligence information about the hijackings with the U.S., and to engage with NATO on an international mission against terrorism. Additionally, regional experts were sent to the CIA to share their experiences during the Soviet war, particularly in regards to Afghanistan’s mountainous terrain. Russia agreed to allow the U.S. access to its airspace for humanitarian flights and pledged combat and rescue support. Lastly, President Putin gave explicit permission for former Soviet republics in Central Asia to assist the U.S. as they saw fit.

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311 Weitsman, *Waging War*.
312 Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*. 
This allowed the U.S. to pursue basing support and air access from states such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.\footnote{Lambeth, \textit{Air Power Against Terror}.}

The U.S. was initially reluctant to accept most of the military pledges of support, with one notable exception: the United Kingdom. Before the 9/11 attacks, Prime Minister Blair and President Bush developed a close relationship and agreed on many defense issues. Blair believed the relationship to be integral to UK interests, and after the 9/11 attacks urged the U.S. to accept its offers of support and assemble a multilateral coalition. He also thought the assault against al Qaeda and the Taliban was necessary for securing the UK – the likelihood of future attacks was not limited to the United States and had the potential to be even more devastating in scope should the groups acquire weapons of mass destruction.\footnote{Davidson, \textit{America’s Allies and War}.} Thus, he offered the U.S. access to all of the UK’s available resources – including the 20,000 British soldiers stationed in Oman – with few restrictions on how these resources could be used. British Special Forces were also able to engage alongside U.S. SOFs prior to the commencement of the official operation.\footnote{Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}.}

Outside of the U.S.’s partnership with the UK, much of the military support pledged by states and international organizations went largely unaccepted by policymakers in the initial planning stage, including the support of NATO. There are four factors that led to this decision. Firstly, there was a prevailing concern that a second round of attacks was imminent. Any delay resulting from multilateral planning could result in the loss of more American lives, and policymakers wanted immediate action, even if it required a unilateral approach.\footnote{Kreps, \textit{Coalitions of Convenience}.} Secondly, Rumsfeld’s RMA strategy gave no real consideration to allied support, and many officials believed the U.S. would have a relatively easy fight against a poorly trained, loosely organized
enemy. Thirdly, the U.S. was not eager to repeat the challenges of allied intervention like it had in Kosovo in 1999.\textsuperscript{317} In addition to coordination problems with ground troops and resources, the engagement in Kosovo tested the alliance’s cohesiveness. Many states placed caveats on the use of their troops and the geographic areas in which they could engage, limiting the effectiveness of the alliance’s engagement.\textsuperscript{318}

Lastly, policymakers recognized that even if allied support was incorporated into the U.S.’s strategy for Afghanistan, most states were unequipped with the necessary technology and resources to allow them to contribute. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. policymakers argued with its European counterparts over the necessity of maintaining a robust and easily mobile NATO force. Previous attempts at strengthening the alliance’s military capabilities – such as the 1999 Defense Capabilities Initiative – were given low priority by many European allies.\textsuperscript{319} Changing demographics, the end of military conscription, and shrinking defense budgets in many states resulted in an inability to contribute to the alliance.\textsuperscript{320} Simply put, NATO did not have the ability to respond to the demands of the U.S.

However, the U.S. accepted some limited participation by the NATO alliance. Because of its experiences with command and execution difficulties in the 1999 Kosovo intervention, policymakers were reluctant to use a NATO command structure in Afghanistan. They did, however, ask the allies to provide a number of resources including enhanced intelligence sharing, assistance to states with high levels of threat, clearance for air operations, air support (such as fueling), and additional security for facilities integral to U.S. operations. The North Atlantic

\textsuperscript{317} Davidson, \textit{America’s Allies and War.}  
\textsuperscript{320} Simon, “NATO’s Uncertain Future.”
Council also pledged the support of its naval forces in the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as use of its Airborne Early Warning and Control Force (AWACs) to support operations. On October 9, 2001, in conjunction with the U.S. Operation Enduring Freedom, NATO launched Operation Eagle Assist. The operation used the AWACs to patrol U.S. airspace in conjunction with the U.S.’s Operation Noble Eagle, and was the first deployment of NATO resources over U.S. territory in the alliance’s history.

Phase 2: Operation Enduring Freedom
On October 7, 2001, the United States and the United Kingdom reported to the UN Security Council their intention to use military force pursuant to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter (the self-defense clause). Operation Enduring Freedom commenced with aerial and cruise missile attacks, and was designed as both a preemptive and retaliatory strike: though the United States sought justice for the 9/11 attacks, it also hoped that removing the Taliban from power would prevent future regimes from aiding al Qaeda or other terrorist organizations. The U.S.’s aggressive air assault was intended to disrupt the Taliban’s air defenses, though it was later revealed that the administration also hoped to scare al Qaeda operatives out of hiding and collect intelligence on bin Laden’s whereabouts. In many respects, the U.S.’s campaign during the first ten days was successful – no enemy fighters were ever able to be airborne during the entire war, and the U.S. sustained no casualties and minimal difficulties on the ground.

After ten full days of bombing, the second phase of the operation commenced with a more extensive ground campaign. The ground campaign largely consisted of U.S. and Northern

321 Sloan, *NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community*.
323 Weitsman, *Waging War*.
324 Williams, *NATO, Security, and Risk Management*.
325 Lambeth, *Air Power Against Terror*. 
Alliance members, and ran in conjunction with a continued aerial campaign. Coalition and Northern Alliance members moved throughout the country to dismantle Taliban and al Qaeda resources and raise support from Afghan civilians. The ground campaign was considered by many to be slower moving and less successful than the aerial strikes. This was in part because U.S. forces were under strict orders to pass any intended target through a long chain of command, for two reasons: officials wanted to minimize civilian casualties in the hopes of limiting anti-Americanism sentiments among the locals, and they hoped to preserve the existing infrastructure of Afghanistan for the stabilization and reconstruction phase of the war.

Despite these efforts, locals reported incidents of civilian casualties and mistakenly bombed targets. In the first year of the OEF, Human Rights Watch reported over 200 casualties, among which at least fifteen of those were children.326 There were also several friendly fire incidents between the United States and Canadian forces, as well as between British and American troops, igniting tensions between the allies. British troops were also involved in a friendly fire incident in the Helmand province after they ordered U.S. air strikes being attacked by what they believed to be Taliban forces. However, the attack was by Afghan police forces, which also mistook the British troops for Taliban fighters. The incident killed one Afghan officer and wounded twelve others.327 There were also several reports of accidental bombings of coalition assets and civilian buildings, including two separate bombings of a facility used by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).328

328 Lambeth, Air Power Against Terror.
The second phase of OEF operations continued until November 8, when coalition and Northern Alliance fighters took the city of Mazar-e-Sharif back from the Taliban. The coalition then set its sights on the capital city of Kabul, and on November 13 were able to reclaim the city. After the fall of Kabul, the U.S. began a protracted guerilla war against al Qaeda and Taliban forces throughout the country. After a major combat operation in the Shah-i-Kot valley (codenamed Operation Anaconda) in March 2002, OEF military actions ended.\textsuperscript{329}

\textbf{International and NATO Support during Operation Enduring Freedom}

When the U.S. finally launched its operations on October 7, the Bush administration declared that over 40 states contributed resources, though it had received pledges of support from over 70 states and international organizations.\textsuperscript{330} However, the U.S.’s initial engagement was largely unilateral. At the outset of Operation Enduring Freedom, only the United Kingdom and the Northern Alliance actually fought alongside the U.S. Great Britain provided Tomahawk missiles, Royal Navy submarines, access to air force bases, and troops and support from the Royal Air Force. These contributions were particularly important to the U.S.’s air campaign, as the British provided 20 percent of the necessary in-flight refueling capacity for the operation.\textsuperscript{331} Great Britain also contributed 4,200 personnel at the outset of the operation.\textsuperscript{332}

Despite limiting participation in the planning phases of the war, the U.S. accepted aid from other countries during OEF. Both Australia and Canada deployed troops and aircraft. British, Australian, Canadian, and Turkish support was integral to the first weeks of the

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{329} Ellen Hallams, \textit{The United States and NATO Since 9/11} (New York: Routledge, 2010).

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{330} Some of the 70 states indirectly pledged their support via participation in international organizations, while others extended direct support in addition to the international organizations in which they participated. Some of these states were asked by U.S. officials to provide specific types of support, while others pledged resources they believed to be paramount to the U.S.’s operations. Additionally, many of these pledges were intentionally vague. See: David J. Gerleman, Jennifer E. Stevens, and Steven A. Hildreth, “Operation Enduring Freedom: Foreign Pledges of Military and Intelligence Support,” CRS Report for Congress, October 17, 2001.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{331} Lambeth, \textit{Air Power Against Terror}.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{332} Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}. 

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operations, while Special Force contributions from Germany, Norway, and Poland later bolstered the U.S.’s efforts. France, having been eager to commit resources in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, supplied a number of aircraft, satellites and other intelligence and reconnaissance assets, and naval resources. French Special Forces were put on high alert, and the French leadership pledged troops to support the ground offensive.\footnote{The French were much more reluctant to cede control of its resources to the U.S., which limited the U.S.’s willingness to accept. However, France was the only state (except the U.S.) to contribute jets to the effort. Davidson, \textit{America’s Allies and War}; Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}.}

After the first few weeks of operations, the U.S. became more receptive to contributions from its allies but was still reluctant to incorporate them into its planning for future combat operations. In November 2001, France provided strategic reconnaissance aircraft, while Germany supplied armored vehicles designed for chemical, biological, and radiological (CBR) materials. The Germans also offered 3,900 military personnel for coalition operations. The Italians and Dutch supplied a variety of aircraft for both attack missions and reconnaissance.\footnote{Lambeth, \textit{Airpower Against Terror}.} Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Poland, and Germany all offered special operations forces, but were never considered by U.S. planners. In mid-November 2001, Great Britain deployed 100 commandos to Bagram; however, the Afghan leadership argued this was a violation of their sovereignty and the United States put the deployment on hold.\footnote{Sarah Kreps, \textit{Coalitions of Convenience}.} In all, there were 69 members of the OEF coalition, with military contributions from 21 of these states.\footnote{Hallams, \textit{The United States and NATO Since 9/11}.}

During Operation Enduring Freedom, NATO remained largely removed from the U.S.’s strategy. It continued its patrol of American airspace (as part of Operation Eagle Assist) to allow U.S. resources to be used elsewhere. In addition, NATO commenced patrolling efforts in the Mediterranean Sea to monitor shipping and to engage with any suspect ships. This operation –
Operation Active Endeavour – was later expanded to escort non-military ships through the Straits of Gibraltar.\(^3^3^7\) NATO officials also agreed to reduce the ongoing mission in Kosovo to allow U.S. troops to be re-stationed in Afghanistan.

However, as Ellen Hallams demonstrates, the coalition that executed Operation Enduring Freedom was not dissimilar to the 1999 NATO-led mission in Kosovo. Of the 21 states that contributed military resources to OEF, 14 of these states were NATO members. Like in Kosovo, the U.S. was better equipped than the other allies and it provided most of the operation’s military capabilities. Where the 1999 Kosovo and 2001 Afghanistan operations differed was the command structure: the U.S. was not restricted to a (sometimes arduous) NATO decision-making process.\(^3^3^8\) For his part, NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson defended both NATO and the U.S.’s decision to engage without the alliance’s participation. He continually advocated for the U.S. to accept more of the allies’ offers of assistance, particularly offers of humanitarian relief supplies into neighboring central Asian countries.\(^3^3^9\) In mid-November, NATO began developing plans for the anticipated humanitarian effort that would be undertaken after OEF completed, and these plans would serve as the basis of the UN peacekeeping effort.\(^3^4^0\)

Though the United States enjoyed a high level of political and military support for its operations in the pre-war phase, its reluctance to allow the participation of other states resulted in tension amongst NATO allies. While France played a role in the operation, it expressed its concern over the U.S.’s seeming willingness to act unilaterally. French officials were upset by the absence of international participation in the planning stages of the war, and expressed its


\(^{3^3^8}\) Hallams, The United States and NATO Since 9/11.

\(^{3^3^9}\) Hallams, The United States and NATO Since 9/11; Lambeth, Airpower Against Terror.

\(^{3^4^0}\) Lansford, 9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
concern about the stability of Afghanistan after the U.S.’s operation. Days before Operation Enduring Freedom commenced, France appealed to the European Union to develop stabilization and reconstruction plans for Afghanistan after the Taliban was deposed. Some NATO allies, such as Italy, expressed their contempt regarding the U.S.’s decision not to utilize the resources offered.\textsuperscript{341} The U.S.’s proposal to invade Iraq in 2002 exacerbated tensions over operations in Afghanistan. Though Green Parties across Europe began expressing their reservations about U.S. actions against al Qaeda bases almost immediately after Operation Enduring Freedom began, concern about the long-term sustainability of the Afghanistan mission in light of the U.S.’s proposed second war in Iraq worsened European sentiment.\textsuperscript{342}

**Phase 3: International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)**

November 2001 was a turning point for Operation Enduring Freedom. Kandahar, the second-largest city in Afghanistan, was the last major city under Taliban control. A thousand Marines dropped in the desert south of the city seized the city in a matter of days, expelled the occupying Taliban, and took control of the airport.\textsuperscript{343} The end of 2001 brought major changes to coalition efforts: whereas the war had previously been waged primarily from the air, the U.S. transitioned to a ground effort. The U.S. continued to be receptive to allied participation, accepting support from more than 25 partners.\textsuperscript{344} High intensity fighting continued until early March 2002, when coalition forces launched Operation Anaconda.\textsuperscript{345} Over 2000 ground troops traversed the eastern Afghanistan to force hundreds of al Qaeda and Taliban members from the mountainous Shah-e-Kot valley. With airstrikes to support their efforts, the coalition engaged and killed dozens of al Qaeda fighters over a two-week period, though the operation was

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\textsuperscript{342} Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United*.
\textsuperscript{343} Lansford, *9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq*.
\textsuperscript{344} Weitsman, *Waging War*.
\textsuperscript{345} Kreps, *Coalitions of Convenience*. 

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originally intended to last only a few days. When U.S. and Canadian troops finally withdrew on March 19, U.S. officials declared Operation Anaconda a success and ended the ongoing Operation Enduring Freedom.\footnote{346}{“Campaign Against Terror March 2002: Operation Anaconda,” PBS Frontline, accessed December 15, 2014 \url{http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/etc/epilogue.html}.}

One of the most important developments in the latter phase of Operation Enduring Freedom resulted from the conference held in Bonn, Germany, on November 27, 2001. The United Nations convened representatives from four of the major ethnic factions in Afghanistan to develop a plan for a new Afghan government. Though the leader of the Northern Alliance, former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, refused to attend, the Northern Alliance sent 11 delegates from different ethnic groups to the conference. The four parties were able to compromise on a number of issues. They established a 29-member interim government led by Pashtun leader Hamid Karzai, and agreed that this interim government would rule Afghanistan until the next meeting of the loya jirga in the spring. When the loya jirga met, it would select a transitional administration and begin drafting a new constitution.\footnote{347}{The loya jirga is a traditional Afghan council comprised of leaders from the major ethnic groups. See: “Campaign Against Terror Filling the Vacuum: The Bonn Conference,” PBS Frontline, accessed December 15, 2014 \url{http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/withus/cbonn.html}.}

Despite reaching a consensus on these issues, there was much concern over who would be responsible for peacekeeping in Afghanistan. Prior experiences and ethnic tensions made the groups reluctant to allow an all-Afghan peacekeeping force led by the Northern Alliance.\footnote{348}{Ibid.}

The four groups finally reached an agreement: they would request that the United Nations Security Council lead a multinational peacekeeping force from Kabul. In return, the groups would remove all of their military units from both Kabul and any other area in which the UN force was deployed. The groups also requested that the multinational force participate in
rebuilding Afghanistan’s infrastructure. On December 20, 2001, the UN Security Council approved the requests made under the Bonn Agreement through UNSC Resolution 1386. The resolution established the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), comprised of 3,000-5,000 personnel from nearly 20 different countries. And on December 22, 2001, Northern Alliance President Rabbani officially handed over control to the Interim Afghan administration led by Karzai.

U.S. officials were pleased by the outcomes of the Bonn Conference. The U.S. promoted Karzai as a “viable candidate” to lead the interim government and worked to include him in the negotiations. They also supported the establishment of ISAF under the leadership of the United Nations. Since ISAF’s primary mission was peacekeeping, the U.S. could focus on its combat operations without worrying about security, leaving the more experienced European countries to conduct humanitarian operations. As a result, the U.S. reduced the size of OEF to 10,000-12,000 troops and reallocated its resources to the ISAF mission. Both the United States and its coalition partners hoped the ISAF mandate would encourage Afghans to take an active role in the stabilization and reconstruction efforts, this allowing the international effort to be minimized.

In conjunction with combat operations and the ISAF mission, the United States also deployed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) around Afghanistan, beginning in 2002. The

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351 Lansford, 9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
352 “Campaign Against Terror Filling the Vacuum.”
353 Lansford, 9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
354 Williams, NATO, Security, and Risk Management.
PRTs were intended to represent a “whole of government” approach to rebuilding Afghanistan. Each team was funded by the U.S. and consisted of 100-200 members, with a mix of both civilian and military personnel. Although these PRTs were funded and initially led by the United States, the NATO alliance started to take control of its own PRTs in January 2004. By 2005, there were 25 PRTs throughout the country, 11 of which were led by non-U.S. NATO allies.

International and NATO Support for ISAF

The international community was also pleased by the outcome of the Bonn Conference and supported the establishment of ISAF. Great Britain agreed to lead the first deployment of the multinational force, which consisted of troops from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey. Each participating state served a six-month term as operations leader.

In January 2002, the United Nations led the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance for Afghanistan. The conference, which was held in Tokyo over a two-day period, raised $4.5 billion in pledges. In April 2002, the members of the G8 met in Geneva and agreed to a multinational security sector reform (SSR) for Afghanistan. The U.S., Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Japan would each take the lead on an issue area most related to their strengths. The United States would lead military reforms, while Germany would work to reform the police force and Italy the judicial sector. The UK would lead the effort to combat the rampant drug problems resulting from Afghanistan’s opium production, while Japan would lead the effort for disarmament, demilitarization, and reintegration (DDR).

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356 “Afghanistan and the United Nations.”
Although there was widespread international support for the UN mission in Afghanistan, within ISAF there was disagreement regarding the mission’s leadership. When the German-Dutch leadership rotation took control in February 2003, they appealed to NATO to provide assistance to the ISAF mission. These appeals sparked a transition, and by August 2003, ISAF ended the six-month leadership rotation. Instead, NATO would lead the ISAF mandate, though it would remain under the direction of the United Nations. Under NATO leadership, the Security Council passed Resolution 1510 in October 2003, authorizing phased ISAF engagement into all regions of Afghanistan. The mission’s control spread from the north in 2004, the western region in 2005, and finally to the south and east in 2006.\footnote{Hallams, \textit{The United States and NATO Since 9/11}; Kelly, Bensahel, and Oliker, \textit{Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan}; “About ISAF,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed December 15, 2014, http://www.isaf.nato.int/history.html.}

Changes to the leadership and scope of the ISAF mission led NATO to participate in other operations in Afghanistan. In January 2004, the alliance took command of its first PRT, and by June of 2004 had six PRTs throughout the country. Though NATO supported the efforts of both ISAF and the U.S., some allies were reluctant to allow their troops to participate in the expansion of the ISAF mandate into less stable regions.\footnote{Hallams, \textit{The United States and NATO Since 9/11}.} There were also several incidents that concerned allies. British forces were outstretched, and both the United Kingdom and Finland reported friendly fire episodes resulting from poor communication among allies. Allies raised doubts about the private security firms operating throughout the country as well, and objected to the interim government’s use of capital punishment. Despite these concerns, all 26 NATO member states participated in the ISAF mission. Eleven additional countries also contributed to the mission, and by 2006 NATO increased the force to 36,000 troops and 25 PRTs. NATO also
established a nonmilitary position, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan, to assist with the country’s political development.\textsuperscript{360}

In October 2006, the United Nations ceded control of the entire ISAF mission to NATO. Just prior to the transition, NATO also signed into an agreement with the Afghan government to establish a framework for cooperation between the two parties. The agreement outlined activities for each party to undertake, planning and implementation measures, and a mechanism for assessing progress. There was an added emphasis on making improvements in the Afghan National Army. The following month, NATO allies met at a summit in Riga, Latvia. The mission in Afghanistan dominated the agenda. Alliance participants argued that NATO had an obligation to its own citizens, as well as the citizens of Afghanistan, to continue supporting the Afghan Compact and ensure the establishment of democratic institutions, the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police, and civilian organizations. Summit participants also saw Afghanistan as a turning point in the internal politics of NATO: the alliance’s future, they argued, was based on whether it could overcome coordination problems in Afghanistan and whether the mission would ultimately be successful.\textsuperscript{361}

As ISAF continued its phased expansion into the more conflictual regions of Afghanistan, the NATO alliance struggled to address issues regarding burden-sharing, deployment levels, major disparities between allies in the number of troops engaged, and national caveats on the operational flexibility of troops.\textsuperscript{362} Still, at the January 2010 NATO Summit in London, the alliance devised a strategy to transition responsibility for security to the

\textsuperscript{360} Peterson, \textit{NATO and Terrorism}.


Afghan National Security Force (ANSF), as well as an expansion of the NATO civilian mission. The Kabul Conference, held in July 2010, emphasized the continued economic and social challenges in Afghanistan. By July 2012, fifty countries were participating in ISAF. In spite of disagreements among allies, all 28 NATO member states contributed. Of the estimated 130,000 ISAF troops, 90,000 were from the United States. In June 2013, NATO began the last phase of ISAF by transitioning responsibility of the security of the entire country to ANSF. Though it will continue to support the development of Afghanistan in a smaller, non-combat mission (“Resolute Support”), NATO completed the ISAF mission in December 2014.

Legitimacy, Multilateralism, and the Utility of NATO

Sarah Kreps aptly describes the U.S.’s decision to proceed without NATO participation in the early phases of the war in Afghanistan but then transition to more multilateral operations as resulting from two factors: a change in the expected timeline, and changes to the necessary operational commitment. Many Bush administration officials acknowledged the likelihood of a protracted engagement in Afghanistan in the pre-war phase, but the vulnerability the U.S. experienced in the wake of the 9/11 attacks contributed to heightened anxiety and a perceived need to act quickly against those responsible for the attacks. Additionally, the development of a counterterrorism strategy that emphasized utilizing special operations forces and airpower in lieu of a heavy ground presence – consistent with Secretary Rumsfeld’s Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) strategy – led policymakers to desire a direct decision-making structure and chain of command. Because the NATO command and control structure required a consensus from all NATO members, the U.S. feared it would not be able to convince all of the other allies in a

363 Weitsman, Waging War.
365 Sarah Kreps, Coalitions of Convenience.
timely manner, thus sacrificing operational efficiency. While the U.S. maintained a high degree of influence over the alliance (as detailed in the previous chapter), Bush administration officials were not eager to repeat the Clinton administration’s experience in the 1999 Kosovo operation.

When the first phases of Operation Enduring Freedom were completed, the U.S.’s operational needs changed. Though counterterrorism operations continued under U.S. leadership, the United Nations, NATO, and the Bush administration recognized the need for a long-term plan to stabilize Afghanistan and begin reconstructing the state’s infrastructure and governmental institutions. These efforts required open-ended commitments from many countries, both in terms of troop contributions and resource and financial contributions. Additionally, the U.S. recognized that the Europeans were better equipped to conduct stabilization efforts. Thus, U.S. officials undermined their own decision to forgo NATO participation and leadership and requested that NATO play a pivotal role in the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan.

When NATO agreed to take over leadership of ISAF in 2003, President Bush applauded the alliance’s decision, and the U.S. maintained its support for NATO leadership as responsibility for ISAF transitioned from the UN to NATO in 2006.

Legitimacy

In the first two phases of the war – the pre-war planning phase and the initial combat operation OEF – the U.S. enjoyed a high level of support for its actions, which were widely accepted as legitimate. In the pre-war phase, the U.S. was responding to a clear violation of its sovereignty and attack on its homeland. Individual states and international organizations lined up behind the United States to offer political, economic, and military support for a retaliatory strike.

366 Kreps, Coalitions of Convenience.
367 James Stavridis (USN-Ret., former commander, USEUCOM, NATO SACEUR), interview with author, January 5, 2015, Boston.
368 Hallams, The U.S. and NATO Since 9/11.
Both domestic and international public opinion were also high. Though it quickly became evident that the U.S. intended to strike Afghanistan in a military operation that did not include widespread international participation, its plans to engage al Qaeda and the Taliban fell well within the parameters of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter (the self-defense clause). Thus, the U.S.’s actions in this phase were considered by most to be morally and legally legitimate. During OEF, there were few challenges to the legal legitimacy of the operation. Questions about the moral legitimacy of U.S. operations arose, but these questions were largely focused on concerns such as preventing civilian casualties, avoiding critical infrastructure, improving basic living conditions, and providing basic humanitarian aid such as access to healthcare, medicine, food, clean water, electricity, and education. Concerns regarding the moral legitimacy of the U.S.’s actions against al Qaeda and the Taliban were almost non-existent.

However, the December 2001 Bonn Conference revealed a legitimacy “gap” for the United States: despite its efforts with the Northern Alliance, longstanding ethnic rivalries prevented conference participants from reaching an agreement allowing one group to oversee peacekeeping. Thus, a greater multinational contribution than that under the OEF coalition was necessary if the U.S. wanted to stabilize Afghanistan and begin reconstruction efforts. The establishment of ISAF under UN Security Council Resolution 1386 gave substantial legitimacy to peacekeeping operations. Although the United States remained the largest contributor of troops and resources to NATO, it was the alliance’s reputation that allowed it to assume responsibility for the ISAF mission and maintain the legitimacy of a multinational operation. As
former SACEUR Admiral James Stavridis (USN) explained, NATO’s efforts to engage in the community enhanced the ISAF mission’s legitimacy.\textsuperscript{369}

The legitimacy conferred on ISAF operations by NATO leadership was important to the U.S.’s continued combat mission as well. Despite enjoying high levels of support for military operations at the outset, friendly fire incidents and disagreements between coalition members threatened the operation’s legitimacy. As concerns over the U.S.’s commitment to multilateralism grew, the legitimacy of the U.S.’s actions was questioned. Compounding these concerns was the U.S.’s announcement in late 2002 that it intended to pursue military operations in Iraq, against the wishes of many other UN Security Council permanent members to enact stronger sanctions against the Hussein regime.

**Multilateralism and the Utility of NATO**

The coalition assembled before and during Operation Enduring Freedom symbolized a trend that began much earlier: the United States, unparalleled in defense spending and military resources, was virtually unmatched by its European partners. It did not require the assistance of allies to achieve operational success in Kosovo or Afghanistan. Realizing this, and preferring to avoid the cumbersome decision-making process within NATO, U.S. policymakers wanted to conduct a largely unilateral operation. However, President Bush, Secretary Rumsfeld, and others recognized that there were also significant benefits in forming a coalition. Firstly, it appeased allies who sought the political benefits of partnering with the United States. Secondly, it provided the U.S. with access to resources it lacked previously – particularly overflight and landing rights necessary to the U.S.’s aerial campaign. Thirdly, it allowed U.S. policymakers to boast of the near-70 member coalition it assembled, including military contributions from over

\textsuperscript{369} James Stavridis (USN-Ret., former commander, USEUCOM, NATO SACEUR), interview with author, January 5, 2015, Boston.
20 states, while doing most of the heavy lifting. It also allowed the U.S. to maintain a relatively unrestricted decision-making process and chain of command. This was politically advantageous to the U.S. as it campaigned for support for the Iraq mission, as well as to appease the domestic and international community.

Whereas the benefits of allied participation seemed somewhat difficult to assess in the first two phases of the Afghanistan conflict, they were much more essential to the ISAF mission. As discussed previously, the presence of a multinational peacekeeping force conferred legitimacy on ISAF’s mission. The contributions of 40,000 troops from NATO members and other allies allowed the U.S. to divert troops and resources to its combat operations. Though some allies had substantial military resource disparities, the U.S.’s operations benefited greatly from their knowledge of culture, religion, and languages. As Charles Barry notes, the ISAF mission allowed the U.S. and NATO to improve the interoperability of allies in multinational coalitions – what Barry terms the “coalition culture.” The U.S. invested in providing allies access to the capabilities necessary to conduct ISAF operations, while improving the standardization of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for future NATO operations.\textsuperscript{370} NATO participation was also important to the transition of responsibility for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). Although the U.S. funded the PRTs and many remained under U.S. leadership, the entire PRT structure was eventually transitioned to the ISAF mandate, with nearly half led by other NATO allies.

NATO participation in Afghanistan and leadership of the ISAF mission was not without controversy. Some believed that the U.S.’s attempts to engage a multinational coalition were nothing more than empty rhetoric. Knowing it was outmatched in terms of military capabilities

and seeking to avoid any impediments to action, the U.S. was willing and able to act unilaterally. Thus, it avoided NATO engagement, and participation by other allies was seen as political appeasement – not a sincere attempt to engage international partners. Still, allies contributed political, economic, and military support to Operation Enduring Freedom and gave the United States an important advantage in conducting its aerial campaign. There is little evidence to suggest that the absence of NATO participation hindered the effectiveness of the combat operation, or that there was any longstanding damage to U.S.-NATO relations as a result.

NATO participation in and leadership of the ISAF mission was also criticized. Many states placed caveats on the use of its troops on the ground, particularly in the less stable regions of the country. This hampered the effectiveness of the ISAF mission, limiting its ability to engage the local communities. It also fostered resentment between allies, with those states placing fewer caveats on their troops feeling as though they carried a higher burden for ISAF operations.\textsuperscript{371} However, national caveats were not unique to the Afghanistan mission – the ability of states to refrain from engagement is enshrined in the Washington Treaty, which allows states to decide the ways in which it will fulfill its obligations to the alliance.\textsuperscript{372}

Despite the many benefits of engaging in a multilateral operation, one of the most difficult obstacles for the U.S. and NATO missions was engagement with regional actors, particularly Pakistan. Prior to 9/11, Pakistan was one of only a few states to recognize the Taliban as the legitimate authority of Afghanistan. Additionally, because of the ongoing Kashmir dispute and high levels of corruption, many Pakistani officials were connected to terrorist organizations, including al Qaeda. Following the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan offered political support,


\textsuperscript{372} Saideman and Auerswald, “Comparing Caveats.”
military resources, access to air space, and a forward mounting base in Karachi for ISAF. However, it struggled to reconcile its cooperation with the West and its historical relationship with Afghanistan, the Taliban, and al Qaeda. When Pakistan froze the assets of several different terrorist groups, corrupted officials notified the groups ahead of time, allowing them to act in advance of the freeze. The domestic conditions and rugged terrain along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border also allowed many al Qaeda operatives to find a safe haven in Pakistan. Despite both the U.S.-led coalition and the NATO-led ISAF efforts, the Taliban and al Qaeda’s relationships with regional actors could not be overcome.\(^{373}\)

Another point of contention regarding the ISAF mission and NATO’s utility in Afghanistan was the PRTs. The PRTs were not wholly successful, and many of them experienced difficulties coordinating with combat operations in the same area. The U.S. funded all of the PRTs, and the structure of each unit varied widely. Although the PRTs were intended to balance between military and civilian personnel, most were dominated by military personnel and were frequently criticized for not providing the intended services. Allies also struggled to combat the narcotics problems in Afghanistan, establish the necessary security and governance bodies, and maintain public support within their own countries for continued NATO participation.\(^{374}\) Despite these obstacles, the ISAF mission (through the PRTs) helped to build important infrastructure throughout Afghanistan, including 3,500 schools that service nearly 7 million students, as well clinics and other healthcare facilities that provide healthcare to 85% of the population.\(^{375}\)

**Conclusion**

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\(^{375}\) Warren, “ISAF and Afghanistan: The Impact of Failure on NATO’s Future.”
As demonstrated here, NATO’s participation in U.S. operations in Afghanistan benefited the United States, particularly in regards to the ISAF mission. The engagement also resulted in improvements to the alliance, thereby improving the odds that NATO would persist after the war ended. Though the Bush administration was frequently criticized for being too willing to act unilaterally, the U.S. pursued multilateralism in all phases of the Afghanistan effort. In the early phases, this pursuit was primarily for political reasons, although coalition members provided valuable resources for the U.S.’s efforts. It declined to pursue the war through the NATO command structure based on a number of factors, including a reticence to repeat the mistakes of Kosovo, the invention of the RMA, and the post-9/11 environment.

In the later phase of the war, however, the U.S.’s commitment to multilateralism was much more sincere, as it recognized real benefits to the inclusion and leadership of NATO. Firstly, the United States enjoyed the legitimacy NATO leadership conferred on ISAF operations. Legitimacy was particularly important to the stabilization and reconstruction efforts, as the perception of NATO as “an alliance with a solid reputation and altruistic intentions” worked to gain the trust of the Afghan people. The U.S. maintained its autonomy in combat operations under OEF, but was also able to take a leadership role in ISAF and PRT missions as the strongest NATO member. Secondly, NATO proved its utility to the United States’ mission by providing resources the U.S. was incapable or unwilling to provide. Previous experience with stabilization, reconstruction efforts, and an understanding of the cultures, religions, and languages of Afghanistan enhanced the U.S.’s efforts to mobilize the civilian population and establish legitimate security and governance institutions.

\[376\] Ibid.
As the alliance’s first “out-of-area” mission, Afghanistan also demonstrated that NATO could adapt and persist in the post-Cold War period. As indicated here, the ISAF mission provided a number of improvements in the security and prosperity of Afghanistan by establishing the ANA and the ANP, establishing a justice system, facilitating elections, building schools, opening healthcare facilities, and continuing an open dialogue between the PRTs and Afghan citizens. Additionally, allies worked to improve the alliance’s relationships with non-NATO states and developed extensive anti-terrorism and counterterrorism measures. Lastly, Afghanistan provided the alliance an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the Kosovo operation by improving the interoperability of allied forces and fostering the “coalition culture.”

The challenges the alliance experienced in Afghanistan – such as a renewed debate over burden-sharing - were not unique to the Afghanistan mission, and it is difficult to say that they proved to be any real threat to U.S.-NATO relations or NATO persistence.

Thus, all four of the hypotheses on the importance of U.S.-NATO relations to U.S. foreign policy objectives are confirmed by the Afghanistan case. The United States pursued the alliance’s support and invested in its ability to engage in conflict for legitimacy enhancement. As evidenced by both the initial coalition and the later NATO leadership of ISAF, the Bush administration also understood the importance of adherence to international norms. Additionally, NATO provided valuable resources for the U.S. and ISAF efforts, confirming the utility of alliance engagement for the United States. The United States also capitalized on its influence in the alliance to encourage improvements to the alliance and the “coalition culture” by emphasizing experiences in Afghanistan. Finally, as demonstrated here and in chapter seven, the

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377 Ibid.
378 Barry, “Building Future Transatlantic Interoperability Around a Robust NATO Response Force.”
U.S.’s efforts to reform NATO during the war in Afghanistan helped to further ensure the persistence of the alliance, thus confirming the first hypothesis.
Chapter 5: The 2003 Iraq War

The execution of the 2003 Iraq War, like the war in Afghanistan, resulted from changes to U.S. foreign policy and policies of intervention in the post-9/11 period. However, unlike Afghanistan, the U.S. lacked widespread support for intervention. When the UN failed to authorize the use of force, the U.S. looked first to its NATO allies and then to individual states to form an ad hoc “coalition of the willing.” This chapter begins with an introduction to the disputes between the U.S., the UN, and NATO over the Iraq War. The second section of the chapter demonstrates the effects of the Iraq debate on U.S.-NATO relations. Policymakers believed the U.S.’s actions in Iraq would be retroactively legitimized if the U.S. discovered weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and thwarted an impending attack. The international community – including many of the NATO allies – was less convinced of the imminence of an attack, and sought diplomatic alternatives to the U.S.’s proposed invasion. Though the U.S. engaged in a very public (and at times visceral) debate over the prudence of the Iraq War, it maintained its relationship to the NATO alliance while working to strengthen the alliance’s capabilities in Afghanistan as well as the broader war on terror.

The third section of the chapter further addresses the question of legitimacy. I demonstrate the U.S. first pursued international support via the United Nations, then multilateral support through NATO, and finally assembled the coalition because it wanted to enhance the legitimacy of its actions. The legitimacy of the U.S.’s actions in Iraq was not significantly challenged by the absence of NATO for two reasons. First, many of the U.S.’s NATO allies participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Although many of the coalition’s participants provided small contributions, the operation did not substantially differ from the Kosovo and Afghanistan
operations, wherein NATO was a major participant but the United States carried much of the burden.

Although the Iraq War is regularly cited as evidence of a fractured NATO relationship, a careful analysis of Operation Iraqi Freedom suggests the impact of the U.S.’s decision to engage a coalition without the alliance had a minimal impact on U.S.-NATO relations. The United States’ continued engagement with NATO also served a practical purpose - because the allies were fully engaged in Afghanistan, the U.S. could divert additional resources to the Iraq effort. Although the alliance did not undertake the war in Iraq, there is no evidence of the Bush administration devaluing the utility of the alliance, or the importance of multilateralism.

**Background**

The U.S. kept a close watch on Saddam Hussein and his regime in Iraq in the years following the 1990 Gulf War. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the United Nations Security Council moved rapidly to pass resolutions condemning the use of force and authorizing an intervention, led by the United States, to restore Kuwait’s sovereignty and dispel the occupying Iraqi forces. Though the war lasted only 40 days, the UN continued to pass resolutions and enforce sanctions against the regime in the hopes of securing the region and preventing humanitarian abuses.\(^{379}\) The UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), established by UNSCR 1284 in 1999, led Iraq’s disarmament and demanded compliance with the numerous UN resolutions passed after the 1990 Iraq-Kuwait war. UNMOVIC inspectors worked with Iraqi government officials to establish mutually agreeable terms of compliance. The lack of full compliance with UN demands, combined with Hussein’s

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efforts to extract oil revenues, made many states uncomfortable as to Iraq’s future ambitions.\textsuperscript{380} In the post-9/11 period, the UN took further action to strengthen sanctions and express its concern about the Hussein regime.

There is little evidence the George W. Bush administration intended to drastically change its policy toward Iraq before 9/11.\textsuperscript{381} But growing concerns over weapons development were thrust into the spotlight after the attacks, causing the U.S. to begin an international campaign aimed at regime change. In a September 2002 speech at UN Headquarters, President Bush called member-states to action. He invoked memories of the Gulf War and asserted that in the years since, Iraq demonstrated it had no respect for international law. Without action, Bush insisted Iraq would continue to disregard the rule of the United Nations, develop its weapons arsenals, and act as a bully to its neighbors. Many perceived the language of President Bush’s speech as an unequivocal call for armed intervention. Within days of his speech, the Iraqi government announced it would again allow inspectors to return. The Bush administration rebuffed the offer, arguing Saddam Hussein would simply continue to circumvent the inspectors.\textsuperscript{382}

How to respond to the uncertainty over Iraq’s intentions was a major cause of divergence between the United States and its global partners. To those opposed to using force in Iraq, the US seemed determined to go to war regardless of what the UN accomplished with its inspections. Some states felt the UN had no choice but to assist the U.S. or get out of its way.\textsuperscript{383} When Iraq announced it would allow unconditional access to UNMOVIC inspectors, France and others asserted that if given enough time, Iraq would eventually comply with UN demands. But the U.S. continued to appeal to the greater dangers posed by Iraq’s non-compliance – the

\textsuperscript{380} Bjola, \textit{Legitimizing the Use of Force in International Politics}.
\textsuperscript{381} Kreps, \textit{Coalitions of Convenience}.
\textsuperscript{382} Davidson, \textit{America’s Allies and War: Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq}.
\textsuperscript{383} Rupp, \textit{NATO After 9/11}.
proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the possibility Hussein could decide to
support terrorist organizations, the threat Iraq posed to regional stability – to build both domestic
and international support.384

The United Kingdom, one of the U.S.’s closest allies in the pre-war period, strongly
urged the U.S. to continue its UN campaign. Prime Minister Tony Blair stressed the importance
of international support to enhance the operation’s legitimacy, and although the U.S. continued
to push for additional UN support, it also threatened to bypass any agreement or resolution not
expressly authorizing military intervention in the event Iraq did not comply.385 Negotiations over
a Security Council resolution continued for nearly two months as a result of the tensions between
the U.S. and other Security Council members. The result of these negotiations was resolution
1441. UNSCR 1441 was seen as a compromise for both sides, despite the 15-0 vote in favor.
UNSCR 1441 did not provide the authorization for military intervention the U.S. sought, but did
allow for all UN involvement in Iraq to be accompanied by a military presence. U.S. officials
were convinced Iraq would never meet the resolution’s demands and would eventually require in
military intervention. France (supported by China and Russia) believed a significant military
contingency in Iraq would only exacerbate tensions and would lead the UN Security Council to
war. Thus, the French leadership was unhappy with this clause of the resolution. However, the
French agreed to the terms of UNSCR 1441 because it prevented the U.S. from engaging
immediately and unilaterally with force. They believed if UNMOVIC failed under the new
resolution, the U.S. would return to the Security Council for additional resolutions.386

384 Shimko, The Iraq War and America’s Military Revolution.
386 Rupp, NATO After 9/11; Gordon and Shapiro, Allies at War.
Within days of UNSCR 1441, the Iraq government submitted a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, acknowledging its acceptance of the resolution’s terms but denying it possessed WMDs. The regime could not account for the chemical and biological materials previously documented by UN inspectors, and the Bush administration used this information as an indication of Saddam Hussein’s unwillingness to comply with the demands of the UN. However, the U.S. lacked the support of its fellow Security Council members for a second resolution (authorizing the use of force for enforcement), and continued to appeal to the international community for its Iraq plan by engaging international partners such as NATO.

The NATO Dispute

Efforts to engage NATO began in earnest at the 2002 Prague Summit, just a few weeks after the negotiations on UNSCR 1441. At the summit, President Bush pushed states to recreate the alliance to make it more effective for combatting new threats such as terrorism. NATO allies were asked to make improvements in areas such as intelligence sharing, securing facilities, and providing support for states facing additional threats. Utilizing the ‘lessons learned’ from the Kosovo and Afghanistan engagements, the summit centered on the establishment of the NATO Response Force and reform of the military command structure.

The US did not directly request support for Iraq intervention during the summit. Though the NATO allies agreed the Iraqi government was not in compliance with international law, and that the consequences of a non-compliant Iraq were severe, they disagreed with the U.S. on the necessity of immediate military intervention. The French and German leadership wanted to give weapons inspectors more time to either persuade Iraq to comply or to find more substantial

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388 Sloan, *NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community*. 
evidence of their weapons stockpile, and they were concerned about the U.S.’s apparent determination to go to war.\textsuperscript{389}

U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz went to NATO headquarters two weeks after the Prague Summit and formally requested assistance for the defense of fellow ally Turkey. Wolfowitz asked primarily for nonmilitary assistance, knowing from NATO’s earlier engagements that most allies would be incapable of providing the necessary military resources. Debate over NATO’s involvement continued into January 2003, when the United States made six formal proposals for assistance.\textsuperscript{390} The U.S.’s requests were met with support from several members, including Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland; however, the French and Germans maintained their opposition. Belgium and Luxembourg also expressed concern over the U.S. proposals and sought to block NATO action. In addition to support from existing NATO members, the U.S.’s plan for Iraq was also publicly supported by the ‘Vilnius 10.’ Seven of these states – Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Romania – were invited to join NATO at the earlier Prague Summit, and though they lacked the capacity to provide military contributions, their support for the U.S. influenced policymakers to support a quick membership approval process.

French and German officials were vocal about their skepticism of U.S. proposals, believing the Bush administration was simply using aid to Turkey as a way to implicitly authorize and legitimize the Iraq invasion. Said one French representative, “If we are not yet deciding to go to war in the Security Council, we cannot decide to go to war at NATO. Once the Security Council authorizes force against Iraq, it will be very easy to send matériel to Turkey

\textsuperscript{389} Sloan, \textit{NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community}; Kreps, \textit{Coalitions of Convenience}.

\textsuperscript{390} Gordon, “NATO and the War on Terrorism.”
As the Council debate progressed, President Chirac emphasized France’s lack of support by publicly announcing France would veto a second resolution (to UNSCR 1441) authorizing military action. Despite the agreement of other member-states on the need to uphold its commitment to member-state Turkey, opposing states contended that the U.S.’s proposals were insincere. Even if the intentions of the U.S. were sincere, opposing states argued, accepting the U.S.’s proposal would commit the alliance to an intervention that could easily become prolonged.

Because of both continued debate in the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the declarations of the French and German leadership, NATO Secretary General Robertson moved the Turkey debate to the Defense Planning Council (DPC) in the hopes of reaching a resolution. France, who had separated itself from the military structure of NATO in 1966, was not a party to the DPC, and Secretary General Robertson’s move caused both Belgium and Germany to drop their opposition. On February 19, 2003, the DPC formally authorized NATO to provide aid to Turkey. But the damage to the relationships between individual decision-makers was evident: the heated, sometimes confrontational exchanges of President Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, and President Bush (or more frequently, Secretary Rumsfeld) led to anger and distrust between the alliance partners. Additionally, Turkey maintained that the U.S. would

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393 Rupp, *NATO After 9/11*.
394 The Defense Planning Council (DPC) was an advisory committee for the alliance that addressed the military structures and the use of force. France was the only NATO member that did not belong to the DPC, after its withdrawal from the integrated military structure in 1966. It would later re-join (in 2009), but the committee was dissolved in 2010. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) now handles the responsibilities of the DPC. See: “The Defence Planning Committee (Archived),” The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 28, 2012, accessed June 20, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49201.htm.
395 Rupp, *NATO After 9/11*.
not be permitted to offload its ships in Turkey and enter Iraq through the north, cutting off the
U.S.’s entryway and limiting the U.S.’s efforts to secure the area.  

When the U.S. finally commenced Operation Iraqi Freedom on March 20, 2003, it did so
with a ‘coalition of the willing.’ Unable to secure a second UN Security Council Resolution
because of the objections of France, Russia, and China, the United States remained convinced its
actions would be legitimized once it was proved Saddam Hussein was hiding WMDs. Its closest
supporter of intervention, the United Kingdom, provided the most significant contribution for the
combat phase of the operation by mobilizing 46,000 of its troops. U.S. and UK contributions
constituted 95 percent of both the troop support and financial backing. Additionally, the UK was
the only coalition member to engage in the planning and implementation stages of the operation,
and the U.S. maintained its control over every aspect of the operation.  

Australia and Poland also provided troops to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Of the 40 participating countries, most
provided political support or supplied additional resources. Very few provided combat troops,
and even when they did, their participation was highly conditional.  

On May 1, 2003, President Bush infamously stood aboard the USS Abraham in front of a
‘Mission Accomplished’ banner and addressed the gathered crowd, declaring the major combat
phase of the invasion complete and touting the U.S.’s overwhelming successes in Iraq. In the
period immediately following President Bush’s announcement, the administration sent a mixed
message to the international community about the stabilization and reconstruction phases of the
war. Bush sent former Secretary of State James Baker on a tour of Europe in the later months of

396 Michael Barbero (USA-Ret., former commander NTM-I), interview with author, January 15, 2015, Boston
(telephone). Prior to commanding the NATO Training Mission in Iraq, Lt. General Barbero was the assistant
division commander of the fourth infantry division.
397 Kreps, Coalitions of Convenience; Davidson, America’s Allies.
398 Weitsman, Waging War.
2003 to ask states such as France, Germany, and Russia to forgive Iraqi debt from before the war. However, just days before he was set to present the U.S. requests, the administration released a memorandum authorizing 61 states to place contract bids for reconstruction projects in Iraq. The French, German, and Russian administrations – all of whom had interests in participation in the reconstruction phase – believed this to be a direct commentary on their non-participation, as the memorandum expressly prohibited the participation of non-coalition partners. Meanwhile, states that had supported the United States were seen as being rewarded for their support.399

The capture of Saddam Hussein on December 13, 2003 allowed the U.S. to devote even more time and effort to stabilizing Iraq. In addition to Turkey’s request for assistance during the initial months of the invasion, the UK and Poland had been two of the most active members of the coalition. NATO was extremely reluctant to support Poland’s commitment to the operation, and some member-states remained resentful toward the U.S.’s decision to engage without UN authorization. When the alliance refused to take over Polish efforts in late 2003 and early 2004, U.S. policymakers’ expectations for support in the post-war reconstruction phase dropped.400 However, realizing the need for additional international support, the U.S. again turned to NATO in the hopes it would deploy peacekeeping forces. When it refused peacekeeping support, the administration undertook an aggressive campaign to regain the support of individual allies.401

In January 2004, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, a politician from the Netherlands, succeeded Lord Robertson as NATO Secretary General. Scheffer openly criticized the Bush administration

400 Rupp, NATO After 9/11.
for what he believed to be a cherry-picking use of the alliance: only when it directly suited the administration’s efforts, he argued, did Washington involve the alliance in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite the lack of support for a NATO-led training mission in Iraq, Scheffer insisted that NATO had an obligation to fulfill the requests of the Iraqi interim government with full US participation. The U.S. used the June 2004 Istanbul Summit as an opportunity to request support for training Iraqi security forces. France, Belgium, Germany, and Spain immediately refused to provide forces for the training mission, but other allies agreed to assist U.S. efforts.

When the United Nations Security Council passed UNSCR 1546 on June 4, 2004 recognizing the request of the Iraqi government for a multinational force (MNF) to assist in the reconstruction effort, it also established a framework from which NATO began preparations for NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I). Several alliance members feared that if the U.S. was given too much control over the NATO mission, the alliance would effectively be endorsing the U.S.’s actions. NATO presence increased from under 100 to nearly 400 personnel during its operation, but the alliance maintained its concentration on training Iraqi forces. NATO officially ended its mission in December 2011, coinciding with the withdrawal of the last US forces in Iraq.

Analysis: U.S.-NATO Relations

The strain on President Bush’s relationships with his most vocal opposition demonstrated the U.S.’s re-evaluation of its relationship with some of its NATO partners, but not its

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403 Rupp, NATO After 9/11.
405 Rupp, NATO After 9/11
406 “NATO Assistance to Iraq.”
relationship with the collective alliance. As Stanley Sloan writes, “although the unilateral U.S. approach to Iraq was the instigating event for the crisis in U.S.-European relations, French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder helped make it a full-blown crisis that produced deep divisions among Europeans as well as between Europeans and the U.S.” 407 The dissent from NATO partners France and Germany did not threaten the alliance either, and in some respects was unsurprising. Though the U.S. had enjoyed unprecedented support in the post-9/11 period, the French had been vocal in the belief European security should not be tied to U.S. security since the inception of NATO. When Charles de Gaulle rose to prominence in the late 1950s, eventually winning the presidency, he was adamant the U.S. would not maintain its commitment to Western Europe in the event of an attack – especially one requiring the U.S. to deploy its nuclear weapons. He also noted how the U.S. had much longer, well-established ties to its interests in Asia and the Pacific, and argued it would be absurd for Europe to tie its security so closely to the U.S. As a result, in 1963, de Gaulle announced France would withdraw its fleet from the Supreme Allied Command Atlantic (SACLANT) and would, after one year from the date of notification, remove itself from all of NATO’s military operations. 408

In the post-Cold War era, France continued to lead the charge for Europe to divorce its security from the US, and to build a similar collective defense alliance in either the Western European Union (WEU) or the European Union (EU). As evidenced in the earlier Kosovo case, French officials were also steadfast in their conviction that any NATO operation should have explicit UN authorization, and the U.S. lacked any kind of Security Council approval. Like Germany, the Iraq War was another opportunity for France to demonstrate its actions would not
always be the result of U.S. demands.\textsuperscript{409} That the DPC was able to come to an agreement on what kind of assistance to provide to Turkey when it invoked Article IV was largely the result of non-participation in the DPC by the French.

However, even in light of the Iraq War, France has also sought to maintain close ties to NATO. In 2009, it recommitted fully to NATO military operations. Additionally, it led the campaign to utilize NATO in 2011, when the international community considered intervention in Libya, and was a key contributor to both the U.S.-led Operation Odyssey Dawn and NATO-led Operation Unified Protector.\textsuperscript{410} Therefore, though the Iraq intervention strained relations between the U.S. and NATO in large part because of French opposition, the actions of the French did not necessarily signal the alliance (or the U.S.’s relationship to it) would result in the end of the partnership.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the U.S. also continued to play an active role in the development of other NATO programs related to the war on terror as well as efforts in Afghanistan. After the 2002 NSS was published, Rice urged the U.S. to exercise caution in initiating preventative, coalition-based warfare too often, favoring diplomatic means be used whenever possible.\textsuperscript{411} In April 2003, Powell testified in front of the Senate foreign relations committee, arguing that while the U.S. and Europe disagreed on the connection between WMDs and terrorism, the U.S. had an obligation to convince them as well as a need to work in conjunction to most effectively combat terrorism.\textsuperscript{412}

\textsuperscript{409} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{412} An Enlarged NATO: Mending Fences and Moving Forward on Iraq, Hearing Before the Comm. on Foreign Relations, 108\textsuperscript{th} Cong. United States Senate (April 29, 2003) (statement of Hon. Colin Powell, Secretary of State).
After the November 2002 Prague Summit, Secretary Rumsfeld proposed the establishment of a “NATO Response Force” (NRF) in a meeting of the defense ministers. The proposal addressed the shortcomings of the 1999 Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), established in the wake of the 1999 Kosovo intervention. Though the DCI was intended to modernize NATO’s military capabilities, the initiative failed to meet many of the goals as member-states refused to increase defense spending. The proposal for a response force called for a lightweight military force with roughly 20,000 ground soldiers, flexible communication and strikes capabilities, and the ability to combat nuclear, biological, and chemical threats. The force was modeled after the Fourth Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), established by General James L. Jones (USMC). The US intended for the NRF to complement both the NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and the EU European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), and to serve as a secondary force for short-notice operations lasting no longer than 30 days.

The U.S.’s proposal for an NRF reflected growing concerns about the utility of the NATO alliance to the U.S. While NATO participation could increase the political legitimacy of intervention, there existed a large gap between the military needs of the U.S. and the alliance’s military capabilities. For the U.S., the NRF proposal was intended to augment its own fighting capabilities and reflected the lessons learned from Afghanistan. Writes Michael Mihalka, “A more plausible scenario (for the use of the NRF) would be one where the United States is tied

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415 General Jones would become Commander, US European Command (USEUCOM) and Supreme Allied Commander - NATO Europe (SACEUR) in early 2003. After retiring from the military, General Jones was appointed National Security Advisor by President Obama, where he served until 2010.
down in a major conflict (such as Iraq) when a transnational terrorist group conducts a mass casualty attack…the NRF would be tasked to take out the training camps of the transnational terrorist group.” When asked about the likelihood of the U.S. seeking NATO assistance in Iraq, Rumsfeld said “(the issue is) seeing if we can have more of our capabilities available in days or weeks rather than months or years. If we can have a larger fraction of our capabilities agile and able to get in and out of places and move around in places with a smaller footprint. This is something that NATO countries are perfectly capable of doing if they decided to do it.” Rumsfeld hoped NATO would adopt the proposal, thus creating a rapidly deployable force embodying his domestic RMA campaign and creating a deployable unit to use in Iraq.

The U.S.’s proposal was formally presented at the November 2002 Prague Summit, and approved by the Allied Ministers of Defense in June 2003. By June 2004, the NRF was fully operational, and U.S. officials commented that the NRF could allow the alliance to overcome some of the operational challenges it faced in the contemporary threat environment. At the Riga Summit in 2006, NATO leaders announced the NRF was fully operational, and has been adjusted in the time since to “provide a more flexible approach to force generation, thereby facilitating force contributions which were being hampered by the enduring high operational tempo arising from Iraq, Afghanistan and other missions.” The formation and maintenance of the NRF, as well as the Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, and other counterterrorism operations also led the Bush administration to voice its support for the alliance’s evolution.

417 Ibid.
The disagreement between U.S. policymakers over Iraq exacerbated the perception that U.S. no longer valued NATO. While Rumsfeld pursued a unilateral, RMA strategy first in Afghanistan and then Iraq, Secretary of State Colin Powell and NSA Advisor Condoleezza Rice urged President Bush to seek multilateral support. Rumsfeld was skeptical of the alliance’s ability to support U.S. operations, recognizing the capabilities of the U.S. were far superior to what the alliance could offer. Though the alliance had taken steps to modernize under the Defense Capabilities Initiative in the years prior to Iraq, declining European contributions to the alliance fed Rumsfeld’s perception that the alliance was not of any utility to the U.S. if it wanted to “move around in places with a smaller footprint” in places like Afghanistan and Iraq.\(^{421}\) Powell, conversely, stressed the importance of multilateral action and of winning the political support of both its UN and NATO allies.

Despite disagreement within the administration, there is little evidence suggesting the U.S. valued the alliance less than before the war. U.S. financial contributions to NATO grew from $371.5 million in 2002 to $880.4 million in 2011 (the last year of the NTM-I). U.S. contributions to the three main areas of NATO funding (the civil budget, the military budget, and the Security Investment Program, or NSIP) accounted for 20-25% of all NATO contributions during the same period. Additionally, members of the administration continued to applaud the alliance’s modernization efforts while downplaying the fervent debates on Iraq. In a speech in early 2004, Rice acknowledged these conflicts, saying, “…I will not deny that there is a lot of noise and chatter among the world’s great powers. But this noise is obscuring one of the most striking facts of our time: the world’s great powers have never had better relations with one another.”

Legitimacy

The Bush administration insisted the use of force in Iraq was morally and legally legitimate, though it emphasized the latter. Concern for the legal legitimacy of military intervention resulted from the absence of UN authorization. Although the intervention did not have the explicit consent of the Security Council, the U.S. claimed intervention was a matter of self-defense. The erratic behavior of Saddam Hussein also bolstered the U.S.’s case that military intervention was the only viable option left for addressing the regime: anything short of fundamental regime change would result in the continued oppression of the Iraqi people by a brutal dictator who also posed a threat to the peace and security of the international community. Additionally, although the United States enjoyed the legitimization of the Security Council endorsement for the war in Afghanistan, its actions in the 1999 Kosovo operation demonstrated that policymakers did not believe a Security Council resolution was imperative to act. The Kosovo operation was ultimately deemed “illegal but legitimate” and led policymakers to believe the same retroactive evaluation could occur in Iraq when the U.S. successfully located the WMDs and proved Saddam’s intentions to act aggressively.

Those who did not support the use of force argued the Security Council could take further action if Hussein failed to comply with UNSCR 1441, including authorizing the use of force, but insisted inspectors be allowed to collect more evidence demonstrating the imminence of threat. During his reelection campaign in 2002, German Chancellor Schroeder was vocal about his opposition to a possible U.S. invasion of Iraq. French President Jacques Chirac, a Gaullist, demanded the U.S. first take action through the UN and threatened to veto any resolution that appeared to legitimize the use of force. The Chirac administration did not believe Iraq posed an

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422 Bjola, Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics.
immediate threat to its interests, and did not feel its international standing would be damaged by
not supporting U.S. efforts.\textsuperscript{424} U.S. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld fielded the two states’ concerns,
arguing against giving the Iraqi government more time to mislead inspectors, and insisting only a
military operation could result in compliance with UN demands. He also attempted to downplay
opposition in the media, labeling them part of ‘Old Europe’ and highlighting widespread support
from other NATO members as indication of a shift in power and priorities to Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{425}

As Philip Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro observe, the Bush administration made it clear in
addresses to both the UN and NATO that if states failed to support the U.S., the U.S. would
proceed unilaterally, noting “…many American actions, statements, and policies prior to and
following (US appeals for assistance) suggested that the multilateral approach was pure form – it
was not about collective decision making or even real consultations, but simply an effort to win
legitimacy for decisions that had been and would be taken by Washington alone.”\textsuperscript{426} The
assembled ‘coalition of the willing’ lacked credibility as a legitimate military coalition. Not only
were states unable (and in some cases, unwilling) to match the capabilities of the U.S., only one
state (UK) was given a substantive role in the pre-war planning stage.

Though the U.S. made no secret of its intentions to act unilaterally if the international
community refused to recognize the necessity of regime change in Iraq, it did not purposefully
seek to act unilaterally. Instead, it appealed first to the UN, which would lend the most
legitimacy to its operations. When those appeals failed, the U.S. sought NATO support.
Policymakers knew that NATO would not have the operational capacity necessary to fight the

\textsuperscript{424} Davidson, \textit{America’s Allies and War}.
\textsuperscript{425} Keith B. Richburg, “NATO Blocked On Iraq Decision: France, Germany Lead Opposition to War,” \textit{The
Washington Post}, January 23, 2003; Thom Shanker, “Rumsfeld Rebukes the UN and NATO on Iraq Approach,” \textit{The
\textsuperscript{426} Gordon and Shapiro, \textit{Allies at War}, 162.
efficient war Secretary Rumsfeld and others advocated for – the 1999 Kosovo war had demonstrated the alliance’s weaknesses in adapting to the post-Cold War environment. Because U.S. policymakers were so vocal in expressing their displeasure with the operational difficulties experienced in Kosovo, and because the U.S. had been so definitive in their willingness to proceed unilaterally if necessary, scholars mistook the U.S.’s actions as evidence that it no longer valued NATO and the legitimation for the use of force resulting from multilateral action.\(^{427}\)

The moral legitimacy of the U.S.’s actions was also questioned. Europe was skeptical of the ‘war on terror’ and its connection to Iraq. Though public opinion polls reflected a great concern about the threat posed by terrorism, they did not believe the U.S.’s plans fit with the reality – combatting terrorism, in the eyes of many Europeans, was a prolonged battle requiring a multi-pronged approach, not preemptive conflict.\(^{428}\) Many European states believed states should devote more of their resources to \textit{combating} terrorism domestically while developing strategies to address the root causes of terrorism internationally, causing further tension.\(^{429}\)

Some policymakers attempted to frame the need for immediate action by applying the same humanitarian frameworks employed in Kosovo in 1999, hoping it would enhance the moral legitimacy of the operation. Despite a UN endorsement, NATO staged Operation Allied Force in Kosovo to stop widespread humanitarian abuses by Serbian forces, led by Slobodan Milosevic. Though OAF was not authorized by the UN and resulted in thousands of casualties (from both Serbian forces and the NATO bombing campaign) and millions of displaced Kosovars, the


\(^{428}\) Sloan, \textit{NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community}.

\(^{429}\) Gordon, “NATO and the War on Terrorism.”
Independent International Commission on Kosovo acknowledged the moral imperative that drove NATO’s response.\(^{430}\) The lack of UN endorsement resulted from permanent members Russia and China refusing to authorize any external intervention on the basis of humanitarianism.\(^{431}\) Many leaders, including UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, believed the Kosovo intervention signified a need for new international law justifying humanitarian intervention, authorized by the Security Council, even when it violated the organization’s commitment to protecting state sovereignty.\(^{432}\) U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright and others hoped that the lesson learned in Kosovo would catalyze the necessary legal reforms. While states preferred the UN to take action under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, Kosovo demonstrated the willingness of states to apply unconventional methods (in this case, acting through a regional organization) in the event the UN Security Council could not reach a consensus.\(^{433}\)

Policymakers attempted to apply the same argument to the Iraq case: the international community was widely aware of Iraq’s use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq War, and the continued human rights abuses under the Hussein regime. However, as Corneliu Bjola correctly identifies, reports coming out of Iraq in the years prior to the war indicated slightly improved conditions, thus suggesting the immediate use of force was unwarranted.\(^{434}\) This weakened the argument that the U.S.’s use of force was morally legitimate.

The U.S. sought domestic and international support for its efforts in Iraq in two distinct phases: the first when it appealed to the international community via the United Nations for an

\(^{430}\) The Kosovo Report.
\(^{431}\) Williams, NATO, Security and Risk Management.
\(^{432}\) Buchanan, Human Rights, Legitimacy, and the Use of Force.
\(^{434}\) Bjola, Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics.
endorsement for the invasion, and the second when it requested political and military support, initially from NATO and later from individual states for its coalition of the willing.

Phase 1: Pre-War Planning

The Bush administration initially enjoyed strong domestic support for pursuing further action against Iraq. The Bush administration used the 2001 Congressional AUMF to bolster its case connecting Saddam Hussein to anti-Western terrorist groups. In a speech given in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 7, 2002, Bush spoke to the likely connection between the two.

> We know that Iraq and the Al Qaida terrorist network share a common enemy—the United States of America. We know that Iraq and Al Qaida have had high-level contacts that go back a decade. Some Al Qaida leaders who fled Afghanistan went to Iraq. These include one very senior Al Qaida leader who received medical treatment in Baghdad this year, and who has been associated with planning for chemical and biological attacks. We've learned that Iraq has trained Al Qaida members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases. And we know that after September the 11th, Saddam Hussein's regime gleefully celebrated the terrorist attacks on America.\(^{435}\)

The administration continued this rhetoric to successfully shore up additional support from the public and from Congress for the Iraq intervention, despite its intention to act unilaterally and without public or congressional support.\(^{436}\)

Though the Bush administration enjoyed overwhelming congressional support for the global war on terror in the early stages, there were lingering questions as to whether proceeding in Iraq without international support was the best course of action. Prominent U.S. democratic


leaders, including former president Bill Clinton, Senators Edward Kennedy, John Kerry, Carl Levin, and Representative Nancy Pelosi expressed their beliefs that Iraq was in possession of WMDs and agreed Iraq posed a serious threat and demanded immediate attention. However they and members of the Bush administration, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, disagreed with the administration’s plans to act unilaterally and without the support of UN and NATO member-states.\textsuperscript{437} Much of the debate centered not on the severity of threat but rather the administration’s fighting campaign. Former national security advisor Brent Scowcroft, former secretary of state James Baker, both of whom had served under the George H.W. Bush administration, argued overthrowing the Hussein regime without a real reconstruction plan was dangerous. The Council of Foreign Relations, the State Department, and the National Intelligence Council provided detailed reports to the administration on the negative consequences of engagement, which were all but ignored by Secretary Rumsfeld and White House officials planning the invasion. Army Chief of Staff Erik Shinseki repeatedly voiced his concerns over Rumsfeld’s estimates for troop mobilization, claiming the administration was grossly underestimating how many would be required to establish security and stability, only to be later ridiculed by Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz.\textsuperscript{438}

When the Bush administration released the September 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS), it was evident the administration intended to parlay its domestic support and act with or without international participation to invade Iraq. The NSS advanced the neoconservative agenda of preemption and preventative war, advocated for by many in the administration, including Vice-President Cheney, Secretary Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. However, the administration maintained a high level of

\textsuperscript{437} Kreps, Coalitions of Convenience; Rupp, NATO After 9/11.
\textsuperscript{438} Holsti, American Public Opinion on the Iraq War.
support from both the public and Congress, due in part to the massive PR campaign it undertook to capitalize on the sense of vulnerability Americans experienced after the 9/11 attacks. According to Brian Schmidt and Michael Williams, “…the Bush administration depicted a threat environment radically different from which existed during the Cold War…In the climate of fear that existed after 9/11, and intentionally inflamed by neoconservative pundits appearing on MSNBC and Fox News, scenarios of rogue states or terrorists armed with WMD were deemed unacceptable by Bush administration officials.”\(^439\)

The Bush administration experienced a rally-around-the-flag effect from the public in the wake of 9/11, a trend that continued in the first phases of the Iraq invasion. Though the initial surge in support declined in late 2002 and early 2003, the presidential approval ratings remained above 50 percent, and surged to over 70 percent when the U.S. announced its invasion on March 20, 2003.\(^440\) However, there was some dissent from the public and a growing anti-war movement began to emerge as the U.S. moved forward with planning. The movement objected to intervention and contended that the money and resources would be better utilized for improving homeland security and building (domestic) social programs.\(^441\)

Both congressional and public support were key elements to the Bush administration’s case for intervention to the international community, and officials worked to bolster domestic support in the hopes it would give leverage to the U.S. in its negotiations with the United Nations.\(^442\) Pushing the need for immediate action in the event the UN authorized an intervention in Iraq, the administration successfully campaigned for a second congressional resolution

\(^{441}\) Lansford, *9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.*
\(^{442}\) Ibid.
authorizing the use of force. In September, President Bush sent a draft resolution to Congress, and in October 2002, Congress passed its own joint resolution. The Joint Resolution on the Authorization for Use of Military Force in Iraq (P.L. 107-243) addressed the long list of international law violations Iraq had committed since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and insisted the U.S. take action to prevent the proliferation of WMDs and fulfill its commitment to the international community. Moreover, the resolution asserted the authorization of military force was vital to U.S. national security – specifically, the likely connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda meant the Bush administration’s proposals to use force against Iraq were consistent with its global war on terror. Though the second resolution did not enjoy as much overwhelming support in both chambers, it received more than the necessary approval in both the House (296-133) and the Senate (77-23).

Although the administration received the necessary authorization from Congress, the importance of international endorsement was still acknowledged by both Congress and the public. Bush’s resolution draft gave little mention to the role of the United Nations, and was met with concern by members of both parties in Congress. Senate Democrats, including Senate majority leader Tom Daschle (MN), were concerned about the president’s willingness to act without UN authorization as well as congressional support. On the resolution draft, Daschle was quoted as saying “We don’t want to be a rubber stamp…but we want to be helpful. We do want to be supportive.” Senator Russ Feingold (WI) expressed concern over the wording of the resolution: “It is incredibly broad. Not only does it fail to adequately define the mission in question, it appears to actually authorize the president to do virtually anything anywhere in the
Middle East.” Both parties worked to dispel the notion that dissent against the president’s draft resolution or authorization for U.S. efforts in Iraq were the result of partisan politics, instead attributing the concern to the lack of congressional input during the planning process. The final legislation emphasized the need for an active UN presence in Iraq. It called for the U.S. to enforce UN sanctions and any decisions made by the Security Council, but also implored the President to work through the UN to “…obtain prompt and decisive action by the Security Council to ensure that Iraq abandons its strategy of delay, evasion and noncompliance and promptly and strictly complies with all relevant Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.”

As evidenced here, the Bush administration enjoyed high levels of support for both its global war on terror and intervention in Iraq from Congress. While President Bush often insisted public opinion did not factor in to his decision-making process, he often courted public support for his decisions, and the Iraq War was no exception. The Bush administration’s decision to seek congressional support for the intervention indicates the administration’s belief that domestic acceptance of its Iraq plan would bolster the support of the public as well as support for other political and military ambitions. The administration used the anxiety and feelings of vulnerability in the post-9/11 period to rally public support for the Iraq invasion by carefully connecting Saddam Hussein, weapons of mass destruction, and al Qaeda.

Even though public opinion tended to favor the engagement of allies in U.S. military action, the administration’s rhetoric about the necessity of immediate action successfully convinced many to support the U.S. To further improve domestic public support, the

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446 Holsti, American Public Opinion on the Iraq War.
administration downplayed the concerns of the European publics and connected European leaders’ dissent to either economic concerns (both the French and the Germans had trade relationships with Iraq, and France had established oil agreements that were challenged by the UN sanctions against Iraq) or to anti-Americanism. Thus, domestic support was not wholly contingent on the international community’s participation, and there was relatively little question as to the legitimacy of the invasion. The limited domestic debate focused primarily on Rumsfeld’s RMA strategy, with former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, former Secretary of State James Baker, and Army Chief of Staff Erik Shinseki all campaigning against what they believed to be unrealistic estimates of the necessary resource and troop commitments. This debate did not focus on the moral or legal legitimacy of invading Iraq’s sovereignty, deposing Saddam Hussein in the hopes of a complete regime change, and implementing institutional reforms aimed at democratizing Iraq.

The administration hoped the high levels of domestic public support would bolster support from the international community as it attempted to win favor in the United Nations and challenge the Security Council to take action. Though there was a very public debate between Secretary Powell and those urging the U.S. to pursue legitimacy enhancement, and Secretary Rumsfeld who insisted the U.S. already had the moral and legal authority to act, President Bush expressed optimism the UN would understand its own survival was in question. When asked by a reported from the Associated Press about the likelihood of allied support, Bush said “I think you’re going to see a lot of nations – that a lot of nations love freedom. They understand the threat. They understand that the credibility of the United Nations is at stake. They heard me loud and clear when I said ‘Either you can be the United Nations, a capable body, a body able to keep

447 Gordon and Shapiro, Allies at War.  
448 Holsti, American Public Opinion on the Iraq War.
the peace, or you can be the League of Nations.’ And we’re confident that people will follow our lead.”  

However, he made his belief that the U.S. had the authority to act without international support clear. “At the United National Security Council, it is very important that the members understand that the credibility of the United Nations is at stake…And if the United Nations Security Council won’t deal with the problem, the United States and some of its friends will.”  

However, unlike its successes in shoring up domestic support from both Congress and the public, the administration was unable to convince UN members its proposed intervention was legitimate. During the lengthy debate over Resolution 1441, the U.S. repeatedly insisted there was just cause for intervention: not only was the Iraqi regime developing and stockpiling WMDs, but it repeated and deliberately failed to meet the existing UN guidelines. According to the U.S., this posed an immediate threat to its national security and fell squarely within the parameters of Article 51 of the UN Charter. As Bjola notes, the administration failed to provide sufficient evidence that an attack was imminent “on the grounds that in the post-9/11 environment the nature of the evidence required to give a state the right to launch a military attack had sufficiently changed.”  

There was also longstanding evidence of serious human rights abuses in Iraq, but in the pre-war planning phase the Bush administration focused most of its argument on weapons development and the need for collective security.  

The administration’s inability to obtain an endorsement from the United Nations for intervention in Iraq threatened the legitimacy of the operation. While policymakers enjoyed high

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450 ibid.
451 Cornelio Bjola, Legitimising the Use of Force in International Politics.
452 ibid.
levels of domestic support, it did not receive widespread international support. Theories as to why the U.S. was unable to secure international legitimization for its operations fall into one of a few major themes that are collectively more plausible.\textsuperscript{453} The evidence presented in the earlier part of this chapter demonstrates that the U.S. differed with its UN partners over the imminence of the threat, the motivations for and necessity of intervention, and the proportionality of the use of force. Because of these disagreements, the U.S. did not obtain the necessary authorization for the invasion from the UN. However, instead of proceeding unilaterally, the U.S. continued to court international allies first through NATO channels and then by appealing to individual states for support. As earlier interventions demonstrated, multilateral coalitions were unlikely to enhance the operational capacity of the U.S.’s efforts. However, the U.S. pursued these allies to enhance the operation’s legitimacy, which it believed necessary to the success of the mission and to maintaining the U.S.’s international reputation.

**Phase 2: The Great NATO Debate**

When efforts to build legal legitimacy for the Iraq invasion through obtaining a UN endorsement fell short under UNSCR 1441, domestic and international pressure mounted for the U.S. to pursue multilateral support via NATO.\textsuperscript{454} As previously demonstrated, there was a widespread belief Saddam Hussein’s regime posed a threat to both the United States and the international community, and some evidence that NATO allies would be supportive of U.S. efforts. The publics of major NATO allies Great Britain, France, Germany, and Turkey expressed concern of Iraq as a threat to world peace, but were less inclined to support their home


\textsuperscript{454} The U.S. also pursued support for individual member states and regional organizations during this time, but its primary focus was on its western European allies.
state’s involvement with the U.S. intervention.\footnote{In the data collected by the 2002 Pew Global Attitudes Project, over 40% of those surveyed in Great Britain and France identified Iraq as a “moderate threat” to stability in the Middle East. Interestingly, the German public felt even more strongly about the danger posed by Iraq, with 43% of respondents identifying Iraq as a “great danger.” The Turkish public was more skeptical of the threat, with 26% believing Iraq to be a great danger, and 22% believing it a moderate danger. British citizens were far more receptive to assisting the U.S. efforts (with 47% in favor of) than the French (33%) and German (26%) respondents. Turkish respondents were not asked this question; instead, they were asked whether they favored or opposed allowing the U.S. and its allies to use Turkey as a base for military action. An overwhelming majority (83%) opposed this proposal.} Majorities in France and Germany believed the U.S.’s efforts were to control Iraqi oil, while Americans and the British believed the U.S. wanted to eliminate the threat to security posed by Hussein.\footnote{“What the World Thinks in 2002,” Pew Global Attitudes Project, December 4, 2002, accessed April 8, 2015, http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2002/12/2002-Report-Final-Updated.pdf.} Opposing allies were skeptical of the appropriateness of using force to depose Saddam Hussein, instead arguing disarmament without regime change could successfully be pursued.\footnote{In none of the 4 non-U.S. NATO states surveyed by the Pew Research Center’s “6 Country Survey” did a majority of respondents favor using force against Hussein. Great Britain was the most supportive, with 44% in favor, while Turkey was the most unsupportive (just 13% in favor of the use of force). Russia, the sixth state surveyed, was also highly skeptical of both the U.S.’s intentions – 54% believed that the U.S. was trying to control Iraqi oil – and the need for using force to remove Saddam from power (12% in favor). However, a majority of Russian respondents believed Iraq was a threat (55%) and were split on whether he should be removed from power (42% said he must be removed, while 32% believed he could be disarmed and 26% were uncertain).}

The 1999 Kosovo intervention had, in some respects, set a precedent for the U.S.’s efforts to move the debate from the UN to NATO in the hopes that the international community would see its actions as legitimate. In appealing to its NATO partners, the U.S. cited Kosovo as providing the necessary precedent for the alliance to circumvent the UN Security Council deadlock in the hopes that the alliance’s participation would enhance the legitimacy of the intervention. But the U.S.’s attempts to parallel the two cases were weakened by several factors, damaged by its own rhetoric as well as international perceptions of the Kosovo intervention. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the U.S. was publicly critical of NATO’s inefficiencies in combat and repeatedly called for increased contributions and more proportionate burden-sharing within the alliance in the years following Operation Allied Force. The U.S. and NATO were also
criticized for engaging in an air campaign that killed hundreds of civilians on the ground, and resulted in continued violence against Kosovars by the Serbian forces. The U.S. pointed to the Iraqi regime’s obfuscation of weapons inspectors as evidence Saddam intended to use chemical agents in the immediate future, but as intrastate violence declined slightly in the years leading up to the war, its engagement plan was seen as hasty and imprudent. In addition, much of the U.S.’s rhetoric regarding the need for action in Iraq focused on how the proliferation of WMDs and “likely” connections to terrorist organizations threatened U.S. security and international peace, not on the humanitarian crimes against Iraqi civilians.

Despite earlier calls for legal reform and the human rights abuses committed by Saddam Hussein’s regime, the precedent set by Kosovo did not result in support for NATO to supersede the authority of the UN and intervene in Iraq. As previously demonstrated, both France and Germany’s opposition to the war carried over to the North Atlantic Council debates. A consensus for NATO support to ally Turkey was only reached after Secretary General Lord Robertson moved the debate to the Defense Planning Council (of which France was not a member). While the collective alliance disagreed with the U.S.’s plans, individual member-states were not deterred from pledging their support to the U.S. The war’s opponents openly criticized the participation of all seven states seeking NATO membership – Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia, and Slovenia – while ignoring the possible motivations for their cooperation with the U.S. (such as the retention or increase in foreign aid). The U.S. lauded their efforts, with Secretary Rumsfeld referring to those supporting the U.S. as “New Europe” and implying that the efforts of Germany and France to block U.S. action resulted from entrenched (and incorrect) ideas of European security threats.\footnote{Kitchen, \textit{The Globalization of NATO.}} NATO officials urged both sides
to end the public rhetorical battles to ease tensions within the alliance.\textsuperscript{459} When the Iraq coalition was formed in 2003, twelve of the forty-seven participating states were NATO members (not including the U.S.). The aforementioned states seeking alliance membership also participated in the coalition. A total of twenty-two NATO states participated in the reconstruction efforts, and twenty-three made some contribution to the NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I).\textsuperscript{460}

Polls conducted by Gallup, Pew, CBS/\textit{New York Times} and others in the same period indicated the American public’s preference for allied support: the majority of the public preferred the U.S. engagement of its international partners to bring down the Iraqi regime. In the aftermath of Congress’s joint resolution, over 55 percent of Americans polled favored military action in Iraq for regime change purposes; however, nearly half of those conditioned their support on the participation of allies. Support for U.S. engagement in Iraq peaked in January 2003, with 68 percent favoring military engagement. But as support grew, so did the demand for multilateralism, with 37 percent demanding the U.S. act only if their allies agreed to fight alongside. In a poll conducted by Pew on the eve of the invasion (March 13-16, 2003), 59 percent supported military action against Hussein; however, of those supporting military action, only 16 percent insisted their support was conditional on allied participation, marking a shift in U.S. attitudes.\textsuperscript{461,462}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item In 2004, when the NTM-I was formed, NATO had 26 member states. Albania and Croatia would join NATO in 2009. Neither state is included in the coalition, post-war reconstruction, or NTM-I figures presented above. Albania was a member of the coalition of the willing and participated in the reconstruction efforts. Croatia provided personnel contributions to the reconstruction.
\item Ole R. Holsti, \textit{American Public Opinion on the Iraq War}. The survey data presented is a compilation of polls conducted by both the Pew Research Center and Gallup. As Holsti notes, the respondents were not asked if the support pledged by the United Kingdom constituted assistance or support from major allies.
\item Holsti asserts that these findings are consistent with the idea that Americans – even those largely in favor of U.S. primacy – favor the idea of burden-sharing relationships in conflict. The decline in those who conditioned their support on allied participation on the eve of the war may indicate the effects the UN and NATO disputes between the U.S., France, and Germany had on how those polled judged the necessity of allied participation when it became evident that the U.S. intended to act unilaterally.
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International public opinion was most supportive of military interventions conducted through the UN or NATO. Interestingly, respondents believed that NATO enhanced intervention legitimacy to almost the same degree as the UN. The ‘Transatlantic Trends’ 2003 report found that 43% of European respondents supported an intervention with NATO involvement, versus 34% or 39% percent who would support US unilateralism or US and allies, respectively. Support for intervention with the UNSC rose to 46%. American respondents were more favorable to US unilateralism (63%) and US and allies (64%) than their European counterparts, but increased their support more when asked about NATO (73%) and UNSC (74%) intervention.\footnote{463}  

When NATO partners struggled to come to an agreement over the amount and type of aid it would provide to Turkey as part of the U.S.’s operations, the U.S. temporarily abandoned its efforts to win the alliance’s support. Though it had made its willingness to operate unilaterally abundantly clear, policymakers chose instead to pursue an ad hoc ‘coalition of the willing.’ Historically, ad hoc coalitions allowed the US to customize its efforts to a particular conflict much easier than working through an alliance with pre-existing political and military decision-making structures.\footnote{464} Because Secretary Rumsfeld’s plans for the Iraq invasion were based on the RMA – which was relatively successful in the earlier operation in Afghanistan with limited international participation – the ad hoc coalition seemed to meet the U.S.’s operational needs.

Proponents of the coalition cited four factors for pushing ahead with the operation using a coalition in lieu of NATO and UN support: (1) the U.S.’s actions would be found morally and legally legitimate in retrospect – just as in Kosovo – because of the danger posed by WMDs and terrorism; (2) the U.S.’s military strength and hegemonic status demanded it act with or without

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\footnote{463} The survey data in this report was collected 10 - 25 June 2003, after both contentious debate and lack of consensus in both NATO and the UNSC, and after the first stage of the US-led invasion.

international support; (3) despite disagreement in the Security Council and NATO, the allies did support taking action against the regime, and major allies such as Great Britain supported the U.S.’s plan for regime change; (4) the anticipated timeline and necessary force was minimal, as the Iraq military was considerably weakened during the 1990 Kuwait invasion with no large-scale rebuilding after the war. The administration was willing to act unilaterally because it was powerful enough to do so, and because it was serving the common interest of the international system by maintaining stability.

But the assembled coalition did not have the desired legitimation effects. Though several member states (and the seven ‘Vilnius 10’ member states seeking membership) participated in the U.S.’s coalition of the willing, the coalition did not carry the same legitimacy as NATO participation would; instead, it seemed to many to be an ill-informed attempt at multilateralism with no sincere desire to work with its international partners. Sarah Kreps argues the U.S. attempted to engage smaller states (such as Palau and Micronesia) as part of coalition, despite their inability to make significant military or political contributions, for “the political validation they – at least in the aggregate – might offer to the coalition.” She and others identify these efforts as an “alternate method of multilateralism.”

Many believed most of the coalition members participated because of the financial or political incentives of having supported its most important ally: the United States. Writes Patricia Weitsman, “...the coalition of the willing was largely composed of states with something to gain by standing shoulder to shoulder with the United States, rather than being motivated by outright fear or threat generated by the Hussein

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465 Kreps, *Coalitions of Convenience*, p.137.
Additionally, the coalition was financially and politically costly for the U.S., with no measurable benefit to fighting effectiveness.

Though President Bush declared the initial phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom an overwhelming success in May 2003, the U.S.’s mission in Iraq continued to suffer from legitimacy and operational problems stemming from a number of issues. Firstly, though U.S. troops quickly gained control of Baghdad, Saddam Hussein and several members of his administration were able to evade capture until December 2003. Secondly, the dispatched teams of WMD inspectors known as the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) spent $400 million in the first year only to find no evidence of a current WMD program. States like France and Germany, opposed to the war from the outset, used the lack of WMDs as reason to refrain from proving a retrospective UN resolution or NATO endorsement. Thirdly, in deposing the Baath Party, the U.S. fired thousands of individuals including young men serving in the Iraqi army, leaving the government incapable of providing basic services and giving rise to an anti-American insurgent movement. The Bush administration overestimated the level of support that U.S. troops would receive from Iraqi civilians, how willing the three major groups in Iraq (Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds) would be to work together, and underestimated how difficult it would be to prevent insurgency and ensure a stable, functioning, and peaceful government. Lastly, although the assembled coalition was initially successful at securing victory, its successes were seen not as the result of a carefully conceived and executed multilateral strategy, but rather as the “profound capability asymmetry between the coalition and Saddam Hussein’s forces.”

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466 Weitsman, Waging War, p.135.
467 ibid.
468 Lansford, 9/11 and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
469 Holsti, American Public Opinion on the Iraq War.
470 Weitsman, Waging War, p. 151.
Deadlock in the United Nations was broken in June 2004, with the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1546. From the resolution, and as a result of the request from the Iraqi Interim Government, NATO prepared to launch NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I). The U.S. was willing to provide security and funding for the NATO effort in exchange for a training schedule coinciding with the U.S.’s timetables, as well as command over the mission.\footnote{Rupp, \textit{NATO After 9/11}.} However, because it was a non-combat mission, NATO maintained political control of its forces, which fell under the command of the US mission’s Deputy Commanding General for Advising and Training.\footnote{North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO Assistance to Iraq.”} As previously demonstrated, many NATO members believed the U.S.’s demands for leadership in NTM-I indicated its unwillingness to cede control to the alliance; thus, while all NATO member states contributed to the mission, several states (including France and Germany) refused to allow their troops in Iraq to prevent them from falling under U.S. command.\footnote{Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}.}

According to Lieutenant General Michael Barbero, the U.S. Army officer who commanded the NTM-I from 2009 until 2011, the disagreement between the NATO allies over the NTM-I mission (and U.S. leadership) did not necessarily inhibit the NATO operation’s success. Several of the allies, including Turkey, Great Britain, and Italy played an integral role in training the Iraqi leaders and police force. In addition to the symbolic value of a NATO presence, the allies contributed real capabilities to the NTM-I; General Barbero cited Turkey’s acceptance of dozens of military leaders into slots in their schools and the Italian Carabinieri’s (military police) establishment of a training school to teach tactical skills, professionalism, and
investigative skills as examples of allied capabilities contributions that enhanced the U.S.’s OIF and the NTM-I.\textsuperscript{474}

Despite the contributions of over forty coalition partners, the eventual UN Security Council resolutions designed to facilitate stabilization and reconstruction, and NATO’s support through the NTM-I, the U.S.’s war in Iraq suffered from the lack of legitimization from the international community. Additionally, the absence of weapons of mass destruction and the U.S.’s underestimation of the tremendous commitment needed to rebuild a stable Iraqi government led to the erosion of domestic and international public support.\textsuperscript{475}

\textit{Conclusion}

There are many possible explanations for why the Iraq War is treated as a unique case in the U.S.-NATO relationship and frequently cited as evidence of both the alliance’s ineffectiveness and inevitable demise. All of these explanations, however, obscure the possibility that the case, when considered in the context of post-Cold War interventions, provides a greater understanding of several key issues. The Iraq War illuminated a growing gap between the United States and its European allies about terrorism and international security. However, it did not indicate a change in U.S. preferences for multilateralism, nor did it indicate that the U.S. would abandon the alliance.

In many respects, the Iraq case challenged fundamental beliefs about U.S.-NATO relations in the post-Cold War period. U.S. policymakers repeatedly voiced concerns about the alliance’s ability to effectively engage in modern warfare, noting the growing disparities in NATO contributions by member states, the shrinking defense budgets of many states, and the challenges in Kosovo resulting from the growing capabilities gap. Despite its offer for assistance

\textsuperscript{474} Michael Barbero (USA-Ret., former commander NTM-I), interview with author, January 15, 2015, Boston (telephone).

\textsuperscript{475} Holsti, \textit{American Public Opinion on the Iraq War}.\n
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after 9/11 and the invocation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the U.S. developed a
strategy for Afghanistan with little regard for international participation. Perceiving the
Afghanistan mission a success, policymakers pushed for a similar approach in Iraq.

The U.S.’s decision to employ this strategy in Iraq was disputed domestically and
internationally, as critics repeatedly warned the Bush administration about the long-term
consequences of regime change in Iraq. However, as the evidence presented here demonstrates,
the international community was not wholly opposed to taking action against Saddam Hussein.
Many believed the Baathist regime had committed humanitarian abuses against its own
population, continued to develop weapons of mass destruction in light of international sanctions,
and posed a threat to international community. They did not dispute the need for action, and their
objection to the U.S.’s efforts did not come from its desire to act using the Afghan model.
Instead, they argued over the necessity of the U.S.’s expedited timeline: while the potential threat
of Iraq was quite real, states such as France and Germany wanted further verification of Iraq’s
weapons development programs before authorizing intervention. The necessity of regime change
was also disputed, as skeptics of the U.S. plan believed Saddam Hussein could effectively be
disarmed but remain in power.

These disagreements led to vociferous debates in the international community, first in the
United Nations and later in NATO. But there is no evidence these debates caused permanent
damage to U.S.-NATO relations. While Secretary Rumsfeld and others were outspoken in their
criticism of NATO, the U.S. continued to push for reforms to the alliance’s ability to respond to
crises in light of the Kosovo intervention, the war in Afghanistan, and the new threat
environment. These efforts resulted in the establishment of the NATO Response Force. Both the
Bush and Obama administration continued U.S. military and financial contributions to the
alliance, and pursued legitimacy enhancement for its Iraq efforts via the alliance. The American public also maintained support for U.S.-NATO efforts, with many indicating a preference for any U.S. conflict engagement to include NATO participation and in the wake of the Iraq War a desire to restore the U.S.'s international reputation.\footnote{Holsti, \textit{American Public Opinion on the Iraq War}.}

Despite the absence of NATO participation in the U.S.'s primary operation in Iraq, the evidence presented here (and in particular, during the planning stages of the war) confirms the hypotheses that the United States pursues alliance participation for legitimacy enhancement and adherence to international norms. The Bush administration also requested NATO participation for the alliance’s utility, and the alliance demonstrated its capability to enhance the U.S. mission through the NTM-I, confirming the hypotheses on the utility of NATO. Furthermore, the U.S. continued to encourage reforms to the alliance, even though it largely refused the administration’s requests in the early stages of the Iraq war.

**Legitimacy**

The U.S.’s plan for Iraq suffered from a lack of legitimacy from the beginning phase of planning, and the lack of an endorsement from both the United Nations and NATO only compounded the problem. During the 2002 campaign to rally support, the U.S. successfully rallied domestic support for the Iraq invasion despite conclusive evidence of weapons of mass destruction. This was due in large part to the sense of vulnerability the public experienced in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, and congressional efforts to unite behind the president and be resolute in the war on terror. The Bush administration played to this support, framing the Iraq threat as imminent and asserting the necessity for regime change led by the U.S.\footnote{ibid.} The administration hoped the widespread domestic acceptance of its plan for engagement, combined
with its political strength in the international system, would lead to both an endorsement by the UN Security Council and the legitimization of the invasion. When it failed to secure a second resolution, the U.S. turned its attention to NATO in the hopes that alliance participation would lead the international community to retrospectively deem the invasion morally and legally legitimate as it had in Kosovo. However, it failed to secure overwhelming NATO support and was forced to draw on the support of individual member states for its coalition of the willing.

Of course, the lack of legitimacy for the U.S.’s Iraq efforts did not result exclusively from its inability to rally international support. The U.S.’s rhetoric about the need for immediate action against an imminent threat was repeatedly challenged by those who were critical of the U.S.’s plan. Writes Ole Holsti, “The American invasion of Iraq was based on two elements of ‘worst case’ analysis – that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and that, because he had intimate ties to the al Qaeda terrorist organization that had carried out the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, Saddam was also complicit in those attacks.” Both of these elements were discredited in the early parts of the invasion. No WMDs were discovered, and the U.S. failed to produce conclusive evidence demonstrating the ties between Saddam and al Qaeda. These revelations effectively weakened the U.S.’s future efforts for rallying international support for the war. Writes John Mueller, “Had the invasion been a success…the venture, despite the very considerable misgivings, even hostility of the international community, would probably have been accepted as legitimate in time.” Though the UN Security Council would pass a set of resolutions authorizing a multinational force, it

478 ibid, pp. 44-45.
would do so primarily to prevent instability and ensure the establishment of a cohesive, functional government while protecting Iraqi civilians.

The other impediment to legitimacy enhancement was the U.S.’s strategies for what to do once Saddam was disposed. The success of Rumsfeld’s RMA – the Afghan model – in Afghanistan led members of the Bush administration to disregard some of the recommendations of military advisors as to the necessary troop commitment. Though the Iraqi military never fully recovered from the first Gulf War and was far outmatched by U.S. military capabilities, American policymakers failed to realize how unstable Iraq would be during the reconstruction process. They believed Iraqi civilians would be favorable to the American presence because of the severity of brutality experienced at the hands of the Baathists, led by Saddam. They also believed leaders from each of the main groups within Iraq would unite around the common goal of reconstructing a more democratic government. For these reasons, the U.S. believed the assembled coalition of the willing would be sufficient for both conflict engagement and legitimacy enhancement, despite the lack of assistance from the UN and NATO.480

However, the lack of international support for the intervention was incredibly damaging to U.S. legitimization efforts, particularly in the planning phases of the war. While NATO participation would not confer the same degree of legitimacy as a Security Council resolution, there is clear evidence demonstrating Congress, the American public, and the international community likely would have perceived the U.S.’s actions as more legitimate had NATO agreed to participate. The Kosovo precedent could have been applied to legitimacy in Iraq had the operation been successful at locating WMDs, connecting Saddam to terrorist organizations, and installing a stable democratic Iraqi government. The absence of legitimacy for the intervention

480 Sarah Kreps, Coalitions of Convenience.
made U.S. efforts to rally support for the post-war reconstruction phase more difficult. Additionally, when NATO failed to fulfill U.S. requests for assistance, the administration was forced to offer costly political and military incentives to individual states in exchange for participation in the coalition of the willing. Because of this, the resulting coalition lacked fighting efficiency, cohesion, and most importantly, the legitimacy of an alliance-backed operation.

Multilateralism and the Utility of NATO

It is difficult to infer from the Iraq case the U.S.’s value for multilateralism in the post-Cold War period. There are two competing narratives on the importance of multilateralism under the Bush administration that emerge from the evidence presented in this chapter. The first suggests the U.S. never actually intended to act multilaterally, and only sought international support because of the legitimacy enhancement. From this perspective, the U.S.’s continued pursuit of allies after the initial invasion was purely strategic. Having faced much more difficulty in establishing a stable Iraqi government than initially anticipated, as well as executing the simultaneous war in Afghanistan, the U.S. recognized how difficult it would be to proceed unilaterally. Thus, the administration sought international participation for the reconstruction and stabilization phase so it could turn its attention to its larger war on terror and focus its combat abilities. The Bush administration’s rhetoric – about the U.S.’s confidence in the severity of threat posed by Saddam Hussein, the necessity of regime change, and the international dissent resulting from the debates in the UN and NATO – reinforced the perception U.S. primacy led policymakers to prefer unilateralism.

The second narrative suggests the Bush administration valued multilateralism, despite its claims the U.S. would pursue unilateral action if necessary. The evidence presented here
indicates this assessment is more accurate. In the case of Iraq, the U.S. did not pursue multilateralism to enhance its military abilities: U.S. capabilities were unmatched and the Iraqi army was so weakened, an American victory was certain. None of its efforts to assemble a multilateral coalition were to enhance the fighting effectiveness of the U.S., and none were because the U.S. felt international support was integral to its success on the battlefield. Instead, the efforts to include the international community reflected U.S. beliefs about legitimacy enhancement. If the UN or NATO endorsed the U.S.’s efforts, it did not matter what kind of military or operational support was provided: the U.S. needed endorsement from these organizations to make their actions morally legitimate in the eyes of other states and in the eyes of the public. That the U.S. did not seek support from other alliances or organizations as vehemently as it did in the UN and NATO reveals in part the value of legitimization the alliance holds for the U.S.

The tensions between the United States, France, Germany, and others regarding the U.S.’s willingness to intervene in Iraq without an authorizing resolution from the UN Security Council did not significant alter the U.S.’s relationship with the alliance. The United States continued to support efforts to improve the alliance’s ability to engage in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The U.S.’s actions indicated the Bush administration believed the alliance, though not engaged in Iraq, was still useful to the United States’ objectives. The U.S. spearheaded the establishment of the NATO Response Force, repeatedly engaged in efforts to mobilize allies around shared security concerns (such as terrorism and cybersecurity), supported the alliance’s membership expansions, and continued to sustain its financial and resource contributions to the alliance.
Chapter 6: The 2011 Libyan Intervention

Unlike the preceding cases, the 2011 Libyan crisis did not stem from longstanding ethnic tensions, an attack on a NATO ally, or a potential immediate threat to international security. Instead, the crisis stemmed from the Libyan peoples’ frustration with the 42-year authoritarian rule of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. Growing discontent with economic disparities, advances in communication and the advent of social media, and a series of international events in the Middle East and North Africa known as the Arab Spring inspired an uprising of Libyan intellectuals, students, and oil workers. Although the international community was closely monitoring the Arab Spring uprisings, it was the Qaddafi regime’s brutal response to relatively peaceful protests in mid-February that sparked the possibility of an international intervention.

The following chapter analyzes the 2011 Libyan revolution. As in the other cases, I divide the crisis into three phases. The pre-intervention phase, from February to March 2011, is much shorter than the other three conflicts. Concerned about the possibility of a humanitarian crisis in Libya and spillover into other states in North Africa and the Middle East, the international community acted quickly to formulate plans for a possible intervention. The second phase, mid- to late March 2011, explains Operation Odyssey Dawn (OOD). Led by the United States, Operation Odyssey Dawn was a multilateral coalition effort to enforce the conditions of UNSCR 1973, including a no-fly zone, arms embargo, and the protection of Libyan civilians through an aerial bombing campaign. I demonstrate how the U.S.’s reluctance to lead a prolonged campaign in Libya led the Obama administration to pursue a multilateral operation led by the NATO alliance. The third phase of the intervention is Operation Unified Protector, the NATO-led campaign to continue enforcement of UNSCR 1973. The operation enabled the rebels
to overthrow the Qaddafi regime in late August 2011 and capture Colonel Qaddafi two months later. NATO officially ended Operation Unified Protector in October 2011.

Analysis of these three phases reveals the U.S.-NATO relationship under the Obama administration, and the benefits of NATO participation to the legitimacy of the Libyan intervention. The legitimizing effects of NATO factored into the U.S.’s decision to pursue NATO leadership during the planning of Operation Unified Protector – many U.S. officials believed NATO leadership would lend more legitimacy to the operation than a coalition of states or an individual state. However, legitimation of the operation was a secondary concern for the United States, as its primary reason for pushing the alliance’s leadership was to alleviate the military and political burden on the U.S.

During the pre-intervention phase, the U.S. made its preference for multilateralism and its unwillingness to lead a prolonged operation clear. It sought a transition from the U.S.-led operation to a NATO-led operation because the alliance provided the necessary political and military infrastructure for executing a coalition operation. In the early months of Operation Unified Protector, the administration rebuffed several requests to provide more resources. But as OUP continued, the alliance’s weaknesses and the Europeans’ inability to end the operation without substantial support from the U.S. became clear and the administration was forced to increase its contributions to effectively end operations.

**Background**

In September 1969, a young Libyan military officer led a group of pan-Arab nationalists in a coup d’état against the existing monarchy, established when Libya declared its independence in 1951. During the coup, the revolutionaries deposed King Idris al-Sanusi and gave his authority to the young military officer, Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. Colonel Qaddafi presented himself to
the newly liberated Libya as a reluctant leader and man of the people. However, during his 42-year tenure, Qaddafi instituted highly repressive policies to preserve his power, based on his personal understandings of socialism, Arabism, and Islam. He chronicled his political, economic, and social philosophies and distributed them to the population in his Green Book. The Green Book was meant to serve as a guide for the Libyan people and evolved as Qaddafi’s philosophies changed. As Alison Pargeter details, Colonel Qaddafi used Libya as “giant laboratory” for “a litany of bizarre whims and half-baked political and economic experiments, which had plunged the country into a permanent state of chaos.”

During most of Colonel Qaddafi’s tenure, the international community perceived Libya as a threat to international stability. Libya was isolated from the international community as Qaddafi became increasingly hostile toward the West. He constantly criticized the global powers as imperialists and regularly challenged their militaries to engage in conflict. In 1981, two Libyan aircraft challenged U.S. forces over the Gulf of Sirte. In response, the U.S. shot down both planes. In 1984, a British police officer was killed outside the Libyan embassy in London during anti-Qaddafi protests, leading the United Kingdom to break its diplomatic ties with Libya. In the 1980s and 1990s, Qaddafi also engaged in several acts of state-sponsored terrorism. In early April 1986, Libyans attacked a Berlin disco and killed three people, including two U.S. servicemen. The attack was later traced back to Qaddafi. In retaliation for his role in planning the club attack, the United States bombed military and residential facilities (including Qaddafi’s house) in Tripoli and Benghazi, killing 101 people. In 1988, under the direction of Colonel Qaddafi, a Libyan intelligence officer, Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi, placed a bomb on Pan Am

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Flight 103. The plane exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 270 people on board.\textsuperscript{483} The pushed the UN Security Council for punitive measures against Libya as evidence of Qaddafi’s role in the attack surfaced. In 1992, the Security Council imposed sanctions against Libya for its participation in state-sponsored terrorism. In 1994, the Security Council also implemented restrictions on air travel and arms sales to Libya after Qaddafi refused to turn over two suspects implicated in the Lockerbie bombing by the U.S. and Great Britain.\textsuperscript{484}

In the late 1990s, Colonel Qaddafi had a change of heart regarding Libya’s relationship with the West. In the hopes of generating new economic opportunities, Qaddafi agreed to turn over the Lockerbie bombing suspects in April 1999. During the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Libya also agreed to abandon its weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) program, formally denounced terrorism, and accepted responsibility for the Pan Am 103 bombing in a letter to the United Nations. Subsequently, the United Nations removed Libya from list of states sponsoring terrorism and lifted sanctions against the regime. Libya’s relationships with the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the European Union improved as the parties worked to restore diplomatic ties. The West became the largest consumers of Libyan oil, which had lower production costs than oil from Norway and Russia. Prior to the 2011 crisis, an estimated 85 percent of Libyan oil was sold in the European markets.\textsuperscript{485}

Although the state improved trade relationships and increased its oil revenues, conditions for the working classes did not improve – only the regime and those closest to Qaddafi

\textsuperscript{483} A second intelligence officer, Al Amin Khalifah Fhimah, was implicated in the bombing, but only Abdelbeset Ali Mohamed al Megrahi was convicted in the 1999 hearing.
(including many of his children) benefitted from the political and economic expansion.\textsuperscript{486} Despite its growing relationships with Western liberal democracies and the economic opportunities its improved reputation created, Libya remained one of the most oppressive countries in the world, according to Freedom House and other human rights organizations.\textsuperscript{487} The economic disparities between the Libyan elite and the rest of the population sparked resentment toward Qaddafi and his regime, and these tensions provided the foundation for the 2011 revolution.

\textit{Analysis: The Libyan Intervention}

The 2011 Libyan revolution began as a result of both international and domestic conditions. Domestically, high levels of corruption and inequality, poor housing and employment opportunities, and other repressive policies of the regime fueled anger toward Qaddafi. The regime’s oil revenues also prompted resentment, as only those closest to Qaddafi benefitted from Libya’s newfound prosperity. Internationally, the Libyan conflict was sparked by a larger series of rebellions in the Middle East and North Africa, known as the Arab Spring.

The Arab Spring rebellions, facilitated in part by the technological revolution and pervasiveness of social media platforms such as Facebook, began in Tunisia in December 2010. On December 17, Mohamed Bouazizi, a fruit vendor in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, self-immolated after having his fruit stand shut down for lacking the appropriate permits. When Mouazizi confronted law enforcement officials over what he believed to be a corrupt system, he was attacked and beaten by the officers. Citizens gathered in the town square as Bouazizi doused himself in paint thinner and then lit his body on fire. They believed his actions reflected his desperation and humiliation, and related to his struggles to obtain personal and financial stability.

\textsuperscript{486} Pargeter, \textit{Libya}.
\textsuperscript{487} Chivvis, \textit{Toppling Qaddafi}.
against the oppressive Tunisian government. Many took to the streets to protest the regime of the Tunisian regime, led by President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. As news of the Tunisian uprising spread, citizens in Egypt, Algeria, Yemen, Jordan, Bahrain, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and other states took to the streets as well to protest their own authoritarian regimes, many of which had been in power for decades. In Libya, Colonel Qaddafi appeared unconcerned about the possibility of a similar uprising. When Tunisian president Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia in January 2011, Qaddafi blamed Wikileaks and a false sense of security for the protestors’ success in deposing the president. He criticized the demonstrations and spoke of the harsh repercussions Libyans would face if they attempted a similar revolution.

Despite Qaddafi’s warnings, the Arab Spring protests spread to Libya in February 2011. On February 15, protestors took to the streets of Benghazi to protest the arrests of Fathi Terbil, a human rights lawyer, who famously advocated for victims of the riots at the Abu Salim prison in 1996. Though the protests started with a small group of fellow lawyers, hundreds of residents quickly joined the demonstrations, throwing rocks and gasoline bombs at buildings and riot police. As the crowd grew, police began using water cannons. When word of the protests in Benghazi spread, similar protests in the cities of Zentan and Al Beyda commenced. In addition to the street protests, activists rallied online via social media websites such as Facebook, organizing more demonstrations and demanding changes to the Libyan constitution. Anti-Qaddafi rebels rallied for a self-proclaimed “day of rage” on February 17, and protests expanded

490 Chivvis, Toppling Qaddafi.
to other cities including Misrath, Sirte, and the capital, Tripoli. The police fired machine guns at the crowds, killing two hundred protestors and wounding nine hundred others in just a few short days. However, despite the aggressiveness of the police and the high number of civilian casualties, by February 21, all of Qaddafi’s forces either retreated from Benghazi or abandoned their posts. 492

As Kjell Engelbrekt and Charlotte Wagnsson note, the characteristic feature of the protests in mid-February was “the immediate and unrelenting” assault of the security forces, which forced the protestors to arm themselves. The protestors – mostly students, oil workers, and human rights activists – gained the sympathy of many citizens who had tired of living under the authoritarian regime for decades. As support for the opposition grew, so did the number of rebel fighters – regular army and foreign fighters began to defect from Qaddafi’s forces to join the protests. 493 In addition to Benghazi, the rebels quickly took control of two more cities, Baida and Tobruk.

On February 21, Colonel Qaddafi appeared on television, pleading with the regime’s loyal followers to fight back against the rebel forces. Referring to the protestors as “cockroaches” and “rats,” Qaddafi told his followers, “Come out of your homes, attack them in their dens. Withdraw your children from the streets. They are drugging your children, they are making your children drunk and sending them to hell.” He went on to say that he would “cleanse Libya house by house,” and declared his intentions to remain in power: “I am not going to leave this land. I will die as a martyr at the end…I shall remain, defiant. Muammar is leader of the

492 Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi*.
revolution until the end of time.\textsuperscript{494} Speculation of a possible international intervention in Libya began following the protests in Benghazi on February 15-17, and Qaddafi’s subsequent television appearance.

\textbf{Phase 1: Pre-Intervention Planning}

On February 22, the UN Security Council convened for an emergency meeting after Qaddafi deployed snipers, gunships, and planes in an extensive and violent crackdown on the protestors.\textsuperscript{495} President Obama followed the emergency meeting with a speech demanding Qaddafi end the violence. He cited Qaddafi’s actions as violations of international law, and reiterated the condemnation of not only the Security Council, but also of the European Union, the Arab League, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. He also noted the U.S. would implement efforts to remove its personnel from Libya, and work through multilateral institutions to take further action against Qaddafi if the violence continued.\textsuperscript{496} In the following days, President Obama consulted with the leaders of France, Great Britain, and Italy as all four states moved to pull its citizens out of Libya.\textsuperscript{497} On February 25, the United States closed its embassy in Tripoli as it announced new sanctions against the Libyan government, including freezing assets belonging to Colonel Qaddafi and other high-ranking officials participating in the crackdown and a travel ban. Although the sanctions exerted diplomatic pressure on Qaddafi, the


\textsuperscript{495} Chivvis, \textit{Toppling Qaddafi}.


\textsuperscript{497} Chivvis, \textit{Toppling Qaddafi}. 

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Obama administration refrained from publicly acknowledging any plans for a military intervention.\textsuperscript{498}

On February 26, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution (UNSCR) 1970, the first of two resolutions to stem the violence in Libya. UNSCR 1970 condemned the actions of the Libyan government, called for an international commission to investigate any potential human rights abuses, and referred the case to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Additionally, the resolution imposed a travel ban, arms embargo, and listed a number of financial and political sanctions. It referred the case to the International Criminal Court, for review of possible crimes against humanity and violations of international law.\textsuperscript{499} U.S. officials such as UN Ambassador Susan Rice highlighted the unanimous vote on the resolution as evidence of the international community’s commitment to resolving the Libyan crisis and its resolve to protect civilians from continued humanitarian abuses. Rice also confirmed the administration’s belief the diplomatic efforts would be sufficient to stopping Qaddafi.\textsuperscript{500}

In early March, the makeshift governments of rebel-controlled Libyan territories united to form the National Transitional Council (NTC).\textsuperscript{501} The NTC, comprised mostly of tribe leaders, former prisoners, human rights activists, lawyers, intellectuals, and expatriated individuals, was led by Mustafa Abdel Jalil, a defected justice minister. On March 5, the NTC proclaimed itself the sole representative of Libya and sent two members to meet with foreign governments in the


\textsuperscript{501} The National Transitional Council is sometimes known as the Transnational National Council, or TNC.
hopes of gaining international recognition as the legitimate representative of Libya. While the NTC worked to establish its legitimacy, the Qaddafi forces launched a major counteroffensive to combat rebels trying to take the capital of Tripoli. The counteroffensive consisted of both a ground and limited aerial campaign in the towns of Brega, Ras Lanuf, and Zaniyah. The regime’s efforts were successful in shifting control of the fighting from the rebels back to Qaddafi.

As it became clearer Qaddafi would not capitulate, the international community began to consider additional diplomatic and military options, including the establishment of a no-fly zone. Following a NATO defense ministerial meeting on March 10, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates indicated the Obama administration would consider enforcing a no-fly zone but the U.S. was unwilling to commit to further military action. The same day, NTC leaders met with French President Nicolas Sarkozy. The following day, March 11, President Sarkozy raised the prospect of air strikes to its European allies at a EU summit in Brussels. On March 12, the Arab League formally requested a mandate for a no-fly zone from the UN Security Council.502

The pressure from the French, the Arab League, and several other states and international organizations forced the Obama administration to strongly consider the no-fly zone, as well as further military action. At a National Security Council (NSC) meeting on March 15, President Obama expressed discontent with the no-fly zone plan because he did not believe it would stop Qaddafi from continuing the violent campaign against the rebels. After the NSC meeting, U.S. military advisors began preparing plans for an intervention. They advocated for NATO to take

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the lead role, and for the U.S. to fulfill its obligation to the alliance while refraining from taking a leadership position in the operation.  

While the Obama administration felt pressure from the international community to respond to Qaddafi’s successes in early March, the public and political elites both expressed concern over the possibility of a U.S. intervention in Libya. In a Pew poll conducted March 10-13, 2011, only 27 percent of those surveyed believed the U.S. had a responsibility to address the fighting in Libya. Although a small majority (51 percent) agreed the U.S. should increase the economic and diplomatic sanctions against Qaddafi, only 44 percent supported enforcement of a no-fly zone. Only 16 percent approved of bombing Libyan air defenses, and 82 percent opposed sending in ground troops. Political leaders from both parties were divided on how to address the growing conflict. Secretary Gates, as well as Vice-President Joe Biden, National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, and Deputy NSA Denis McDonough, expressed reservations about enforcing the no-fly zone and argued it would require additional military operations, which could drag the U.S. even further into the Libyan conflict. However, congressional leaders such as Senator Joe Lieberman, Senator John McCain, and Senator John Kerry cited an imperative need for intervention to prevent a humanitarian crisis like those experienced in the 1990s in Rwanda and the Balkans.

On March 17, the UN Security Council passed a second resolution on Libya. UNSCR 1973 detailed to the inability of the Libyan government to protect innocent civilians, condemned the gross actions and flagrant human rights violations by the Qaddafi regime, and demanded an immediate ceasefire. The resolution also authorized a no-fly zone, arms embargo, additional

503 Michaels, “Able But Not Willing.”
505 Chivvis, Toppling Qaddafi.
freezing of assets, and a flight ban.\textsuperscript{506} Two of the Security Council permanent members, China and Russia, abstained from voting, as did NATO ally Germany and two other rotating members.\textsuperscript{507} The following day, President Obama addressed the nation, stating the U.S.’s intention to act with its international partners to enforce UNSCR 1973. President Obama also explicitly stated the U.S. would not deploy ground troops into Libya, and stressed the U.S.’s continued coordination with the United Nations, the European Union, the Arab League, and individual allies – especially France and Great Britain.\textsuperscript{508} On March 19, 2011, the United States launched Operation Odyssey Dawn to enforce the no-fly zone.

\textbf{International and NATO Support in the Pre-Intervention Phase}

France and Great Britain were the two biggest advocates for an intervention in Libya in February and March. British Prime Minister David Cameron voiced concern that Libya could become a humanitarian crisis similar to the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts of the 1990s. French President Nicolas Sarkozy argued inaction posed a danger to the West’s values, and the necessity for action fell well within the parameters established under both international law and the UN Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine.\textsuperscript{509} The Libyan conflict posed a potential threat to European security and stability, as well as the flow of oil and natural gas to Europe. As Christopher Chivvis notes, “This joint Franco-British pressure was essential in generating diplomatic momentum for intervention…In retrospect, French and British pressure to intervene

\textsuperscript{509} Engelbrekt and Wagnsson, “Introduction.”
in Libya had at least as much to do with perceived threats to security and economic interests as with domestic and international power politics.\textsuperscript{510}

In consultation with the United States, France and Great Britain evacuated their citizens from Libya to facilitate quick action against the regime. In late February, they presented the UN Security Council with proposals for extensive sanctions against Qaddafi and his regime. These proposals established the framework for UNSCR 1970. At the same time, they spearheaded discussions of the no-fly zone over Libya, and as regional support emerged from the Arab League, both states rallied the United Nations, the European Union, and their NATO allies to support the no-fly zone.\textsuperscript{511}

On February 25, one day before the UN Security Council passed UNSCR 1970, NATO convened an emergency meeting of the North Atlantic Council in response to Qaddafi’s harsh crackdown on the protestors. NATO military officials prepared to assist in evacuating citizens from allied countries and to support humanitarian efforts undertaken by the UN or NATO allies. There was, however, some disagreement in the NATO alliance as to the role NATO should play in enforcing a no-fly zone or carrying out strikes against the Qaddafi forces. While the French pushed for a multilateral intervention, it was reluctant to endorse NATO participation as it feared the alliance’s presence would undermine support from the Arab League and other states threatened by the alliance’s “aggressive” reputation.\textsuperscript{512} The United States and Great Britain, as well as Italy and Norway, insisted the alliance should play an integral in any kind of operation. Germany, however, wanted to avoid any kind of military engagement, and instead argued in favor of increasing sanctions and taking additional diplomatic measures. Turkey worried the

\textsuperscript{510} Chivvis, \textit{Toppling Qaddafi}, 35.
\textsuperscript{511} Chivvis, \textit{Toppling Qaddafi}; Michaels, “Able But Not Willing.”
West’s interest in Libya was driven by access to its natural resources and was reluctant to consider NATO intervention. There was also concern among all of the allies about NATO resources being stretched too thin as operations in Afghanistan continued.\footnote{Michaels, “Able But Not Willing.”}

In early March, several NATO allies increased their intelligence collection in Libya to better monitor the ground situation as hostilities escalated. Though the allies were initially reluctant to consider the use of force, a meeting of the NATO defense members on March 10 formally introduced the option to consider participation in enforcing a no-fly zone. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen indicated the alliance would also discuss whether it should pursue additional military action, and would continue consulting regional organizations including African Union and the Arab League, as well as the UN and the EU.\footnote{“NATO Defence Ministers Will Discuss Situation in Libya and Longer Term Prospects in Middle East,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 7, 2011, accessed March 1, 2015, www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-B6E67EC7-D86A96C6/natolive/news_71277.htm?selectedLocale=en.}

Because Qaddafi’s offensive in mid-March successfully shifted control of the conflict away from the rebels, the allies agreed NATO should ensure the rebel forces would be able to maintain their defensive position and eventually shift back to an offensive position. Both the United States and Great Britain insisted NATO participation was crucial to the legitimacy of any operation, and would be greater than a coalition effort while attracting non-NATO partners and other regional organizations. Additionally, the alliance provided the necessary operational framework with its well-established military command structure and access to regional facilities such as airfields (and over flight access). However several states, including Germany, Poland, Turkey, and the United States maintained that the alliance should not undertake military operations outside of the no-fly zone. They also repeated concerns of what impact a Libyan operation would have on the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. The allies could not reach a
consensus on the need for additional intervention planning, and conceded to plan only for a supporting mission to enforce a no-fly zone, if mandated by the UN Security Council. The allies did, however, agree to reconsider if the conditions in Libya deteriorated further and the international community (and international law) supported intervention at a later time.\textsuperscript{515}

When the Security Council ratified UNSCR 1973 on March 17, the requirements for reconsidering NATO participation in an intervention were fulfilled. In addition to having the support of the Arab League and the African Union for the no-fly zone and some kind of international intervention, the United Nations explicitly authorized the intervention. However, the alliance was unprepared to undertake immediate action. Thus, the United States launched its own operation, Operation Odyssey Dawn, with the assistance of France, Great Britain, and several other NATO and non-NATO allies.

**Phase 2: Operation Odyssey Dawn**

When the United States launched Operation Odyssey Dawn (OOD) on March 19, 2011, it was joined by a coalition of states including the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Canada, Italy, Netherlands, Qatar, and the UAE. The primary objectives of OOD were to enforce the no-fly zone mandated by UNSCR 1973 and to conduct an aerial campaign aimed at destroying Libya’s long-range air defenses to protect the U.S. and its allies from retaliatory strikes.\textsuperscript{516} The U.S. also aimed to damage any military units posing a threat to rebel positions. In the first few days of fighting, the coalition ran under separate U.S., British, and French commands as three parallel operations: Operation Odyssey Dawn (U.S.), Operation Ellamy (United Kingdom), and Operation Harmattan (France). However, the United States moved quickly to consolidate the effort under the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), led by U.S.

\textsuperscript{515} Michaels, “Able But Not Willing”; Chivvis, *Toppling Gaddafi*.

\textsuperscript{516} Weitsman, *Waging War*. 

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Army General Carter Ham. Although OOD was under the authority of General Ham, U.S. Navy Admiral Samuel J. Locklear maintained control over the execution of OOD, serving in a dual role as Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa as well as the Commander of Allied Joint Force Command for NATO missions in the Mediterranean. Coalition forces remained under the control of their respective countries.517

In the first few days of airstrikes, the U.S. and the coalition effectively eliminated the Qaddafi regime’s long-range missile capabilities, struck a number of strategic military installations, and bombed several buildings, including one in Colonel Qaddafi’s compound. Although the airstrikes successfully struck several targets, the aerial campaign did not convince Qaddafi to concede: on March 20, he spoke on state TV, saying “We will exterminate every traitor and collaborator with America, Britain, France and the crusader coalition. They shall be exterminated in Benghazi or any other place.”518 Following the first few days of strikes, Obama administration officials reiterated the importance of international participation in a sustained effort in Libya. Operation Odyssey Dawn, officials argued, was intended to be a preliminary operation to make it easier for NATO or a coalition effort to take over leadership of U.S. operations. President Obama insisted the U.S. would continue its participation, but not in a leadership capacity. He demanded that responsibility for the Libya operation be transferred as quickly as possible, preferably to the NATO alliance.

Prior to Operation Odyssey Dawn, several congressional leaders acknowledged the need for an intervention on humanitarian grounds, and on March 1, 2011, the Senate unanimously agreed to Resolution 85, condemning the actions of Qaddafi and the human rights violations

committed by the Libyan regime. The resolution also called for the United Nations Security Council to impose the no-fly zone over Libya. However, when President Obama officially notified Congress about the deployment of military personnel and equipment on March 21, members of both parties in the House and Senate chided the president’s decision. Democratic Representatives Jerrold Nadler, Barbara Lee, and Michael Capuano argued the president exceeded his constitutional authority when he consented to engaging American troops without congressional authorization. Republican Senators Rand Paul and Richard Lugar issued statements condemning the president’s actions as well.

As the U.S. increased the rhetorical pressure for other states to take the lead in Libya, the NATO allies continued to debate whether OOD should become an alliance mission. The alliance took several steps to improve its capability of taking responsibility for Libya operations. On March 23, it moved ships and aircraft in the Central Mediterranean to prevent the shipment of arms to Colonel Qaddafi’s army. The allies also instituted a search and seizure order of all incoming ships. On March 24, NATO finally agreed to take control of the multinational effort in Libya, at the behest of several states and international organizations, including the Arab League and other non-NATO partners. On Sunday, March 31, the U.S. officially ended Operation Odyssey Dawn.

During the twelve day operation, the U.S. deployed multiple resources from the U.S. Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, including: Arleigh Burke-class, guided-missile destroyers USS Stout and USS Barry; submarines USS Providence, USS Scranton, and USS Florida; 110+ Tomahawk cruise missiles (used by both the US and UK), nineteen U.S. warplanes (including Marine Corps Harrier jets); Air Force B-2 stealth bombers, F-15, and F-16 fighter jets; and U.S.

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519 “NATO and Libya: Operation Unified Protector.”
Navy EA-18 Growlers.\textsuperscript{520} These resources were supplemented with refueling aircraft and reconnaissance and rescue resources, as well as a number of CIA intelligence assets on the ground in Libya and neighboring states. Additionally, although the OOD mission did not include NATO participation, Joint Task Force (JTF) tools, including the USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) and the USS Ponce (LPD 15), were employed during the operation.\textsuperscript{521} The total operational expenditure for the U.S. during this time was $550 million dollars.\textsuperscript{522}

\textbf{International and NATO Support for Operation Odyssey Dawn}

The NATO alliance was not a participant in the U.S.-led coalition effort Operation Odyssey Dawn. However, as previously noted, several NATO allies played an important role in the coalition. On March 19, France was the first state to initiate airstrikes against Libya, shortly after the heads of state convened to finalize preparations for enforcement of the no-fly zone and strategic aerial strikes. In the first three days of operations, France deployed 20 aircraft and conducted nearly 60 sorties. By the end of the OOD, French aircraft flew 150-200 sorties per day. Great Britain also deployed a number of aircraft, including ten Eurofighter Typhoons and several Tornados, supported by the 907 Expeditionary Air Wing (whose resources included VC-10 tanker aircraft, Nimrod and Sentinel surveillance and reconnaissance planes, E-3D AWACS, and C-17 and C-130 transports). Additionally, the Royal Navy deployed a submarine and two frigates, HMS Cumberland and HMS Westminster.\textsuperscript{523}

Although the Arab League and other regional organizations strongly supported the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya, the U.S. operation was criticized by several states.


\textsuperscript{521} “U.S. Naval Forces Open Odyssey Dawn.”

\textsuperscript{522} Michaels, “Able But Not Willing.”

The Arab League criticized OOD airstrikes as outside of the UN mandate, while China, who abstained from voting on UNSCR 1973, publicly acknowledged it made a mistake in not vetoing the UN authorization. Among the NATO allies, Turkey and Germany remained the most critical of U.S. and coalition efforts. When NATO moved its ships and aircraft around the Mediterranean to prepare for the transfer of responsibility from the U.S. to the alliance, Germany removed its naval assets from NATO command. Both states refused to participate in the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector.

Phase 3: Operation Unified Protector

As the United States ended Operation Odyssey Dawn on March 31, NATO commenced Operation Unified Protector (OUP). The three components of OUP - “enforcing an arms embargo in the Mediterranean Sea to prevent the transfer of arms, related materials and mercenaries to Libya; enforcing a no-fly zone to prevent planes from bombing civilian targets; and conducting air and naval strikes against military forces involved in attacks or threatening to attack Libyan civilians and civilian populated area” - mirrored those of Odyssey Dawn and were framed as part of a humanitarian mission to enforce UNSCR 1973. Command of OUP was given to Canadian Air Force Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard after Turkey blocked France and Great Britain’s bid to take command of the operation. Although the United States refused leadership of OUP, several of its officers played an integral role in the decision-making process. NATO Joint Force Command (JFC) in Naples, led by U.S. Navy Admiral Samuel Locklear, was responsible for implementing the decisions of the NAC and the Supreme Allied Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE). SHAPE was led by U.S. Navy Admiral James Stavridis, who

524 Dagher, Trofimov, and Hodge, “Allies Press Libya Attack.”
525 Gertler, “Operation Odyssey Dawn (Libya).”
526 “NATO and Libya.”
served in dual roles as commander U.S. European command (USEUCOM) and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).\textsuperscript{527}

In exchange for NATO leadership under the new operation, the U.S. agreed to continue participation in military operations, intelligence collection and analysis, refueling and support capabilities, and by a contribution of advanced military technology.\textsuperscript{528} During the operation, the United States Navy deployed command and assault ships, cargo ships, transport docks, frigates, destroyers, and submarines. These deployments included the following assets: USS Bataan, USS Halyburton, USNS Kanawha, USS Mahan, USS Mesa Verde, USS Mount Whitney, USS Ponce, USS Whidbey Island, USNS Lewis and Clark, and USNS Robert E. Peary.\textsuperscript{529} The Air Force also contributed resources to the Operation Unified Protector efforts, including reconnaissance aircraft, ground surveillance aircraft, refueling tankers, psychological warfare aircraft, and electronic attack aircraft. These efforts were executed with the use of the U-2 high-altitude aircraft, E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, EC-130J aircraft, KC-10 aircraft, and KC-135 aircraft, and F-15 and F-16 aircraft.\textsuperscript{530}

During the first month of operations, Colonel Qaddafi made several appeals to the international community to end the NATO airstrikes. On April 6, he sent a letter to President Obama in which he claimed the opposition forces were terrorists affiliated with al Qaeda, and asked the president to appeal to its allies to stop the bombing campaign. In the days that

followed, Qaddafi also met with a delegation of four African leaders, and on April 10 announced he would accept the proposed road map for ending the conflict. However, the rebels rejected plan, which did not include Qaddafi’s removal from power, and the fighting continued. In late April, Qaddafi addressed the international community again in a speech wherein he accused the NATO coalition of killing civilians and destroying Libya’s infrastructure. As fighting continued into May, Qaddafi stayed out of the public eye, but resurfaced later in the month for renewed discussions with African leaders for a ceasefire.  

In the first few months of Operation Unified Protector, several high-ranking members of the Qaddafi regime resigned to join the opposition fighters or seek asylum elsewhere. The National Transition Council also gained more legitimacy as it continued to appeal to the international community. In early June, Germany and Spain joined France in recognizing the NTC, and on July 15, the United States and Great Britain followed. By late July, over thirty states recognized the NTC as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people. This allowed the states recognizing the authority of the NTC, including the NATO allies engaged in OUP, to begin unfreezing Libyan funds to support the rebels’ efforts against Qaddafi.

As Qaddafi refused to step down and the fighting continued, the rebels made a number of advances in capturing territory once controlled by the Qaddafi forces. On August 11, the rebels captured the eastern part of Brega, but Qaddafi forces maintained control of oil facilities in the west. On August 11, the rebels also captured Zawiyah, a strategically advantageous location because of a supply highway to Tunisia. The following day, rebels captured Garyan, another

strategic highway city. On August 19, the rebels began their final siege into Tripoli, and after intense fighting, Colonel Qaddafi and his family were forced to flee to Algeria as opposition forces stormed his compound and took control of the capital city on August 22, 2011.\(^533\)

After the rebels captured Tripoli on August 22, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to restoring peace and ensuring Qaddafi and members of his regime were brought to justice. On the same day the rebels captured Tripoli, NATO Secretary General Rasmussen confirmed NATO would continue its efforts to protect Libyan citizens. On September 16, the UN Security passed Resolution 2009 to establish a UN support mission (UNSMIL). By the end of September, more than 60 states and international organizations recognized the NTC’s authority, including the African Union. In early October, the NATO defense ministers met in Brussels to discuss ending OUP. Though they agreed to continue the operation, both the ministers and the Secretary General insisted the alliance would work with the United Nations and the NTC to end the mission as soon as possible.\(^534\)

On October 20, opposition forces took control of Sirte, the last Qaddafi regime stronghold, and captured and killed Colonel Qaddafi. On October 27, both the UN Security Council and NATO announced they would end operations in Libya.\(^535\) On October 31 at midnight, NATO officially ended Operation Unified Protector. In the 222 days of engagement, the OUP coalition flew more than 26,000 sorties (120 sorties per day), of which almost 11,000 were strike sorties. NATO allies carried out 75 percent of the airstrikes and assumed full responsibility for maritime operations. At the peak of the operation, 8,000 troops were engaged


\(^{534}\) “NATO and Libya”; “Libya Profile.”

in OUP aerial and maritime operations, though no ground troops were deployed. The coalition partners deployed over 250 aircraft and 21 NATO ships.\(^{536}\) According to the official reports, the airstrikes hit almost 6,000 targets, including 600 battle tanks, 400 rocket launchers, and 300 ammunition dumps.\(^{537}\)

In the days leading up to the transition from the U.S.-led Operation Odyssey Dawn to the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector, President Obama, Defense Secretary Gates, and other members of the administration pressed the allies to take a leading role in Libya, a sentiment that was repeated several times over the course of OUP. Still, the United States played an integral role despite its refusal to command the operation. The United States contributed the largest number of troops (8,507 deployed), followed by Italy (4,800 deployed), France (4,200 deployed), and Great Britain (3,500 deployed). The U.S. also executed the most sorties (25 percent), followed by France and Great Britain (33 percent combined). However, France and Great Britain flew more of the strike sorties (33 and 20 percent, respectively) than U.S. aircraft.\(^{538}\) The U.S. also spent more money than any other coalition partner. From the beginning of Operation Odyssey Dawn through the end of September 2011, the United States spent $1.1 billion in Libya, compared to an estimated $257-$482 million in spending by the United Kingdom and $415-$485 million by France. Only a small proportion of the OUP budget came from the NATO common fund. The alliance spent an estimated $52 million during the operation to deploy its Airborne

\(^{536}\) “NATO and Libya.”

American political elites and the public had mixed perceptions of the U.S.’s participation in Operation Unified Protector. As responsibility for the Libya operation shifted from the U.S. mission to the NATO-led OUP, Congress remained divided on whether the U.S. should participate in the ongoing operations. On April 1, the U.S. Justice Department released a memorandum confirming the president was within his legal and constitutional authority to authorize the limited use of military power in Libya “because he could reasonably determine that such use of force was in the national interest.”\footnote{“Authority to Use Military Force in Libya,” United States Justice Department, April 1, 2011, accessed April 9, 2015, http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/opinions/2011/04/31/authority-military-use-in-libya.pdf.}

Senators Kerry, McCain, and Lugar stood behind the Justice Department’s finding, arguing the U.S.’s deferral to NATO alleviated any immediate concerns of violations of the 1973 War Powers Resolution.\footnote{Josh Rogin, “Senate Has No Plans to Invoke War Powers Act Over Libya,” \textit{Foreign Policy: The Cable}, May 10, 2011, accessed March 1, 2015, thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/05/10/senate_has_no_plans_to_invoke_war_powers_act_over_libya.} Senators Kerry and McCain also pushed for a resolution in support of the U.S.’s participation in OUP. However, as NATO operations continued, legislators again raised concerns over violations of the War Powers Resolution. In June, Democratic Representative Dennis Kucinich and Republican Representative Walter Jones, along with eight other representatives, filed a lawsuit against the president, but a U.S. district court judge later dismissed the lawsuit.\footnote{Jennifer Bendery, “Kucinich Sues Obama For Violating War Powers Act in Libya,” \textit{The Huffington Post}, June 15, 2011, accessed November 7, 2013, www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/06/15/Kucinich-obama-war-powers-act-libya_n_877396.html?view=print&comm_ref=false.}

Public support for the U.S.’s engagement in Libya was also inconsistent. Prior to the commencement of Operation Odyssey Dawn, only 44 percent of those surveyed supported U.S.
enforcement of a no-fly zone, and even fewer (16 percent) supported a bombing campaign. However, a Gallup poll conducted on March 22 (three days after the beginning of OOD) indicated 47 percent of those polled approved of the U.S.’s participation in military action in Libya. When the U.S. shifted leadership to NATO under Operation Unified Protector, American support for the intervention grew: a May 2011 poll conducted by the German Marshall Fund (GMF) indicated that 59 percent of those polled approved of the international intervention. Nearly 60 percent of U.S. respondents also supported sending military advisors to Libya to support the rebels. Support for ground troops remained low, however, with only 31 percent in favor of a ground operation. In a follow-up survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund in 2012, 49 percent of respondents believed the intervention in Libya was the right thing to do.

**International and NATO Support for Operation Unified Protector**

The preceding section details the leadership of NATO during Operation Unified Protector. Fifteen NATO and four non-NATO states participated in Operation Unified Protector: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Although Germany and Italy publicly objected to the operation, both agreed to provide logistical support for humanitarian assistance. The participating states contributed 195 aircraft (including 64 strike aircraft) and nine states deployed ships for the operation.

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The UN Security Council gave the allies explicit authorization to intervene in Libya when it passed UNSCR 1973. Although the United States was the leading contributor of troops and executed the most sorties during OUP, the French and British allies were integral to OUP operations. Alison Pargeter writes, “Had NATO not entered the conflict when it did, it is likely that the rebel forces would not have been able to dislodge Qaddafi from the west of the country and would not have prevented him from re-taking the east.”547 In addition to the roles of the United Nations and NATO, several regional organizations and non-NATO allies impacted the execution of Operation Unified Protector. On March 12, the Arab League formally requested the United Nations establish a no-fly zone over Libya, setting the precedent for UNSCR 1973.548 Despite NATO’s reputation in the region as an aggressive Western organization, both the United Arab Emirates and Qatar participated in the operation. Sweden, Morocco, and Jordan also contributed to OUP. The participation of these non-NATO allies enhanced the legitimacy of Operation Unified Protector, but support for the operation dwindled within the first few weeks. By mid-April, only eight of the original fifteen states (U.S., UK, France, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, and Norway549) were conducting air strikes, though several other states provided maritime support and access to necessary resources (such as airfields).550

The African Union did not play a significant role in OUP, though several African leaders met with Qaddafi and the rebels in April to formulate a roadmap for ending the conflict. The AU recognized the legitimacy of the NTC in August, further strengthening its ability to establish an interim government. Several AU states also worked with the UN, the European Union, and the

547 Pargeter, Libya: The Rise and Fall of Qaddafi,” 8.
549 On August 1, Norway withdrew its aircraft from OUP.
Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and other states as part of the “Friends of Libya” group organized by the United Nations Secretary General.\(^{551}\)

International public opinion on the NATO intervention in Libya was divided. According to the GMF poll conducted in May 2011, only 48 percent of European respondents approved of the intervention (compared to 47 percent of respondents who disapproved of OUP). Support was highest in Sweden and the Netherlands. Although France and Great Britain spearheaded the NATO operation, both publics were reluctant to endorse their states’ participation – only 52 percent of French and 50 percent of British respondents approved of the intervention. Of the NATO allies and OUP participants, Germany and Turkey had the lowest approval rates. Although over half of the respondents from Turkey approved of removing Qaddafi from power, only 23 percent of Turkish respondents approved of the intervention.\(^{552}\) In a second GMF poll conducted in June 2012, the collective European attitude remained unchanged regarding the appropriateness of the Libya intervention: 48 percent of EU respondents agreed with the decision to intervene. Despite Germany’s nonparticipation in Operation Unified Protector, German attitudes about the intervention were much more positive than in 2011, with 53 percent of respondents approving the intervention.\(^{553}\)

**Legitimacy, Multilateralism, and the Utility of NATO**

Both Operation Odyssey Dawn and Operation Unified Protector enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy because of the two Security Council resolutions, including UNSCR 1973 which authorized the no-fly zone, sanctions, and the protection of civilians by individual states or

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\(^{552}\) “Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2011.”

\(^{553}\) “Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2012.”
regional organizations. Legitimacy was enhanced by the endorsement of non-NATO allies and regional organizations such as the Arab League. Because the Libyan campaign was spearheaded by France and Great Britain, there is no evidence the United States sought a multilateral coalition during Operation Odyssey Dawn to enhance the legitimacy of the intervention. Instead, President Obama’s efforts to engage the international community stemmed from the administration’s position that the United States should act as an equal partner, not a leader, in Libyan operations.

However, several members of the Obama administration argued that NATO should replace the U.S. when it ended its leadership of the Libyan operation. Military planners agreed NATO’s leadership would lend more legitimacy to the operation replacing OOD than if it were led by an individual state or an ad hoc coalition.\footnote{Michaels, “Able But Not Willing.”} Thus, legitimacy enhancement was a factor during the formation of Operation Unified Protector. The Obama administration also preferred a NATO intervention in Libya because of the utility of multilateralism: U.S. military planners pursued allied participation and NATO leadership to alleviate the U.S.’s military and economic burdens. The execution of Operation Unified Protector revealed the resource shortcomings and fractures in the U.S.’s relationship with NATO, but the alliance’s participation enhanced the United States’ political and military objectives.

**Legitimacy**

In addition to the UNSCR 1970 and UNSCR 1973, and the endorsement of a number of non-NATO allies and regional organizations, legitimacy for the United States’ actions in Libya was enhanced by the United Nations’ Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, as articulated by the 2005 World Summit participants and adopted by the United Nations.\footnote{Weitsman, *Waging War.*} As discussed in the Kosovo chapter, the R2P doctrine establishes the conditions under which, in the event of a
possible humanitarian crisis, states may supersede another state’s sovereignty to protect civilian populations. The R2P doctrine was repeatedly cited in the case for intervention in Libya. As David Rieff explained, “Muammar el-Qaddafi’s threat in March to unleash a bloodbath in rebel-held Benghazi was just the kind of extreme instance that R2P’s framers had in mind. And the U.N.-sanctioned NATO intervention did forestall a massacre.”

Operation Unified Protector was justified as fulfilling the international community’s commitment to R2P, enhancing the legitimacy of the U.S. and NATO’s actions. The International Criminal Court’s acknowledgment of possible crimes against humanity bolstered the legitimacy of the UN and NATO’s decision to intervene as well. UNSCR 1973 referred the case of Libya to the International Criminal Court, and in late June 2011 the ICC issued arrest warrants for Colonel Qaddafi, his son Saif al-Islam Qaddafi, and his brother-in-law, Abdullah al-Sanussi.

Although both Operation Odyssey Dawn and Operation Unified Protector enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy, there were threats to maintaining legitimacy of the Libyan intervention. Regional support for enforcement of the no-fly zone over Libya was high, as evidenced by the Arab League’s formal request to the United Nations on March 12. However, NATO’s regional partners were less enthusiastic about the alliance’s bombing campaign. Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa publicly condemned the airstrikes, and South African President Jacob Zuma criticized NATO for using the UN resolution for “regime change” in Libya. As David Rieff noted, “The Security Council resolutions that authorized an R2P-based intervention to

557 “A Timeline of Conflict in Libya.” The ICC case against Colonel Qaddafi was dismissed in November 2011 because of his death. Both Saif al-Islam Qaddafi and Abdullah al-Sanussi were captured following Qaddafi’s death. They are currently detained in Libya.
protect Benghazi did not authorize outside powers to provide air support for the subsequent rebellion against Qaddafi. And it is almost certain that without that support he would not have been overthrown.” Of the three elements of Operation Unified Protector – enforcement of the arms embargo, enforcement of the no-fly zone, and the protection of civilians – the decision to employ targeted aerial campaign for civilian protection quickly became the most essential to the rebels’ efforts to overthrow Qaddafi. However, the bombing was also problematic for many states, and thus was the most controversial and least legitimate component of the operation.

The legitimacy of OUP, and in particular the air strikes, was also threatened by several reports of civilian casualties. In August 2011, just before the fall of Tripoli, the Libyan government reported to Human Rights Watch (HRW) NATO bombs killed 1,108 civilians and wounded over 6,000 more from March until August 2011. However, after the regime collapsed in late August, several former government officials indicated the casualty figures were fabricated to garner sympathy from the international community. The United States and NATO could not verify the total number of civilians killed by airstrikes either: although some states conducted covert operations and collected intelligence from assets located inside Libya, the alliance never deployed any personnel to monitor accidental deaths or friendly-fire incidents. Human Rights Watch verified nine incidents of civilian casualties in which 72 people were killed. There were also reports of several friendly fire incidents between NATO and the rebels, including incidents in Brega, Misrata, and Zawiyah. Although NATO cited evidence of measures taken to minimize an accidental targeting of civilians – including “patterns of life” surveillance and a

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559 “R2P, R.I.P.”
561 Weitsman, Waging War.
heavy reliance on precision munitions – the reports of civilian casualties and friendly fire incidents threatened the legitimacy of OUP.  

Multilateralism and the Utility of NATO

The Obama administration enjoyed some political and public support for U.S. engagement in Libya, but the president repeatedly expressed his reluctance to engage U.S. troops and resources for a prolonged campaign in Libya. When the Security Council voted in favor of UNSCR 1973, President Obama affirmed the U.S.’s participation to enforce the resolution in Qaddafi failed to immediately comply with the UN guidelines. However, in his March 18 address he also stated that the U.S. would not lead a sustained coalition effort: “American leadership is essential, but that does not mean acting alone. It means shaping the conditions for the international community to act together.” The Obama administration also applauded the efforts of France and Great Britain, and continued to pressure its NATO allies to support a NATO-led operation to replace the coalition assembled under Operation Odyssey Dawn. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton held conference calls with her counterparts in France, Great Britain, and Turkey to settle the dispute over command of NATO operations in Libya.

Following NATO’s announcement on March 24 that it would assume responsibility for the NATO mission, President Obama addressed the nation from the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. During the speech, the president referred to his earlier promise to engage the military in a limited capacity, stating

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563 “Remarks on the Situation in Libya (March 18, 2011).”
I said that America’s role would be limited; that we would not put ground troops into Libya; that we would focus our unique capabilities on the front end of the operation and that we would transfer responsibility to our allies and partners. Tonight, we are fulfilling that pledge. Our most effective alliance, NATO, has taken command of the enforcement of the arms embargo and the no-fly zone. Last night, NATO decided to take on the additional responsibility of protecting Libyan civilians. This transfer from the United States to NATO will take place on Wednesday. Going forward, the lead in enforcing the no-fly zone and protecting civilians on the ground will transition to our allies and partners, and I am fully confident that our coalition will keep the pressure on Qaddafi’s remaining forces. In that effort, the United States will play a supporting role -- including intelligence, logistical support, search and rescue assistance, and capabilities to jam regime communications. Because of this transition to a broader, NATO-based coalition, the risk and cost of this operation -- to our military and to American taxpayers -- will be reduced significantly.\footnote{Barack H. Obama, “Address to the Nation on the Situation in Libya,” The American Presidency Project, March 28, 2011, accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=90195&st=&st1=.}

Although the U.S. executed more air strikes and contributed more troops to the NATO operation than any other ally, it allowed France and Great Britain to lead the execution of strike sorties. The United States also maintained a significant influence over OUP operations through high-ranking officers serving in dual roles as U.S. and NATO commanders, but the day-to-day command of OUP operations was relegated to Lt. Gen. Bouchard (CAN).

The United States’ role in Operation Unified Protector reflected the personal and political preferences of the Obama administration to avoid engaging U.S. troops in another protracted
conflict such as the Afghanistan and Iraq intervention. However, its continued participation in the NATO operation, and willingness to contribute significantly more resources and financial support than the other allies, indicated the administration’s belief in the alliance’s ability to enforce UNSCR 1973. Thus, the U.S. engagement of NATO was based in part on the utility of the alliance.

At the same time, Operation Unified Protector revealed both operational weaknesses and tensions between the United States and the alliance. In addition to providing fewer resources and financial support than the United States, the European allies did not have adequate stockpiles of laser-guided munitions or the necessary technological infrastructure for timely information exchanges. The United States also contributed more intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) such as unmanned aerial vehicles, as well as air-to-air refueling resources.\textsuperscript{566}

The inabilities of the European allies to provide the necessary resources caused tension between the United States and NATO. In some cases, such as the shortage of laser-guided munitions, the inability of the allies to maintain adequate stockpiles resulted from the significant decline in military spending since the end of the Cold War. In other cases, such as the provision of aircraft, the U.S. contributed more resources because although they had the necessary equipment, the allies refused to deploy them. Although the European allies affirmed the necessity of OUP, U.S. officials saw argued the inability to fulfill their commitment to the operation stemmed from a lack of political willpower. Secretary Gates deepened the tensions between the U.S. and NATO when he publicly chastised states such as Germany, Turkey, Poland, the Netherlands, and Spain for refusing to take part in the airstrikes while praising

\textsuperscript{566} Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}. 
Denmark and Norway for their disproportionate contributions.\textsuperscript{567} NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen agreed the European allies’ weaknesses stemmed primarily from political, not military, constraints.\textsuperscript{568}

When the European allies appealed to the United States in mid-April for more participation, U.S. officials refused to engage more personnel and resources. However, the U.S. did provide more precision munitions and continued leading surveillance and intelligence collection efforts. As the European weapons stockpiles were exhausted, the United States increased its weapons contributions as well. The United States’ contributions, especially in the later months of OUP, were necessary for the success NATO operations, but drove the cost of the American contribution higher while causing embarrassment for the European allies.\textsuperscript{569}

Still, despite these operational difficulties, the United States’ pursuit of NATO leadership was driven in part by the utility of the alliance. Geographically, NATO participation gave the United States access to necessary logistical support, such as access to airfields, supply routes, regular maintenance, and the use of existing equipment and weapons stockpiles.\textsuperscript{570} NATO’s well-established command and control systems facilitated the transition of operations from the U.S. (under Operation Odyssey Dawn) to NATO. NATO’s integrated command structure also facilitated an easier integration of non-NATO allies into OUP. Unlike the previous engagements in Kosovo and Afghanistan, there were no reports of friendly-fire incidents between NATO allies – all of the reported incidents occurred between the alliance and the Libyan rebels. Although this

\textsuperscript{567} Michaels, “Able But Not Willing.”
\textsuperscript{569} Engelbrekt and Wagnsson, “Introduction.”
\textsuperscript{570} Engelbrekt and Wagnsson, “Introduction.”
was due in part to the lack of ground troops, it also reflected the alliance’s growth from previous engagements.\textsuperscript{571}

\textit{Conclusion}

There were several factors influencing the Obama administration to pursue NATO engagement in Libyan operations. The Obama administration made its preference for a multilateral intervention in Libya explicitly clear. When the UN Security Council authorized an intervention under UNSCR 1973, the United States moved quickly to engage its allies in a two-week coalition effort to begin enforcement of the no-fly zone and arms embargo, as well as the protection of the civilian population. The U.S. also pushed for a quick transition from U.S. leadership. Despite the French-British coalition’s willingness to lead, the United States argued NATO leadership would enhance the operation’s legitimacy. The United States agreed to continue its participation in Libyan operations in exchange for a NATO-led operation, and its participation was crucial in ensuring Operation Unified Protector’s success. This confirms the hypothesis on the U.S.’s pursuit of NATO for legitimacy enhancement. Furthermore, the U.S.’s actions throughout the course of the operations in Libya indicate the importance of adhering to international norms regarding the use of force for the Obama administration, thus confirming the second hypothesis on U.S.-NATO relations.

Although legitimacy enhancement was a factor in the U.S.’s insistence on NATO leadership in Libyan operations, the principal reason the Obama administration pushed for the alliance’s participation was its preference for multilateralism and its belief in the utility of NATO, confirming the third and fourth hypotheses. The integrated command and control systems, improved interoperability, and the information-sharing mechanisms of NATO facilitated the coordination of both allies and non-NATO participants. Additionally, the

\textsuperscript{571} Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}. 
collective pool of NATO resources simplified important components of OUP, particularly the alliance’s patrol of the Central Mediterranean.

Operation Unified Protector also revealed key indications of U.S.-NATO relations. While Secretary General Rasmussen repeatedly expressed NATO’s commitment to OUP and the protection of Libyan civilians, both he and U.S. officials struggled to convince many European allies to participate or contribute resources to OUP missions. In addition to lacking the necessary political willpower, OUP reminded the allies of the growing capabilities gap between the United States and Europe. This became especially evident in later months of the operation when the U.S. was forced to increase its financial and resource contributions to OUP because of dwindling European stockpiles. Ultimately, the U.S. contributed more money, aircraft, weapons, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support than any other ally. As a result of the U.S.’s longstanding leadership within the alliance, it was also able to exert a significant influence on NATO missions through several high-ranking military officers serving in dual U.S.-NATO roles. Subsequently, the Obama administration enjoyed political and military benefits from NATO participation, as well as enhanced legitimacy for the operation, indicating the U.S.’s likely engagement of NATO for future operations.
Chapter 7: The Evolution and Persistence of NATO

NATO’s participation in the four conflicts analyzed in the preceding chapters revealed the major strengths and weaknesses of the alliance in combat, as well as the advantages to the U.S.’s efforts to engage NATO. Each episode was a watershed moment for the alliance, allowing the allies to regroup and reassess NATO’s operational and political needs. In the two decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO faced a reduction of both troops (from 5 million to 3.8 million active military) and facilities (from 78 headquarters to just 11). Still, the allies undertook several new initiatives in the inter-conflict periods to improve the alliance’s political and military infrastructure. Some of these efforts to streamline NATO resources reflected the defense budget cuts of many of the European allies and changing domestic and international priorities. Other changes resulted from the recognition of a new security environment and the need for a modernization of capabilities. NATO’s reforms of existing programs, establishment of new initiatives, expanding membership and non-NATO state partnerships, and summit declarations further reflected the alliance’s attempts to evolve and persist in the post-Cold War environment.

The existing literature on NATO after the Cold War, however, largely overlooks the inter-conflict development – and more importantly, the United States’ role in facilitating many of these initiatives – in evaluating the alliance’s persistence. The following chapter will analyze the ways in which the alliance responded to these watershed moments in the intra-conflict periods. I demonstrate that in addition to exercising a substantial influence during the four conflicts, the United States significantly impacted the intra-conflict development of the alliance. This allows

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for a more complete understanding of NATO’s evolution and fills important gaps in the existing perspectives on alliance persistence.

**NATO’s Evolution**

NATO’s intervention in the Balkans – including Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia in 1995 and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo in 1999 – was NATO’s first real post-war engagement. These operations raised concerns about the alliance’s unity, credibility, command and control mechanisms, and the growing capabilities gaps among allies. Disagreement between the U.S., the UK, and France (as well as Russia) in the UN Security Council and the North Atlantic Council signaled to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic that the allies were not united on the decision to intervene in the Balkans. After the 1995 operation in Bosnia, President Clinton and other allied leaders wrongly believed the alliance could make a credible threat for the use of force in Kosovo and Milosevic would end the violence between the Serbian forces and ethnic Albanians. Milosevic, however, was emboldened by the disunity between the allies and continued his campaign without concern of NATO intervention. When the violence in Kosovo escalated in 1998, the United States cited Operation Deliberate Force as precedent for insisting on an air-only campaign, much to the chagrin of other allies. The conflict in Kosovo threatened European peacekeeping troops in surrounding areas and the stability of the greater Yugoslav region. The continued humanitarian abuses also threatened the values of Western nations. However, both China and Russia’s unwillingness to authorize an intervention through a Security Council resolution exacerbated the discord between the allies, furthering the perception of the alliance’s disunity.

As Operation Allied Force commenced on March 24, 1999, NATO’s miscalculations about Milosevic’s capitulation became clear. Additionally, because the allies failed to plan for an
extended campaign, it authorized only a few bombing targets at the outset of operations. The process to approve new targets through the alliance’s consensus-based command structure was slow and cumbersome, revealing evidence of NATO’s operational weaknesses. The two Balkans operations highlighted the growing capabilities gap between the United States, which maintained its defense spending in the post-Cold War period, and the European allies, many of whom shrunk their defense budgets and resource stockpiles after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a result, the U.S. carried significantly more of the burden than the European allies in many aspects of the aerial campaign, as demonstrated in chapter 3. The Kosovo intervention also demonstrated the European allies’ inability to act through other European organizations and without the leadership of the United States. The Washington Summit in April 1999 provided an opportunity for the alliance to regroup and address the ongoing difficulties of the Kosovo operation. At the summit, the allies resolved to remain committed to the objectives of Operation Allied Force and strategized to intensify the air strikes. This intensification caused substantial damage to Serbian infrastructure and military assets, which bolstered the negotiations between the G8, President Yeltsin, and Milosevic, and eventually led to the cease-fire.

For just the second time in alliance history, NATO declassified its new Strategic Concept following the 1999 Washington Summit. The Strategic Concept stressed the importance of the allies’ solidarity and cohesion, stating, “The Alliance embodies the transatlantic link by which the security of North America is permanently tied to the security of Europe.” The ambitious agenda also reflected the allies’ experiences during the two Balkans operations, noting the necessity of increasing European contributions to alleviate burden-sharing issues and narrow the growing capabilities gap, improving communications technologies and interoperability, developing the European Security and Defense Identity (EDSI) to allow European allies to take
more responsibility for their security and defense, and stressing the need to continue relations with international organizations such as the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, and the Western European Union, as well as non-NATO partnerships.\(^{573}\)

In the aftermath of Operation Allied Force, NATO attempted to overcome some of the political and military challenges during the Balkans operations. The allies recognized the necessity of change to its political and military infrastructure if the alliance was to persist in the contemporary environment. In addition to growing concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, ongoing peacekeeping missions, and crisis prevention, the 1999 Washington Summit and Strategic Concept identified several immediate threats to the alliance’s periphery, including ethnic and religious rivalries, failed political or economic reforms, territorial disputes, human rights abuses, and instability resulting from the dissolution or reorganization of states. For the first time, the Strategic Concept addressed the threat of international terrorism as well, though most states maintained the position that terrorism was primarily a domestic issue.\(^{574}\)

In addition to the Washington Summit discussions and the renewed Strategic Concept, the alliance established the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) in December 1999. The purpose of the DCI was to “ensure the effectiveness of future multinational operations across the full spectrum of Alliance missions in the present and foreseeable security environment with a special focus on improving interoperability among Alliance forces.”\(^{575}\) The allies continued to expand their relationships with non-NATO members through the North Atlantic Cooperation Council


\(^{574}\) ibid.

(renamed Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997) and the Mediterranean Dialogue. In 1999, NATO extended membership to the Czech Republic and Hungary, and encouraged other Eastern European states to partner with the alliance (and possibly pursue NATO membership) through its Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Although these programs were established prior to the Balkans interventions, after Operation Allied Force the allies recognized the need for these partnerships, particularly in the changing security environment.

These efforts were unexpectedly derailed by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. The alliance invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and quickly assembled multiple proposals in support of the U.S. However, the legacy of the Kosovo operation weighed heavily on U.S. policymakers’ decision to engage the alliance. Because of the burdensome command and control structure of the alliance and the capabilities gap between the United States and many of the allies, the U.S. largely refrained from engaging the alliance at the outset of Operation Enduring Freedom, opting instead to engage individual allies based on their ability to contribute to the U.S.’s operational needs. The alliance agreed to increase its intelligence-sharing capabilities and provide support for Operation Enduring Freedom by conducting two parallel missions. The first, Operation Eagle Assist, highlighted the utility of the alliance’s airborne early warning and control system (AWACS). The operation deployed the alliance’s AWACS aircraft over the United States, allowing the U.S. to secure its domestic airspace while deploying its own resources elsewhere. NATO also deployed its naval resources to the Mediterranean for patrolling and tracking possible terrorist activities under a second mission, Operation Active Endeavour. The second operation is still active today.

Prior to assuming command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), established in 2003 by the United Nations, the NATO allies continued to adopt new policies to
improve the alliance’s political resources and military capabilities. The alliance capitalized on improved relations with Russia and established the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) at the 2002 Prague Summit. The NRC enabled information sharing between the partners and allowed them to coordinate on shared security concerns. In 2004, the NRC released its first Action Plan on terrorism, reaffirming NATO and Russia’s common goals of preventing terrorism, combatting terrorist activity, improving states’ abilities to respond and manage terrorist attacks, and supplementing the counterterrorism and anti-terrorism efforts of other states and international organizations.\textsuperscript{576} In addition to establishing the NATO-Russia Council, the summit declaration announced a new framework to engage its PfP partners, revealing the Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism.\textsuperscript{577} In 2004, NATO expanded its non-member state relationships in the Middle East by establishing the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

Reflecting on the Kosovo intervention and the alliance’s inability to meet the U.S.’s capabilities demands for Operation Enduring Freedom, the 2002 Prague Summit emphasized the need for alliance transformation.\textsuperscript{578} As highlighted in chapters 4 and 5, the allies also agreed to establish the NATO Response Force (NRF). The first NRF unit was assembled in 2003, achieved partial operational capability in 2004 and full operational capability in 2006.\textsuperscript{579} Following the Prague Summit, the North Atlantic Council reorganized its military infrastructure and established


the Allied Command Transformation (ACT). The ACT was tasked with ensuring the alliance’s future operational viability while making the military component more efficient.\footnote{“History of Allied Command Transformation,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization Allied Command Transformation, August 9, 2010, accessed April 9, 2015, http://www.act.nato.int/history-of-allied-command-transformation.}

NATO’s leadership of the ISAF mission revealed the strengths of the alliance in ground operations. As demonstrated in chapter 4, a major component of the NATO mission was to build civil-military partnerships and strengthen the alliance’s relationships with nongovernmental organizations to deploy into the Afghan communities. The United States lacked the necessary knowledge of the different cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages of Afghanistan, and the allies brought these critically needed skills to the ISAF mission. The alliance also retrained the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) and re-established the justice system. Under the ISAF mission, NATO took the lead in stabilization and reconstruction efforts and eventually took responsibility for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) throughout Afghanistan.

However, the NATO-led ISAF mission also indicated the alliance’s weaknesses. Because of the structure of the Washington Treaty, individual states were able to place caveats on how and where their troops deployed, as well as restrictions on combat activities. At times, the command and control system was arduous, just as in the 1999 Kosovo operation. The alliance also struggled with ensuring adequate burden-sharing between the participating allies and disparities in troop contributions. One of the most evident weaknesses was the allies’ inability to conduct joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (JISR) missions. The United States
was forced to execute the majority of these efforts, as well as supply the necessary equipment, personnel, and communications networks.\textsuperscript{581}

The NATO alliance’s efforts to maintain its relevance was once again challenged in 2003 with the United States invasion of Iraq. After several refusals by the allies to assist the U.S. efforts, NATO agreed to lead the multinational force established by the UN under UNSCR 1546. As highlighted in chapter 5, the alliance demonstrated its ability to provide a wide range of resources with its leadership of NATO Training Mission Iraq (NTM-I) – not only did the presence of NATO enhance the legitimacy of the operation, but the allies’ contributions enhanced the mission’s capabilities and provided substantial opportunities for training Afghan security and police forces.

As the result of NATO’s leadership in ISAF and its NTM-I mission in Iraq, the alliance continued to evolve to better fit the contemporary security environment. In 2004, the alliance welcomed seven new member states, many of whom supported U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2006, the allies agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) spearheaded by U.S. Marine Corps General James Jones (who served as NATO SACEUR from 2003 to 2006) to establish the NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre (NIFC). The NIFC was intended to address the alliance’s ISR shortcomings, particularly in out-of-area missions such as Afghanistan (and later Libya), as well as to support the NRF.\textsuperscript{582} NATO’s shortcomings in ISR also led to reforms to the Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) program. Although the AGS program was conceived in 1992 to “pursue work on a minimum essential NATO-owned and operated core capability supplemented by interoperable national assets,” the allies struggled to

\textsuperscript{581} Matthew J. Martin, “Unifying Our Vision: Joint ISR Coordination and the NATO Joint ISR Initiative,” Joint Forces Quarterly 72 (January 2014): 54-60.

reach a consensus regarding the necessary state contributions (largely due to the ongoing defense budget cuts in many European states) prior to the 9/11 attacks. However, operational difficulties in Afghanistan forced the allies to reorganize and reprioritize the program several times. At the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon, the AGS program was incorporated into the revised Strategic Concept, and in 2012 the North Atlantic Council settled the funding dispute to move new AGS acquisition forward.

The allies repeatedly reaffirmed their commitments to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and the NTM-I mission in Iraq, as well as counterterrorism and efforts to prevent the proliferation of WMDs, at the 2006 Riga Summit, the 2008 Bucharest Summit, and the 2009 Strasbourg/Kehl Summit. Each summit produced an ambitious list of initiatives the Heads of States hoped the alliance would undertake, including: more rapid deployment of troops during crises, better intra-theatre airlift, improved networked capabilities, better information sharing, and improvements in special operations forces training and deployability. In 2009, the alliance also extended membership to Albania and Croatia, and the alliance grew to 28 members. At the 2010 Lisbon summit, the allies agreed on a new Strategic Concept and a plan to restructure the NATO command structure. The 2010 Strategic Concept outlined an ambitious agenda reflecting the ongoing difficulties in Afghanistan and the political pressure to reduce defense spending and streamline the alliance’s operations. Still, the allies remained committed to ensuring the alliance’s ability to respond to emerging crises, as well as play an integral role in stabilization and reconstruction efforts around the world.583

In 2011, NATO’s evolution was again challenged by the Libyan intervention. The United States, France, and Britain pushed the alliance to assume responsibility for the no-fly zone, arms embargo, and protection of the civilian population, because it was one of the only organizations with the necessary capabilities to do so. Throughout the first twenty years of the post-Cold War period, NATO’s conflict engagements and peacetime evolution equipped the alliance with the necessary political and military infrastructure to coordinate both NATO and non-NATO allies. This was especially important to the United States, which wanted to relinquish leadership of the Libya operations as quickly as possible.

NATO’s air campaign was limited not only by the unwillingness or inability of some allies to commit ground troops, but also by the UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which prohibited a ground presence. Because of these limitations, it was difficult for the alliance to coordinate with the rebel fighters on the ground. The alliance’s justification for intervention, the R2P doctrine, led to disagreement over target selection. Although the alliance had successfully provided a deep understanding of Afghanistan culture, ethnicity, and religions during the ISAF mission, it failed to bring the same kind of resources for understanding to the Libyan conflict. Operation Unified Protector (OUP) also suffered as support for operations declined within the first few weeks of the air strikes, and while half of the NATO allies participated in OUP activities, only eight states conducted airstrikes. Meanwhile, the other half of the alliance refrained completely from participation in OUP. Once again, the alliance’s deficiency in ISR


resources was highlighted and the United States was forced to increase its contributions in the later months of the operation to compensate for these shortcomings.

The strengths and weaknesses of the alliance during Operation Unified Protector led to another set of reforms to the alliance’s political and military structures. In early October 2011 – just a few weeks before the end of OUP – NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen introduced a new initiative, Smart Defense. The Smart Defense initiative was formally incorporated into the alliance’s strategy at the 2012 Chicago Summit. The three components of the initiative – prioritization of capability adoption and advancement, specialization to capitalize on the strengths of each member, and cooperation between allies to share resources integral to common issues – reflected the alliance’s evolution as well as the continued political and financial pressures on the alliance to become more efficient and cost effective.\textsuperscript{586} As demonstrated earlier, the Heads of State came together at the 2012 Chicago Summit to settle the funding dispute over the NATO Response Force, to enable the project’s advancement. The allies also addressed the alliance’s ongoing intelligence resource shortages and created the Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (JISR) initiative to increase intelligence sharing efficiency, conduct training for JISR staff and allied nations’ military officers, and establish the necessary standardization agreements to improve ISR interoperability.\textsuperscript{587} The Chicago Summit also allowed the allies to formulate its exit strategy for Afghanistan, while member states reaffirmed


\textsuperscript{587} “Unifying Our Vision.”
their commitments to NATO’s ongoing counterterrorism efforts and recognized new security challenges facing the alliance such as cyberterrorism.\footnote{\textit{“Chicago Summit Declaration,”} North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 20, 2012, accessed April 9, 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87593.htm.}

As evidenced here, the NATO command structure and operational capacities have undergone several transformations, resulting in new initiatives and improvements to the alliance’s ability to respond to crises in the contemporary threat environment. Many of the existing analyses of NATO overlook this evolution, thus leading scholars to faulty conclusions about the alliance’s persistence. Furthermore, these analyses ignore the role of the United States in this evolution. The next section will address these shortcomings by indicating the ways in which the U.S. influenced the alliance’s evolution. By considering the U.S.’s role in each conflict as well as the intra-conflict periods, a more complete explanation for NATO’s persistence emerges.

\textit{U.S. – NATO Relations}

Analysis of each of the four cases – the 1999 Kosovo intervention, the 2001 war in Afghanistan, the 2003 Iraq War, and the 2011 intervention in Libya – demonstrate the evolution of NATO and the United States’ relationship with the alliance, as well as the impact U.S.-NATO relations had on the alliance’s development during these engagements. During combat operations, the alliance remained heavily reliant on U.S. contributions. Subsequently, the United States used each of these engagements as opportunities to press the European allies for increased defense spending and a greater contribution to NATO. Many of the European allies maintain divergent philosophies about the most imminent threats to European security; however, U.S. interests have taken priority on the alliance’s political and military agendas during and in
between conflicts. Although NATO represents the collective interests of each of the 28 member states, its post-Cold War evolution has largely reflected U.S. interests.

Although the two Balkans operations primarily resulted from European security concerns, the United States was unmatched in its military contributions to the alliance’s efforts, as detailed in chapter 3. The United States’ refusal to intervene in the first years of the Bosnian war, despite having established a precedent for intervention in both the Persian Gulf War and in Panama, was frequently cited as the reason for NATO’s delayed response to the ongoing violence. Additionally, the decision to only intervene in Kosovo with aerial strikes reflected the Clinton administration’s refusal to commit ground troops. President Clinton and others believed the Bosnian operation, Operation Deliberate Force, projected a high likelihood of success with a second air-only campaign in Kosovo. Due to both its political power and unparalleled capabilities, the United States exerted significant influence on the execution of Operation Allied Force. Two U.S. proposals – codenamed Operation Flexible Anvil and Operation Sky Anvil – and one of the U.S.’s concept of operations plan (CONPLAN 10601) provided the framework for the NATO operation.

During Operation Allied Force, the United States elected to maintain a parallel command structure to the NATO command structure. This decision was based on concerns about the U.S.’s aerial capacities being restrained by the alliance and the need to protect its most sensitive intelligence assets, but proved to be problematic for several reasons. The two command structures were slow to provide information to one another, and the U.S. sometimes withheld information about its operations from NATO to prevent leaks. There was also tension between the officers serving the U.S.’s efforts and the U.S. officers assigned to the NATO

589 Weitsman, Waging War.
mission. The U.S. maintained its influence over the NATO operation through NATO SACEUR General Wesley Clark and Admiral James Ellis, who had operational and tactical control of the NATO forces. However, General Clark and Admiral Ellis regularly clashed with the U.S.’s counterparts General John Jumper, who maintained operational control over the U.S.’s ISR resources, and General Michael Short, who maintained operation control over the U.S.’s other resources. Compounding the difficulties of maintaining two separate command structures was the NATO alliance’s slowness to approve targets and disagreements over the rules of engagement between all of the participating allies. These difficulties led the United States to spearhead efforts to reform the alliance’s command and control systems at the 1999 Washington Summit and following the end of Operation Allied Force. Although the Clinton administration encouraged the European allies to develop the European Defense and Security Initiative, it also recognized the importance of continued U.S. participation in the alliance and strongly advocated for the 1999 Defense Capabilities Initiative.

The United States also led the diplomatic efforts of NATO and the European allies during the Kosovo operation as the founding member of the Contact Group and party to the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords that effectively ended the war in Bosnia. Although it was ultimately the efforts of Russian President Boris Yeltsin that resulted in Milosevic’s capitulation, the United States’ political efforts – led by Ambassador Christopher Hill and Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke – set a precedent for U.S. diplomatic efforts in future NATO operations.

The U.S. declined many of the offers for assistance from NATO during the initial stages of the 2001 war in Afghanistan; however, the alliance’s evolution after 9/11 and its leadership of

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591 Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War For Kosovo*.
the ISAF mission directly reflected the U.S.’s influence on the alliance. The World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks shifted the paradigm for the European allies – al Qaeda’s attacks on the most powerful ally prompted NATO to recognize the international threat of terrorism instead of recognizing it as a largely domestic issue. Prior to 9/11, there was very little momentum for changes to the alliance’s anti-terrorism measures. At the 2002 Prague Summit, the allies set about ambitious counterterrorism and anti-terrorism initiatives that reflected the alliance’s shortcomings, particularly in intelligence sharing. Many of these new measures also reflected the U.S.’s interests in combatting international terrorism.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and other Bush administration officials publicly cited the alliance’s command and control difficulties in Kosovo as one of the deciding factors in the Bush administration’s decision to prefer limited contributions from NATO during the Afghanistan war. This public acknowledgment of one of the alliance’s greatest weaknesses was frequently cited as evidence of declining U.S.-NATO relations. However, the allies used this information to make reforms to the alliance through new programs such as the Allied Command Transformation. Additionally, the NATO Response Force was inspired by and modeled after Secretary Rumsfeld’s Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) initiative and the U.S.’s special forces-led teams in Afghanistan. The NRF was intended to be “able to execute the full range of missions…from Peace to high intensity war-fighting.” The NRF brought together land, air, maritime, and special operations forces to facilitate a rapid (and temporary) response to emerging threats and disaster relief.\(^{593}\) Bush administration officials hoped that the NRF could be used to provide assistance when U.S. forces were engaged elsewhere.

\(^{593}\) “NATO Response Force.”
The ISAF mission in Afghanistan and the training mission in Iraq reflected the NATO alliance’s attempts to remain relevant and fulfill important gaps in the United States’ efforts. NATO’s leadership of ISAF reflected the interests of the European allies, who agreed to execute the UN-mandated mission but struggled to maintain unit cohesion and assemble the necessary resources and leadership prior to the alliance’s participation in 2003. NATO’s leadership also reflected the interests of the United States, who needed the support for stabilization and reconstruction efforts. Despite the reluctance to participate in the U.S.’s Iraq operation, the NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I) provided invaluable enhancements to the U.S.’s efforts to rebuild the justice and police systems and train Iraqi officers. As noted in chapter 4, the ISAF mission facilitated the “coalition culture” and allowed the U.S. and the NATO allies to improve interoperability. The U.S. provided resources for the allies, while improving the standardization of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). The alliance’s efforts to engage with the local communities, as well as its coordination of civil and military actors in the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) also reflected the needs and interests of the United States while highlighting the strengths of the European allies. The PRTs played an integral role in the stabilization and reconstruction phase in Afghanistan while allowing the U.S. to run its Afghanistan operation in parallel and divert some resources to the Iraq mission.

Improvements to the alliance’s command and control system, as well as its aerial capabilities, were highlighted in the 2011 Libya operation. The alliance’s integrated command structure allowed the United States, France, and Great Britain to transfer leadership of their operations to NATO quickly and with far fewer operational difficulties than those experienced during Operation Allied Force. However, the alliance’s shortcomings - particularly in its

594 Barry, “Building Future Transatlantic Interoperability Around a Robust NATO Response Force.”
intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities - led the United States to once again push for reform within the alliance. Because the U.S. was forced to increase its contributions of ISR resources over the eight-month Operation Unified Protector, the Obama administration pressured the alliance to again reprioritize ISR capabilities acquisition. As demonstrated previously, the establishment of the Joint ISR initiative and the re-engagement of the Allied Ground Surveillance initiative at the 2012 Chicago Summit reflected the allies’ experiences during both Afghanistan and Libya.

Conclusion

The NATO alliance faced significant challenges in each of the aforementioned conflicts, and struggled to overcome political, military, and operational difficulties during and after each conflict. From each of these conflicts and intra-conflict periods, the alliance has evolved to be more responsive to the contemporary security environment and the U.S.’s interests. NATO has become better equipped to respond to out-of-area missions, improved interoperability during both aerial and ground campaigns, and developed a capacity to engage civil and military leaders in the local communities. It adopted new programs to address some of the most pressing security threats to the U.S. and its allies, such as terrorism, human rights abuses and ethnic conflict, and cyber warfare. Because of the U.S.’s leadership, the alliance’s ability to conduct airstrikes with a high success rate improved dramatically from Kosovo to Libya.

However, the gap between NATO’s proposals and the execution of many of these initiatives remains. The alliance continues to face declining contributions from almost all of the 28 member states and uneven burden-sharing in combat. The United States remains the largest contributor to the alliance. Although the non-U.S. allies have a higher GDP than the United States, their collective defense spending is less than half of the United States’ defense budget.
U.S. defense expenditures account for 73 percent of the alliance’s total defense spending. Furthermore, the U.S. contributes more than 20 percent of the direct funding for NATO – which is twice the amount of the alliance’s second highest contributor, the United Kingdom.  

The alliance also maintains a growing capabilities gap. Despite having undertaken a variety of missions with different levels of authorization from the United Nations, the allies have not agreed on the necessity of UN authorization for NATO missions, leading to disagreements among member states over the appropriateness of intervention in places like Syria. According to some U.S. officials, NATO is still perceived as a useful tool for longer-term operations (such as stabilization and reconstruction efforts), but unequipped to provide a rapid response to immediate threats. Though these shortcomings pose a threat to the alliance’s future prosperity, earlier analyses of NATO’s persistence after the Cold War overstated the likelihood of the alliance’s demise because of these issues. Instead, as this research demonstrates, NATO’s evolution and persistence is facilitated by the U.S.’s relationship with the alliance.

Throughout the first 25 years of the post-Cold War period, the United States remained the top contributor to the NATO alliance, used its contributions and hegemonic status to influence the alliance agenda, pushed for an expanded membership, exercised influence over the military operations of the alliance by retaining key leadership positions such as the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), and fostered its relationships with the individual allies. Conversely, the U.S. also demonstrated its willingness to act unilaterally or outside of the alliance if it deemed necessary, and regularly downplayed the importance of a UN Security Council authorization when it interfered with U.S. objectives. Still, as U.S. Navy Admiral and

596 Carter Ham (USA-Ret., Commander, USAFRICOM), interview with author, January 19, 2015, Boston (telephone); James Stavridis, interview with author.
former NATO SACEUR James Stavridis characterized, NATO remains the United States’ “partner of first refusal.”

It is important to note that the European allies played a significant role during each conflict and during the intra-conflict periods. Some of the initiatives undertaken by the alliance reflected European interests – strengthening the ISR capabilities of the alliance, streamlining the alliance’s resources in light of shrinking defense spending, and improving NATO’s ability to respond rapidly to emerging crisis was beneficial to all of the allies. However, as demonstrated here, the U.S. played a key role in advocating for many of these changes despite the European allies’ inability or unwillingness to increase its own contributions. Although some of the allies, such as France, called for an independent European defense organization following the Cold War, the alliance did not implement measures in order to lessen the U.S.’s role in European security and defense. Rather, the European allies remained just as reliant on the U.S.’s role in NATO, and NATO’s role in international conflict, as it was during the Cold War, despite divergent attitudes about the alliance’s shared interests. Thus, NATO’s evolution and persistence is largely the result of the U.S.’s continued hegemonic status and leadership within the alliance.

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597 James Stavridis, interview with author.
Chapter 8: The United States and Multilateralism

NATO’s evolution and persistence in the post-Cold War period is demonstrated by the four cases presented in this volume. Whereas previous analyses treated these cases in isolation, I also posit the importance of examining the intra-conflict periods. A more complete understanding of NATO’s evolution reveals an understated element in the existing explanations of the alliance’s persistence – the role of the United States. Because the United States believed the alliance was valuable to its security and defense interests, it continued to invest in NATO, despite declining investments from the European allies and divergent attitudes regarding collective security and defense. Thus, the first hypothesis – that the NATO alliance persists because the U.S. is a hegemonic power with a vested interest in the continuation of the alliance and subsequently exerted its political influence, asserted its military supremacy, and contributed the necessary economic resources to ensure the alliance’s survival – is confirmed.

The expansion and adaptation of NATO challenged structural realist assertions that in the absence of a clearly identifiable threat, member states would abandon the alliance. The hegemonic status of the United States was underestimated as a driving factor to unite the allies in peacetime. The traditional structural realist frameworks for understanding states’ behavior as balancing or bandwagoning were insufficient to explain why the European allies sometimes refused to comply with the United States’ requests, yet remained committed to the alliance. Although liberal institutionalist explanations posited the changing nature of the international system and the transnational nature of emerging threats as explanations for NATO’s evolution, these explanations also failed to fully realize the reasons for its persistence. Liberal institutionalist scholars asserted the importance of the allies’ shared democratic values as the

likely cause of continued participation in the alliance. However, as demonstrated in the preceding chapters, many of the allies repeatedly argued the importance of establishing European security mechanisms independent of the United States.

NATO’s persistence is better understood by analysis of U.S.-NATO relations. However, the question of why the allies have remained committed to NATO remains largely unanswered in the existing theoretical traditions. This analysis provides insight into the incentives for the United States to remain an active member of the alliance. While some of these incentives reflect the military or political utility of NATO participation, the United States is also driven by value-based incentives – namely, the alliance’s effect on the perception of moral and legal legitimacy, as well as American policymakers’ desire to appear to adhere to international norms regarding the use of force.

This analysis provides a more comprehensive explanation of the incentives for the U.S.’s continued participation in NATO, as demonstrated in the four cases: the 1999 Kosovo intervention, the 2001 war in Afghanistan, the 2003 Iraq War, and the 2009 Libya operation. The United States pursued NATO for legitimacy enhancement and to project an image of adherence to international norms regarding international intervention. Despite its military dominance, the United States also benefitted from the military contributions of the allies. Thus, the four hypotheses regarding the U.S.’s interest in NATO’s persistence presented in chapter 1 are confirmed:

H₂ₐ: The U.S. values NATO as a vehicle for legitimacy enhancement.
H₂ₕ: The U.S. wants its conflict engagement to conform (or appear to conform) to international norms and expectations about war; thus, it seeks to act through multilateral organizations such as NATO.
H2c: The alliance’s persistence allows the U.S. to improve its ability to engage in conflict.

H2d: The historical legacy of U.S.-NATO relations, U.S. primacy after the Cold War, and U.S. leadership within the alliance allowed the U.S. to exert a high level of influence over the post-war development of the alliance.

U.S. incentives for NATO persistence

Each of the four cases presented in the preceding chapters demonstrate a variety of incentives for the United States to continue its membership in NATO. Collectively, these cases illustrate four dimensions of legitimacy: the legal and moral legitimacy of the actions of the United States, the legal and moral legitimacy of the actions of NATO, the effects of NATO participation on the U.S.’s legitimacy, and the effects of NATO participation on perceptions of legitimacy among local indigenous personnel in the conflict zones. Each case also highlights operational and military advantages that encouraged the United States to engage the NATO alliance. The alliance provided a unique interoperability advantage – particularly in later conflicts – because of its highly institutionalized command and control systems. The alliance enhanced U.S. operations by providing the necessary access to airfields and overflight privileges, as well as resources that bolstered reconstruction and stabilization efforts.

Legitimacy Enhancement and Adherence to Norms

In the 1999 Kosovo operation, the decision to engage NATO was based in part on the need to enhance the legitimacy of the intervention. Despite the objections of Russia and China, two of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the Western powers commenced an aerial bombing campaign to stop the ongoing human rights abuses and ethnic cleansing campaign by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. Without an explicit authorization for intervention by the Security Council, France, Great Britain, and the United States believed NATO’s leadership would provide a higher degree of legitimacy than an ad hoc coalition. The
allies also hoped NATO’s Kosovo operation would be a precedent for future humanitarian inventions, particularly if the Security Council was unable to reach a consensus. For the European allies, NATO engagement would also enhance the legitimacy of its actions by committing the most powerful state in the international system, the United States, to the operation. The decision to engage the alliance was successful in conferring legitimacy on the intervention – in retroactive evaluations of Operation Allied Force, the alliance’s actions were deemed to be “illegal but legitimate” by the UN Secretary General and many members of the international community.

The United States also used NATO’s participation in Kosovo to enhance the legitimacy of its actions with the domestic population. As demonstrated in chapter 3, the majority of Americans supported the NATO air strikes at the beginning of the operation. However, after a month of bombing with only limited success, the U.S. and the other allies began considering the deployment of ground troops. While a PIPA poll indicated a majority of Americans disapproved of the United States committing a ground force, support for U.S. ground operations was considerably higher if it was conducted through the NATO alliance.599

The legitimizing effects of NATO participation were much different in the 2001 war in Afghanistan. As demonstrated in chapter 4, the U.S. enjoyed an unprecedented degree of legitimacy for its actions because of the September 11, 2001 attacks, including both domestic and international authorization for the use of force. This was a significant factor in the Bush administration’s decision to decline many of the alliance’s offers of support in the beginning phases of the war. However, the December 2001 Bonn Conference revealed a legitimacy “gap” for the United States among the various ethnic groups and local communities within

599 “Americans on Kosovo: A Study of US Public Attitudes.”
Afghanistan. Thus, the U.S. recognized the need for a greater international presence and encouraged the United Nations to establish the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Although the ISAF force was not well-received by some of the local tribes and communities, many were receptive to the allies’ efforts to rebuild schools and hospitals, provide literacy classes and basic healthcare, and rebuild Afghanistan’s infrastructure.

In Iraq, the legitimacy of American actions was damaged by the absence of a Security Council resolution and poor intelligence about Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program. Legitimacy was also lessened by the vociferous disagreement between the United States, France, and Germany. The absence of NATO in the Bush administration’s ad hoc coalition of the willing further hindered attempts to legitimize its actions. As demonstrated in chapter 5, domestic support was much higher than international support for the war in Iraq, and some of the U.S.’s closest allies refused to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

However, in 2004, NATO agreed to take command of the training mission for Iraqi forces, as established by UNSCR 1546. According to Lieutenant General Michael Barbero, commander of the NTM-I from 2009 to 2011, the allies brought real capabilities to the training mission’s efforts, but the NATO presence was also “important symbolically, and also for the future of Iraq, to try and pull it into the right spheres of influence and have some sort of lasting relationship.”

Thus, although the NTM-I mission consisted of only a few hundred personnel and participating states placed significant caveats on the use of troops, Iraqi leaders accepted the mission as a legitimate international presence because of NATO’s leadership. As General Barbero notes, U.S. officials hoped NATO’s leadership of the training mission would also build better relationships with Iraqi leaders and confer legitimacy on the new Iraqi forces.

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600 Michael Barbero, interview with author.
The 2011 operation in Libya enjoyed a higher level of legitimacy than the U.S.’s efforts in Iraq due to both the United Nations and NATO’s participation. While the UN Security Council refused to authorize the intervention, many allies believed the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine justified the U.S., UK, and France’s parallel operations. As demonstrated in chapter 6, the United States repeatedly expressed its desire to transfer responsibility for Libya operations to NATO because the alliance was the most capable, coordinated, and legitimate option for enforcing UNSCR 1973. U.S. officials did not believe a coalition would have the same capabilities or political strength as the alliance, and pushed the allies to accept leadership of the operation. Although Russia and China argued that Operation Unified Protector violated international law and was illegitimate, the Western allies assert the authority of the two Security Council resolutions, the precedent of Kosovo and R2P, and NATO’s leadership as evidence of the operation’s legitimacy.

The presence or absence of NATO in each of the conflicts affected the perception of legitimacy by both domestic and international audiences. At times, the United States pursued NATO participation to legitimize its actions and adhere to norms governing the use of force and conflict engagement. As demonstrated in chapter 5, most states agreed that the United Nations is the most appropriate mechanism for legitimizing the use of force. However, to a lesser extent, NATO enhances the legitimacy of states’ actions in the absence of a UN endorsement. NATO is considered to be a more legitimate mechanism for the use of force than coalition or unilateral engagement, due to a high degree of institutionalization for decision-making and its consensus-based command and control systems.
The Utility of Multilateralism Through NATO and U.S. Primacy

NATO’s contributions to each of the four conflicts enhanced U.S. efforts and demonstrated the utility of multilateralism. Despite the alliance’s shortcomings – particularly in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance resources – NATO contributions were key to the Kosovo operation, and more importantly, allowed the alliance to identify crucial areas of improvement. While the U.S.’s participation was an integral part of the success of Operation Allied Force, the Clinton administration was extremely reluctant to act without the contributions of the alliance. Operation Allied Force was an air-only campaign, but some of the allies’ most important contributions were on the ground, as access to bases, airfields, and overflight rights were paramount to conducting strike and non-strike sorties.

The 2001 war in Afghanistan required a more substantial contribution from NATO and further demonstrated the utility of multilateralism to U.S. interests. The European allies brought invaluable skills for the stabilization and reconstruction efforts of the ISAF operation. The ISAF mission filled important gaps in access to healthcare and education. The allies were adept at engaging governmental and nongovernmental organizations, humanitarian organizations, and agencies such as USAID. The alliance’s deployment of its AWACS aircraft under Operation Eagle Assist freed up a number of U.S. planes and manpower to be diverted to Afghanistan. The alliance also contributed the same types of ground resources as in Kosovo, allowing the United States to utilize military installations and airfields. NATO reassigned resources from the Kosovo mission, and when the U.S. sent more troops to Afghanistan during the 2009 surge, the allies contributed an additional 10,000 troops to the ISAF mission.601 NATO’s anti-terrorism operation in the Mediterranean, Operation Active Endeavor, enhanced anti- and counterterrorism efforts as well.

601 James Stavridis, interview with author.
As demonstrated in chapter 5, the utility of engaging NATO in Iraq was evident in the small NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) contingent. The contributions of the allies - particularly the Italian carabinieri (military police) and the Turkish military – were invaluable to training new military and police officers, as well as establishing the justice system and other infrastructure to ensure the stability of Iraq.

The Libyan operation benefitted from the allies’ contributions of aircraft, overflight rights, access to airfields and aircraft carriers, and the contributions of non-U.S. allies to both strike and non-strike sorties. Moreover, according to the commander of Operation Odyssey Dawn, General Carter Ham, the decision to transition responsibility from the U.S. to NATO enhanced the alliance’s reputation: the alliance had “proven its competency as a standing organization, so the transition would not be particularly difficult from a U.S.-led coalition effort to a NATO-led effort [and] it could be done quickly, with minimal destruction. Trust was probably the most important ingredient – trust that this mission would be handled properly, would be effective, and it would be well led if it was done within the NATO construct.”

The alliance also demonstrated its capacity to execute several operations simultaneously. During Operation Unified Protector, the NATO alliance was engaged in ongoing missions in both Kosovo (the KFOR operation) and Afghanistan (ISAF), as well as continued patrols of the Mediterranean under Operation Active Endeavor. However, former NATO SACEUR Admiral James Stavridis said the Libya operation was not hindered by a shortage of military capabilities: “I never felt resource-constrained in either Afghanistan or Libya. We were maxed out, but I did not feel resource-constrained. I think probably the tightest resources were lawyers, international legal advice, public affairs, and planners [as well as] people who were doing the very detailed

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602 Carter Ham, interview with author.
planning of the logistics movement. But again, we were able. We had capacity in the system to do that.”

Thus, despite shortages in precision munitions and ISR capabilities, the Libya operation and the U.S.’s pursuit of multilateralism proved to be beneficial.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the intra-conflict periods allowed the United States to exert its influence over the alliance to encourage improvements to the allies’ ability to formulate rapid responses to immediate crises, become more effective in combat, and develop necessary intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance (ISR) capabilities to lessen its reliance on the U.S. Policymakers continually push the European allies to contribute more resources to NATO and increase their defense budgets.

At times, the disparities between the United States’ contributions and European contributions have caused tension between the allies. Still, many policymakers have accepted the U.S.’s role as the largest contributor in the alliance. According to Admiral Stavridis,

We always felt like the rules of the game were such that the U.S. would provide two and the Europeans would provide one. In terms of dollars, in terms of troops, in terms of aircraft. The U.S. was always ready, willing, able with its two. It was hard work to get the Europeans to provide their one, and that’s unfortunate…by any rational measure, we ought to see a NATO alliance that is about half U.S., half NATO. That’s just not the reality of the world. The Europeans are not as prolific in their defense spending. The Europeans’ DNA is much less one of using hard power and much more of using soft power. So the reality is, the best deal you’re going to get is two and one.

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603 James Stavridis, interview with author.
604 Ibid.
Policymakers acknowledge the political, military, and economic benefits of NATO engagement for ensuring U.S. interests, despite disparities in alliance contributions. According to Lt. General Barbero, commander of the NATO Training Mission in Iraq from 2009 to 2011, “If the U.S. is planning a mission somewhere in the world and doesn’t make a stop in Brussels to try and consult with and enlist NATO’s support and make that a prime objective, then we’re missing the boat…NATO brings unique capabilities that bring credibility and they do produce real effects.”

**Conclusion: The United States, NATO, and the Future of U.S. Multilateralism**

The impending change to the bipolar balance of power system experienced at the end of the Cold War resulted in a rift amongst scholars about the future of the United States. They compared the U.S. to the many hegemonic and even imperial powers of centuries’ past, and many acknowledged that the malleability of the post-WWII environment led to decades of U.S. dominance and the creation of an international system predicated on U.S. interests. Many pointed to the institutions established by the U.S. in the aftermath of World War II as a source of both continuity and change in the new environment. There was little consensus in both the scholarly and policy communities about what the new distribution of power would be, how states

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605 Michael Barbero, interview with author.
would organize around it, and whether it would bring about peace and stability. Structural realists debated over the balance of power while liberal theorists urged policymakers to abandon this conceptualization of the international system in favor of one that emphasized institutional cooperation. Both realist and liberal scholars warned policymakers about the sustainability of U.S. primacy, and many affirmed the importance of continued participation in international institutions.608

Additionally, many scholars and policymakers argued that U.S. foreign policy could have a significant impact on regional stability, particularly in regards to Western Europe, China, and Russia.609 They sought to prevent the U.S. from expanding its power too much, out of fears that rising states would be incentivized to build their capabilities and threaten the U.S. Samuel Huntington asserted the U.S. should stop referring to its interests as congruent with the rest of the world’s interests and abandon its “unipolar world” rhetoric, urging policymakers to instead consider how the U.S. could best employ its superpower status and strengthen its most worthwhile relationships to obtain a favorable position in the emerging multipolar system.610 Christopher Layne advocated a similar position, arguing that the U.S. should take advantage of the institutions it created in the wake of World War II to maintain the international conditions favorable to it under the emerging multipolar system.611 Additionally, Layne argued, the U.S. should abandon its strategy of preponderance and look to alternative grand strategies to preserve


its powerful status. \footnote{The elements that comprise a grand strategy of preponderance include the “creation and maintenance of a U.S.-led world order based on preeminent U.S. political, military, and economic power, and of American values; maximization of U.S. control over the international system by preventing the emergence of rival great powers in Europe and East Asia; and maintenance of economic interdependence as a vital U.S. security interest.” Layne favors the alternative strategy of offshore balancing but acknowledges the merit of other grand strategies as well, arguing that the more important point to realize is the danger of continuing with the status quo preponderance strategy. \cite{Layne}} \footnote{Richard Haass, \textit{The Reluctant Sheriff} (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations Inc, 1997).} \footnote{Paul Kennedy, \textit{The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers} (New York, NY: Random House, 1987).} \footnote{Snyder, “Imperial Temptations.”} \footnote{Ikenberry, “Getting Hegemony Right.”}

Richard Haass urged the U.S. to actively engage with other states, build relationships that could be employed in times of crisis (thus preventing the U.S. from having to act unilaterally as much as possible), and establish and maintain institutional arrangements (including alliances) that would mitigate conflict whenever possible. \footnote{Christopher Layne, “From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America’s Future Grand Strategy,” \textit{International Security} 22, no. 1 (Summer 1997): 86-124, p. 88.

Concerns over U.S. imperialism also abounded. Paul Kennedy warned against “imperial overstretch,” writing, “…decision-makers in Washington must face the awkward and enduring fact that the sum total of the United States’ global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country’s power to defend them all simultaneously.” \footnote{Richard Haass, \textit{The Reluctant Sheriff} (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations Inc, 1997).}

Jack Snyder argued against an expansionist, offensive advantage-based agenda by U.S. policymakers in an attempt to quell terrorism and preserve its power. \footnote{Paul Kennedy, \textit{The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers} (New York, NY: Random House, 1987).} \footnote{Snyder, “Imperial Temptations.”}

John Ikenberry posited the U.S. had a responsibility to both itself and the international community to mitigate the threat posed by its predominance: “A global backlash to U.S. power is not inevitable…particularly if the United States remembers its own political history. Our leaders have the ideas, means and political institutions that can allow for stable and cooperative order even in the midst of sharp and shifting asymmetries of power.” \footnote{Ikenberry, “Getting Hegemony Right.”}

Ideas about the ability of the U.S. to maintain its hegemony subsequently resulted in debates over the U.S.’s grand strategy and the importance of multilateralism. As Timothy
Crawford writes, “When the Eastern Bloc dissolved and the Soviet Union broke up, the United States became a unipolar power…The resulting power vacuum, predictably, invited greater U.S. activism. The United States found new freedom of action, and more reasons to use it.”

The George H.W. Bush administration struggled with its temporarily unrivaled leadership, encouraging other states to pursue their interests with the inherent acceptance of U.S. hegemony under the “New World Order.” The Clinton administration’s strategy of engagement and enlargement met with several difficulties. Contentious disagreement between Clinton and Congress – particularly after the 1994 elections, in which Republicans regained a majority in the House – centered on the U.S.’s participation in the United Nations and NATO. Crises in Somalia, Lebanon, the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, and elsewhere immediately challenged the U.S.’s resolve as global leader.

As the Clinton administration shifted foreign policy concerns away from the politics of the Cold War and towards transnational issues of globalization, human rights, and the environment, new non-state actors created another level to the already complex defense puzzle.

U.S. hegemony remained relatively unrivaled at the end of the century. However, U.S.-NATO involvement in the former Yugoslavia (first in Bosnia and later in Kosovo) raised new questions concerning the ability of both NATO and the U.S. to effectively engage in ‘out-of-area’ missions. Subsequently, the attacks of 9/11, the decisions of the Bush administration to engage in warfare in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the economic prosperity of China, and the

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619 Joffe, “‘Bismark’ or ‘Britain’?”
Obama administration’s decision to engage U.S. forces in Libya again reignited the debate over the sustainability over U.S. hegemony.\textsuperscript{621}

The unexpectedly sudden and peaceful end of the Cold War caused temporary uncertainty for the United States. As the lone superpower, each of the aforementioned conflicts demonstrated to policymakers that the U.S. had much to gain and much more to lose from the new balance of power, leading to a ferocious debate about whether its hegemonic status was worth more to the U.S.’s interests than the costs of fulfilling the responsibilities and obligations of its unipolar position. Earlier debates over whether the U.S. could achieve a more advantageous global position without overextending itself and whether the obligations as a ‘world police’ force would tax U.S. resources were reignited. Additionally, policymakers wondered whether U.S. power would be the source of future tension among partner states and whether it would be able to adapt to the new type of threat its status posed.

The utility of NATO to U.S. efforts was an issue that was frequently revisited by policymakers. Some policymakers argued that in the case of future conflict, the U.S. had an unquestionable responsibility to act multilaterally – i.e., through institutions like NATO – to protect and foster a more cooperative, transparent international system.\textsuperscript{622} Writes Joseph Nye, “The element of the American order that reduces worry about power asymmetries is our membership in institutions ranging from the UN to NATO…the multilateralism of American preeminence is a key to its longevity, because it reduces the incentives for constructing alliances

\textsuperscript{621} Weitsman, \textit{Waging War}.
against us.” Others argued that the nature of conflict, combined with the preponderance of American military strength, meant that the U.S. could – and should – act unilaterally when it deemed appropriate.

As demonstrated by this analysis of U.S.-NATO relations, the United States has continued to value multilateralism for conflict engagement. Despite its hegemonic status, which has remained relatively unchallenged in the post-Cold War era, it regularly engages its allies. Although the U.S. maintains the military capacity to act unilaterally, it continues to sustain its contributions to NATO to enhance the alliance’s capabilities. The United States recognizes the advantages of its relationship with the alliance, and has acted to ensure the alliance’s persistence in the post-Soviet era. Politically, NATO allows the United States to maintain political relations with some of its closest European partners, many of whom share the same values of freedom and democracy as the U.S. Its relationship with NATO projects unity among the Western powers and demonstrably impacts international perceptions of legal and moral legitimacy in conflict engagement. Militarily, U.S.-NATO relations provides U.S. policymakers with a shared pool of resources and the command and control systems necessary to coordinate multilateral aerial, maritime, and ground exercises. The European allies benefit from NATO persistence and U.S. leadership of NATO as well. The political and military incentives identified in this study may

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624 There are two distinct bodies of literature arguing the US’s use of unilateralsim. One school of thought is that the US is more inclined to act unilaterally because of its hegemonic status or because of the difficulties associated with multilateralism, while the other school posits the merit of unilateralsim as the most advantageous type of engagement for US interests. See: Davidson, America’s Allies and War: Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq; Robert Kagan “Power and Weakness: Why the United States and Europe See the World Differently,” Policy Review 113 (June/July 2002): 3-28; Charles Krauthammer, “The New Unilateralism (editorial),” Washington Post, A29, June 8, 2001; Kreps, Coalitions of Convenience; Jennifer Sterling-Folker, “Between a Rock and Hard Place: Assertive Multilateralism and Post-Cold War U.S. Foreign Policymaking,” in After the End: Making U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War World, James M. Scott, Ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999): 277-304; Weitsman, “Wartime Alliances versus Coalition Warfare.”
explain why, despite some discontent with NATO, the European allies remain committed to the alliance.

The United States has chosen at times to act outside of the alliance. However, it has consistently engaged the alliance for both political and military support. Despite speculation of deteriorating U.S.-NATO relations and predictions of the NATO alliance’s demise in the post-Cold War era, there is ample evidence demonstrating the value and utility of NATO to the United States.
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