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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAM

NATO IN AFGHANISTAN: DEMOCRATIZATION WARFARE, NATIONAL NARRATIVES, AND BUDGETARY AUSTERITY

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Abstract

This paper explains changes in NATO's nationbuilding strategy for Afghanistan over time as an internal push-and-pull struggle between the major NATO contributors. It distinguishes between the "light footprint" phase, which had numerous problems connected to limited resources and growing insurgency (2003–2008), NATO's adoption of a comprehensive approach (CSPMP) and counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy (2009–2011), the transition and drawdown (2011–2014), and the Enduring Partnership (beyond 2014). The paper explains NATO's drawdown, stressing both increased budgetary strictures compelling decisionmakers to focus on domestic concerns and predominant national narratives connected to a protracted stabilization effort in Afghanistan. The United States provided constant pressure for NATO to develop integrated civilian-military capabilities and implement a security-development-governance strategy. It was supported by the United Kingdom, which sought to maximize its political influence, and Poland, which saw NATO as an insurance premium. Germany long resisted the idea of participating in a war-like effort, while France resisted NATO becoming a toolbox for Washington's broader strategic purposes. NATO's internal decisions reveal a pattern of negotiated power and predominant national narratives affecting economic cost-benefit calculi.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. From Democracy-Building to Surge and Drawdown	
2.1 Democratization and Stabilization in an Afghan Context	3
2.2 Light Footprint and Its Deficiencies (2003–2007)	4
2.3 The Civilian Surge (2008–2011)	8
2.4 Implementing an Exit Strategy (2011–2014)	12
3. Budgetary Imperatives and Political Adaptation	15
4. The Impact of Geopolitical Lessons	21
4.1 United States: Democracy by Imposition and Fiscal Crisis	21
4.2 United Kingdom: Deficits and Defense Transformation	30
4.3 Germany: Perpetual Zurückhaltung	36
4.4 France: Reintegration for Influence	42
4.5 Poland: Buying an Insurance Premium	48
4.6 From National Positions to Common Alliance Policy	53
5. Conclusion.	57

1. Introduction

As the decade-long Afghanistan campaign draws to an end, it calls for a comprehensive assessment of NATO's nation-building effort and the factors leading to the alliance's policy adaptation and eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Afghanistan operation represents NATO's largest operation to date. It is also NATO's first operation outside Europe, and the first time the alliance has assumed a direct role in a state-building effort. This paper seeks to break with the majority of the existing literature on NATO's role in Afghanistan. This literature has focused either on the strictly military aspects of NATO's operation¹ or tried to address the technical aspects of state-building on the ground, often with recommendations about how to do it more effectively.² However, such narrowly operational perspectives provide only partial and inadequate accounts of the development of NATO's Afghanistan policy.

NATO's presence in Afghanistan can be described as consisting of three phases. The first of these was NATO's initial, under-resourced attempt to promote democratic statehood from 2003–2007 (which I will hereafter refer to as the "light footprint" phase). The second was NATO's implementation of a surge/counterinsurgency strategy (hereafter referred to as the "civilian surge") from 2008–2011, during which NATO devoted greater resources to its Afghan operations in an attempt to achieve its state-building ambitions. In the third phase (the "drawdown strategy," 2011–2014), NATO has downplayed its state-building ambitions to match its declining financial resources, renewing its initial focus on security sector recruitment in preparation for its gradual exit from Afghanistan.

See, for instance, Theo Farrell and Stuart Gordon, "COIN Machine: The British Military in Afghanistan," Orbis, Vol. 53, No. 4 (June 2009), pp. 665-683; David Johnson, "What Are You Prepared to Do? NATO and the Strategic Mismatch Between Ends, Ways, and Means in Afghanistan—and in the Future," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Vol. 34, No. 5 (2011), pp. 383-401; Rudra Chaudhuri and Theo Farrell, "Campaign Disconnect: Operational Progress and Strategic Obstacles in Afghanistan, 2009–2011," International Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 2 (March 2011), pp. 271-296; Anthony Cordesman, "The Lessons of Afghanistan: War Fighting, Intelligence, and Force Transformation" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009); James Gannon, Obama's War: Avoiding a Quagmire in Afghanistan (Dulles, V.A.: Potomac, 2011); Ivan Ivanov, Transforming NATO: New Allies, Missions, and Capabilities (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011); Seth Jones, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2008); Benjamin Schreer, "The Evolution of NATO's Strategy in Afghanistan," in Håkan Edström and Dennis Gyllensporre, eds., Pursuing Strategy: NATO Operations from the Gulf War to Gaddafi (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Brian Williams, Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America's Longest War (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). See, for instance, Barbara Stapleton, "A Means to What End? Why PRTS are Peripheral to the Bigger Political Challenges in Afghanistan," Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2007), pp. 1–49; Michael O'Hanlon and Bruce Riedel, "Plan A-Minus for Afghanistan," Washington Quarterly, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter 2011), pp. 123-132; Mark Sedra, "Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan: The Slide toward Expediency," International Peacekeeping, Vol. 13, No. 1 (March 2006), pp. 94-110; Habib Haider and François Nicolas, Afghanistan: Reconstruction et développement [Afghanistan: reconstruction and development] (Gémenos: Autres Temps, 2006); Peter Marsden, Afghanistan: Aid, Armies, and Empires (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009); Robert Rotberg, ed., "Building a New Afghanistan" (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2007); Matthew Morgan, A Democracy Is Born: An Insider's Account of the Battle against Terrorism in Afghanistan (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2007); Moonis Ahmar, ed., "The Challenge of Rebuilding Afghanistan" (Karachi, Afghanistan: Bureau of Composition, Compilation, and Translation, 2005); Astri Suhrke and Kaja Borchgrevik, "Afghanistan: Justice Sector Reform," in E. Newman et al., eds., New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding (Tokyo: UN University Press, 2010); and Richard Ponzio, Democratic Peacebuilding: Aiding Afghanistan and Other Fragile States (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Given the degree to which NATO's commitment to building an Afghan nation has come to conflict with harsh realities on the ground, there is a fundamental need to study how individual member states' political motivations have driven the Afghanistan campaign.³ A few scholars have addressed the political motivations in NATO and its member states. Sten Rynning characterizes it as a long institutional adaptation process driven by NATO members in which means and ends never came to match one another. Michael Williams describes the Afghan campaign as a "good war" driven by a liberal conscience among its contributors. A volume edited by Nik Hynek and Peter Marton analyzes the individual national narratives of NATO members.⁴ This paper contributes to this emerging literature.

In this paper, I introduce a neoclassical realist model to explain NATO's evolving Afghanistan strategy. Theoretically, neoclassical realism attempts to bridge the differences between the abstract assumption of structural explanations (neorealism) and empirically rich foreign policy studies (classical realism) and to systematize the theoretical insights of domestic politics into a scientifically inspired model. It calls for an in-depth explanation, that is, an analysis that takes into account the internal state dynamics predominant in foreign policy-making processes. Specifically, I seek to explain NATO's policy shifts in Afghanistan (dependent variable *y*) by focusing on the policy's budgetary/economic dimension as resulting from member states' declining defense budgets following the financial crisis (dependent variable *x*) as mediated by predominant national narratives connected to the operation among the major NATO contributors (intervening variable *z*). The three-leveled neoclassical realist sequencing (x-z-y) posits that budgetary decline is a necessary, but not sufficient variable explaining NATO's policy change. It is therefore necessary to include an intervening variable representing subjective national motivations distinct from and predating the Afghanistan campaign.

The paper discusses each of these variables in turn. First, I outline NATO's shifting ambitions for and allocation of resources to the building of a democratic Afghanistan over three main phases. Second, I briefly discuss the impact of the 2008 financial crisis on national defense budgets. Third, I conduct a process-tracing analysis taking into account how the predominant national narratives affected national cost/benefit calculations delaying or accelerating the decision to retreat from Afghanistan. The conclusion summarizes my findings in theoretical terms.

2. From Democracy-Building to Surge and Drawdown

This section describes the rise and decline of NATO's democratic agenda. As stated above, this intervention has consisted of three main phases: (1) light footprint (2003–2007), (2) civilian surge (2008–2011), and (3) exit strategy (2011–2014). NATO's adaptation process has reflected an internal political struggle over whether the alliance should assume a broad civilian/political/

³ Following a Clausewitzian logic, a military campaign is determined ultimately by its political setting and one cannot adequately understand its logic by focusing narrowly on either organizational adaptation or the technical factors that determine success or failure on the ground.

⁴ Michael Williams, *The Good War: NATO and the Liberal Conscience in Afghanistan* (Hampshire, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Sten Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan: The Liberal Disconnect* (Redwood, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012); and Nik Hynek and Peter Marton, eds., *State-Building in Afghanistan: Multinational Contributions to Reconstruction* (Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, 2012).

military responsibility as part of its nation-building effort.

2.1 Democratization and Stabilization in an Afghan Context

NATO's objectives in Afghanistan came to include a reformist state-building agenda. NATO aimed to establish a state with centralized rule, a democratically elected leadership, a liberal market economy, and a commitment to human rights principles.⁵ Although the creation of traditional representative institutions such as the Loya Jirgas at the national and village levels boosted the legitimacy of the new Afghan government, NATO largely limited its capacity-building programs to supply-driven technocratic strategies. This process triggered power struggles with local brokers, which in turn grew into an insurgency.

NATO initially deployed troops in Afghanistan in 2003; these troops served a support function within the broader United Nations (UN)-coordinated framework. NATO did not, therefore, contribute to the toppling of the Taliban regime. This regime had openly sponsored international terrorism, including the attacks of September 11, 2001, which compelled NATO to activate its collective defense article for the first and, thus far, only time in its history. U.S.-led coalition forces pushed the Taliban out of its southern stronghold of Kandahar in November 2001. Al-Qaeda retreated into Pakistan shortly thereafter. However, it was necessary to create a strategy for the post-conflict phase, in order to avoid allowing Afghanistan to disintegrate back into a safe haven for international terrorism. The UN initiated a development strategy in which NATO came to assume a larger responsibility over time.

The Bonn Agreement (2001) set out a democratic peace-building blueprint for post-Taliban Afghanistan. It outlined the international community's commitment to supporting Afghanistan's adoption of a national constitution and election of a fully representative government. The UN reaffirmed its commitment to supporting a democratic model with the Afghanistan Compact (2006), which listed three main pillars: development (economic and social), governance (rule of law and human rights), and security, tied specifically to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The London Conference (2010) marked a new transition phase, as participants mapped out a process in which the Afghan government in Kabul would gradually, province by province, take over all security, governance, and development responsibilities. NATO also declared its intention to withdraw all its forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

At least three factors stirred instability in Afghanistan in the short term and therefore made democratization a difficult path for NATO to pursue. First, democratization sowed the seeds for future violent conflicts with the Taliban, which opposed liberal democracy and women's rights as modern and Western phenomena. Second, democratization exacerbated the ongoing conflict between the Northern Alliance (supported by the United States and NATO) and the Taliban regime

⁵ Sari Kouvo, "State-Building and Rule of Law: Lessons from Afghanistan?" (Rome: NATO Defense College Forum Paper, 2009), p. 28.

⁶ Ellen Hallams, *The United States and NATO since 9/11: The Transatlantic Alliance Renewed* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), pp. 67–69.

⁷ Barnett Rubin, "Peace-Building and State-Building in Afghanistan: Constructing Sovereignty for Whose Security?" in Mark Berger, ed., *From Nation-Building to State-Building* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), p. 179.

(supported by al-Qaeda); this conflict culminated in a resurgence of violence in 2006. Third, warlords, drug lords, and local power brokers did not want to see their power or poppy production curtailed by rule of law. NATO's co-optation of these actors into the political process in the interest of short-term stability hindered Afghanistan's democratic development.⁸

2.2 Light Footprint and Its Deficiencies (2003–2007)

NATO took formal control of ISAF in 2003 and expanded operations to the whole of Afghanistan by 2006. The alliance was eventually faced with a full-scale insurgency, which gave rise to political disagreements among allies not only over burden-sharing but also over how to deal with the insurgency. Expansion of NATO's objective should be understood in more than geographical terms, however. The ISAF strategy (on paper, at least) came to stress the necessity of democratic Afghan statehood as an overall political objective. In contrast to its essentially military presence in Kosovo (Kosovo Force, or KFOR), NATO in Afghanistan has come to assume a direct role in state-building, a challenging task in a country with a weak central government that can only exercise control via trade-offs with local power brokers.

While commanding ISAF, NATO has shown a willingness to evolve and assume new missions. This reflects a transformation process that began with the Prague Summit in 2002, where the United States pushed NATO allies to transform their military capabilities in order to take on new types of missions. The absence of both local and international civil society actors on the ground in Afghanistan forced NATO to assume new and unprecedented development tasks requiring tighter integration between the military and civilian domains than had traditionally been the case for most participating nations within the alliance. NATO's initial deployment into Afghanistan was characterized by a "light footprint" approach relying on limited resources and boots on the ground. This approach was intended to increase local ownership of the reconstruction process on the ground. NATO defined the light footprint in contrast to a Soviet-style "heavy footprint" scenario, which would have carried the risk of becoming bogged down with a large number of troops.

At the start of its Afghanistan operation in 2003, NATO focused on military stabilization. This focus was a consequence of the strong division of labor defined in the Bonn Agreement (2001)

⁸ Matthew Hill, *Democracy Promotion and Conflict-Based Reconstruction: The United States and Democratic Consolidation in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 107–108.

⁹ Alexander Mattelaer, "How Afghanistan Has Strengthened NATO," *Survival*, Vol. 53, No. 6 (December 2011/January 2012), p. 128.

In 2003–2004, French and German troops were deployed in the northern part ("stage 1"); in 2004, Spanish and Italian troops moved into the western part ("stage 2"); in mid-2006, U.S., U.K., Canadian, and Dutch forces moved into the southern region ("stage 3"); by late-2006, ISAF had become responsible for security throughout Afghanistan ("stage 4").

[&]quot;In helping the Afghan people build security today, we are defending basic values we all share, including freedom, democracy and human rights as well as respect for the views and beliefs of others." See NATO, ISAF's Strategic Vision: Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the Nations Contributing to the UN-Mandated NATO-Led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, April 3, 2008, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8444.htm.

¹² Hallams, The United States and NATO since 9/11, p. 76.

and the Tokyo Agreement (2002) that assigned lead nations to different development tasks. For instance, the United States was responsible for building an Afghan army, Germany for rebuilding an Afghan police, Japan for demobilization and reintegration, Britain for counternarcotics, and Italy for building a judicial system. From NATO's perspective, the strong division of labor between military stabilization and development defined in the Bonn Agreement meant that Afghanistan would undergo "warlord democratization" in which armed groups would demobilize and arbitrate disputes through Western-style elections rather than through violence.¹³

Provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) have been NATO's principal direct mechanism for rebuilding Afghanistan. The general purposes of PRTs are to extend the authority of the central government throughout Afghanistan's provinces, to foster economic development, and to undertake and coordinate projects for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. PRTs were imported into the ISAF as a response to its expansion beyond Kabul and to shore up the process formulated in the Bonn Agreement. PRTs have been engaged in state-building efforts such as the construction of infrastructure and buildings for district and provincial administrations, construction of schools, and health facilities, as well as constructing basic infrastructure such as roads, drinking water and electricity. The division of labor was designed so that NATO would provide security for the PRTs to operate, while the civilian side remained the responsibility of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), or what the Afghans authorities were able to implement on their own.

All PRTs operate under ISAF, but they have different lead nations. The PRTs are configured as joint civil-military teams designed to enhance the quality of the "hearts and minds" campaigns by drawing on civilian expertise and facilitating the dispersal of funds. PRTs blur the traditional distinction between the military and the civilian domains to adapt to a security environment where credible state-building efforts require military involvement. PRTs have been the most important development actors in Afghanistan's troubled regions, offering a comprehensive package of security, development, and reconstruction. PRTs remain more a diplomatic than a military tool; that being said, PRTs can call in military backup from rapid reaction forces or airpower, thus considerably enhancing their bargaining power vis-à-vis local power brokers.¹⁵

It was only around the time of the NATO Riga Summit in November 2006 that NATO started to recognize the insufficiency of the military approach employed thus far: "There can be no security in Afghanistan without development, and no development without security. The Afghan people have set out their security, governance, and development goals in the Afghanistan Compact, concluded with the international community at the beginning of the year." The Riga Summit initi-

Rubin, "Peace-Building and State-Building in Afghanistan," p. 176.

Barbara Stapleton, "Grasping the Nettle: Facilitating Change or More of the Same," in Whit Mason, ed., *The Rule of Law in Afghanistan: Missing in Inaction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 48.

Peter Jakobsen, *PRTs in Afghanistan: Successful but Not Sufficient*, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) Report No. 6 (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2005), p. 12.

[&]quot;[W]hile recognising that NATO has no requirement to develop capabilities strictly for civilian purposes, we have tasked today the Council in Permanent Session to develop pragmatic proposals in time for the meeting of Foreign Ministers in April 2007 and Defence Ministers in June 2007 to improve coherent application of NATO's own crisis management instruments." See NATO, *Riga Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council*, November 29, 2006, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts-37920.htm.

ated a new policy track with the purpose of establishing a comprehensive approach (CA), and tasked NATO Foreign Ministers in 2007 with continuing this development. In addition, NATO in September 2006 agreed to a strategic partnership with Afghanistan, which reiterated the recognition that security could not be provided by military means alone. The Riga Summit thus paved the way for a gradual breakdown of the previously strong division of labor between development and military stabilization.

It should be noted that at the time of the Riga Summit, NATO was still trying to heal wounds caused by members' disagreement over the Iraq War in 2002–2003. Therefore, changing ISAF's strategy remained a sensitive issue for some allies, which did not wish to see NATO transformed into an extended foreign policy tool for the George W. Bush administration. NATO's adaptation in its early years in Afghanistan therefore continued to be constrained by internal disagreement about whether ISAF's mandate could be extended beyond mere stabilization to a holistic "hearts-and-minds" approach with greater investment in socio-economic development and governance. As stated above, the Afghanistan Compact, adopted in 2006, specifically linked ISAF/NATO to the broader democratization effort (security, governance, development). Thus, NATO was either directly involved in development through PRTs or indirectly by taking the security initiative for joint development efforts under the Afghanistan Compact.¹⁸

Some European allies came to Afghanistan with the presumption that they were supposed to assure stabilization and reconstruction, while combat operations would remain a predominantly U.S-led effort to which it would be possible to "opt-in." In reality, NATO found itself unprepared when faced with the increasing insurgency. NATO was able to agree on some very broad political goals for the ISAF operation. Its efforts, however, were marred by widely differing national interpretations of the alliance's new role. Members like Germany insisted on doing reconstruction and development in the north/northeast of Afghanistan, while others, like the United Kingdom and Poland, were willing to engage in counterinsurgency in the south/southeast. ¹⁹

No other actor besides NATO and the United States had decisive influence on the ground in Afghanistan. Only NATO and the United States possessed credible power projection capable of backing words with action. It was, therefore, necessary for NATO to gradually assume a more political role in Afghanistan. By linking itself to the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact throughout the entire country, NATO over time became the most significant actor in the UNcoordinated development framework for Afghanistan. During the first phase of its presence in Afghanistan, NATO focused on preserving security, not only through "warlord democratization,"

[&]quot;Security requires good governance, justice and the rule of law, reinforced by reconstruction and development, as well as international, and particularly regional co-operation...Drawing on its extensive experience in defence planning and security sector reform, NATO commits itself specifically to promote democratic control and transparency in the armed forces and security institutions." See NATO, *Declaration by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*, September 6, 2006, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official texts 50575.htm.

NATO in 2003 established the position of a Senior Civilian Representative in Kabul to represent the alliance's political leadership in Kabul. The Representative provides a direct channel of communication between the theater, NATO HQ in Brussels, and the North Atlantic Council (NAC). In reality, however, the Representative's position has been weak due to an unclear relationship between the military and the civilian domain and his contribution has been low compared to the civilian-military integration efforts at the national levels.

¹⁹ Schreer, "The Evolution of NATO's Strategy in Afghanistan," pp. 143–145.

but also by supporting the attempt to hold nation-wide democratic elections in 2005. Neither the Afghan National Army (ANA) nor the Afghan National Police (ANP) was able to provide most of the necessary security measures for these elections.²⁰ Therefore, ISAF deployed over 2,000 troops in addition to what it had already on the ground in Afghanistan, through a specifically designed Election Support Force (ESF).²¹ This perhaps showed best NATO's commitment to build democracy in Afghanistan, anchored in centralized institutions in Kabul.

The downside of the light footprint strategy, however, was that the international mission generally had ignored the extent to which Afghanistan's institutional capacities had been eroded during decades of internal conflict.²² By linking itself to the Bonn Process and later the Afghanistan Compact while at the same time wanting to restrict itself to a "light footprint" approach, NATO quickly faced a discrepancy between ends and means in both the military and the civilian domains. From a military perspective, having few and dispersed troops on the ground led to the inability to defeat the Taliban from an early stage. As counterinsurgency experts can tell us, counterinsurgency campaigns take fourteen years on average, and they require high per-capita security assistance.²³

As the insurgency's violence increased, it became clear that the Taliban had not been defeated but merely pushed south or over the border into Pakistan, where it enjoyed sanctuary. Although coalition forces were likely to win almost any tactical victory against the Taliban, tactical operations did not translate into strategic progress. They could not prevent the Taliban from returning and representing a viable political alternative to foreign forces and the Afghan central government. ATO lacked the resources to hold and build on the territory it cleared by military means. NATO's failure to eliminate the threat of Taliban shadow government and to re-establish the authority of the Afghan central government stood in contrast to the alliance's proclamation of a hearts-and-minds campaign. NATO had previously relied on the use of heavy air power against the Taliban to compensate for its light footprint. It changed strategy, however, after it became clear that such use of air power resulted in a high number of civilian casualties and created resentment against NATO's presence. Hence, the only way for NATO to regain the military initiative was to put more troops on the ground.

The expansion of NATO's objectives, combined with its limited resources, had the unintended side effect of forcing the alliance to rely on local power brokers who could offer it needed intelligence, land and security. In return, the local power brokers received financial and political support from NATO, which, over time, undermined the authority of the central government.²⁷

²⁰ Rubin, "Peace-Building and State-Building in Afghanistan," p. 177.

NATO, "ISAF's Support to Afghan Elections," April 29, 2009, http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/elections/index.html.

Hamish Nixon and Richard Ponzio, "Building Democracy in Afghanistan: The State-Building Agenda and International Engagement," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 2011), pp. 27–28; and Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 9 (February/March 2009), pp. 34–35.

²³ Jones, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, p. 10.

Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "NATO's Future Vietnam? Afghanistan and the Future of the Atlantic Alliance," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (December 2009), pp. 530–536.

²⁵ Schreer, "The Evolution of NATO's Strategy in Afghanistan," p. 146.

²⁶ Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," pp. 40–42.

²⁷ Ben Rowswell, "Solving the Statebuilders' Dilemma," Washington Quarterly, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Winter 2012), p.

From an early stage, NATO's need for efficient security forces conflicted with its principles of democratic oversight and civilian control. This was the initial ambition connected to security sector reform in Afghanistan and, indeed, an area in which NATO could meaningfully draw on its expertise. NATO's unwillingness to use military pressure against warlords and faction leaders meant that the creation of depoliticized armed forces relied on incentives and co-optation rather than on marginalization or elimination. NATO adopted the PRT concept in the belief that the PRTs would be kept apart from counterinsurgency operations because the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was in charge of combat missions. NATO initially focused on ISAF in support of the Bonn Process. With time, however, NATO was precluded from strategic thinking about the real counterinsurgency problem it was facing. 29

In sum, the alliance was overwhelmed by an effort that tried to combine the conduct of warfare with an attempt to rebuild Afghanistan.³⁰ NATO had to manage a difficult balancing act. On the one hand, the alliance acted as an occupying force whose combat missions claimed civilian casualties. On the other, NATO was attempting to build a country by implementing a hearts-and-minds doctrine. The intrinsic conflict between NATO's interventionist role and its state-building activities gave rise to confusion about the ISAF strategy and over whether the alliance was able to agree on a coherent strategy at all.³¹ NATO's expansion of its objectives, without a corresponding increase in resources, therefore had negative effects on both the alliance's civilian and military undertakings. Insufficient resources nourished doubt about how serious NATO was about the achievement of its civilian-military objectives.

2.3 The Civilian Surge (2008–2011)

At the NATO Bucharest Summit in April 2008, NATO adopted the Comprehensive Strategic Political-Military Plan (CSPMP) as part of the ISAF strategy. It did so in light of the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. CSPMP is built around the three lines of operation discussed above: security (eliminate the enemy), development (create economic and social progress) and governance (build legitimate government). CSMPS assigns NATO a lead role for the security pillar and a support function for the development and governance pillars. What was qualitatively new about the introduction of CSPMP was NATO's willingness to bind the three pillars together in a politico-military plan for the entire campaign and to make this plan constantly evolving, with priorities subject to regular review. NATO's adoption of the CSPMP stood in contrast to its previous approach, which had only allowed necessary adjustments to the situation at the operational

108.

²⁸ Sedra, "Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan."

²⁹ Rynning, NATO in Afghanistan, pp. 94, 103–104.

³⁰ Astri Suhrke, "A Contradictory Mission? NATO from Stabilization to Combat in Afghanistan," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (April 2008).

At one point, one could count up to eight different mission objectives that ISAF was supposed to pursue in Afghanistan: counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, nation-building, state-building, opium eradication, peace-support, stability-enabling and, more recently, "leveraging local capacity invented as an attempt to sideline Karzai and to exert influence directly through the tribal leaders." See Christopher Coker, "The Conflict in Afghanistan," *British Politics and Policy at LSE* blog, April 20, 2010, http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/2010/04/20/afghanistan-we-can-longer-define-success).

level. The strategic level had lagged behind or was confined to very broad political declarations that did not provide adequate solutions to NATO's increasing problems.³² The CSPMP's "comprehensiveness" refers to the strong tie between the civilian and military domain necessary to ensure an effective military effort followed by a swift reconstruction phase to win the hearts and minds of the population.³³ It also represents an extension of partnerships with international development organizations and NGOs, whose governance and development capacities NATO did not possess.³⁴

CSPMP is essentially a framework document (with its content classified). It specifies a series of intermediate goals and priorities regarding NATO's role. CSPMP is subject to review and reprioritization by the so-called Policy Coordination Group under NATO's Division of Operations, and it is updated in full once a year. CSPMP is constructed around four main pillars: ISAF, the ANP and ANA, the civilian authority (rule-of-law, disarmament, drugs, etc.), and regional diplomacy (including Pakistan and Central Asia). When NATO decided on CSPMP Afghanistan in 2008, therefore, the alliance achieved some progress toward defining its own leadership role: not substituting for the Afghan government or the UN, but taking the lead in conceiving a strategy anchored inside NATO and implemented through ISAF. 36

NATO's adoption of CSPMP ran parallel to its adoption of a general comprehensive approach, the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan (CAAP), which was designed to transform its traditional military channels to adapt to other strategic theaters similar to Afghanistan. In adopting the "comprehensive approach" to crisis management, NATO recognized that counterinsurgency is a political struggle in which the ability to provide for the needs of the population determines victory, and in which social injustice and bad governance drives militant recruitment.³⁷ CSPMP implies the application of all aspects of state power, not just military power, in the counterinsurgency effort. Insurgency shadow government must be eliminated because it represents a real political alternative to the foreign presence and to the authority of the central government

At the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit in April 2009, NATO formally endorsed the U.S.-led surge strategy and agreed to a significant troop escalation supporting the new comprehensive approach. From then on, the way was paved for NATO to vest military and civilian resources directly in Afghanistan's state-building strategy. One of the key elements in NATO's CSPMP effort was the establishment, in November 2009, of a NATO Training Mission to Afghanistan (NTM-A), with the purpose of overseeing the higher level training for the ANA and training and mentoring of the ANP. This training task had previously been entirely OEF-mandated. NTM-A was tasked both with capacity-building (guiding the Afghan Ministries of Interior and of Defense toward self-reliance), and with the recruitment of soldiers and police officers, thus giving NATO a direct

³² Schreer, "The Evolution of NATO's Strategy in Afghanistan," pp. 143–152.

³³ Theo Farrell, "Testing Times: NATO War-Making in Afghanistan and Beyond," in Sten Rynning and Jens Ringsmose, eds., *NATO's New Strategic Concept: A Comprehensive Assessment*, DIIS Report No.2 (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2011).

Arita Holmberg, "The Changing Role of NATO: Exploring the Implications for Security Governance and Legitimacy," *European Security*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (December 2011), p. 534.

³⁵ Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2009), pp. 9–10.

³⁶ Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, pp. 57–58, 145.

³⁷ Suhrke, "A Contradictory Mission," p. 232.

involvement in the state-building effort.

While the CSPMP was implemented, NATO was long hesitant to formally adopt counterinsurgency (COIN) into its terminology. In October 2008, ISAF issued a Joint Campaign Plan (JCP) that framed the mission in COIN terms, including defeating an "insurgency" and the use of "clear-hold-build." The JCP must be considered a breakthrough, given NATO's previous framing of its presence in Afghanistan. COIN therefore broke with the near-theological debate with countries willing to extend NATO's role to the conduct of combat operations. NATO explicitly endorsed the COIN concept only in October 2009, at a defense ministerial meeting in Bratislava. It had earlier been outlined by the ISAF commander (COMISAF) General McChrystal, in the Initial Assessment that was leaked to the press. McChrystal's assessment recognized the lack of clear strategic objectives for ISAF's mission in Afghanistan. Moreover, it called for NATO to address the broader political-military roots of the conflict by developing an extensive counterinsurgency strategy going forward.³⁸

McChrystal famously argued that it was time to clean up the Afghan government. ISAF could no longer ignore corruption, which contributed to the broader problem of public distrust of the central government.³⁹ McChrystal's Initial Assessment came to dominate NATO's COIN approach, accentuating a so-called "population-centric COIN." Population-centric COIN takes a cautious view of the effectiveness of military force and focuses on the need to secure popular support through a clear-hold-build strategy. It stands in contrast to "enemy-centric COIN," which focuses on the targeted search in villages for weapons or insurgents, based on intelligence and over-the-horizon missions.⁴⁰ The "clear" element of population-centric COIN is largely military by nature, while "hold" refers to economic development and social stabilization, and "build" refers to the development of a legitimate government. All elements are designed to diminish insurgent influence over the civilian population. NATO's COIN doctrine in Afghanistan has implemented a military "hard power" phase, followed by a civilian, "soft power" phase, in which NATO has assumed state-building responsibilities itself, or has supported development and governance promoted by other actors, to create an environment designed to prevent the return of insurgency.⁴¹

NATO's population-centric COIN approach should be seen in the context of the simultaneous 2009 U.S.-led civilian surge in Afghanistan—a surge that, in addition to increasing troop numbers, had a strong civilian component. This civilian component consisted of a large influx of experts coordinated by the American Embassy in Kabul. The United States wanted to regain strategic momentum against the Taliban in Afghanistan by building on the common approach set out by NATO. NATO took over COIN tasks that previously were almost exclusively delimited to the American-led OEF combat mission. NATO recognized the broader problems connected to

³⁸ Stanley McChrystal, "COMISAF Initial Assessment (Unclassified)—Searchable Document," *Washington Post*, September 21, 2009.

[&]quot;In summary, the absence of personal and economic security, along with the erosion of public confidence in the government, and a perceived lack of respect for Afghan culture pose as great a challenge to ISAF's success as the insurgent threat. Protecting the population is more than preventing insurgent violence and intimidation. It also means that ISAF can no longer ignore or tacitly accept abuse of power, corruption, or marginalization." See McChrystal, "COMISAF Initial Assessment."

⁴⁰ Suhrke, "A Contradictory Mission," p. 222.

⁴¹ Johnson, "What Are You Prepared to Do," p. 338.

rampant levels of corruption, and the impossibility of working with a central government deeply distrusted by or unresponsive to the Afghan population. NATO followed up the introduction of the CSPMP in Afghanistan with a significant increase in forces and resources intended to regain the strategic momentum and reverse the foothold that the Taliban was gaining throughout Afghanistan.⁴²

The surge represented an escalation in both quantitative terms (increased numbers of military and civilian personnel) and in and qualitative terms (adoption of a new approach based on civilian-military integration). The surge addressed the mismatch between means and ends in order to give NATO a realistic chance to achieve its goals. The deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan did not allow ordinary development actors to statebuild, and it was clear that NATO was incapable of providing the necessary security throughout the entire country. Population-centric COIN was designed to reverse this trend and create the necessary preconditions for a positive political development. The implementation of the comprehensive approach, at the end of the day, however, has remained the responsibility of NATO members' national governments, and has depended on each member's ability and willingness to synchronize three aspects of state power (economic, military and diplomatic) in the common counterinsurgency effort.

Some members have been more enthusiastic about CMPSP and COIN implementation than others. Not all allies agreed to send more troops, and countries already present in the southern part of Afghanistan (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada) largely drove the surge. At the same time, a lack of a clear operational definition of what was expected of allied contributions on the civilian side of the comprehensive approach⁴³ left the door open for a great deal of national interpretation and implementation. NATO, under the leadership of General McChrystal and, subsequently, General Petraeus, experienced positive results from the surge, especially in the south and southwest parts of the country. The Taliban came under pressure as a result of the campaign intensification⁴⁴ and, correspondingly, anti-Taliban sentiments among the population, which that had become victims of the Taliban's methods, grew. On the other hand, coalition forces never achieved a momentum great enough to allow for optimism about the coalition's ability to eventually decisively defeat the Taliban insurgency.⁴⁵

The surge was intended to gain strategic momentum and create a necessary breathing space facilitating the difficult transition process. This momentum was intended to enable the Afghan security forces to take over the security responsibilities of the country, province by province. Moreover, NATO was handing over the responsibility for the PRTs to the Afghan government. 2010 and 2011 represent the peak years of the CSPMP. From 2012, NATO sought to translate its significant troop and resource increase into a transition strategy in which the Afghans eventually would take full responsibility for security throughout the country, allowing NATO an "honorable" retreat.

⁴² From 61,130 troops by mid-2009, to over 99,249 troops in April 2010, to 119,819 by August 2011. See Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified*, p. 6; Jens Ringsmose, "NATO Burden-Sharing Redux: Continuity and Change after the Cold War," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 8, No. 31 (August 2010), p. 332; and Hynek and Marton, *State-Building in Afghanistan*, p. 3.

⁴³ Johnson, "What Are You Prepared to Do," pp. 394–396

⁴⁴ Williams, Afghanistan Declassified, pp. 233–239.

⁴⁵ O'Hanley and Riedel, "Plan A-Minus for Afghanistan," pp. 124–125.

2.4 Implementing an Exit Strategy (2011–2014)

At the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, NATO agreed it would end its military presence in Afghanistan by 2014. It would begin a gradual phase-out of combat operations in early 2011, leaving Afghan forces eventually fully responsible for security across the whole of Afghanistan. The Lisbon Summit was an important landmark, as it set a final date for the transition to Afghan self-governance and thus the eventual withdrawal of NATO troops. After 2014, NATO's presence in Afghanistan would mainly be limited to military advising, training and assistance. Transition had always been NATO's plan—no one wanted to stay in Afghanistan indefinitely. Transition only became a serious issue, however, in 2009, and only in 2010 became the policy to be implemented following the end of the surge campaign. NATO emphasized a condition-based and thus flexible transition.⁴⁶ On the other hand, NATO defined the end of 2014 as an exit date by which sufficient progress in terms of stabilization should have been achieved that would allow a formal hand-over of responsibilities to the Afghan authorities. It would be fair to say, hence, that the withdrawal in reality has been calendar-based rather than conditions-based.

The Chicago Summit in 2012 defined NATO's plans for troop withdrawal as "irreversible." NATO entered a predominant support function phase as of mid-2013, when all parts of Afghanistan started to transition to ANSF responsibility. At the same time, ISAF began transforming into a predominantly classroom mission for the training and advising of Afghan security forces after 2014.⁴⁷ The more detailed transition plan is outlined in the Inteqal paper, which foresees a province-by-province transition according to evaluations based on security, governance, and development.⁴⁸ The vast increases in quantitative numbers suggest that NATO is increasingly focused on the building of the security sectors and the empowerment of the central government in preparation for the alliance's eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan. NATO's exit strategy from Afghanistan is essentially a form of apprenticeship for the Afghan government with a renewed focus on stabilization that extends the authority of the central government to strengthen the ANA and the ANP. NATO/ISAF's role includes not only training and advising but also patrolling along with Afghan forces in the field. This is supposed to reinforce the self-confidence and the fighting capability of the Afghan forces, enabling them to operate independently over time.⁴⁹

The withdrawal from Afghanistan has been paralleled by the establishment of an "Enduring

[&]quot;The process of transition to full Afghan security responsibility and leadership in some provinces and districts is on track to begin in early 2011, following a joint Afghan and NATO/ISAF assessment and decision. Transition will be conditions-based, not calendar-driven, and will not equate to withdrawal of ISAF-troops. Looking to the end of 2014, Afghan forces will be assuming full responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan." See NATO, Lisbon Summit Declaration, Declaration by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, November 20, 2010, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68828.htm mode=pressrelease.

⁴⁷ NATO, Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan, Issued by the Heads of State and Government of Afghanistan and Nations Contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), May 21, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official texts 87595.htm.

⁴⁸ NATO, "Integal: Transition to Afghan lead," June 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics 87183.htm

⁴⁹ O'Hanley and Riedel, "Plan A-Minus for Afghanistan," pp. 129–132.

Partnership" between NATO and the Afghan government, ensuring a proper transition phase based on both practical and political cooperation. ⁵⁰ For NATO, the implication of the enduring partnership have been making sustained support for Afghan security institutions a primary priority, as seen in the rapid and significant recruitment of army soldiers and police officers through NTM-A as 2014 approaches. ⁵¹ The Lisbon Summit declared that NATO and Afghanistan should consult with each other on "issues of strategic concern." The Afghan government has signaled commitment to carry out the three lines of responsibilities (security, governance, and development). ⁵² At the Chicago summit, the partnership agreement was delimited to external funding of the Afghan security forces after 2014. The funding is set to run from 2015 to 2024, but progressively decline, with the Afghan government taking full responsibility for its own security forces no later than 2024. ⁵³ NATO's continued influence on Afghan politics post-2014, however, depends on its ability to integrate a political-military package. Political consultations alone would have little impact on Afghanistan or any other state in the region. NATO can only wage political influence in Afghan politics based on conditionality coupled to its military resources and expertise. ⁵⁴

NATO allies internally described the holding of elections in Afghanistan as a "critical landmark," and suggested that security failure during the election process would have catastrophic consequences for the country's democratic process. 55 However, both the 2009 and 2010 elections left NATO little hope of ensuring even a procedural level of democracy in Afghanistan. In addition to a fraudulent election process and a politically compromised electoral commission, election-day security was lacking throughout the country, despite NATO/ISAF's efforts. 56 Voter turnout during 2009 and 2010 was lower than during previous elections, 57 and the district council elections scheduled to take place in 2010 were cancelled. 58 The 2004 and 2005 elections were flawed, but the basic lack of progress displayed during the 2009 and 2010 elections destroyed any illusion that a realistic transition to some sort of centralized, responsive state would be possible by 2024. 59

⁵⁰ NATO, Statement on Afghanistan, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Nations Participating in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), December 4, 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_59701.htm?mode = pressrelease.

From 97,000 to 195,000 military personnel and from 95,037 to 157,000 police personnel in the period from 2009 to 2012, with self-reliance forces as the declared goal. See NATO, "Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) Fact-Sheet" (NATO, 2011), http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/isaf-factsheet-on-current-ansf-status.html.

NATO, Declaration by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on an Enduring Partnership, November 20, 2010, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/ official texts 68724.htm.

⁵³ NATO, Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan.

⁵⁴ Sten Rynning, "After Combat, the Perils of Partnership: NATO and Afghanistan beyond 2014," Research Paper No. 80 (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2012), p. 6.

Wikileaks, "The December 3, 2008 North Atlantic Council Foreign Ministers Meeting on NATO Operations," http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/12/08USNATO471.html.

⁵⁶ Scott Worden, "Afghanistan: An Election Gone Awry," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (July 2010), pp. 11-25.

Thirty-three percent nationwide and 10 percent in some districts of Helmand and Kandahar. See Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, *Afghanistan: How the West Lost Its Way* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 225.

⁵⁸ Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2012: Afghanistan," http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/afghanistan-0.

⁵⁹ Hill, Democracy Promotion and Conflict-Based Reconstruction, p. 94.

Although Afghanistan suffers from severe democratic deficits, the country has experienced some progress in other areas not related to the political development of the country. Whereas nothing seems to alter the extensive corruption problems in all layers of the Afghan state apparatus, ⁶⁰ the prevalence of electoral fraud, and the impunity of local power brokers, Afghanistan has experienced a quadrupling of GDP, increased literacy rates, and at least preliminary success in recruitment for Afghanistan's security sectors. ⁶¹ In 2012, the NATO Secretary General welcomed the announcement of the presidential elections in 2014 as a historic opportunity for Afghanistan's democratic progress to contribute to stability, security, and prosperity. ⁶²

Although NATO can provide coercion and capital, it can offer neither national leadership nor legitimacy for building an Afghan state. The state-building effort has ended up being internationalized to such an extent that Afghanistan has been turned into a rentier state with uncertain legitimacy. The Afghan government continues to lack fundamental fiscal and implementation capacities that would allow it to carry out policies decided upon in Kabul.⁶³ External aid has overwhelmed national revenues, with foreign assistance accounting for 90-95 percent of the entire state budget and development expenditures (2009 numbers).⁶⁴ The costs related to securing the 2004 and 2005 elections alone mounted to \$318 million, exceeding the entire Afghan government revenue for 2004 (\$269 million); the 2009 presidential and provincial elections alone cost more than \$200 million.⁶⁵ The extreme internationalization has provided an externally produced monopoly on the use of violence. The obvious downside of such internationalization, however, is that it perpetuates a statehood depleted of internal sovereignty, which conflicts with official claims to increase local ownership, sustainability, and legitimacy in line with democratic ideology.⁶⁶

In sum, NATO found itself in a catch-22 position in which development was necessary to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a new safe haven for international terrorism. NATO had no allies with real political leverage on the ground (not even the EU or the UN). Therefore, NATO, as the only powerful international actor, ended up developing the necessary civilian capacities itself.⁶⁷

Afghanistan in 2010 numbers is the second-most corrupt country in the world (after Somalia), according to Transparency International. In 2009, Afghan citizens had to pay the equivalent of 23 percent of the national GDP in bribes, while drugs and bribery constituted the two largest income generators in Afghanistan. See Bird and Marshall, *Afghanistan*, p. 239.

Rowswell, "Solving the Statebuilders' Dilemma," p. 97.

NATO, "Secretary General Welcomes Announcement on Afghan Elections," October 31, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news-91116.htm.

Rubin, "Peace-Building and State-Building in Afghanistan," pp. 177–178.

These numbers do not include expenses related to NATO operations and local development. Rentier states based on huge influxes of foreign aid are more fragile than traditional rentier states based on natural resources, because strategically motivated foreign assistance inevitably alters interests and power relations between groups. See Astri Suhrke, "Exogenous State-Building: The Contradictions of the International Project in Afghanistan," in Mason, ed., *The Rule of Law in Afghanistan*, pp. 240–241. After 2014, foreign support to the Afghan national security forces is envisaged to remain at a very high level of 86 percent, in addition to the military training efforts that remain in the country. See "The NATO Summit: NATO's Risky Afghan Endgame," *Economist*, May 26, 2012.

⁶⁵ Ponzio, Democratic Peacebuilding, p. 239.

⁶⁶ Florian Kühn, "Supporting the State, Depleting the State," in Hans Ehrhart and Charles Pentland, eds., *The Afghanistan Challenge: Hard Realities and Strategic Choice* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2009), pp. 68–70; and Suhrke, "Exogenous State-Building," pp. 237–246.

⁶⁷ Williams, The Good War, pp. 97–101.

2008 through 2010 represented a peak in NATO's state-building effort. During this time, NATO decided to throw resources into a big last attempt to reverse the negative development of a growing insurgency and to match means with ends. The 2011–2014 period and beyond, conversely, indicates a cooling in both ends and means. This has been due in no small part to the lack of democratic progress and a renewed preference for stabilization through security sector reinforcement and transition to Afghan self-reliance.

Summing up, one can distinguish five important landmarks in the rise and decline of NATO's hearts-and-minds doctrine:

- 1. the Riga Summit in 2006;
- 2. the Bucharest Summit in 2008 endorsing CSPMP;
- 3. the Bratislava Foreign Minister Meeting in 2009 adopting COIN as official policy;
- 4. the Lisbon Summit in 2010 adopting a new transition process toward end-2014;
- 5. the Chicago Summit in 2012 manifesting NATO's irreversible drawdown.

In the next section, I explain the rise and decline of NATO's democratic agenda in Afghanistan. As outlined above, I employ the neoclassical realist model (y): power transitions (x) mediated through predominant narratives at the national level (z). I start out explaining as much as possible from the perspective of crude budgetary imperatives: the effect of state budget consolidation on national defense allocations. Using a realist perspective, it is necessary to understand the material frame within which national decisions were taken as a primary ordering principle. Budgetary decline was likely to have a direct material impact on contributing nations' willingness to project force out-of area against a tenacious Taliban opposed to the spread of democratic practices. I then proceed to a narrative-driven understanding of the participation of the most important NATO countries in the Afghanistan operation, analyzing how budgetary strictures have been mediated through national narratives at the domestic level constituting either restraining or reinforcing factors.

3. Budgetary Imperatives and Political Adaptation

NATO's operational adaptation to the difficult Afghan theater of operation, as noted in the introduction, provides only a partial explanation for the development of the alliance's policy over time. Although democratization has been NATO's official rhetoric, the alliance's actual approach has been more pragmatic and ad hoc; elaborate plans for the development of Afghanistan and claims about Afghan leadership have to a large extent reflected ideological imperatives in Western capitals rather than the reality on the ground in Afghanistan.⁶⁸ This discrepancy between

Stapleton, "Grasping the Nettle," pp. 255–256. Moreover, acording to Kalinovsky, the Western approach to nation-building and modernisation in Afghanistan has clear parallels to the Soviet attempt in the 1980s. In both cases, superpowers believed in a universal rationality, according to which the Afghan population would respond positively to promises about economic aid and livelihood improvements. The Soviet "nation-building" program was characterised by a constantly improvised fire-fighting operation on a national scale, a strategy that was abandoned after

declared objectives and the reality perhaps best illustrates the argument that policy is driven by the cost/benefit calculations predominant in Western capitals. NATO in Afghanistan has chosen arguably one of the toughest countries in the world to democratize.

NATO policy cannot be adequately explained as some kind of rational adaptation to operational needs. It has, however, been highly sensitive to economic fluctuations, as military spending and development assistance allocations must be drawn directly from the national fiscal income bases. Operations are strongly dependent on financial priorities and national budgetary allocations to external power projection purposes. The transformation in most NATO countries from compulsory military service to an all-volunteer force has made NATO increasingly reliant on capital/treasury rather than on soldiers/blood, because the new type of operations require cost-intensive special operation forces, light- and medium-sized military units, and the procurement of new military technology.⁶⁹

From 2008 onward, NATO operated in a domestic environment of increasing fiscal austerity with allies reducing defense spending. The fiscal situation intensified due to the need to reduce large annual national budget deficits. National debts rapidly accumulated as a consequence of the global economic crisis, with dropping or stagnating GDP rates after the financial meltdown in 2008.⁷⁰ Declining national incomes had a direct negative impact on external power projection capabilities through budgetary strictures and more pressing economic problems at home. Fiscal revenues decreased due to declining income and firm profits, while government spending increased due to the activation of automatic stabilizers (unemployment insurance, economic stimuli packages) during the crisis to avoid a double-dip recession. The resulting state deficits raised strategic reconsiderations about the real value of a prolonged NATO stability operation in a country representing little vital interest.

NATO can, strictly speaking, afford a continued presence in Afghanistan. However, a change in material reality can compel decisionmakers to reprioritize material interests ahead of values. Increased material constraints are likely to alter cost/benefit calculations in a way that disfavors a continued democracy-building effort and favors an accelerated drawdown and stabilization. Fiscal constraints (combined with an effort that has provided little durable pay off) call for a refocus on short-term stabilization objectives and the abandonment of overseas nation-building. Under increasing material constraints, NATO came under increased time pressure to, if not produce results, then at least pursue a realistic Afghanistan exit option.⁷¹ National governments, parliaments, and defense ministries, however, have applied different strategies to cope with the impact of the economic crisis and the pressure on the defense budgets and operational costs in

¹⁹⁸⁷ by reaching out to the rebel leaders. See Artemy Kalinovsky, "The Blind Leading the Blind: Soviet Advisers, Counter-Insurgency, and Nation-Building in Afghanistan," Working Paper No. 60 (Princeton, N.J.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, January 2010).

⁶⁹ Vincenzo Bove and Elisa Cavatorta, "From Conscription to Volunteers: Budget Shares in NATO Defence Spending," *Defence and Peace Economics*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (June 2012), p. 287.

⁷⁰ It is the effect of absolute rather than relative decline that is relevant to policy change in Afghanistan. The challenge to NATO's presence derives from insurgency and instability rather than, in the traditional sense, from the rise of a competing power in the region.

Amin Tarzi, "Recalibrating the Afghan Reconciliation Program," *PRISM*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (September 2010), p. 73.

Afghanistan.⁷² The issue is most acute for the United States and the United Kingdom, which have the largest force contribution in Afghanistan and for which the deployment has represented a relatively higher share of their overall military spending. The economic situation, however, has given rise to similar debates in other countries as well. In 2009, the budgetary costs⁷³ connected to the deployment to Afghanistan for Germany represented 1.7 percent of total military spending, for France less than 1 percent, while for Britain this number was as high as 9.2 percent of total military spending.⁷⁴

The effect of accumulating state budget deficits on central government debt is shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Governments have faced skyrocketing increases in central government debt as percentage of GDP from 2007–2008 onward. The United States and the United Kingdom, as the strongest contributors to ISAF, have incurred the highest increases in government debts; Germany and Poland have witnessed the lowest increases in debts. The result of increasing state budget deficits has been cuts or planned cuts in defense budgets in most NATO countries, due to the need, under financial austerity, to set clear political priorities for policy areas. Most NATO members have already reached a critical upper level of national incurrence of debt, and have been disinclined to allocate more domestic resources to external power projection. Defense spending, expressed as percentage of GDP, increased in the United States and the United Kingdom until 2010, but has since gone into decline; Germany and Poland's defense spending has remained steady, whereas France's defense spending overall has declined (cf. Table 3).⁷⁵

The military has borne a relatively higher share of the necessary fiscal adjustments (indeed, NATO members give priority to "butter" over "guns"). ⁷⁶ A continuing need to reduce national deficits suggests that the cuts in military spending are not just temporary. The challenge of economic austerity has resulted in planned defense cuts in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Poland, which are among the countries with the highest proportion of deployable forces and which together represent 87 percent of total NATO defense expenditures. After an intense build-up of troops as part of the U.S.-led surge strategy, NATO countries began their drawdown as of mid-2011 (cf. Table 4). In most countries, the rising budget deficits have resulted in political crises over how to deal with these deficits, resulting in marked planned defense cuts over a five-year period.

⁷² International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2012), p. 71.

Budgetary costs account for additional expenses directly related to the operation in question—as opposed the broader economic costs that also include medical costs, productivity loss due to injury, and loss of life.

⁷⁴ Sam Perlo-Freeman, Olawale Ismail, and Carina Solmirano, "Military Expenditure," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 193–194.

⁷⁵ Ironically, military spending as percentage of GDP increased during the crisis, due to slow growth or falls in GDP. In periods of high economic growth, countries increase military spending more slowly than their economies grow, but during a crisis this trend changes. See Sam Perlo-Freeman and Carina Solmirano, "Global Developments in Military Expenditure," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 153.

⁷⁶ For democratic counterinsurgents, the domestic expectation to produce visible and steady progress is higher than for non-democracies. Strong voter demands for a solution to domestic, economic problems compel decisionmakers to cut increasingly unpopular foreign commitments in the short term.

Table 1: Central Government Gross Debts as Percentage of GDP.⁷⁷

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*	2012*	2013*
U.S.	60.4	67.8	67.4	66.1	66.5	75.5	89.1	98.2	102.5	106.5	108.1
U.K.	38.7	40.3	41.8	43.0	43.7	52.2	68.1	79.4	85.4	90.3	93.6
Germany	64.4	66.2	68.5	67.9	65.4	66.8	74.5	82.5	80.5	82.0	80.4
France	63.2	65.0	66.7	64.1	64.2	68.2	79.2	82.3	86.0	90.3	92.7
Poland	47.1	45.7	47.1	47.7	45.0	47.1	50.9	54.8	56.4	55.2	56.8

^{*}Estimates.

Table 2: Central Government Annual Net Lending (+) or Borrowing (-) as Percentage of GDP.⁷⁸

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*	2012*	2013*
U.S.	-4.9	-4.4	-3.2	-2.0	-2.7	-6.7	-13.3	-11.1	-10.0	-8.5	-6.5
U.K.	-3.4	-3.5	-3.4	-2.7	-2.9	-5.1	-11.4	-10.1	-7.9	-8.3	-7.0
Germany	-4.2	-3.8	-3.3	-1.7	0.2	-0.1	-3.1	-4.2	-0.8	0.2	-0.3
France	-4.1	-3.6	-3.0	-2.4	-2.8	-3.3	-7.6	-7.1	-5.2	-4.6	-3.7
Poland	-6.2	-5.4	-4.1	-3.6	-1.9	-3.7	-7.4	-7.9	-5.0	-3.5	-3.4

^{*}Estimates.

Table 3: Defense Expenditure as Percentage of GDP.⁷⁹

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
U.S.	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.2	5.1	5.4	5.4	4.8	4.1
U.K.	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6
Germany	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.2
France	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.8
Poland	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8

⁷⁷ International Monetary Fund (IMF), *World Economic Outlook*, 2013, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2013/01/weodata/index.aspx.

⁷⁸ IMF, World Economic Outlook.

NATO, "NATO-Russia Compendium of Financial and Economic Data Relating to Defence," December 20, 2007, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2007_12/20090327_p07-141.pdf; NATO, "Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence," April 13, 2012, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_04/20120413 PR CP 2012 047 rev1.pdf; and IISS, https://www.nato

Table 4: NATO/ISAF Troops in Afghanistan per Country.80

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
U.S.	12,000	15,108	20,600	34,800	90,000	90,000	68,000	68,000
U.K.	6,100	7,740	8,330	9,000	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,000
Germany	2,750	3,155	3,310	4,365	4,877	5,150	4,737	4,400
France	1,000	1,073	3,000	3,095	3,850	3,932	2,418	550
Poland	10	937	1,130	1,910	2,488	2,580	1,800	1,739

^{*}Data for February 201381

NATO countries have reacted differently to the budgetary situation not only due to the objective differences in their need to obtain budgetary equilibrium (for instance, the United States compared to Poland), but also due to diverging benefit perceptions connected to the Afghanistan operation. One perceived benefit is obviously the desire to leave behind a more democratic Afghanistan, seen as a prerequisite for competent governance and long-term stability. This concern, however, has been likely to be most predominant for the United States, a superpower with global interests that has been a primary target of international terrorist organizations. The United Kingdom, which was likewise exposed to terrorist attacks, has also been likely to see a sectional interest in Afghanistan. Another perceived benefit of the Afghanistan operation for NATO members has been the perceived geopolitical gain of providing support to the U.S.-led coalition. Non-U.S. contributors are buying security premiums or influence in Washington by supporting its democratization endeavors in Afghanistan, even though they have little or no direct interest in the operation as such. As Alexander Mattelaer has argued, the Afghan campaign has demonstrated that NATO has shown signs of turning into a coalition framework, i.e. an opt-in-based operation rather than a genuine collective defense effort, with alliance members participating in operations primarily for political purposes. 82 Actual NATO decisions may therefore not be related primarily to the Afghan theater, but to the broader strategic debate about to what extent NATO should develop civilian capacities or expand its geographical scope of operation (from Europe-centric to global).

In weighing costs against benefits, purely rational calculi provide limited analytical value. In accordance with the neoclassical realist logic, hence, I proceed to the prevalence of national narratives that mediate material constraints into diverging preferences and behavior. To reiterate, my core argument is that decisionmakers draw on national security narratives as heuristic tools when faced with a complex reality or in the absence of clear preferences. Narratives can be described as historical experience related to a country's geopolitical positioning in the past. A state may be

⁸⁰ IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2007); IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2008); IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2010); IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2011); and IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2012).

⁸¹ ISAF, "Key Facts and Figures," 2013, http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.pdf

⁸² Mattelaer, "How Afghanistan Has Strengthened NATO," p. 136.

driven to avoid past foreign policy "failures" or to repeat past foreign policy "successes," thus delaying rational adaptation to a changed material environment. How decisionmakers weigh costs and benefits should be seen through the lens of historically informed narratives. Different narratives can account for policy divergence among states exposed to "similar" material pressures. Divergence can be observed not only at the political level, but also at the operational level, because an out-of-area operation allows NATO countries to implement national preferences in practice. Decisionmakers embedded in a narrative forging skepticism or reservations about NATO's Afghanistan mission have been likely to reinforce the budgetary pressures for an accelerated withdrawal. Conversely, decisionmakers embedded in lessons forging enthusiasm and commitment have been likely to restrain the budgetary pressure for a quick withdrawal. Tracing the impact of different national lessons, therefore, can address the imperfect causal relationship between policy and budgetary strictures.

At the political level, official NATO policy decisions are dependent on a negotiated agreement among contributors about the (evolving) political purpose of the NATO/ISAF mission. Significant contributors like the United Kingdom, France, and Germany enjoy significant political leverage over the decision process. Non-contributors or small contributors like the Netherlands, the Baltic States, or Turkey also enjoy formal veto powers but are unlikely to block the great contributors in moving forward with adopting policies such as CSPMP or COIN. The United States has traditionally pushed for NATO to develop civilian capabilities, but it has faced differing or even competing national interpretations of the NATO mandate. The United States was (and is) dependent on allied support; its NATO allies account for nearly 90 percent of the total ISAF force.⁸³

At the operational level, although NATO provides a political platform for forming coalitions of the willing, contributors do not have to agree on how to tackle a given security challenge on the ground. He lack of unity of command of force is accompanied by a lack of unity of effort between military and civilian actors, increasing the overall operational complexity of NATO's mission. Participating states report to their national command authorities, which impose restrictions known as "national caveats" on the tasks the forces undertake, e.g. barring forces from combat operations or from operating in certain areas, or requiring consultation with the national capitals. The same goes for the PRTs, which have no centrally defined model or doctrine, but which function to preserve national concepts and structures.

⁸³ The Pentagon in 2005 implemented its plan of "equal responsibility" in Afghanistan. The plan's idea was that ISAF should take over operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda on par with the United States. The United States' need for support would supposedly give NATO allies a certain degree of leverage in terms of defining the mission objectives.

The NAC provides political guidance for the strategic military command exercised by the Allied Command Operations (ACO) and the Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR), but the operational command for ISAF lies with the Joint Forces Command (JFC). Different players at both the strategic and the operational level thus contribute to difficulties in applying a coherent strategy for Afghanistan.

⁸⁵ Schreer, "The Evolution of NATO's Strategy in Afghanistan," p. 147.

James Sperling and Mark Webber, "NATO: From Kosovo to Kabul," *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 3 (May 2009), p. 509.

4. The Impact of Geopolitical Lessons

In this section, I discuss and analyze the most important NATO countries' decision-making processes in turn, beginning with the United States. The United States has been by far the most important power in Afghanistan in terms of both contributions to and leadership in the NATO mission. The United States therefore serves as a useful point of departure, allowing comparison with the policy of NATO allies that either accept the status quo or try to revise the United States' leadership role. The analysis of each country follows the sequence: (a) positioning in NATO decisions and operational approach, (b) geopolitical lessons influencing participation in the mission, and (c) budgetary decline and the impact of security narratives on national cost/benefit calculations.

4.1 UNITED STATES: DEMOCRACY BY IMPOSITION AND FISCAL CRISIS

The U.S. policy position is characterized by a strong emphasis on democracy, as well as an increasing ambition from the Riga Summit onwards to see NATO develop civilian capabilities in support of the nation-building effort in Afghanistan. Initially, the United States was opposed to nation-building through the use of military force,⁸⁷ and strongly in favor of a light footprint approach, which centered ISAF on Kabul to prevent the Taliban from returning to power. The U.S. designed its PRT model to provide security and development with a minimum of troop commitment on the ground.⁸⁸ Gradually, when faced with the challenge of defining a long-term strategy, the United States linked Afghanistan to its Freedom Agenda, intended to address the problem of Islamist fundamentalism abroad, and to a NATO liberal interventionist strategy.⁸⁹

On the other hand, the light footprint approach meant that the provision of basic security and democracy promotion was downgraded outside of Kabul and the bigger cities. It also forced the United States to rely on local power brokers. 90 As the situation in Afghanistan worsened,

In the words of Secretary of State Rice: "The president must remember that the military is a special instrument. It is lethal, and it is meant to be. It is not a civilian police force. It is not a political referee. And it is most certainly not designed to build a civilian society." See Condoleezza Rice, "Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2000). And in the words of President Bush: "We will not stay. We don't do police work. We need a core of a coalition of the willing...and then pass these tasks on to others." George W. Bush, quoted in Bird and Marshall, *Afghanistan*, p. 239.

⁸⁸ Jakobsen, PRTs in Afghanistan, p. 19.

The following quotes best illustrates the U.S. position. "Afghanistan faces continuing economic and security challenges. It will face those challenges as a free and stable democracy." See George W. Bush, "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East,' Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," November 6, 2003, https://jeorgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html). "The United States is firmly committed to help Afghans build a free, secure and prosperous future and applauds the Afghan people as they advance further on their democratic journey." See Condoleezza Rice, quoted in "Bush, Rice Congratulate Afghanistan on Successful Elections," 2005, https://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2005/09/20050918183655uhyggep0.5411341.html#axzz2mAEZnwMa. "The United States and NATO have a vital interest in supporting the emergence of an effective, democratic Afghan state that can defeat the Taliban and deliver 'population security'...We can succeed in Afghanistan but we must be prepared to sustain a partnership with that new democracy for many years to come." See Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest: American Realism for a New World," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August, 2008). James Dobbins, *After the Taliban: Nation-Building in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac, 2008), p.

the rather strong-worded Freedom Agenda increasingly stood in contrast to the actual resources devoted to fulfilling the task. The United States, arguably the natural leader in Afghanistan, provided little initial leadership within NATO and gave little strategic vision for NATO's role in Afghanistan. In Riga, the United States nevertheless pushed for a global NATO and for an evolving NATO policy in Afghanistan, culminating with the adoption of the CSPMP in Bucharest in 2008.

President Obama was elected in 2008 with the promise of finishing the fight against al-Qaeda and international terrorism in Afghanistan. The Obama administration infused a more realistic coherence between ends and means. It narrowed U.S. goals to "dismantle, disrupt and defeat Al-Qaeda" and rejected nationbuilding "because it is Afghans who must build their nation." The Obama administration replaced its predecessor's rhetorical emphasis on democracy and freedom with more narrow goals aimed at building an effective and stable Afghan state. At the same time, Obama declared that it was necessary to employ a comprehensive approach and implement a civilian surge to win over the rural parts of Afghanistan before an eventual exit.

Obama increased the U.S. presence in Afghanistan through a military escalation intended to reverse the Taliban momentum as well as a civilian surge intended to strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of the central government in Kabul. The "integrated civil-military campaign plan" that then-U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry formulated and COMISAF/USFOR-A General McChrystal launched was a strategy which embedded the military surge in the broader civilian surge and which sought to integrate state-building and counterinsurgency in a common strategy. McChrystal also addressed corruption and misuse of power, which constituted parts of the fundamental problem of distrust between the Afghan government and the Afghan people. This distrust hampered the attempt to enhance the legitimacy of the government anchored in Kabul. The U.S. government deployed a considerable number of temporary civilian experts to reinforce the military surge. The United States was trying to promote economic and social development and good governance in addition to the military gains or, in COIN terms, to "hold-and-build" what had been "cleared" by military means. 95

The U.S.-initiated surge provided new and much-needed leadership to the NATO effort through

^{161;} Oz Hassan and Andrew Hammond, "The Rise and Fall of America's Freedom Agenda in Afghanistan: Counter-Terrorism, Nation-Building, and Democracy," *International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (May 2011), pp. 535–537.

White House, "White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington, D.C.: White House, 2009).

[&]quot;We are not going to be able to rebuild Afghanistan into a Jeffersonian democracy...What we can do is make sure that Afghanistan is not a safe haven for Al Qaida. What we can do is make sure that it is not destabilizing neighboring Pakistan." See Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan," United States Military Academy at Westpoint, Wespoint, New York, December 1, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan.

⁹³ White House, "White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report."

⁹⁴ United States Government, *United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan* (Kabul: United States Government, 2009), http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB370/docs/Document%209.pdf.

⁹⁵ Johnson, "What Are You Prepared to Do," p. 394.

the formulation of clearer political goals; NATO allies acted in a supporting role. He integration of NATO and the U.S.-led OEF mission culminated with COMISAF becoming commander of both ISAF and OEF forces. The United States pushed for NATO's adoption of a CSPMP for Afghanistan and population-centric COIN in support of the surge. The U.S. government designed the surge and transition to Afghan self-reliance within a flexible medium-term time frame to assure NATO allies that the effort would not be open-ended.

President Obama announced the beginning of the troop retreat from Afghanistan on June 22, 2011, declaring it was time for the United States "to focus on nation-building at home." The withdrawal from Afghanistan began according to the initial plan by which NATO and the United States had been preparing for a gradual transition to Afghan self-reliance with regards to all three pillars: security, governance, and development. In practice, both the United States and NATO accepted a quick transfer of power to an Afghan government that continued to lack basic democratic legitimacy. If the U.S. government earlier was still convinced that it should continue persuading or creating the incentives for the Afghan government to embrace democracy, its preference clearly moved to transferring power and responsibility to the Afghan government. 100

The United States has signaled willingness to uphold a smaller military presence in Afghanistan beyond 2014, but only for training and assistance purposes under the auspices of a U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership.¹⁰¹ State-building efforts have been scaled down and centered on the creation of a strong Afghan army and police force to gradually take over security responsibilities. The United States created a partnership agreement with the Afghan government, to remain in force until 2024. The partnership agreement reiterates earlier democratization objectives but, simultaneously, it signals commitment to the protection and promotion of democratic values from a backstage role focused on mentoring and guidance of the Afghan government.¹⁰² Democracy promotion persists as a foreign objective, but it has changed from imposition to a backstage strategy.

What security narrative, in turn, can help us understand the U.S. preference for democracy building in Afghanistan? I asked former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in person about the U.S. motivation to embark on a light footprint approach. She answered that the U.S. government was initially motivated by the negative memory connected of the Soviet invasion and eventual retreat from Afghanistan in the 1980s. According to Rice, moreover, the fact that the military over time

Veronica Kitchen, *The Globalization of NATO: Intervention, Security, and Identity* (Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, 2010), p. 106; Schreer, "The Evolution of NATO's Strategy in Afghanistan," p. 148–149.

⁹⁷ Bird and Marshall, *Afghanistan*, p. 219.

⁹⁸ In accordance with *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, which highlights the need for political, social, and economic programs, which are "usually more valuable than conventional military operations in addressing the root causes of conflict and undermining an insurgency." David Petraeus et al., *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 54.

⁹⁹ Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan," The White House, Washington, D.C., June 22, 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/22/remarks-president-way-forward-afghanistan.

Hassan and Hammond, "The Rise and Fall of America's Freedom Agenda in Afghanistan," p. 546.

¹⁰¹ Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2012), p. 28.

¹⁰² Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Kabul, May 2, 2012.

came to assume nation-building tasks should be seen as a result of "mission creep," rather than deriving from an ideological change in the U.S. government. The situation in Afghanistan had worsened due to the Taliban finding a sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan, which would allow them to become powerful again over time. Hence, it was necessary to commit a greater amount of resources to the operation.¹⁰³

A couple of analogies between NATO's effort in Afghanistan and past experiences with NATO as a promoter of freedom illustrate how the United States interpreted the rising challenge from Taliban insurgency. The Afghanistan effort was embedded within the broader Freedom Agenda and President Bush, according to his memoirs, came to see Afghanistan as "the ultimate nation-building mission. We had liberated the country from a primitive dictatorship, and we had a moral obligation to leave behind something better." The link to the Freedom Agenda is relevant from a general ideational perspective, but in identifying the policy impact of lessons one needs to address possible specific parallels. President Bush employed historical analogies between opposition to the Taliban and NATO's integration of the Eastern European countries at the end of the Cold War.

In Riga in 2006, President Bush repeated his earlier statement that he gave in Warsaw about NATO enlargement in 2001, but this time drawing parallels to the development in the Middle East. Indeed, Bush pictured NATO as a kind of freedom multiplier in other parts of the world: "Freedom in Europe has brought peace to Europe, and Freedom has brought the power to bring peace to the broader Middle East. Soon after I took office, I spoke to students at Warsaw University. I told them America had learned the lesson of history. I said, 'No more Munichs, and no more Yaltas.' I was speaking at the time about Europe, but the lessons of Yalta apply equally across the world...My country has made its choice, and so has the NATO Alliance. We refuse to give in to a pessimism that consigns millions across the Middle East to endless oppression." 105

President Bush had earlier drawn parallels between the Afghanistan operation and the United States' past positive experience connected to the Marshall Plan in Europe: "America seeks hope and opportunity for all people in all cultures. And that is why we're helping to rebuild Afghanistan...By helping to build an Afghanistan that is free from this evil and is a better place in which to live, we are working in the best traditions of George Marshall...The Marshall Plan, rebuilding Europe and lifting up former enemies, showed that America is not content with military victory alone...The terrorists took refuge in places of chaos, despair and repression. A democratic Afghanistan would be a hopeful alternative to the vision of the extremists." ¹⁰⁶

The U.S. past experience with the exportation of democracy to countries after toppling their dictatorial leaderships has forged a historical understanding in favor of repeating similar successes in Afghanistan. President Bush justified NATO's new role as an out-of-area democratizer by pointing to both a similar positive experience in Europe (Marshall Plan) and an abstract notion

¹⁰³ Condoleezza Rice, interviewed by the author, Palo Alto, California, April 16, 2011.

George Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Random House, 2010), p. 205.

George W. Bush, "President Bush Discusses NATO Alliance during Visit to Latvia," Riga, Latvia, November 28, 2006, http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/77014.htm.

¹⁰⁶ George W. Bush, "President Outlines War Effort: Remarks by the President to the George C. Marshall ROTC Award Seminar on National Security Cameron Hall," Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia, April 17, 2002, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020417-1.html

of instances in which freedom was abandoned in the past (Munich, Yalta). Moreover, Bush saw the new, post-communist NATO members as a force-multiplier of U.S. strategic influence. For the United States as a hegemonic leader of NATO and the Western community since 1949, its historical lessons do not apply (solely) to international change related to its survival but to its ability in the past to transform the international system. The U.S. democratization narrative is fundamentally marked by at least two past critical geopolitical events: spreading democracy and economic prosperity in Japan and in Western Europe and, ultimately, bringing the Soviet Union to its knees. One may add one additional lesson of tactical relevance for the way the United States decided to conduct its surge in Afghanistan between 2009 and 2011. I asked former U.S. Ambassador Eikenberry in person, who indicated that the civilian-military surge in Afghanistan was modeled on the 2007 surge in Iraq. The surge in Iraq was a positive lesson of how stabilization and a relatively quick transition to Iraqi security responsibility could be facilitated through a massive influx of troops followed by a gradual drawdown. 107

While the Bush administration employed historical analogies as a justification for NATO policy, the Obama administration has been much less outspoken about democratic analogies, prioritizing a transfer to Afghan self-reliance. However, this does not imply that President Obama carries around a fundamentally different historical narrative than his predecessor. Rather, one should see the drawdown and the refocus on security sectors and Afghan self-reliance as a tactical shift in the U.S. approach to the spread of democracy abroad. This shift can be explained from the perspective of declining U.S. power and more urgent needs to solve domestic problems. The United States has strong, shared lessons in favor of bringing democracy to distant countries; these lessons do not change overnight. What has changed is rather that President Obama and the U.S. Congress compared to their predecessors have faced an unfavorable financial situation conducive to more moderate foreign ambitions.

Since September 11, 2001, the U.S. war on terror has involved two simultaneous state-building projects in Afghanistan and in Iraq. These have constituted a serious burden on the U.S. federal budget, accounting for a significant rise in defense expenditure as share of GDP from below 4 percent to around 5.5 percent (cf. Table 3). Moreover, the Bush administration was the first in U.S. history to cut taxes while going to war, even in face of continued government deficits. The U.S. debt rose from \$6.5 trillion to \$10 trillion from 2003 to 2008. The total budgetary cost of the global war on terror (2001–2011) amounts to approximately \$1.28 trillion. It is estimated that at least one fourth of the U.S. public debt can be attributed directly to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. ¹⁰⁹

The fluctuation in U.S. defense expenditure, both in terms of base spending and operations, can be seen from Table 5 below. The total costs related to U.S. operations peaked in 2008 and reached a new stable level from 2009–2011, followed by a steady decline through 2013. Most of the U.S. defense cuts can be attributed to the decline in expenses related to operations,

¹⁰⁷ Karl Eikenberry, interviewed by the author, Palo Alto, California, March 12, 2012.

Hassan and Hammond, "The Rise and Fall of America's Freedom Agenda in Afghanistan," p. 542–546.

Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes, "Estimating the Costs of War: Methodological Issues, with Applications to Iraq and Afghanistan," in Michelle Garfinkel and Stergios Skaperdas, eds., *Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Peace and Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 306; and IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2013), p. 61.

whereas the base budget stabilized at a new high level after 2009. The diversion of economic and military resources from Iraq to Afghanistan, in turn, can be seen from Table 6. Resources that were freed from Iraq from 2007 onwards allowed the United States to divert economic and military resources to Afghanistan, and to reduce the under-resourcing that so far had characterized its effort here.

Table 5: Discretionary Budget Authority (\$ Billion, Current Prices)¹¹⁰

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*	2013*
Base 111	364.9	376.5	400.1	410.6	431.4	479.0	513.2	527.9	528.2	529.9	527.5
Operations	72.5	90.8	75.6	115.8	166.3	186.9	145.7	162.4	158.8	115.1	87.2
Other	-	0.3	3.2	8.2	3.1	-	7.4	0.7	-	-	-
Total	437.5	467.6	478.9	534.5	600.9	665.9	666.3	691.0	687.0	645.0	614.8

^{*}Estimates

Table 6: Costs Related to Defense and Foreign Aid/Diplomacy for Overseas Operations (\$ Billion, Current Prices)¹¹²

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Afghanistan	14.7	14.6	20.0	19.0	39.2	43.4	59.5	93.8	118.6	113.7	86
Iraq	53.0	75.9	85.6	101.7	131.3	142.1	95.5	71.3	49.3	17.7	3
Other ops.	8.0	3.7	2.1	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	-

¹¹⁰ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, "Overview: United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request" (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2013), p. 8, http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2014/FY2014_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf; and United States Office of Management and Budget, "Fiscal Year 2013 Historical Tables: Budget of the U.S. Government" (Washington, D.C.: Office of Management and Budget), pp. 129–130, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2013/assets/hist.pdf.

¹¹¹ Includes costs related to the approximately 160,000 personnel that the United States has stationed globally in peacetime. See Adam Grissom, "The United States," in Clara O'Donnell, ed., "The Implications of Military Spending Cuts for NATO's Largest Members," analysis paper (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2012), p. 25.

Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2011), p. 17; and Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, "Overview: United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request," (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2012), fig. 6-2, http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2013/FY2013_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf.

Hence, in 2009, President Obama and the U.S. Congress were not initially faced with overwhelming budgetary constraints, because the military resources freed from Iraq could be used in Afghanistan for the comprehensive COIN build-up. Moreover, the United States, like other Western economies, sought to provide fiscal stimuli to the economy by postponing reducing the budget deficit. The \$787 billion stimulus package, however, included only \$7 billion extra for military expenditures, perhaps reflecting the view that stimuli in the military sector were not the best way to create jobs. Although the surge strategy was approved, it caused explicit worries about the U.S. inability to fund overseas commitment in the long-term and making it clear that the U.S. presence would not be open-ended.

It should be noted, moreover, that members of the U.S. Administration were in disagreement about the surge strategy. Vice President Biden, who opposed the McChrystal-driven COIN approach, advocated a return to the "encircle-and-kill" approach to counter-terrorism that would not commit a large number of U.S. forces. Ambassador Eikenberry also participated in the internal debate, warning against increasing troop levels that would end up deepening Afghan external dependence and arguing that President Karzai himself was not an "adequate strategic partner." Already at the outset of the civilian surge, one could trace skepticism and internal divisions over whether it was really worth the effort.

President Obama emphasized the worsened economic situation as a reason for focusing on nation-building at home: "Having just experienced the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the American people are understandably focused on rebuilding our economy...as we end the war in Iraq and transition to Afghan responsibility, we must rebuild our strength here at home. Our prosperity provides a foundation for our power. It pays for our military. It underwrites our diplomacy. It taps the potential of our people, and allows investment in new industry... That's why our troop commitment in Afghanistan cannot be open-ended—because the nation that I'm most interested in building is our own." Specifically, Obama argued against opponents of defining a time frame for the U.S. withdrawal: "It must be clear that Afghans will have to take responsibility for their security, and that America has no interest in fighting an endless war in Afghanistan." 115

In 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates made it clear that the United States was facing painful choices among defense spending priorities, complaining that the Pentagon had for too long emphasized long-term projects with the purpose of developing high technology equipment and weapons systems, instead of devoting resources to the lower end of the spectrum. Gates specifically argued that it was necessary to institutionalize a COIN focus in the acquisition process to meet the requirements for fighting insurgencies of the type in Iraq and Afghanistan. Gates argued that the United States was already an undisputed leader in high-technology equipment. Cuts in the immediate wake of the financial crisis, hence, were delimited mostly to cancellations of procurement of weapons systems largely irrelevant for the COIN effort in Afghanistan.

¹¹³ Perlo-Freeman, Ismail, and Solmirano, "Military Expenditure," pp. 197–198.

Bird and Marshall, *Afghanistan*, pp. 231–232.

Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

¹¹⁶ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2010), p. 23.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

By 2011, it was clear that the reality of decreasing fiscal income would force the United States to make necessary cuts and, according to Secretary of Defense Gates, that these cuts inevitably would fall on Afghanistan: "America's serious fiscal situation is now putting pressure on our defense budget, and we are in a process of assessing where the U.S. can or cannot accept more risk as a result of reducing the size of our military. Tough choices lie ahead affecting every part of our government, and during such times, scrutiny inevitably falls on the costs of overseas commitments." The rising U.S. budget deficit sparked a political crisis in Congress, which had a significant impact on the U.S. financial debate over military spending. The outlays for the financial year (FY) 2011, notably the increase in operations and maintenance and procurement spending, suggested that some of the spending planned for 2010 was postponed until 2011 as the final peak in U.S. military spending after a decade-long war effort.

President Obama presented a defense budget for FY 2012 with the authorization to spend \$671 billion for the Department of Defense, of which \$553 billion were to be allocated to the base budget and \$118 billion for overseas operations (i.e. Afghanistan and Iraq), which was \$41.5 billion lower than the request for FY 2011. The proposal passed Congress with approval for almost the full amount requested, including \$531 billion for the base budget and \$117 billion for overseas operations. The Obama administration was under increasing pressure from the opposition Republican Party to reduce \$1.6 trillion annually from the federal government deficit by 2011. At the same time, the Republicans were unwilling to increase the tax revenue, for instance by removing the tax cuts introduced by the Bush administration, and were willing only to undertake sharp cuts in government spending. Proposals by President Obama to reduce the deficit through expenditure cuts, while making targeted expenditure increases in specific areas, were rejected by the Republican opposition. The proposal specific areas in specific areas, were rejected by the Republican opposition.

A compromise was reached in July 2011 that, on one hand, would increase the government debt ceiling to prevent a U.S. sovereign default but, on the other hand, would reduce growth in government debt. The resulting Budget Control Act, signed into law by the President in August, has imposed a set of spending restrictions that would result in a \$917 billion cut, including a \$450 billion cut in defense spending. The Act also established a bipartisan Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction that was tasked with identifying further ways to cut the government deficit by \$1.2-\$1.5 trillion over a 10-year period. As the committee was unable/ to reach an agreement, it triggered an emergency clause in the Act resulting in automatic spending cuts—sequestration—totaling \$1.2 trillion for the 10-year period beginning in 2013. These cuts were to be equally split between defense and non-defense-related expenses. The sequestration is a specific to the sequestration of the se

The U.S. Department of Defense was therefore called upon to cut \$259 billion by 2017 and

¹¹⁸ Robert Gates, "Transcript of Defense Secretary Gates' Speech on NATO's Future," *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Wire* blog, June 10, 2011, http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2011/06/10/transcript-of-defense-secretary-gatess-speech-on-natos-future/.

¹¹⁹ Perlo-Freeman, Ismail, and Solmirano, "Military Expenditure," pp. 158–159.

¹²⁰ Elisabeth Sköns and Sam Perlo-Freeman, "The United States' Military Spending and the 2011 Budget Crisis," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2012* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 162.

¹²¹ Sköns and Perlo-Freeman, "The United States' Military Spending and the 2011 Budget Crisis," p. 163.

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, U.S. Public Law No. 112-18, U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 125 (2011), pp. 1298-1832, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ81/pdf/PLAW-112publ81.pdf.

¹²³ Sköns and Perlo-Freeman, "The United States' Military Spending and the 2011 Budget Crisis," p. 163.

\$487 billion within a decade, a number that, however, was partly outweighed by a simultaneous increase in its base budget (cf. Table 5). The result is that both the U.S. Army and the Marines will have their personnel reduced over a period of five years, approaching pre-September 11, 2001 levels. 124 Planned cuts are still in excess of \$450 billion, necessitating further cuts of more than half a trillion U.S. dollars. 125 Detailed plans for these military cuts are still unknown but, according to U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, they will amount to more than half a trillion dollars. As Congress has failed to enact measurements to reduce the deficit, this amount would have to be cut through sequestration, which, according to Panetta, damages the military's ability to protect the nation. 126 President Obama, furthermore, has been under pressure from the Senate after a nonbinding bipartisan vote of 62-33 in November 2012 for an accelerated drawdown . 127

The Strategic Defense Guidance (SDG) outlined the negative effect of the budgetary crisis on the U.S. willingness to engage in nation-building endeavors going forward: "As we responsibly draw down from these two operations [Iraq and Afghanistan], take steps to protect our nation's economic vitality, and protect our interest in a world of accelerating change, we face an inflection point. This merited an assessment of the U.S. defense strategy in light of the changing geopolitical environment and our changing fiscal circumstances...U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations." SDG took into account the effect of absolute decline, that is the direct fiscal impact on troop commitments, but it was also important because it acknowledged the need to recalibrate strategic prioritizations following the relative decline of the United States.

SDG asserted that the United States "of necessity" would rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region following the rise of China. U.S. influence and stability in the Asia-Pacific region would depend on its continued or strengthened military presence. SDG acknowledged that the changing strategic environment no longer allowed the United States to conduct "long wars" against diffuse terror threats, distracting it from counteracting the reality of emerging powers. The ability to project credible military power is crucial for the United States to uphold prestige and political alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. The need to bind military resources to other parts of the world diverts resources from large-scale nationbuilding projects whose security benefits are diffuse or uncertain.

In sum, the United States has not abandoned democracy as a strategic objective guided by its

¹²⁴ Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker, "Defense Budget Cuts Would Limit Raises and Close Bases," *New York Times*, January 26, 2012.

¹²⁵ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2012), p. 45.

[&]quot;But if it [sequestration] happened—and, God willing, that would not be the case—but if it did happen, it would result in a further round of very dangerous cuts across the board—defense cuts that I believe would do real damage to our security, our troops and their families, and our military's ability to protect the nation." Leon E. Panetta, quoted in Jim Garamone, "Debt Reduction 'Sequestration' Concerns Panetta, Mullen," American Forces Press Service, August 4, 2011, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=64932.

[&]quot;Senate Vote Backs Quicker Afghan Troop Withdrawal," *Boston Globe*, November 30, 2012, http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2012/11/30/senate-backs-quick-withdrawal-from-afghanistan/SSVF5jm0e5yR0pmCuPr2SL/story.html.

United States Department of Defense, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," pp. 1, 6, http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense Strategic Guidance.pdf

¹²⁹ United States Department of Defense, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership," p. 2.

¹³⁰ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2012), p. 51.

historical mission and positive lessons connected to democratization abroad. The impact of financial austerity has incited a tactical change in the means employed to pursue this goal. President Obama, addressing the U.N. General Assembly in 2009, reiterated the U.S. commitment to democracy's universality, but voiced his intention to scale down or even abandon democracy promotion by imposition.¹³¹ The 2010 National Security Strategy emphasized the historical value of the U.S. "power of example" in a telling contrast to the controversial 2002 National Security Strategy's emphasis on preventive warfare.¹³² Afghanistan is no exception to this change, as testified to by the U.S.-Afghan partnership, which signaled a development from active imposition to a backstage strategy based on financial support and guidance. The United States, in principle, preserves its preference for democratic institution-building, but stabilization has become the primary objective as a consequence of the new budgetary reality.

4.2 United Kingdom: Deficits and Defense Transformation

The United Kingdom was actively involved in the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, and took the lead in organizing ISAF in 2002 before the NATO take-over in 2003. The United Kingdom was the clearest supporter of NATO's deployment in Afghanistan, linking the effort in Afghanistan to the defense of common values. At the operational level, the United Kingdom generally emphasized security over development, and thus prioritized the effect of kinetic operations, disarmament and demobilization of militias, security sector reform, and drug traffic eradication. The United Kingdom's operational approach has been reflected in its PRT set-up, which has a joint civilian-military leadership, but which allows civilian actors to enjoy a high degree of autonomy with limited military involvement.

The United Kingdom generally supported the U.S. vision of NATO's role in Afghanistan, and its disagreements with the United States have been of a predominantly tactical character (such as over support for Karzai or poppy eradication policy). It should be noted, however, that the United Kingdom aligned with France and Germany in opposing the U.S. proposal to merge ISAF with the OEF. The United Kingdom designed its deployment to Helmand in 2006 to be present in

^{131 &}quot;Democracy cannot be imposed on any nation from the outside. Each society must search for its own path, and no path is perfect. Each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its people, and—in the past—America has too often been selective in its promotion of democracy." Barack Obama, "Sharing a Common Future,' Address to the United Nations General Assembly," New York, United Nations Headquarters, September 23, 2009, http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/2009/september/129519.htm.

[&]quot;America has always been a beacon to the peoples of the world when we ensure that the light of America's example burns bright...America's influence comes not from perfection, but from our striving to overcome our imperfections...More than any other action that we have taken, the power of America's example has helped spread freedom and democracy abroad." See Barack Obama, "The National Security Strategy" (Washington, D.C.: Office of the President of the United States, 2010), pp. 2, 36.

[&]quot;If NATO stands for anything it is the defence of values of liberty and democracy; those values are being defended now in Afghanistan and if we don't make sure this succeeds, it will have devastating impact on our own security." Tony Blair in 2006, quoted in Kitchen, *The Globalization of NATO*, p. 100.

¹³⁴ Jakobsen, PRTs in Afghanistan, pp. 21–22.

¹³⁵ Markus Gauster, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan," Occasional Paper No. 16 (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2008), pp. 47–54.

John Dumbrell, "The U.S.-U.K. Special Relationship: Taking the 21st-Century Temperature," *The British*

places where it would be able to contribute most productively to the U.S. effort in a way conducive to supporting the special relationship with the U.S. forces.¹³⁷ As the Taliban grew stronger in the south, the United Kingdom adopted a more aggressive line. Moreover, it was eager to adopt and implement the CSPMP in order for NATO to succeed in Afghanistan.¹³⁸

Through 2007, U.K. military and civilian capabilities were aligned to match a more comprehensive COIN effort, in accordance with the evolving U.S. hearts-and-minds approach. This required a doctrinal adaptation, because the United Kingdom initially preferred a clear distinction between security and development. The United Kingdom supported the U.S.-initiated surge by living up to its commitment as the second-largest NATO contributor (9,500 troops at the peak in 2010). The United Kingdom accepted and promoted NATO's global turn in support of the United States, and accepted CSPMP implementation and COIN adaptation. Rhetorically, Prime Minister Cameron made a clear hierarchy of priorities, placing security before democracy. He tied NATO's escalation to the defense of the United Kingdom, and portrayed it as a war of necessity.

From the beginning, the United Kingdom wanted to uphold its "special relationship" with Washington and, therefore, adopted the U.S. strategic vision for Afghanistan. The special relationship grew out the Second World War and the need to protect Western Europe from Sovietled communism.¹⁴³ The United Kingdom came to believe that, given its own relative decline, it would harvest political benefits through a close strategic partnership with the most powerful nation.¹⁴⁴ If it would invest enough in military capabilities and operations, it would justify "spe-

Journal of Politics and International Relations, Vol. 11, No. 1 (February 2009), p. 66; and Paul Gallis and Vincent Morelli, *NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2008), p. 17.

¹³⁷ Anthony King, "Operation Herrick. The British Campaign in Helmand," in Hynek and Marton, eds., *State-Building in Afghanistan*, pp. 35–37.

Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin, *NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2009), p. 26.

¹³⁹ Tom Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in Post-Cold War Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 209–210; and Farrell and Gordon, "COIN Machine," p. 669–673

[&]quot;We are not here to create a perfect democracy, we are not here to create a perfect country." Although Cameron said it could be "hugely helpful" to win hearts and minds by helping girls to school, he stressed the need of a clear hierarchy of policies, with security first. See "Britain in Afghanistan: David Cameron's Hunt for an Afghan Exit Strategy," *Economist*, July 4, 2011.

[&]quot;Britain's own security is at risk if we again allow Afghanistan to become a safe haven for terrorists. It is, therefore, vital to the UK that Afghanistan becomes a stable and secure state." See United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, "Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review" (London: Cabinet Office, 2010), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61936/national-security-strategy.pdf

[&]quot;We are in Afghanistan through necessity. As the home of international terrorism, the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan remains the primary threat to Britain's national security. Having driven al-Qaeda out of Afghanistan, we must not let it come back again under the safe umbrella of Taliban rule." See David Milliband, "Three Vital Steps to Rebuild Afghanistan," *Telegraph*, August 17, 2009.

William Wallace and Christopher Phillips, "Reassessing the Special Relationship," *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (March 2009), pp. 264–267.

David Betz and Anthony Cormack, "Iraq, Afghanistan, and British Strategy," *Orbis*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring 2009), pp. 336; and Tim Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "Does a Multi-Tier NATO Matter? The Atlantic Alliance and the Process of Strategic Change," *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (March 2009), pp. 215–216.

cial" access to the U.S. defense industry, defense planning, and U.S. foreign policy decision-making. 145 Although the special relationship has brought material benefits, including in Afghanistan (defense cooperation and the opportunity to play a global role), it has also to some extent been founded on an illusion that the United States would have an equal sentimental attachment to the United Kingdom beyond the two states' common interests. 146

At a general level, the positive geopolitical lessons of a close partnership with the United States compelled the United Kingdom to support the vision of a global NATO with credible expeditionary capabilities. As stated by the House of Commons Defense Committee in support of an enhanced NATO decision at the Bucharest Summit: "If NATO limits itself to a regional role, it risks becoming marginalized. NATO's willingness to fulfill a global role is critical to the continued support of the United States. Without U.S. support, NATO has no future. But U.S. support depends on NATO becoming more capable, deployable, and flexible, and on the European allies contributing more." The United Kingdom maintains a 15 percent rule, whereby it generally seeks to deploy forces corresponding to at least 15 percent of the U.S. contribution in overseas operations. Public support to the mission has been sustained in what has generally been perceived as a justified cause that supported the United Kingdom's legacy and global outlook. Moreover, as stated above, the United Kingdom itself fell victim to Islamic terrorist attacks in London in 2005. 149

The United Kingdom also shared a common destiny with the United States in a crude material sense. Both countries faced a similar budgetary reality and high direct costs connected to an increasingly difficult operation in Afghanistan. Similarly, the escalated U.K. presence in Afghanistan happened within a context of resources being liberated from the drawdown in Iraq. The U.K. Ministry of Defense (MoD) received £1.1 billion to fund the United Kingdom's overseas operations in 2004–2005 (Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo). By contrast, this total rose to a high of £4.5 billion in 2008–2009. The costs of the Afghanistan operation put several constraints on the U.K. military budget. Although the Treasury's contingency fund accounted for a major portion of defense purchases, the MoD's main budget funded new equipment, such as helicopters, to be used in Afghanistan. The U.K. government was criticized, including by the military itself, for under-equipping its forces in Afghanistan. The active U.K. presence in combat

Wallace and Phillips, "Reassessing the Special Relationship," pp. 168–169.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 181–182.

¹⁴⁷ United Kingdom House of Commons, "The Future of NATO and European Defence: Ninth Report of Session 2007–2008," (London: Stationary Office Limited, 2008), p. 3, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/111/111.pdf.

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Dorman, "The United Kingdom," in Andrew Dorman and Joyce Kaufman, eds., *The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Perceptions, Policy, and Practice* (Redwood City, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 85.

Jens Ringsmose and Berit Borgesen, "Shaping Public Attitudes toward the Deployment of Military Power: NATO, Afghanistan, and the Use of Strategic Narratives," *European Security*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (December 2011), pp. 515–516; and Williams, *The Good War*, pp. 109–110.

¹⁵⁰ In 2010, for the sake of comparison, the amount the British government spent on payment of the national debt interest (£44 billion) was higher than amount spent on defense (£40 billion). See Her Majesty's Treasury, "Departmental Budgets," 2010, http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pesa 2011 chapter1.pdf.

Sofie Brune, et al., "Restructuring Europe's Armed Forces in Times of Austerity: The United Kingdom, France, and Germany," SWP Working Paper No. 8 (Warsaw: Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2010), p. 2.

operations put a severe burden on the defense budgets. 152

The escalation in Afghanistan took place under the circumstances of soaring budget deficits (rising to £178 billion in 2009–2010). This called for the formulation of a new strategic defense review, regardless of whether Labor or Tories won the 2010 general elections. By the end of 2009, it was already clear that the United Kingdom's planned equipment programs for the decade were overheated. They were both focused on too many types of equipment for too broad a range of tasks and underfinanced even by optimistic estimates of resources available for future military spending. Moreover, a large amount of the equipment used in Afghanistan, rather than drawing from the "core army stocks," was funded through supplementary budget allocations. This showed the need to reprioritize equipment purchases. 154

The practice of funding overseas operations through Treasury supplementary reserves, however, which started with Afghanistan and Iraq, has made the Treasury change its attitude toward "Urgent Operational Requirements" (UORs). The Treasury has narrowed the definition of what could be considered as "true UOR." The result is that MoD over time has been obliged to bear an increasing part of the costs that before would be covered by Treasury reserves. Of a £770 million package earmarked for new armored vehicles for Afghanistan in 2008, for instance, the Treasury decided that £120 million represented a boost to core capabilities and, thus, should be covered by the MoD budget. As seen in Table 7, the U.K. defense budget peaked in 2009–2010, when resources were shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan, followed by a decline from 2010–2011.

Table 7: U.K. Defense Expenditure, Total and in Afghanistan and Iraq (in £ Million, Current Prices)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11*	2011-12*
Afgh.	46	67	199	738	1,504	2,623	3,821	3,777	3,485
Iraq	1,311	910	958	956	1,457	1,381	342	127	37
Total	30,861	32,515	33,164	34,045	37,387	38,579	40,246	39,461	37,169
exp.									

^{*}Excludes costs of the Libya intervention of a total £320mln¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Perlo-Freeman, Ismail, and Solmirano, "Military expenditure," p.194.

¹⁵³ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2012), p. 82.

Bernard Gray, *Review of Acquisition for the Secretary of State for Defence*, independent report, October 2009, p. 21, http://www.bipsolutions.com/docstore/ReviewAcquisitionGrayreport.pdf.

¹⁵⁵ IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2010), p. 111.

The United Kingdom has gradually increased spending on development assistance to Afghanistan. DFID Afghanistan's program budget is £178 million per year from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015). See U.K. Department for International Development, "Summary of DFID's work in Afghanistan 2011-2015," 2013, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67411/afghanistan-2011-summary.pdf. As for other NATO members, the amount of British spending connected to development assistance in Afghanistan remains limited, however, compared to the overall contribution amounting to an annual £4 billion (cf. table 7) but reflects an increase in the direct economic aid in preparation for the post-2014 period.

¹⁵⁷ United Kingdom House of Commons, "The Costs of International Military Operations," Commons Library Standard Note SN03139 (London: House of Commons Library, 2012), p. 9, http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN03139.pdf.

The U.K. armed forces are undergoing change as a result of a government-imposed eight percent defense spending reduction through 2016.¹⁵⁸ The cuts are a direct consequence of the deficit reduction policy that the Liberal-Tory government initiated as a declared top priority as the United Kingdom emerged from a deep recession following the financial crisis. The United Kingdom entered the recession in 2009, with a public borrowing requirement of 11 percent of GDP, the largest peacetime government deficit ever. The major burden of budgetary consolidation was focused on cuts across public sectors (73 percent) rather than tax increases (27 percent).¹⁵⁹

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) published in 2010 took notice of several areas in which cuts had to be made, including personnel reductions in the regular forces as well as a 20-30 percent reduction in the operational ambition and deployable capability of the armed forces. ¹⁶⁰ By 2020, the United Kingdom is supposed to only have the ability to conduct one Afghanistan-like enduring stabilization operation of up to 6,500 troops (as opposed to the 9,500 deployed to Afghanistan), as well as one non-enduring complex operation of up to 2,000 personnel, and one non-enduring simple intervention of up to 1,000 personnel. ¹⁶¹ At the same time, the SDSR stated the intention to modernize the armed forces, focusing on quality rather than quantity. ¹⁶²

However, further reductions in military spending may be expected, as MoD still runs with a multi-billion pound gap between commitments and allocated resources. The Treasury had indeed recommended a more radical cut of 10-23 percent from the annual £37 billion MoD budget, rendering further cuts necessary in the future¹⁶³ Hence, the defense spending ceiling, which has been fixed through 2016, may not sufficiently cover identified loopholes of up to £20 billion.¹⁶⁴ Both Prime Minister David Cameron and Defense Secretary Liam Fox have expressed the ambition of increasing military spending again after 2015, but this will depend on the future development of the U.K. economy.¹⁶⁵

Newly appointed Defense Secretary Philip Hammond linked the reduced defense goals in SDR to declining budgets: "One of the greatest strategic threats that we face is the threat of persistently unbalanced public finances...Defense cannot be immune from the process of fiscal correction, so we have to live within the budgets that we are given. We have set out a strategy for 2020, and we will have to tailor how we deliver that strategy to the budgets that are available." Hammond further noted the fact that the United Kingdom despite the financial cuts still will be

John Gordon et al., "NATO and the Challenge of Austerity," *Survival*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (August/September 2012), p. 122.

¹⁵⁹ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2012), p. 84

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 81, 83.

¹⁶¹ Or, alternatively, three non-enduring operations, if not already engaged in enduring operations or commitment of all of the United Kingdom's efforts in one intervention of around 30,000 troops (two thirds of the Iraq deployment in 2003).

¹⁶² United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, "Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty," p. 19.

[&]quot;163 "Q&A: Strategic Defence and Security Review," BBC, October 18, 2010.

Director General for External Policies, "The Impact of the Financial Crisis on European Defence" (Brussels: Director General for External Policies, 2011), http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201106/2011 0623ATT22406/20110623ATT22406EN.pdf

¹⁶⁵ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2012), p. 81.

able to project power abroad. This puts the United Kingdom in a special category, along with the United States, of states able to deal with contingencies up to brigade level deployment on a sustained basis.¹⁶⁶

The costs related to Afghanistan amount to 9.5 percent of total U.K. military spending. The resources freed by the withdrawal of combat troops from Afghanistan after 2011are hugely helpful to the consolidation of the United Kingdom's fiscal balance. In principle, they are sufficient to cover all of the imposed defense cuts of up to 8 percent through 2016. Cuts in the defense budget through 2015 are projected to account for a decline as a percentage of GDP from 2.64 to 2.08 percent, thus maintaining the United Kingdom slightly above the NATO golden rule of two percent military spending of GDP. On the other hand, if UORs were excluded and only baseline defense were counted, defense spending would fall to 1.88 percent of GDP. The United Kingdom's commitment to NATO's golden rule therefore depends on the future performance of the U.K. economy and the willingness to undertake tax increases or cuts in non-defense sectors.

As long as the United Kingdom is faced with nearly 10 percent annual deficits of GDP (cf. Table 2), nothing suggests that the ability to sustain forces in enduring stability operations or "long wars" will become a realistic priority beyond Afghanistan. As stated by the U.K. Ministry of Defense: "We are delivering this commitment [to Afghanistan] in the context of inherited defence spending plans that are completely unaffordable. There was an unfunded liability of around £38 billion over the next ten years. That is more than the entire Defence budget for one year. We must start to tackle this legacy before we can begin to put Defence on a sound and sustainable footing for the future. And Defence must, like other parts of government, contribute to reducing the deficit to restore the economy."¹⁶⁸

It should be noted that the United Kingdom, unlike the United States, did not internalize a strong narrative in favor of democracy support, direct or indirect, to third countries. Quoting Foreign Minister Miliband: "We know from our history that democratization happens primarily because of local dynamics and pressures: a state concedes representation when it needs more resources or when a growing middle-class demands political power commensurate with its economic weight." The United Kingdom's commitment to democratization seems determined by the special relationship. The United Kingdom under Tony Blair was a staunch supporter of the George W. Bush administration's Freedom Agenda in both Afghanistan and Iraq, despite the two countries' divergent perceptions of the underlying security logics. In apparent assimilation to President Obama's cooling of democracy by imposition, Cameron voiced himself opposed to utopian projects.

United Kingdom House of Commons Defence Committee, "Evidence Session with the Secretary of State," December 7, 2011 (London: Stationary Office Limited, 2011), pp. 4, 6, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmdfence/1682i/1682i.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2010), p. 85.

United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, "Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty," p. 15.

David Miliband, "Dilemmas of Democracy: Work in Progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2008), https://csis.org/event/dilemmas-democracy-

work-progress-afghanistan-and-pakistan.

Wallace and Phillips, "Reassessing the Special Relationship," pp. 280-284.

[&]quot;I think the right balance can be found in what I believe in: liberal conservatism. Liberal because I believe civil rights, democracy, pluralism and the rule of law are the source of progress and a key component of lasting

In sum, considerations about material constraints compelled the United Kingdom to refocus on stabilization and drawdown from an overseas operation that showed few national benefits. The positive historical lesson of common destiny with the United States, on the other hand, produced a consistent ideational impact restraining the budgetary strictures. Considerations about maintaining the special relationship, not democracy-building or commitment to liberal interventionism as such, pervaded U.K. strategic thinking.¹⁷² The special relationship narrative constituted an important ideational impact in favor of completing the Afghanistan mission "with honor." The United Kingdom endorsed the gradual transfer of authority to the Afghan government, leaving the ANSF in charge of the security responsibilities as NATO and the United States were pulling out.

4.3 Germany: Perpetual Zurückhaltung

Germany has been the perhaps strongest proponent of a NATO in close support of the U.N., and has seen ISAF as a continuation of NATO's peacekeeping missions in the Balkans in the 1990s.¹⁷³ Germany served as lead nation for the construction of the ANP and set as its primary goal establishing a police forced committed to democracy and the rule of law, with equal representation of ethnic groups and gender. Germany designed its military presence in Afghanistan primarily to support civilian tasks in reconstruction and development. Germany refused to station troops to places other than the less troubled northern parts of Afghanistan, and refused to lift its heavy national caveats (restrictions from combat operations or requirements of consultations with Berlin prior to engaging in an operation). Consequently, Germany left the lethal combat operations to NATO allies stationed in the south.

Germany from the outset emphasized the civilian side of the conflict by insisting on the importation of PRTs in the ISAF force. Moreover, Germany maintained its status as the fourth largest donor of bilateral assistance to Afghanistan. The German PRT model has been based on a strong inter-ministerial coordination, but with separate civilian and military leaderships. Whereas NGOs on the ground favored the German PRT model because of a strong demarcation line between the civilian and the military domain, NATO allies criticized Germany for not living up to its part of the burden-sharing. Allies also criticized Germany for de facto creating a parallel strategy by

security. But conservative too—because I recognise the complexities of human nature, am sceptical of grand utopian schemes to remake the world, and understand that you have to be hard-headed and practical in the pursuit of your values." See David Cameron, quoted in "Cameron Says He Will Put an End to Blair's 'Liberal Interventionism' Foreign Policy," *Daily Mail*, October 26, 2007.

¹⁷² In the United Kingdom 2010 national security strategy, the United States is emphasised both as strategic ally and as a crucial intelligence and defense partner. See United Kingdom Cabinet Office, "A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy" (London: Cabinet Office, 2010), pp. 15–22, http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/national-security-strategy.pdf. Moreover, the 2008 national security strategy described the partnership with the United States as the "most important bilateral relationship and central to our national security." See Cabinet Office, "The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: Security in an Interdependent World" (London: Cabinet Office, 2008), p. 8, http://interactive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/documents/security/national-security-strategy.pdf.

¹⁷³ Michael Brozska, "Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan: The German Approach," in Hans-Georg Ehrhart and Charles Pentland, eds., *The Afghanistan Challenge: Hard Realities and Strategic Choice* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2009), pp. 246–247.

stationing troops only in the less troubled parts of Afghanistan, and by focusing overwhelmingly on development.¹⁷⁴ In 2005, the German government reacted strongly against a U.S. suggestion to merge ISAF with the OEF combat operations.¹⁷⁵

The German contribution is important because Germany is a traditionally war-aversive country that has contributed the third largest force in the NATO mission, with more than 5,000 troops by the peak in 2010. However, participating in counterinsurgency was by no means the premise upon which Germany agreed to engage in Afghanistan when it deployed troops to the ISAF force. The Germans did not oppose the NATO surge, but preferred to define the mission in terms of a "comprehensive approach" as a more digestible wording. Germany's participation in the NATO surge strategy meant that Germany agreed to some important modifications to its rules of engagement, such as pre-emptive use of force or the pursuit of enemies, resulting in the first German offensive operations since World War Two.¹⁷⁶

Ideational factors continue to play a relatively larger role in German security politics considerations than those of most other NATO countries.¹⁷⁷ Afghanistan and ISAF were no exceptions to this rule. In 2003, German defense minister Peter Struck explicitly linked Germany's presence in Afghanistan to the principles of "citizen in uniform" and "internal leadership,"¹⁷⁸ which emphasize the culturally sensitive and educated soldiers acting on his own.¹⁷⁹ Germany's presence in Afghanistan has been constructed around a narrative about not being engaged in a war but rather in a "risk-afflicted operation," in the phrase coined by the German defense minister in 2008.¹⁸⁰ Germany's legacy of self-imposed restraint, "Zurückhaltung," however, is not surprising given Germany's historical reasons for rejecting the use of force as an instrument in foreign affairs and a cultural collective memory of anti-militarism that continues to shape German foreign policy.¹⁸¹

The deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and the de facto absorption of Germany into COIN operations were severe challenges to the German self-perception about its role in

Gauster, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan," pp. 26–27; and James Bindenagel, "Afghanistan: The German Factor," *PRISM*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (September 2010), pp. 106–107.

Defense Minister Peter Struck remarked that changing NATO's role "would make the situation for our soldiers doubly dangerous and worsen the current climate in Afghanistan...NATO is not equipped for counterinsurgency operations. That is not what it is supposed to do." See Peter Struck, quoted in Judy Dempsey and David S. Cloud, "Europe Balking at New Afghan Role," *New York Times*, September 13, 2005.

¹⁷⁶ Timo Behr, "Germany and Regional Command-North," in Hynek and Marton, eds., *State-Building in Afghanistan*, pp. 54–55.

¹⁷⁷ Dyson, Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in Post-Cold War Europe, p. 163.

[&]quot;Armed forces cannot be conceived in a vacuum that takes no account of the particular tradition or history of a country. The integration of the Bundeswehr into society remains one of the greatest success stories of the Federal Republic." See Peter Struck, quoted in Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in Post-Cold War Europe*, p. 170.

John Duffield, "Political Culture and State Behaviour: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism," *International Organisation*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Autumn 1999), pp. 782.

¹⁸⁰ Jens Ringsmose and Peter Thruelsen, "NATO's Counterinsurgency Campaign in Afghanistan: Are Classical Doctrines Suitable for Alliances?" UNISCI Discussion Papers No. 22 (Madrid: Unidad de Investegación sobre Seguridad y Cooperación Internacional, 2010), p. 64.

Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, "The Test of Strategic Culture: Germany, Pacifism, and Pre-Emptive Strikes," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (September 2005), p. 344.

Afghanistan.¹⁸² When a Bundeswehr colonel in 2009 called in a NATO air strike in Kunduz that unintentionally killed dozens of civilians, it was a hard blow to Germany's self-image of doing peacekeeping or humanitarian work in Afghanistan. The single event triggered an immediate effect on an already negative attitude to the Afghanistan operation among the German public.¹⁸³ The German defense minister in 2010 broke the ice and declared that Germany was faced with "war-like" conditions in Afghanistan.¹⁸⁴ ISAF represents a huge mental step for a country that has only taken minor steps toward acceptance of troop deployments abroad since the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994 paved the way for Germany's first peacekeeping missions under a multilateral flag.¹⁸⁵

Germany has been split between, on one hand, its reluctance to devote military resources to a mission that has adopted COIN as official policy and, on the other, its obligations as a NATO ally and its self-image as committed supporter of multilateral missions under a UN mandate. The following quote from Foreign Minister Westerwelle in a speech to the Bundestag in 2010 seems to demonstrate Germany's internal split: "We have two guiding lines: we aim to take international responsibility. At the same time we will continue the culture of military restraint... We will fulfill our international responsibility, but it remains in the culture of military restraint." As further indication of the weight of German history, Westerwelle went on to reaffirm that the application of German military force was subject to strong parliamentary control: "The Bundeswehr is not a government army, it is also no army of any parties or partisan majorities. The Bundeswehr is a parliamentary army. Also this is our guideline in the negotiations within the alliance." 188

Arguments about defending Germany's national security in Afghanistan have not had wider repercussions in the German public debate, which has framed ISAF as a humanitarian mission decoupled from the combat operations in the south. 189 The German Bundestag, which votes annually on the mandate of the German troops, has stressed the necessity of supporting Afghanistan's move toward democratic statehood, in accordance with the original UN-led Bonn process and the subsequent decisions taken under UN and NATO auspices. Germany re-affirmed itself as a top-3 contributor to ISAF in numerical terms when the Bundestag approved troop increases in accordance with the NATO-decided strategy. 190 Germany's "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" —coming to terms with the past—is essential to understanding Germany's inclination toward both alliance

¹⁸² Behr, "Germany and Regional Command-North," pp. 52–56.

Bindenagel, "Afghanistan," p. 106; and Hans Kundnani, "Germany as a Geo-Economic Power," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Summer 2010), p. 39.

[&]quot;Guttenberg erklärt den Krieg" [Guttenberg declares war], *Spiegel*, April 6, 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/ politik/ausland/0,1518,687468,00.html.

¹⁸⁵ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in Post-Cold War Europe*, p. 166; and Behr, "Germany and Regional Command-North," p. 56.

Sarah Kreps, "Elite Consensus as a Determinant of Alliance Cohesion: Why Public Opinion Hardly Matters for NATO-Led Operations in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (July 2010), pp. 204–205.

¹⁸⁷ Guido Westerwelle, "Rede von Außenminister Westerwelle im Deutschen Bundestag zum Strategischen Konzept der NATO" [Speech by Foreign Minister Westerwelle in the German Bundestag about NATO's strategic concept], November 11, 2010, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2010/101111-BM-BT-Nato-Rede.html?nn=547972.

¹⁸⁸ Author's translation.

¹⁸⁹ Behr, "Germany and Regional Command-North," p. 56.

¹⁹⁰ Bindenagel, "Afghanistan," p. 106.

commitment and counterinsurgency aversion.

Germany, in contrast to both the United States and the United Kingdom, faced only moderate financial pressures, making the impact of historical lessons—the past negative memory—all other things equal, more relevant to study. The German defense budget grew steadily between 2006 and 2009, following several years when the budget had been left unchanged (cf. Table 8). The budgetary increase followed the publication of a German white book on security and defense in 2006. The white book was a product of the review process of the German armed forces that took place after 2000, resulting in 2003 in the Defense Policy Guideline (DPG) stating that Germany should be able to participate in operations covering the full mission spectrum, including high-intensity operations, anywhere in the world on short notice. 192

The German economy was performing well by the beginning of 2008, with declining fiscal deficits allowing moderate increases in the German defense budget to meet this goal. ¹⁹³ Germany was not burdened by a simultaneous engagement in Iraq (Germany vehemently opposed the 2003 Iraq war), and the defense budget decided upon in 2009 was still largely untouched by the repercussions of the financial crisis. ¹⁹⁴ Capability-wise and financially, Germany was therefore prepared to support NATO's surge strategy through a significant troop escalation. The German military, however, still did not adjust to high-intensity operations and Germany has since demonstrated no political will to sacrifice the lives of others or the lives of its own soldiers in combat. ¹⁹⁵

The German defense budget had been underfinanced for some time (in terms of insufficient equipment purchases for out-of-area operations), and this situation became graver as the Afghanistan operation became more intense in terms of fighting, even for the German troops stationed in the less troubled northern parts of the country. ¹⁹⁶ Afghanistan became Germany's most expensive out-of-area operation by far, accounting for nearly a tripling of operational costs from 2005 to 2011 (cf. Table 8). According to a report by the German MoD, the total costs of German international operations in 2011 amounted to €1.478 billion of which ISAF represented €1.279 billion, or 86 percent. ¹⁹⁷

¹⁹¹ Deutsches Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, "Weißbuch 2006 zur Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr" [White book 2006 on Germany's security policy and the future of the Bundeswehr], (Berlin: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2006), http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/Germany_Weissbuch_2006 oB sig.pdf

Brune et al., "Restructuring Europe's Armed Forces in Times of Austerity," p. 9.

¹⁹³ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2008), p. 109.

¹⁹⁴ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2010), p.113.

¹⁹⁵ Dyson, Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in Post-Cold War Europe, pp. 176–177.

¹⁹⁶ Director General for External Policies, "The Impact of the Financial Crisis on European Defence," p. 15.

^{197 &}quot;Internationale Einsätze kosten 1,5 Milliarden Euro" [International efforts cost 1.5 billion euros],

Wirtschaftswoche, March 24, 2012, http://www.wiwo.de/politik/deutschland/bundeswehr-internationale-einsaetze-kosten-1-5-milliarden-euro/6358788.html. By comparison, KFOR came at the cost of €68 million (4.6 percent), counter-piracy off the Horn of Africa at €62 million (4.2 percent), and Lebanon at €25 million (1.7 percent).

Table 8: German Defense Expenditure (in € Million, Current Prices), Total¹⁹⁸ and Related to ISAF¹⁹⁹

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
Afgh.	383.3	337,5	377.3	500.8	515.3	501.9	738.7	1,082	1,279	1,059	-
Total	31,060	30,610	30,600	30,365	31,090	32,824	34,166	34,032	33,563	31,871	33,258
exp.											

^{*}Planned²⁰⁰

Because of the need to reduce rising deficits, the German government took the decision to cut defense expenditure in early 2010, when Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schäuble asked the MoD to contribute to a drastic federal budget consolidation. At the time, the federal debt had risen to a—for Germany—historically high level of more than 80 percent of annual GDP (cf. Table 1). Cuts in the federal budget were imminent due to Germany's constitutionally mandated debt ceiling, which obliges the government to restrict new debt incurrence to no more than 3.5 percent of GDP per year from 2016.²⁰¹ The cabinet asked the MoD to cut some €8.3 billion between 2011 and 2015. It forecasted a reduction in the annual defense budget from €32 billion in 2012 to €30.5 billion by 2015, corresponding to an approximately ten percent reduction.²⁰²

In other terms, Germany cut its defense spending in an official effort to further transform the Bundeswehr into a "modern" deployable and flexible force. The budget decline simultaneously reaffirmed Germany's position as one of the lowest defense spenders in NATO Europe.²⁰³ It was initially decided that cuts should have been implemented by 2015 but, due to the inability of the German MoD to realistically deliver this level of savings, the time horizon was postponed

¹⁹⁸ SIPRI, "The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database" (2012), http://milexdata.sipri.org/; and NATO, "Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence." Data include pensions.

¹⁹⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Schriftliche Fragen mit den in der Woche vom 23. Januar 2012 eingegangenen Antworten der Bundesregierung" [Written questions with answers received from the federal government in the week of January 23, 2012], Drucksache 17/8509 (Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, 2012), p. 5, http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/085/1708509.pdf. The official ISAF costs have been disputed by a study from the German Institute for Economic Research calculating the budgetary costs of Germany's Afghanistan effort since 2002. With a hypothetical withdrawal by 2016, the budgetary costs are estimated at €25 billion (in constant 2010 prices). This corresponds to nearly €2 billion annually on average, excluding significant interest costs, 0.6 percent of the German federal budget or 1.2 per mil of annual GDP. It excludes additional economic costs of between €6 billion and €15 billion. See Tilman Brück, Olaf de Groot, and Friederich Schneider, "The Economic Costs of the German Participation in the Afghanistan War," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (2011), pp. 800–803.

²⁰⁰ Deutsches Bundesministerium der Finanzen: "Bundeshaushaltplan 2012, Einzelplan 14" [Federal budget 2012, section 14], p. 5, http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/bundeshaushalt2012/pdf/epl14.pdf. SIPRI provides data showing military expenditure, including military pensions, whereas the German Bundesfinanzministerium provides data showing the defense budget. Bundesfinanzministerium data are used for 2013, but bearing in mind that the lower number compared to the previous and subsequent years should be attributed to the difference in measurement.

Brune et al., "Restructuring Europe's Armed Forces in Times of Austerity," p. 9.

²⁰² Sam Perlo-Freeman, "Europe and the Impact of Austerity on Military Expenditure," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2012* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 175.

Gordon et al., "NATO and the Challenge of Austerity," p. 129.

to 2016.²⁰⁴ Then-German defense minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg supported the view that necessary savings could only be reached by reducing the number of personnel in the German armed forces, both military and civilian. Germany suspended/abandoned universal conscription in 2011, in the largest restructuring of its armed forces since the end of the Cold War.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan will have a significant consolidation effect on the German defense budget. 3.5 percent direct savings will be generated to the government-imposed 10 percent MoD cut by the cessation of military expenses related to the ISAF contribution. The drawdown has come simultaneously with cuts in other areas reducing Germany's future out-of-area capabilities, and as German decisionmakers have voiced concerns that the long effort has brought few visible benefits. Savings will be achieved partly through an overall reduction in the German armed forces from 220,000 to 180,000. As opposed to the previous goal of being able to sustain 14,000 troops on operations, the Bundeswehr's new goal is the ability to sustain only 10,000 troops abroad. Draw abroad.

Thomas de Mazière, the new German defense minister, made it clear that future Bundeswehr reforms will depend as much on the new security challenges to Germany as the imposed budgetary limits.²⁰⁸ The new DPG was issued in 2011 as a response to the new budgetary situation. It states, on one hand, that the Bundeswehr needs the capabilities as a security actor matching Germany's international position, while on the other had it also has to contribute to the overall budget consolidation agreed to by the government.²⁰⁹

On the whole, however, Germany is currently on the way to a realistic fiscal consolidation, with a government debt already being reduced as of 2011 (cf. Table 1), in part due to Germany's stability preference and commitment to deficit reduction over growth stimuli. Germany's fiscal consolidation removed the threat of defense cuts in addition to those already planned. Compared to both the United States and the United Kingdom, which (i) suffer from more rapidly increasing national debts, (ii) spend more on overall defense, and (iii) out of this amount spend more in Afghanistan, Germany is relatively less constrained in material terms. The German case stands out due to a strong national narrative that kept Germany ideationally constrained. Germany

Stephen Larabee et al., *NATO and the Challenges of Austerity* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2012), p. 28. "The international community knows that we cannot make Afghanistan a Western-style democracy. This is not the point. Now that a little more than eight years have passed since the operation began, we must admit—and I am also being self-critical and not blaming anybody else—that we have seen some progress and too many setbacks; what is more, some of our goals were unrealistically optimistic, or even wrong." See Angela Merkel, "Statement by Federal Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel on the German Armed Forces' Mission in Afghanistan Delivered in the German Parliament on Thursday, 22 April 2010," Brussels, April 22, 2010, http://www.nato.diplo.de/content-blob/2675808/Daten/749706/RegErklBKin220410 eng.pdf.

Bastian Giegerich, "Germany," in O'Donnell, ed., "The Implications of Military Spending Cuts for NATO's Largest Members," pp. 17–18.

²⁰⁷ IISS, Military Balance, (London: IISS, 2012), p. 79.

²⁰⁸ Deutsches Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, "Weisung zur Strukturreform" [Referral for structural reform] http://www.bmvg.de/resource/mzEzNTM4MmUzMzMyMmUzMTM1MzMyZTM2MzEzMD MwMzAzMDMwMzAzMDY3NzA3NTc1MzI3NjY5NjUyMDIwMjAyMDIw/110322%20BM%20Weisung%20 Strukturreform.pdf.

²⁰⁹ Deutsches Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, "Defence Policy Guidelines: Safeguarding National Interests—Assuming International Responsibility—Shaping Security Together," May 18, 2011, p. 9, http://www.nato.diplo.de/contentblob/3150944/Daten/1318881/VM_deMaiziere_180511_eng_DLD.pdf.

accepted the general ISAF evolution but remained worried about definitional concerns about "counterinsurgency," which it viewed as a primarily U.S./U.K.-driven doctrine.²¹⁰ Germany is not quickly withdrawing from Afghanistan (like France), but remains committed to the official NATO drawdown schedule.

4.4 France: Reintegration for Influence

France's participation in Afghanistan has been marked by ambiguity, not least due to its sometimes difficult bilateral relationship with the United States. Paris supported NATO's Article 5 activation after the September 11, 2001 attacks. This decision became decisive in France's move away from its insistence on NATO remaining a European security organization operating only in or near a European theater. France's ambition to preserve the grand strategic line in the U.S. global war on terrorism was disrupted by its opposition to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which led to a significant cooling in French support of any U.S.-driven initiative toward a global NATO.²¹¹ France opposed the U.S. proposal to merge ISAF with OEF, due to its resistance to NATO being degraded to a toolbox for Washington's broader strategic objectives. Paris did not want to allow the United States the opportunity to divert resources to Iraq, leaving NATO alone responsible for the stabilization of Afghanistan.²¹²

France wanted to delimit NATO to a strictly military role, and supported ISAF as a combat and stabilization mission, buttressing the Afghan government in building legitimacy and governance. France decided not to contribute a PRT to Afghanistan, a likely indication that it did not favor NATO developing civilian capacities captured by U.S. interests. In regions where French troops have conducted combat operations, a U.S. PRT has had the responsibility for the development and governance tasks in conjunction with the French.

The breaking point in French Afghanistan policy occurred in 2008 after the election of President Sarkozy, who initiated a significant troop increase in support of the U.S.-led surge strategy. This increase peaked in 2010, with approximately 4,000 combat troops on the ground (cf. Table 4). France concentrated its troop escalation in the small province of Kapisa, north of Kabul, fiercely fought over because of its strategic importance and volatility. French forces have sustained intense fighting since they took over responsibility in 2008. As a response to NATO's CSPMP adoption, France reviewed its national caveats, making it easier for its troops to be deployed to other parts of Afghanistan. France did not face domestic constraints preventing it from fully aligning with the COIN effort.²¹⁵ The escalation, however, did not stir a doctrinal change in France's approach to counterinsurgency. France continued to differ widely from U.S. forms of

Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "Counter-What? Germany and Counter-Insurgency in Afghanistan," *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 153, No. 1 (February 2008), pp. 42–46; and Benjamin Schreer, "Political Constraints: Germany and Counterinsurgency," *Security Challenges*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn 2010), pp. 98–101.

Adrian Treacher: "France and Transatlantic Relations," in Dorman and Kaufman, eds., *The Future of Transatlantic Relations*, p. 107.

Gallis and Morelli, *NATO in Afghanistan*, p. 17.

²¹³ Morelli and Belkin, *NATO in Afghanistan*, pp. 28–29.

Joshua Foust, "France in Kapisa," in Hynek and Marton, eds., State-Building in Afghanistan, pp. 88–90.

²¹⁵ Veronica Kitchen, The Globalization of NATO, p. 105.

maximalist/universalist COIN by relying on a more limited/pragmatic approach working more closely with or around the Afghan government as primary channel of legitimacy.²¹⁶ Newly elected President Hollande's decision to withdraw all combat troops by the end of 2012 (two years ahead of the official NATO schedule), moreover, manifested France's ambiguous commitment to ISAF.

France's ambivalence toward ISAF is an expression of continuity more than change in French NATO policy: weighing the benefits of alliance membership against the wish to preserve national autonomy. At the heart of French strategic thinking is the Gaullist balancing principle of keeping European security disentangled from U.K.-U.S. hegemony, and the lesson that France's security is best preserved through balance-of-power and the promotion of multipolarity.²¹⁷ Gaullist lessons prescribe the preservation of national defense forces as the ultimate guarantee of the preservation of national autonomy. This has translated into persistent skepticism about NATO as an organization (though not necessarily about NATO as an alliance) and, thus, into ambiguity about the expansion of NATO's mandate. Although France accepted NATO's geographical expansion to Afghanistan, it has remained skeptical about its functional expansion as a state-builder (let alone democracy promoter), and it has refused at the operational level to vest its own civilian resources for U.S.-driven purposes.

France has been instinctively unwilling to assume civilian responsibilities (e.g. through PRTs) out of fear that this would strengthen NATO's strategic role in civil-military affairs and reduce the EU to a mere support function for NATO.²¹⁸ Moreover, France has a historically driven doctrine of delivering both kinetic and non-kinetic effects can be traced back to France's experiences in the Indochina War and the Algerian Independence War. France has learned the counterinsurgent's need to obtain the population's support in order to succeed in the long run. France has opposed any view that NATO's mission in Afghanistan is to build democracy. This is so both at the strategic level, where France sees NATO as a primarily military instrument, and at the operational level, where France believes NATO should not act as a legitimate substitute for the Afghan government.²¹⁹ Both at the strategic and at the operational level, hence, the Gaullist national narrative has set France at odds with the official CSPMP approach.

France's acceptance of NATO's increasing role in Afghanistan should be explained not as a change in geopolitical thinking (which remains "constant"), but from the perspective of France's desire to maximize its influence, strained by the realities of military and economic decline. France has been faced with the reality that its relative economic weight has decreased and that it alone is not able to exert the world influence it intends to while continuing defense cuts. France has turned to Europe and the creation of a capable Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP) for force multiplication since the end of the Cold War. However, other NATO members have continued to nourish skepticism about French attempts to promote a European

Foust, "France in Kapisa," pp. 95–97.

²¹⁷ Ulrich Krotz and James Sperling, "The European Security Order between American Hegemony and French Independence," *European Security*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (September 2011), pp. 312–313.

²¹⁸ Rynning, NATO in Afghanistan, p. 100.

²¹⁹ Kitchen, The Globalization of NATO, p. 107-108.

Henrik Larsen, "The Russo-Georgian War and Beyond: Toward a European Great Power Concert," *European Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (March 2012), pp. 106–109.

security architecture rival to NATO as long as France refused to participate as a full member in NATO's integrated military structure. President Sarkozy championed France's return to the integrated military structure that it had left in 1967 under Charles de Gaulle and, thus, managed to remove a major symbolic irritant in relations with its allies.

The ascension in the transatlantic security framework was backed with a vote of confidence by the National Assembly (329 to 228 votes), even though French security and defense policy as a special presidential domain does not require formal parliamentary consent. French reintegration into NATO and the troop escalation in Afghanistan followed a process of restructuring of the French armed forces that was announced with the publication of the French white book on defense in June 2008. The reintegration decision was based on the realization that France could only translate its budgetary and operational weight into political influence within NATO by regaining a full seat at all levels within the organization. Both President Sarkozy²²³ and Foreign Minister Kouchner²²⁴ emphasized this point.

French NATO reintegration was based not only on the wish to reach a political influence commensurate with France's actual contributions but also on the explicit aim of revitalizing the transatlantic relationship. The French white book on defense from 2008 envisaged a new balanced transatlantic relationship, where the EU would formulate big foreign policies as an equal partner to the United States, once the EU had been equipped with an affirmed defense policy.²²⁵

France saw the reluctance of European allies to deploy more forces to Afghanistan as symptomatic of Europe's dependence on the United States and believed that Europe needed to become more competent in areas of defense. ²²⁶ At the same, however, it was clear that the CESDP

²²¹ Ministère de la défense français, *Défense et Sécurite nationale—le livre blanc* [National defense and security—the white book] (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2008), http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/0000.pdf.

Jeremy Ghez and Stephen Larrabee, "France and NATO," *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (April/May 2009), p. 81; and IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2010), p. 104.

[&]quot;In the world of 'relative powers,' no state can impose its point of view. No one. The cooperation and the solidarity are the fundaments of action. A lone state, a solitary nation is a nation that has no influence. And if one wants to weigh, one has to know how to associate with us allies and friendships. We saw that clearly in Europe." See Nicolas Sarkozy, "La France et l'OTAN, Colloque 'la France, la défense européenne et l'OTAN du XXIème siècle" [France and NATO, symposium 'France, the European defense and NATO in the 21st century'] (Paris: École Militaire, 2009), http://www.consulfrance-pekin.org/imprimer.html?id_article=7247&lang=fr&cs=print, author's translation. "The alliance with the United States and the alliance with Europe do not undermine my country's independence; they strengthen my country's independence. That is what I'll explain to the French when the time comes. This moment is drawing nearer. I'm convinced that France can upgrade her relations with NATO while being an independent ally and a free partner of the United States." See Nicolas Sarkozy, "Conférence sur la sécurité 'Wehrkunde'" ['Wehrkunde' security conference] (2009), http://www.ambafrance-nl.org/Conference-sur-la-securite, author's translation.

[&]quot;We are founding members of the Atlantic Alliance. We have participated in all the NATO operations, in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, yet we have not been involved in developing the plans. France can no longer go on being the only film director that is not invited to contribute to the screenplay!" See Bernard Kouchner, "Entretien du Ministre des affaires étrangères et européennes, Bernard Kouchner, avec le quotidien, 'Le Figaro'" [Interview with Foreign and European Minister Bernard Kouchner with the daily 'Le Figaro'] (2009), http://www.consulfrance-jerusalem.org/ENTRETIEN-DU-MINISTRE-DES-AFFAIRES, author's translation.

²²⁵ Ministère de la défense français, *Défense et Sécurite nationale—le livre blanc*, pp. 98–102.

In the words of French Defense Minister Morin in 2008: "I am convinced that the difficulties we are experiencing in force generation in Afghanistan and Chad are nothing other than the military expression of European

strengthening for France was intended as force multiplier for other theaters than Afghanistan. The reality is that the EU in Afghanistan has largely failed both in providing leadership and in mustering civilian capabilities comparable to NATO, failures best exemplified by the poor record of the EU police-training mission, EUPOL.²²⁷ The need for NATO reintegration and the absence of a capable EU alternative compelled France to ease its disagreement over the CSPMP implementation in an Afghan context.

The white book on defense, moreover, prescribed a transformation aimed at integrating force capabilities both for foreign interventions and national defense, but it simultaneously called for an overall reduction of 45,000 French troops, from 270,000 to 225,000, with corresponding budget cuts over a six- to seven-year time frame. NATO reintegration (and the troop increase in Afghanistan) has gone hand-in-hand with the current restructurings and cuts in the French armed forces. The white book, published before the global financial meltdown in 2008, came to anticipate the need to slim the French defense budget in the short-to-medium term and the pragmatic temptation to seek closer multilateral cooperation to compensate for the loss of national influence that France no longer could wage alone. France avoided major unplanned defense cuts as a consequence of increased fiscal pressure until 2013.²²⁸

The troop escalation in Afghanistan represented a landmark in France's new NATO strategy because it required the liberation of resources limited by general financial austerity or taken away from other commitments, notably in Francophone Africa, France's traditional "sphere of influence." Savings generated from French troop withdrawals from other theaters were outweighed by the troop escalation in Afghanistan, resulting in an overall OPEX cost increase until 2011. The crisis had a direct impact on France's other out-of-area commitments as the government chose to withdraw more than 2,000 troops from French military bases in Côte d'Ivoire and in Chad. As seen in Table 9, the troop escalation turned Afghanistan into France's most costly military operation by far. The significant amount of resources committed to Afghanistan testifies to a French rapprochement with NATO, in which it wanted to align its efforts with those of the rest of its allies.

The French government's initial reaction to the financial crisis and the rising deficits was not to initiate immediate cuts, but to allocate €1.4 billion to defense (for research programs) as part of an overall €26 billion stimulus package for the French economy.²³¹ The government's plan to reduce the budget deficit from nearly 8 percent of annual GDP in 2009 to 4 percent in 2013, to reach a balanced budget by 2017, resulted in minor defense spending adjustments.²³² The French 2009–2014 budget plan called for total of only €102 billion to be spent during this six-year

political resignation. Europe is not taking responsibility for itself. It is wallowing in its own dependence." See Christophe Morin, quoted in Kitchen, *The Globalization of NATO*, p. 102.

²²⁷ Williams, The Good War, p. 99.

Perlo-Freeman, "Europe and the Impact of Austerity on Military Expenditure," p. 175.

²²⁹ NATO reintegration itself is estimated to cost €600-800 million. See Director General for External Policies, "The Impact of the Financial Crisis on European Defence," p. 12. French officers had already become gradually involved in NATO's integrated military structures during the 1990s (with approximately 250 officers), but reintegration meant that around 1250 posts had to be filled. See IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2010), p. 104.

²³⁰ IISS, Military Balance (London: IISS, 2010), p. 112.

²³¹ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2010), p. 112.

²³² Larabee et al., NATO and the Challenges of Austerity, p. 19.

period, in a clear divergence from the 2008 white book, which envisaged expenditures of €108 billion.²³³ The government further adjusted the 2009–2014 budget plan downward via the revised defense triennial spending law (cf. Table 9).²³⁴ The total amount of additional cuts approximates €3.5 billion, putting France just below the NATO standard of spending at least two percent of GDP spent on defense (cf. Table 3), effectively manifesting its relative military decline.

Table 9: French Defense Expenditure (in € Million, Current Prices): Total,²³⁵ Costs related to External Operations (OPEX) and to Afghanistan²³⁶

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Afgh.	-	-	90	122	169.8	292.4	387.2	482.7	518.3	492.9	-
OPEX	654	633	553	603	684.9	830.3	870.5	860.1	877.7	1,246.5	872.9
Total Exp.	31,000	32,400	32,900	35,400	36,200	30,200	33,800	30,500	28,900	29,600*	29,100*

^{*}Estimates

The current fiscal situation will force France to undertake further defense cuts after 2013. Estimates from the national audit office assume the sum of de facto planned and necessary cuts and postponements to represent a contraction of around €6–7 billion, making further decline inevitable beyond 2013.²³⁷ The French government has worked on a pessimistic scenario envisaging a necessary cut of €5 billion instead of €3.5 billion. French public opinion has considered defense to be a sector where cuts could be made as a response to the increased fiscal pressure, increasing the likelihood that the defense sector will bear a proportionately high part of the costs.²³⁸ The new Socialist government reaffirmed the ambition of obtaining a balanced budget by

²³³ Ministère de la défense français, "Loi de Programmation Militaire 2009–14" [Military Planning Act 2009–14], p. 5, http://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/139765/1386015/file/mindef VF.pdf.

²³⁴ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2012), p. 78.

²³⁵ IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2005); *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2006); *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2007); *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2008); Sénat français, "Rapport Général sur le projet de loi de finances pour 2013, Tome III, annexe 8" [General report on the finance bill for 2013, Vol. 3, Annex 8], p. 86, http://www.senat.fr/rap/l12-148-38/112-148-381.pdf.

Sénat français, "Rapport Général sur le projet de loi de finances pour 2008, Tome III, annexe 8" [General report on the finance bill for 2012, Vol. 3, Annex 8], p. 21, http://www.senat.fr/rap/l07-091-38/l07-091-381.pdf; Sénat français, "Rapport Général sur le projet de loi de finances pour 2013," p. 37; Jean-Paul Hébert, "20 milliards d'euros pour les Opex depuis 1976" [20 billion euros for external operations since 1976], Le débat stratégique, Vol. 96 (Paris: Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherches sur la Paix et d'Etudes Stratégiquesp (CIRPES)), p. 3, http://www.cirpes.net/IMG/_article_PDF/article_215.pdf; Assemblée Nationale française, "Avis fait au nom de la Commission de la Défense Nationale et des Forces Armées sur le Projet de Loi de Finances pour 2013" [Notice on behalf of the Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces on the draft budget law for 2013], Vol. 235, No 3 (Paris: Assemblée Nationale, 2012), p. 20, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/pdf/budget/plf2013/a0256-tiii.pdf. Numbers before 2007 include expenses related to the Gendarmerie. Data exclude pensions.

²³⁷ Cour des Comptes, "Le bilan à mi-parcours de la loi de programmation militaire" [The mid-term review of military planning law], pp. 47–48, http://www.ccomptes.fr/Publications/Publications/Le-bilan-a-mi-parcours-de-la-loi-de-programmation-militaire.

Brune et. al., "Restructuring Europe's Armed Forces in Times of Austerity," p. 6–7.

2017,²³⁹ leaving little reason to believe, despite announced tax increases, that additional resources will be allocated to the defense budget.

Although France's economic and military decline constituted an "objective" pressure for NATO reintegration and realignment with NATO's general policy, the Gaullist legacy resisted this change on the domestic scene. The troop escalation in Afghanistan was widely unpopular in France, especially after ten French soldiers were killed in an ambush in August 2008, showing to what extent the Afghanistan effort clashed with France's domestic predispositions. As a testimony to the fragility of the new French NATO policy, French officials tried to decouple the troop escalation in Afghanistan from the wider reintegration question. France insisted that its decision to escalate would not be taken at the NATO Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl in April 2009, when France's reintegration with NATO was formally initiated, in order to separate the two events. The decision to escalate was therefore taken during an ISAF meeting prior to the Summit, which allowed French officials to make the desired decoupling from the general NATO reintegration issue, still controversial among the domestic audience.²⁴⁰

The fragile domestic ISAF mandate again became an issue of contestation in the French presidential elections campaign in early 2012. President Sarkozy, in what was likely an attempt to increase his popularity, announced in January 2012 that France would withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2013. His challenger, François Hollande, then trumped Sarkozy by announcing his pledge to withdraw France's combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2012. Newly elected President Hollande stuck to his election campaign pledge.²⁴¹ The accelerated drawdown both helped Paris feel that it was not serving as a tool of U.S. interests and generated much needed savings for an already pressured defense budget.²⁴²

In sum, France's economic and military decline pushed for reintegration into NATO and, by consequence, for France to accept CSPMP as NATO strategy in Afghanistan (even though France at the operational level did not fully adapt). On the other hand, the ideational aversion to NATO as a toolbox for U.S. security interests persisted in accordance with France's historical concerns about external dominance in European security. France's early withdrawal from Afghanistan represents the best testimony to the fundamental ambiguity that persists in French NATO policy between reintegration as a strategy to best preserve France's role as a great power among equals and continued domestic unwillingness to serve U.S. interests. The recent French defense white book from 2013 notes (with disappointment) that "Europe provisionally has lost its ability to project its influence in a context marked by the persistence of weak growth rates." The budgetary pressure was reinforced by lessons-based imperatives, leading to a drawdown two

²³⁹ Steven Erlanger, "Socialists in France Announce New Taxes," New York Times, July 4, 2012.

Wikileaks, "French Domestic Concerns Drive Timeline on NATO Reintegration, Afghanistan, and the NATO Summit" (Wikileaks, 2009), http://www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=09PARIS193.

Hollande pledged that 1,400 troops would remain in a support function of the ANSF. See "François Hollande en Afghanistan pour préparer le retrait français" [François Hollande in Afghanistan to prepare the French exit], *Le Monde*, May 25, 2012.

Camille Grand, "France," in O'Donnell ed., "The Implications of Military Spending Cuts for NATO's Largest Members," Analysis Paper (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2012), pp. 20–21.

²⁴³ Ministère de la défense français, <u>Le Livre blanc sur la défense et la sécurité nationale</u> [The white book on national defense and security], (Paris: Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2013), pp. 30–31, http://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/articles/livre-blanc-2013, author's translation.

years ahead of the official NATO schedule.

4.5 Poland: Buying an Insurance Premium

The fifth and final country case, Poland, is the sixth largest contributor to the Afghanistan operation, with more than 2,500 troops at the peak in 2011 (Italy is the fifth largest contributor). Poland deserves analytical attention because it has a distinct interest connected to its presence in Afghanistan. It represents a regional leader among the "new" Central and Eastern European countries in NATO, with a more traditional Cold War vision of the alliance.²⁴⁴ Partly similar to the case of the United Kingdom, the consistent thing about Poland's Afghanistan policy has been its strong commitment to Washington.

The initial Polish contribution to Afghanistan was rather symbolic as Poland devoted most of its military resources to supporting the U.S. occupation in Iraq. In 2006, Poland deployed troops to Afghanistan without national caveats in an attempt to distinguish itself from those countries imposing such restrictions.²⁴⁵ Poland has not itself led an independent PRT, but in June 2008 attached its team to operate in conjunction with the U.S.-led PRT in the Afghan province of Ghazni. Poland pledged an additional 400 troops in response to U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' request for allies to contribute with more troops and equipment.²⁴⁶ Poland actively involved itself in NATO's CSPMP implementation, but with an emphasis on the military over civilian activities.²⁴⁷ Apart from monitoring the security situation in the Ghazni province, Poland conducted a series of kinetic operations with the aim of eliminating insurgents, especially during the pre-election period in 2009.

Poland's new strategy fell well in line with the U.S. surge initiated in 2009: combat operations as well as mentoring of the ANA and the ANP in support of NATO's transition process. Poland announced in 2010 that it would withdraw its troops by 2012, but subsequently decided that it would follow the NATO schedule of gradually reducing the number of troops on the ground and transforming its mandate to training and mentoring.²⁴⁸ In June 2011, the Polish Deputy Defense Minister confirmed the government's decision to begin a partial drawdown process as of October 2011.²⁴⁹

Partly because of Poland's eager participation in the U.S.-led "coalition of the willing," however, Poland did not enjoy full political visibility within NATO. It is worth noticing that whereas Poland had relied on a strong or privileged bilateral relationship with the United States under President Bush, it over time came to accentuate a stronger multilateral approach with ISAF in

Anna Zielinska, "The Transatlantic Relationship: Poland and the United States," in Dorman and Kaufman, eds., *The Future of Transatlantic Relations*, pp. 160–164.

²⁴⁵ Lukasz Kulesa and Beata Gorka-Winter, "The Polish Engagement in Afghanistan," in Hynek and Marton, eds., *State-Building in Afghanistan*, p. 99.

²⁴⁶ IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2009), pp. 218–220.

²⁴⁷ Kulesa and Gorka-Winter, "The Polish Engagement in Afghanistan," pp. 218–220.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 219–221, 223.

Poland's withdrawal was planned to take place in three steps: 2,500 soldiers until October 2012; 1,800 by October 2013; 1,000 until the final withdrawal in 2014. After this date, Poland plans to contribute financially to the ANSF with an equivalent of \$20 million annually. See Larabee et al., *NATO and the Challenges of Austerity*, p.68.

order to foster the success of NATO as a whole in Afghanistan. As a consequence, Poland decided to consolidate its contingent on the Ghazni province to increase its visibility with an independent contribution, as opposed to the smaller East European countries contributing with more limited resources.²⁵⁰

Poland's presence in Afghanistan reflected first and foremost clear geopolitical concerns about keeping the United States committed to European security and the preservation of a well-functioning NATO. Poland has not internalized U.S. or NATO narratives concerning the necessity to facilitate reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. Polish foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski evoked the argument of the need for solidarity with the Afghans, who along with the Polish contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1980s,²⁵¹ but none of these arguments have resonated with public opinion.²⁵² The Polish public has seen little objective interest in Afghanistan and regarded the country as largely unconquerable.

Polish decisionmakers, conversely, have been explicit about the real national interest they have seen in contributing in Afghanistan: the future credibility of NATO's collective defense clause as defined by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Poland has seen a clear link between NATO's Article 5 activation following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and continued Article 5 guarantees from NATO in the future. As stated by Sikorski: "[O]ur interest in Afghanistan is really our interest in NATO succeeding. We invoked Article 5 in defense of our ally, the United States, and so we want NATO to succeed so as to maintain conviction for future challenges. When NATO goes to war, NATO wins. We have no selfish national interests in Afghanistan. Just a general Western interest in keeping terrorists far from our borders."²⁵³

Poland's privileged relationship with the United States in the global war on terror, not only in Afghanistan but also in Iraq, reflects the perception that Poland's "insurance premium" through NATO is better invested through Washington as the ultimate enforcer or defender of NATO's core principles.²⁵⁴ With the fear of foreign invasion and dominance (by Germany and the Soviet Union) fresh in its memory, Poland saw its accession to NATO in 1999 as a big historical landmark.²⁵⁵ Poland looks primarily to the United States, not to its European allies, as the ultimate guarantor of its security and independence because it perceives its independence as a consequence of the United States' determination and commitment in the face of the Soviet Union and support for a quick Polish integration into NATO. Poland's motivations bear some resemblance to the United Kingdom's desire to maintain special access to U.S. decision-making, but they are nevertheless different because of Poland's overwhelming "insurance premium" focus enforced

²⁵⁰ Kulesa and Gorka-Winter, "The Polish Engagement in Afghanistan," pp. 215–217.

^{251 &}quot;We also feel some solidarity with Afghanistan. They defied the Soviet Union in the 1980s at the same time we defied the Soviet Union, but we've been more lucky. We would like them to be able to benefit from democracy and a free market economy, just as we have. But we have to take a fresh look at this mission because our resources are not limitless." See "Interview: Radoslaw Sikorski," *Foreign Policy*, November 2, 2009, http://www.foreignpolic.yy.com/articles/2009/11/02/interview radoslaw sikorski.

Kulesa and Gorka-Winter, "The Polish Engagement in Afghanistan," pp. 222.

^{253 &}quot;Interview: Radoslaw Sikorski."

Marcin Zabarowski and Kerry Longhurst, "America's Protégé in the East? The Emergence of Poland as a Regional Leader," *International Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 5 (October 2003), pp. 1011–1015.

²⁵⁵ Zielinska, "The Transatlantic Relationship," p. 156–157.

by U.S. de facto power in return for its Afghanistan effort. 256

Paradoxically, Poland's military transformation to out-of-area and nation-building operations had therefore little to do with Afghanistan as such, let alone democratization, but reflected a deeper desire to strengthen NATO's commitment to Article 5, including collective defense capabilities. Moreover, Poland wanted to ensure the presence of a credible (U.S.) force in Europe. Poland's National Security Strategy states: "Poland is in favour of NATO's continued military transformation. It supports NATO's selective engagement in stabilization missions outside Europe, provided, however, that the Alliance maintains a credible potential and is fully capable of collectively defending its member states, and also accounts for the impact of NATO's non-European operations on the course, pace and costs of modernization and transformation of Allied armed forces, including Poland's."²⁵⁷

Poland underwent significant restructuring of its armed forces to meet NATO's operational, technical, and budgetary requirements both prior to and after its accession in 1999. According to legal provisions in place since 2002, Poland operated with a stable defense budget at 1.95 percent of GDP.²⁵⁸ Poland in 2008 decided to professionalize its army and to end conscription, resulting in significant reduction in troop numbers, which remained stable at 100,000 from 2010 onwards. In 2009, Poland adopted an ambitious 10-year plan for modernization of its armed forces for procurement purposes and to increase their inter-operability, deployability, and sustainability. Poland currently is able to deploy and sustain approximately 4,000 troops, a number that is expected to increase with the gradual implementation of Poland's current defense reforms.²⁵⁹

The achievement of these goals was ensured thanks to the Polish 1.95 percent of GDP defense spending threshold, placing Poland as the undisputed top spender among the former Warsaw Pact countries, most of which spend considerable less on defense both in absolute and relative terms. ²⁶⁰ Poland's national economy has not lived through a deep recession as consequence of the financial crisis. While the GDP of the other NATO members shrank, Poland's GDP grew by 1.7 percent in 2009 and by almost 4 percent in 2010. Financial constraints have played no role in Poland's choice to align strongly with the United States in the Afghanistan war. Nevertheless, the Polish government was forced to address the public debt increases (cf. Table 1) as a consequence of the global recession and the lower growth rates in 2008–2009.

Poland has extensive bilateral defense cooperation with the United States in areas such as special operations, defense procurement, missile defense, and preparations for ISAF deployment. The United States assists in enabling Poland to become a "fully interoperable special operations forces partner nation by 2014." See The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Poland Bilateral Defense Cooperation," May 28, 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/28/fact-sheet-us-poland-bilateral-defense-cooperation.

[&]quot;National Security Strategy of Poland" (Warsaw, 2007), http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/Poland-2007-eng. pdf.

²⁵⁸ Director General for External Policies, "The Impact of the Financial Crisis on European Defense," p. 22.

²⁵⁹ Gordon et al., "NATO and the Challenge of Austerity," p. 137.

Czech Republic: 1.3 percent, Slovakia: 1.3 percent, Hungary: 1.0 percent, Estonia: 1.7 percent, Latvia: 1.1 percent, Lithuania: 1.1 percent (of GDP, 2010 numbers). See SIPRI, *The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database*.

Table 10: Polish Defense Expenditure (in Million zł, Current Prices): Total, Operations, ²⁶¹ and to ISAF²⁶²

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
Afgh.	14.7	10.3	10.5	40.1	402.1	346.7	912.7	1,536.6	1,119.4	502.9	531
Operations	243.5	374.18	231.2	225.2	284.3	679.9	-	1,963.6	1,224.4	568.2	-
Total Exp.	15,900	16,900	17,240	18,064	21,579	24,500	22,600	25,719	27,536	29,490	31,170

^{*}Planned²⁶³

The increasing deficit forced the MoD to undertake drastic cuts of almost 20 percent in the 2009 defense budget (cf. Table 10), making it impossible to reach the statutory goal of 1.95 percent of GDP in that year. Poland devoted 7.6 percent of its defense expenditures to out-of-area operations and ISAF accounted for the by far largest percentage, with 5.8 percent of total defense expenditure (2010 numbers). Most cuts focused on investment expenses (reduced by approximately 50 percent and concentrated on delays in long-term procurements), whereas vital deliveries to Polish troops deployed in the framework of ISAF were not affected. Given the new financial constraints on its defense budgets, Poland redirected troops to ISAF from its other international operations (in Lebanon, Syria, and Chad), manifesting ISAF as Poland's main priority.

With the recovery of the Polish economy in 2009 and 2010, it was clear that the 2008–2009 budgetary crisis had only put a temporary damper on Poland's defense spending. ISAF was left largely untouched by the short-term need for immediate defense savings and the continued high level of defense spending. Poland's willingness to actively participate in out-of-area operations leaves no reason to believe that material imperatives have determined its contribution. Warsaw was concerned about the fact that the Obama Administration, compared to its predecessor, generally had lost its strategic interest in NATO's Eastern neighborhood. The troop escalation in support of the surge strategy in Afghanistan was intended to gain renewed access to decision-making

²⁶¹ Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, "MOND Budget" (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2012), http://archiwalny.mon.gov.pl/en/strona/126/LG_89; IISS, The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2003); The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2004); The Military Balance (London: IISS, 2009); and Agenjca Lotnicza Altair, "Koszty polskich misji zagraniczynch 2002–2008" [Costs of Polish foreign missions 2002–2008] (2008), http://www.altair.com.pl/news/view?news/ id=1625. Data includes pensions.

²⁶² Centrum Studiów nad Terroryzmem, "Koszty polskiej misji w Afganistanie" [The costs of the Polish mission in Afghanistan] (Rzeszów, Poland: Centrum Studiów nad Terroryzmem, 2010), http://terroryzm.wsiz.pl/artykuly,Koszty-polskiej-misji-w-Afganistanie.html; "MSZ: Polska w 2013 r. zamierza wydać w Afganistanie 531 mln zł" [Foreign Ministry, Poland plans to spend 531 million zł on Afghanistan in 2013], http://fakty.interia.pl/raport-polacy-w-afganistanie/polacy-w-afganistanie/news-msz-polska-w-2013-r-zamierza-wydac-w-afganistanie-531-mln-zl,nId,956766; and Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, "Wydatki na Afganistan—bezpieczeństwo ponad wszystko" [Expenditure on Afghanistan—security overall] (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2012), http://www.mon.gov.pl/

^{263 &}quot;Poland's Spending Up as Most of E. Europe Cuts Back," *Defense News*, October 24, 2012, http://www.defensenews.com/article/20121024/DEFREG01/310240002/Poland-8217-s-Spending-Up-Most-E-Europe-Cuts-Back Savings generated from ISAF included only the suspension of field exercises and limitation of administrative expenses. See Brune et al., "Restructuring Europe's Armed Forces in Times of Austerity," p. 12.

in Washington in the hopes of refocusing the United States on the East European region.²⁶⁵

As noted above, Poland was compelled not only to look for a privileged unilateral partnership with Washington, but also to prioritize good relations with the major European capitals by working multilaterally through ISAF. One reason for this is that Poland wanted to keep the opportunities open for participation in European security cooperation, for instance within a CESDP framework, as long as it served the interests of Poland's quest for defense insurances. French reintegration and continuous U.S. demands for more European defense spending and capabilities in transatlantic burden-sharing eased previous Polish skepticism toward European defense cooperation. Foreign Minister Sikorski openly said that Poland ideally sought two rather than one insurance policies and that Europe should be able to manage security in its own vicinity rather than relying on the United States by default.

A second reason is that Poland (cf. the remarks by foreign minister Sikorski), had an interest in NATO succeeding as a whole in the fights in which it chose to engage. Should NATO fail in Afghanistan, it would have damaged the cohesion power of the alliance and, thus, its ability to perform collective defense as its core objective, ultimately to the detriment of Poland's national security. Poland's increased involvement in Afghanistan was designed to muster support for its wish to refocus NATO on territorial defense and the Eastern neighborhood. An increased Polish contribution in Afghanistan would strengthen Poland's bargaining power in the context of the formulation of NATO's Strategic Concept in 2010. The Strategic Concept in fact was a Polish accomplishment insofar as it came to reaffirm collective defense as one of the alliance's three core tasks and as it came to tie contingency planning and military exercises to the defense of NATO's Eastern territory.²⁶⁸

Poland's defense budget almost doubled in the 2003–2011 period, confirming Poland as the leading military power among NATO's new post-Cold War members. It is today the third largest European NATO spender after the United Kingdom and France in terms of percentage of GDP. Poland successfully transformed its defense to adapt it to the operational requirements in theaters like Afghanistan. It contributed to NATO's new missions not only with the purpose of strengthening the bilateral relationship with the United States but also to rise from a marginalized

²⁶⁵ Kulesa and Gorka-Winter, "The Polish Engagement in Afghanistan," p. 222.

Zielinska, "The Transatlantic Relationship," pp. 172–173; and Maria Wagrowska, "The Polish Soldier between National Traditions and International Projection," in Sabine Mannitz, ed., *Democratic Civil-Military Relations in 21st Century Europe* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012) p. 191. In 2011, Poland, France, and Germany set up a combat unit of approximately 1,700 soldiers, the so-called Weimar Combat Group, to be ready for deployment as of 2013, with Poland providing the core combat contingency. The Weimar Combat Group will take part in the rotation of the EU's rapid reaction force (battlegroups). See "Germany, France, and Poland Form EU Battlegroup," *EUbusiness*, July 5, 2011, http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/military-france.b52.

^{267 &}quot;Poland would like to have two insurance policies rather than one. I believe that NATO is a military alliance devoted to the defense of the territory of its members. But as we've seen in Afghanistan, there are things that we could better—for example, the financing of operations is a question of caveats; in general the sharing of risks and costs. I think Libya shows that sometimes the United States might want to take a backseat when it's involved in two other wars as now in Iraq and Afghanistan. And so Europe should be able to act in its immediate vicinity so that the debacle of the Balkans may never happen again." See "Full Transcript: Interview With Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski," *Radio Free Europe*, June 6, 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/interview_poland_foreign_minister_radoslaw_sikorski/24221938.html.

Kulesa and Gorka-Winter, "The Polish Engagement in Afghanistan," pp. 220–223.

position as a new member in 1999 to the rank of NATO's top six most influential countries.²⁶⁹ Poland emerged as a clear leader of the territorial defense-oriented tier consisting of former Communist satellites. Poland's historical fears affect its desire to promote democracy not in Afghanistan, but in the Eastern neighborhood (Ukraine, Georgia, etc.), which remains Poland's only true region of geopolitical concern.

4.6 From National Positions to Common Alliance Policy

As mentioned above, the rise and decline in NATO's democratization efforts in Afghanistan represent a gradual evolution over time. NATO's adaptation process has been a long op push-and-pull political struggle over the controversial military-civilian conflation. The United States, as described above, applied constant pressure for NATO both to expand geographically (going global) and to expand functionally (civilian capabilities). NATO took the first step toward such an expansion in Riga in 2006, which culminated with the CSPMP endorsement in Bucharest in 2008 and COIN endorsement in Bratislava in 2009. The transition to Afghan self-reliance and drawdown process initiated in Lisbon in 2010 and Chicago in 2012 was obviously less controversial but nevertheless showed the strong impact of a pace defined by the United States.

NATO's military adaptation to stabilization operations in failed or fragile states was already on the table at the Prague Summit in November 2002, when the United States pushed for allied adaptation to conducting integrated civilian-military operations on a global scale. NATO's first adaptation was the creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF) in 2003, but Germany and especially France made it clear that there were limits to their backing for a global NATO. Moreover, the NRF has suffered from a chronic problem of low fill rates in term of equipment and personnel, making "transformation" in reality predominantly an exercise on paper. At the same time, the United States provided limited leadership in the beginning of the Afghanistan operation (while preoccupied with Iraq). As a consequence of the lacking U.S. leadership, North Atlantic Council (NAC) discussions in the first period of the operation were concerned with military-tactical aspects rather than providing political-strategic guidance for the mission as a whole. Atlantic Council (NAC)

NATO did not go global at the Riga summit in 2006 when the United States pushed for a global turn in terms of partnership agreements serving NATO's presence in Afghanistan. The U.S. pressure for an evolving NATO policy in Afghanistan in parallel to and as a complement to its own strategy was initially resisted by France and Germany, which sought clear geographical and functional demarcation lines defining the purpose of the alliance. France initially refused a NATO takeover of ISAF but subsequently agreed, deploying a significant number of troops and assuming an ISAF leadership role. France was skeptical of the civilian-military set-up and from the beginning refused to contribute a PRT, seeking to keep the CESDP option open and keep NATO boxed into a strictly military role. Germany, on the other hand, was eager to promote a

²⁶⁹ Maria Wagrowska, "The Polish Soldier between National Traditions and International Projection," p. 189.

Jens Ringsmose, "NATO's Response Force: Finally Getting It Right?" *European Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (September 2009), pp. 292–302.

Williams, The Good War, p. 96.

strong civilian-military division of labor in the PRT concept. In this way, Germany sought to keep NATO out of offensive military operations considered to be exclusively U.S.-led endeavors.²⁷² Berlin refused to lift its national caveats and to expand its mandate to more troubled zones, causing frictions with the United States and other NATO allies involved in the difficult tasks of stabilizing the Afghan-Pakistani border regions.²⁷³

From a U.S. perspective, the challenge has been to work with countries with different national experiences, either in terms of commitment to the NATO alliance or in terms of warfare. This proved to be both an obstacle and an advantage for the United States: the United Kingdom and Poland have been eager to serve U.S. interests regardless of the location and the strategy, whereas France and Germany showed themselves able to delay NATO's geographical and functional expansion. On one hand, the United States enjoyed firm support from the so-called RC/S caucus that emerged as an inner NATO coalition after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. RC/S stands for "Regional Command/South" and includes the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, Romania, and Australia. Peginning during the Riga summit in 2006, the caucus began to meet in informal formats prior to the formal NAC meetings; it was understandable, on one hand, as these countries bore the greatest losses, but it also involved the risk of enhancing NATO's internal divisions.

On the other hand, the continued Franco-German resistance proved that the United States was facing hard odds and having to deal with national lessons largely immune to its pressures at the diplomatic level. Condoleezza Rice remarked that it was hardly surprising that the Germans did not embrace a war mission, as "[w]e had worked sixty years for a German army that wouldn't fight in foreign wars." According to leaked CIA cables, U.S. attempts to persuade Germany to devote more resources to ISAF focused on emphasizing its humanitarian aspects and exploiting Germany's sense of commitment to NATO. Trance, as previously noted, was against European capabilities being reduced to a U.S. toolbox and conceded not due to pro-Americanism but due to concerns about decline in relative influence. For NATO as whole, consequently, agreeing on a common position in favor of NATO assuming a direct role in democratic state-building in Afghanistan was a gradual process. The process expressed not changing historical experiences but rather hegemonic bargaining in which the United States, given its power asymmetry, coopted its allies into expanding NATO's role.

NATO's turning point did not come until the Bucharest summit in April 2008, when allies endorsed the CSPMP for Afghanistan, following increasing U.S. pressures for change in NATO's strategy. The endorsement was a dual track decision process underway from the Riga Summit

²⁷² Rynning, NATO in Afghanistan, p. 99–100.

Gale Mattox, "Germany: From Civilian Power to International Actor," in Dorman and Kaufman, eds., *The Future of Transatlantic Relations*, p. 129; and Behr, "Germany and Regional Command-North," p. 50.

Daniel Korski, "London Calling: How Britain Now Runs European Security," European Council of Foreign Relations, March 20, 2008, http://www.ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_london_calling_how_britain_determines euroepan security/.

²⁷⁵ Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan*, p. 127.

²⁷⁶ Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Random House, 2011), p. 668.

²⁷⁷ Wikileaks, "CIA Report into Shoring Up Afghan War Support in Western Europe" (2010), http://wlstorage.net/file/cia-afghanistan.pdf.

that, in turn, led to an informal Foreign Minister meeting in Noordwijk, which resulted in the adoption "by consensus" of the CSPMP in October 2007. The NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer resorted to the "silence procedure" to forge a consensus. As no ally took it upon itself to challenge the CSPMP agenda on the table, the way was paved for a successful Bucharest Summit.²⁷⁸ The summit, moreover, also manifested NATO as a lead organization in crisis management in other theaters beyond Afghanistan. CSPMP was formulated broadly and flexibly enough to complement the U.S. strategy. The United States encouraged NATO allies to take the necessary measures to ensure successful national elections in Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010, with a higher voter turn-out than during the previous elections.²⁷⁹

In the case of France, it was difficult to block or delay the CSPMP while at the same time increasing its troops contribution to Afghanistan, making France effectively look more closely aligned with the RC/S caucus. France's distrust of the development of NATO civilian capabilities persisted, but with renewed pragmatic willingness to work through NATO as a key organization in Afghanistan.²⁸⁰ At the same time, the French decision to rejoin the integrated military structure removed a major symbolic irritant in its relation with the United States, the United Kingdom, and the East European members in particular, as this continued to fuel skepticism about France's intentions to promote CESDP as a rival structure to NATO.²⁸¹ As the only international player with real political leverage, it was clear that a credible European policy could only take place through NATO.

NATO allies endorsed the U.S. surge strategy at the Strasbourg/Kehl summit in April 2009. While the number of U.S. troops tripled between 2008 and 2010, the number of non-U.S. NATO troops rose by one third for the same period of time, ²⁸² showing the extent to which the surge was U.S.-driven. There were still unresolved issues with regard to the actual implementation of CSPMP and an important strategic hurdle to overcome in terms of adopting COIN as official ISAF terminology. The approval of the NTM-A marked the next important step in the implementation of the CSPMP. On the other hand, it remained at least partly controversial because it would initiate NATO's direct involvement in capacity-building with Afghan institutions and for the purpose of ANA and ANP recruitment.

The United Kingdom acted as the most ardent supporter of the United States, not only through its significant ISAF contribution but also by serving as a Trojan horse advancing U.S. interests during NATO diplomacy rounds. The United Kingdom called for allies to increase their troop contribution and to fully embrace implementation of CSPMP. According to internal NAC records, the United Kingdom in October 2008 voiced concern about the slow pace of progress in the discussions about CSPMP.²⁸³ U.K. Foreign Minister Miliband, furthermore, proposed a three-pronged approach for NATO (Afghanization, localization, and civilianization) calling, along the same

²⁷⁸ Rynning, NATO in Afghanistan, p. 147.

Wikileaks, "ISAF Commander McNiell Praises Allied Unity, Highlights Remaining Challenges in his Farewell Address" (2008), http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/06/08USNATO200.html#.

²⁸⁰ Rynning, NATO in Afghanistan, pp. 150–151.

Jolyon Howorth, "Prodigal Son or Trojan Horse: What's in It for France?" *European Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2010); and Ghez and Larrabee, "France and NATO," pp. 87–88.

Belasco, The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11, p. 13.

Wikileaks, "October 8 North Atlantic Council Meeting" (2008), http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08USNAT O367.html.

lines as the United States, for a doubling of the civilian presence and the transformation from a base-bound to a field-bound mobile effort.²⁸⁴ France, by contrast, in 2009 vetoed NTM-A tasks pertaining to capacity-building at the level of the Afghan ministries of Defense and Interior arguing that military advisors should not be used for coaching civilian ministries and that NATO as a matter of principle should not undertake civilian tasks considered to be the responsibilities of other organizations, including the EU. The continued lack of competent EU personnel in Afghanistan, however, over time undermined arguments against NATO filling the civilian vacuum.²⁸⁵ The result was a tacit acceptance of ISAF assuming a role in police training, including the introduction of NATO operational mentoring and liaison teams under NTM-A.

NATO's adoption of COIN as official strategy was a true landmark decision, as NATO, as previously discussed, had so far avoided the explicit use of COIN terminology due to internal controversies. COIN was adopted at an informal defense minister meeting in Bratislava in October 2009, when NATO allies did not enter into controversy over COMISAF General McChrystal's approval of President Obama's COIN campaign. To reiterate, the U.S. pressure for NATO to adopt COIN as ISAF strategy by merging it with the U.S.-led OEF failed in 2005 due to combined French-German-U.K. resistance. ISAF in October 2008 issued a Joint Campaign Plan (JCP) that placed the mission in a COIN framework but which did not explicitly use the term COIN. This step was then overcome, not by merging ISAF with OEF, as the United States initially wanted, but by formally adopting COIN in ISAF terminology. NATO allies and ISAF partners also welcomed President Obama's second review in December 2009 (population-centric COIN, additional troop deployments).²⁸⁶ Germany, not France, was the major hurdle in the adoption of COIN terminology, but was parried by the possibility of keeping its own distinct methods and caveats and thus largely remaining immune to COIN.²⁸⁷

NATO endorsed Kabul's gradual take-over of the country's security responsibilities at an informal foreign ministers' meeting in Estonia in April 2010, leading to the Lisbon Summit declaration in November of the same year. NATO subsequently endorsed President Obama's decision to start the gradual withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan as of mid-2011 and the scheduled transitions of tranches of areas to Afghan self-reliance. According to former U.S. Ambassador Eikenberry, who directed President Obama's civilian surge, the drawdown strategy was designed to avoid a race-to-the-exit effect among NATO allies by defining a flexible medium-term time frame for the achievement of progress in terms of transition to Afghan self-reliance.

As noted in the beginning of the paper, NATO was faced with the tension between pursuing either a condition-based or a calendar-based withdrawal. The reality of budgetary strictures and decreasing benefit perceptions as the campaign dragged out pushed for an accelerated drawdown and thus, in practice, for a calendar-based rather than a condition-based withdrawal. The Chicago Summit in 2012 seemed to confirm the impact of budgetary pressures as NATO decided on an

Wikileaks, "The December 3 2008 North Atlantic Council Foreign Ministers Meeting on NATO Operations."

²⁸⁵ Mattelaer, "How Afghanistan has Strengthened NATO," pp. 129–134.

NATO, Statement on Afghanistan.

²⁸⁷ Behr, "Germany and Regional Command-North," p. 51.

²⁸⁸ Rynning, NATO in Afghanistan, pp. 62–63.

²⁸⁹ Karl Eikenberry, interviewed by the author, Palo Alto, California, March 12, 2012.

accelerated and irreversible drawdown entering a predominant support function phase as of mid-2013. France was the only significant country that initiated a further accelerated drawdown by deciding to withdraw by the end of 2014, at the expense of alliance solidarity.

In political terms, it is remarkable how once very rigid positions on whether NATO should pursue stabilization or counterterrorism, which used to paralyze the internal debate in the early stages of the Afghanistan operation, were replaced by a new CSPMP consensus. NATO until Afghanistan drew on its experience in the Balkans, which did not call upon NATO to develop a CAAC and to embed the military surge in a civilian surge. NATO members underwent steep learning curves with many experiences of failure or status quo in the field and the need to cooperate or integrate across military and civilian agencies. NATO's civilian component in financial and manpower terms grew larger than what one would have expected just half a decade earlier. Moreover, Afghanistan forced many European militaries, which had not been in combat since the Korean War, into combat.²⁹⁰

NATO's major stakeholders were able to slow NATO's steps toward assuming a higher degree of civilian responsibility (France) and the COIN effort (Germany) in Afghanistan. In the long run, however, their objections were alleviated by the possibility of national caveats or an early withdrawal. Fortunately for NATO, the difference between Afghanistan's regions meant that there was room for a division of labor between contributors wanting to focus on state-building tasks only (north/north-west) and those also willing to engage in combat operations (south/south-east). U.S. criticism of NATO allies for bringing too modest force escalations to Afghanistan, best exemplified by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates's warning against the emergence of a two-tiered alliance, did not incite the European allies to increase either defense budgets or their contingencies in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the United States is aware that NATO remains the only lasting forum where it can find reliable partners for future out-of-area operations that it cannot carry out single-handedly. Page 10 of 10

5. Conclusion

This paper has made the case for understanding the rise and decline of NATO's democratic agenda in Afghanistan from the perspective of budgetary strictures. The negative impact on defense spending has affected resource allocations to the Afghanistan operation as the most expensive overseas commitment by far for all participants involved. As mentioned in the introduction,

²⁹⁰ Mattelaer, "How Afghanistan has Strengthened NATO," pp. 132–133.

²⁹¹ Hynek and Marton, State-Building in Afghanistan, pp. 4–12.

Gates openly lamented Europe's limited overall contribution in the Afghan campaign. NATO, he concluded, was in danger of becoming a two-tiered alliance divided between contributors and free riders—and between those specializing in development, humanitarian, and peacekeeping tasks and those who were willing to sacrifice lives in combat missions. See Robert Gates, "Transcript of Defense Secretary Gates' Speech on NATO's Future."

^{293 &}quot;The United States has enduring interests in...bolstering the strength and vitality of NATO, which is critical to the security of Europe and beyond. Most European countries are now producers of security rather than consumers of it...In this resource-constrained era, we will also work with NATO allies to develop a 'Smart Defense' approach to pool, share, and specialize capabilities as needed to meet 21st century challenges." See United States Department of Defense, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership," p. 3.

the existing literature overemphasizes ISAF's operational aspects and neglects the political nature of the Afghanistan campaign as driven from the NATO capitals. My theoretical goal, specifically, has been to bring forward a neoclassical realist explanation into the emerging literature on NATO's liberal disconnect in Afghanistan. I acknowledge the predominance of national narratives, but argue that they should be relegated to the intervening level between power and policy. To reiterate, my argument is not that NATO allies can no longer afford the Afghanistan operation and its democratization efforts, but that they have faced a classical guns-versus-butter dilemma, assigning pressing domestic priorities at the expense of funding for external security and democratization.²⁹⁴

The analysis has proceeded along a three-leveled neoclassical realist sequencing explaining the rise and decline of NATO's democratic Afghanistan agenda (y), first from the perspective of increased fiscal pressures (x) and, second, as mediated through national historical narratives (z). The effect of economic decline is a particularly dominant factor for the United States, with the largest contingent by far in Afghanistan. Moreover, the United States is increasingly tied by the need to engage in other strategic theaters and avoid long wars against diffuse terrorist threats stemming from failed or fragile states. Poland has faced only temporary defense saving needs that have not been allowed to affect the ISAF mission due to Poland's overwhelming interest in NATO succeeding and surviving beyond Afghanistan. Germany has experienced relatively modest defense cuts and its withdrawal is driven more by domestic security restraints. The analysis has highlighted that the explanation of national policies requires an element of qualitative analysis of the different historical predispositions mediating the economic transitions into actual policy.

National-level motivations for commitment to the ISAF mission fall into two main categories. First, historical experience connected to democratization by imposition elsewhere in other periods in time that are applied to Afghanistan applies chiefly to the United States. It saw democratization as an integral part of insecurity-minimization with the purpose of preventing Afghanistan from becoming a new safe haven for international terrorism. The United Kingdom, France, and Poland showed little interest in democratizing Afghanistan both rhetorically and in action, preferring combat or stabilization measures. Germany's distinct developmental approach was more of a tactical than a strategic priority. Second, a nation's historical experience related to its place in a NATO security constellation applies chiefly to non-U.S. countries. For these countries, Afghanistan as such did not represent a key security priority, but their participation was conditioned on dependency on the United States. This stemmed from the loss of world influence (United Kingdom), historical fear of standing without credible collective defense guarantees (Poland), concerns about acting "righteously" as a committed alliance member given a guiltridden past (Germany), or ambiguity about maintaining political influence and strategic independence (France). By comparison, the United States showed no concern about its position within NATO as such but rather saw the alliance as a pawn in its liberal interventionist strategy. The United States, somewhat similar to the post-Cold War enlargements, sought to promote NATO as an alliance of freedom.

Joyce Kaufman, "The United States and the Transatlantic Relationship," in Dorman and Kaufman eds., *The Future of Transatlantic Relations*, p. 75.

The juxtaposition between budgetary strictures and ISAF/NATO commitments is shown in Table 11 below. The budgetary pressure has remained strong for the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, whereas it was moderate (or temporary) for Germany and Poland. The United States, the United Kingdom, and Poland are strongly committed to the mission, whereas France and Germany maintain moderate or ambiguous degrees of commitment.

Table 11: Juxtaposition of Material/Ideational Concerns

		Budgetary Strictures			
		Strong	Moderate		
Security	Restraining	U.S., U.K.	Poland		
Narrative	Reinforcing	France	Germany		

For the United States, the United Kingdom, and Poland (in the upper half of the table), the commitment to the mission restrained the budgetary pressures for a quicker drawdown. In the case of the United States, a commitment to democracy imposition was transformed into a decision to delegate to the Afghan authorities because (i) budgetary pressures were curbed by (ii) strong general experiences in favor of democratization. In the case of the United Kingdom, a position of strong support for NATO's expansion persisted because (i) budgetary pressures were restrained by (ii) commitment to the U.S. leadership. In the case of Poland, a similar position persisted because (i) budgetary strictures were weak/temporary and (ii) because of its survival instinct compelling it to see NATO succeeding as a defense alliance. Restraining lessons in all three cases created the domestic conditions for commitment to a prolonged operation and an expanded NATO role (CSPMP, COIN).

For France and Germany (in the lower part of the table), conversely, ambiguity about the ISAF mission reinforced the budgetary pressures, but for distinct reasons. In the case of France, it led to its withdrawal from Afghanistan two years before the rest of ISAF because (i) budgetary strictures were strong and (ii) France opposes the role of a U.S. toolbox. French economic decline has worked in two ways: first, the reintegration decision that led to the disappearance of previous French objections regarding the ISAF mandate, and second, the early withdrawal decision. In the case of Germany, it did not result in early withdrawal because (i) budgetary strictures were modest and (ii) Germany was committed to acting as a "good" NATO ally, which trumped its aversion to participating in a war-like effort. Germany's tacit acceptance of the expansion of the ISAF mandate can likewise be seen against this backdrop. The waning of Franco-German resistance to the U.S.-led CSPMP and COIN adaptation but moderate levels of commitment pushed decisionmakers to quickly bring their troops home.

NATO came into Afghanistan within a framework of peace-building operations similar to its experiences in the Western Balkans. However, this framework of thinking was practically feasible only in the northern or western part of Afghanistan, whereas NATO quickly ran into problems when it moved into the south and east. NATO adopted its strategy relatively late by accepting its lead role and a new comprehensive approach only in 2008–2009, when the United States began

to show real leadership for the purpose of the campaign. NATO adapted population-centric COIN in a last attempt to bolster a transition to a legitimate government, despite its previous negative experience of lack of basic democratic progress throughout Afghanistan. NATO only decided on a decrease both in means and goals in the final phase of transition/withdrawal beginning in mid-2011.

In sum, the slow adaptation process perhaps best underlines the argument that policy primarily reflects material and ideational imperatives in and among the Western capitals, rather than operational needs on the ground. Changing national interest calculi over time converged in a stronger NATO democratization effort (i) because national sensitivities could be parried by national caveats, (ii) because allies driven by military weakness turned increasingly cooperative, and (iii) because of constant U.S. pressure for an expanded NATO mandate. Afghanistan represents a clear case of hegemonic bargaining: the inability of allies to check the U.S. global agenda due to the existing power asymmetry and the absence of alternative security constellations. This has made bonding and bandwagoning more likely than soft or hard balancing behavior against the United States. U.S. backing of an operation showing objectively no or little democratic progress was the main determinant in France and Germany (tacitly) acquiescing to U.S. leadership and in the United Kingdom and Poland actively supporting it. CSPMP and COIN were the undoubtedly strongest indications of the power of hegemonic bargaining.

From an economic perspective, the combination of continued state budget deficits and domestic inclination to refocus on the pursuit of wealth has placed NATO in a new material situation, with fewer resources at its disposal for state-building purposes going forward. NATO's response has been the "smart defense" initiative that it launched at the Chicago Summit in May 2012, involving pooling of resources for out-of-area operations. To mention another example of economies of scale, the intensification of French-U.K. military cooperation has allowed both countries, despite a shared destiny of economic and military decline, to remain in the exclusive group of NATO countries with the ability to project and sustain a significant military power beyond Europe. Strategic exploitation of economic austerity can delay or to a certain extent alleviate national cuts' undermining of NATO's ability to respond with credible force. On the other hand, the success of such initiatives certainly requires the ability to find convergence among nation states whose self-consciousness derives from unique historical lessons.

The fact that NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept mentions Afghanistan only once as one of several sources for the need for a comprehensive approach, may be taken as a sign of how difficult it is for a multi-tiered alliance to draw unequivocal strategic lessons from specific events.²⁹⁷ Afghanistan represents the theater of the most important and demanding NATO operation ever. For the "globalists" (the United States and the United Kingdom), Afghanistan has demonstrated that NATO can only make limited contributions to grand strategic designs based on liberal internationalism and that NATO to an even higher degree than previously will have to serve as a coalition platform of the willing and able for possible future operations beyond the Euro-Atlantic

Gordon et al., "NATO and the Challenge of Austerity," pp. 125–126.

Jonathan Lipow and François Melese, "Does NATO have a Role to Play in the Global Financial Crisis?" *European Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (March 2009), p. 57.

²⁹⁷ Damon Coletta and Sten Rynning, "NATO from Kabul to Earth Orbit: Can the Alliance Cope?" *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 2012), p. 30.

area. For the "regionalists" (France and Germany), Afghanistan will be taken as a demonstration that NATO should not set out to stabilize war-torn and culturally diverse countries but refocus on its political role in the formulation of a Euro-Atlantic security architecture. The "Article 5ers" (Poland) are likely to focus on traditional defense planning and thus to de-emphasize politico-military relations in future NATO strategy demarcation processes.²⁹⁸

From a general NATO perspective, the lesson from Afghanistan is that NATO in future operations will be called upon from an early stage to give priority to the role of stabilizer over the role of democratizer. NATO will be better off re-focusing on combat operations and security sector reforms with the purpose of empowering the target state to take care of security itself rather than state-building, including political representation, governance, and welfare beyond the mere provision of security. At the very least, NATO's Afghanistan experience supports the literature arguing that the creation of a coercive state is a prerequisite for any aspiration toward the creation of a democratic state ("institutionalization before liberalization").²⁹⁹ Moreover, Afghanistan has shown that development requires local ownership and that strong cultural structures reject state-building imposed from the outside. Afghanistan has demonstrated the limitations of social engineering, but it seems hard to exclude the possibility that NATO ever again will be called upon to stabilize fragile states and to face theaters where military force will be required to create the space for a political solution.³⁰⁰

NATO's Libya intervention in 2011, initially designed to protect civilians, but which in reality spilled over into de facto regime change, provided clear evidence that NATO will not cease to conduct operations outside the Euro-Atlantic area after 2014. Libya was a different "hands-off" operation than NATO's direct involvement in Afghanistan under the security, development, and governance pillars. On the other hand, Libya was widely interpreted within the context of the Arab Spring and the wish to support a perceived pro-democratic movement on NATO's southern flank. Libya may be taken as a testimony that NATO's level of ambition and its risk appetite will be lower than in Afghanistan as a consequence of declining defense budgets and, possibly, a general out-of-area fatigue across NATO's strategic tiers.

Noetzel and Schreer, "NATO's Future Vietnam," pp. 543–544.

Francis Fukuyama, "'Stateness' First," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (January 2005); and Ronald Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³⁰⁰ Farrell, "Testing Times," p. 123.

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