

1 NATO at War

In Afghanistan and at Home?

I would rather fight a coalition than be part of one.

—Napoleon Bonaparte

There is at least one thing worse than fighting with allies—and that is to fight without them.

—Winston Churchill

In the spring of 2006 a riot took place in Meymana, a city in Faryab Province of northwestern Afghanistan, because of a misunderstanding as to what a non-governmental organization was doing in the region. The Norwegian provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in the area came under attack and called for help from nearby NATO forces. This was the first time that NATO forces were really tested since they had begun to take responsibility for security in Afghanistan beyond Kabul. The test did not go well. The Norwegians were outgunned, and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) command could not send nearby forces to assist because of national caveats on those forces. Essentially, other ISAF forces (the Germans, to name the most significant contingent in this case) were prohibited from leaving their geographic areas of responsibility (AORs). The British, who at the time were moving into southern Helmand Province, eventually sent an emergency relief force to assist the Norwegians, but in the words of one senior U.S. general with direct knowledge, “it was a near thing.”¹

As this example makes clear, war is an inherently dangerous endeavor. At the extreme, war risks the potential survival of the nation. At the least, it translates into soldiers dying on the battlefield with the potential for civilian casualties as well. Domestically, war has the potential to ruin political careers, end the tenure of governments, and risk the political lives of state leaders.² The Dutch government fell in 2010 over whether to continue participating in the NATO effort in Afghanistan. A previous Dutch government had fallen in 2002 after the release of a report documenting Dutch failures in Srebrenica, Bosnia, in 1995. More

¹ Interview with senior U.S. military officer, Brussels, July 2007.

² See Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1995; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005; and Chiozza and Goemans 2004.

recently, NATO alliance governments have faced criticism for their treatment of Afghan detainees. Germany faced domestic and international approbation over the Kunduz bombing incident in September 2009 in which more than a hundred civilians were killed. Simply put, war is inherently risky from international and domestic perspectives.

War may be risky, but fighting as a coalition or as an alliance is harder still. Managing the risks of war is complicated when one's troops are under the command of officers from other countries. A book covering the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) effort in and over Kosovo was appropriately titled *Winning Ugly* (Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000). A similar book covering Afghanistan might be titled *Fighting Ugly* to reflect the coordination difficulties that confront the alliance in South Asia. While we cannot blame NATO's Afghanistan performance entirely on the difficulties of multilateral warfare, given the challenges posed by poppies, Pakistan, and President Hamid Karzai,³ there is no doubt that the complexities of fighting together have hampered the effectiveness of the international effort.

Why is coalition warfare so hard? After all, countries often join military coalitions or an alliance effort because they share common interests. Shared interests, however, do not always equate to agreement as to the best ways to pursue those interests. Too often, individual countries engage in efforts that either distract from or undermine the overall coalition effort. The Americans and Italians disagreed over how to proceed in Somalia in 1993, and the French seemed to confound the Americans in Bosnia in 1998.⁴ It has been repeatedly asserted that French officers may have undermined NATO's pursuit of war criminals in Bosnia, including Radovan Karadzic, by passing word of planned operations to the Serbs. Indeed, American officials were so confident of this and so upset that they publically accused France.⁵ The French government did not deny that French officers passed on such tips to the Serbs, only that it was not the policy of the French government.⁶

These examples illustrate some of the difficulties facing any coalition operation. NATO operations in Afghanistan are no exception. Despite NATO being the most powerful, institutionalized, interoperable, practiced security institution in

3 See, for example, Anderson 2011; Bergen 2011; Blanchard 2009; Brewster 2011; Felbab-Brown 2009; Jones 2009; Qazi 2010; Rashid 2009; Rubin and Rashid 2008; and Rubin, Saikal, and Lindley-French 2009.

4 Alan Cowell, "Italy, in U.N. Rift, Threatens Recall of Somalia Troops," *New York Times*, July 16, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/16/world/italy-in-un-rift-threatens-recall-of-somalia-troops.html>, accessed April 5, 2011.

5 Richard J. Newman, "Hunting War Criminals," *U.S. News and World Report*, June 28, 1998, http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/980706/archive_004280_3.htm, accessed January 7, 2011.

6 Sean M. Maloney, "Radovan Karadzic's Time on the Lam: What Took So Long," *National Post*, July 23, 2008, <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/07/23/sean-m-maloney-on-radovan-karadzic-s-time-on-the-lam-what-took-so-long.aspx>, accessed January 7, 2011. This was also the conventional wisdom within the Balkans Branch of the U.S. Joint Staff's Directorate of Strategic Planning and Policy, as observed by Saideman in 2001–2.

existence today and perhaps ever, NATO decisions are made by consensus norms. Reluctant NATO members can opt out of operations altogether, supply capabilities on a purely voluntary basis, and invoke national caveats that specify restrictions on how individual military contingents are used. The effects on NATO operations are profound. The combination of troop limitations, equipment shortages, and caveats in Afghanistan gave insurgents breathing room and forced the United States to nearly double the number of troops deployed to Afghanistan in 2009 (Lafraie 2009) and then surge even more in 2010. “Gen. John Craddock (head of NATO’s military at the time) . . . says these caveats ‘increase the risk to every service member deployed in Afghanistan and bring increased risk to mission success.’ They also are ‘a detriment to effective command and control, unity of effort and . . . command.’”⁷

Caveats have produced resentment within the alliance. Some countries are seen as withholding their full effort. The Germans, Spanish, and Turks are frequently criticized. Others believe themselves to be bearing a disproportionate burden. For example, U.S. and British forces have exhausted themselves by deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan and have suffered significant casualties from Afghanistan, as table 1.1 indicates. The Canadians, Danes, and Estonians have paid an even steeper price per capita than most other countries. Such disparities have generated persistent discussion of a two-tier NATO, differentiating “warrior states” from “ration-consumers” (Noetzel and Schreer 2009), leading some to fear for the potential demise of the alliance. These arguments put the burden-sharing debate of the 1980s, focused on defense spending, in sharp relief (Duffield 1995; Hartley and Sandler 1999; Murdoch and Sandler 1991; Olson and Zeckhauser 1966; Palmer 1990). More broadly, understanding operational restrictions and differing conceptions of the ISAF mission is important if we want to comprehend the limits and effects of international cooperation during conflicts (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Hawkins 2006).

This book seeks to understand both the specific case of NATO in Afghanistan and the broader dynamics involved whenever countries seek to cooperate in combat. To do that, we first present a series of vignettes in this chapter to illustrate the central puzzles confronting multilateral organizations contemplating military interventions. Countries have a variety of means through which they can tailor their participation in multilateral military efforts, and we uncover which countries choose which mechanisms and why they do so in the following chapters. In the remainder of this chapter we introduce our approach to understanding why countries vary in what they do on the ground during multilateral conflicts. We

7 Arnaud de Borchave, “Commentary: NATO Caveats,” UPI.Com, July 10, 2009, http://www.upi.com/Emerging_Threats/2009/07/10/Commentary-NATO-caveats/UPI-47311247244125/, accessed July 15, 2009.

Table 1.1. Casualties, Absolute and Relative, 2001–9

Country ^a	Killed in Action ^b	Size of Contingent ^c	Population	KIA per Contingent	Rank, KIA/Pop
Australia	11	1200	21,262,641	0.92%	11
Belgium	1	510	10,839,905	0.20%	21
Bulgaria	0	460	7,563,710	0.00%	30
Canada	138	2830	33,487,208	4.88%	3
Croatia	0	290	4,425,747	0.00%	29
Czech Republic	3	340	10,506,813	0.88%	17
Denmark	30	750	5,500,510	4.00%	1
Estonia	7	150	1,340,127	4.67%	2
France	36	3070	64,420,073	1.17%	9
Germany	29	4245	82,329,758	0.68%	14
Greece	0	125	11,305,118	0.00%	28
Hungary	2	310	10,014,324	0.65%	19
Iceland	0	8	317,630	0.00%	27
Italy	20	2795	58,126,212	0.72%	15
Latvia	3	165	2,248,374	1.82%	7
Lithuania	1	250	3,329,039	0.40%	16
Luxembourg	0	8	502,066	0.00%	26
Netherlands	21	2160	16,715,999	0.97%	8
New Zealand	0	220	4,213,418	0.00%	25
Norway	9	600	4,660,539	1.50%	6
Poland	16	2025	38,482,919	0.79%	13
Portugal	2	105	10,637,713	1.90%	20
Romania	11	990	22,215,421	1.11%	12
Slovakia	0	240	5,424,925	0.00%	24
Slovenia	0	80	2,046,976	0.00%	23
Spain	22	1000	40,525,002	2.20%	10
Sweden	2	430	9,059,651	0.47%	18
Turkey	2	820	76,805,524	0.24%	22
United Kingdom	245	9000	61,113,205	2.72%	4
United States	947	31855	307,212,123	2.97%	5
Average	52	2234	30,887,756	1.20%	

Note: Entries in shaded rows indicate top five countries in terms of costs paid per contingent, per population.

^a This includes all NATO countries plus three key non-NATO contributors—Australia, New Zealand, and Sweden.

^b The figures here are through the end of 2009. To be clear, many countries have paid a very high price since then.

^c Size of contingent comes from the December 2009 NATO placemat for ISAF, http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat_archive/isaf_placemat_091001.pdf, accessed November 29, 2011. As we learned in our interviews at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in February 2010, the numbers NATO reports are inexact at best. See chapter 2 for a discussion.

then consider several alternative accounts, demonstrating that none explains well NATO member behavior in Afghanistan and why a new approach is required. Finally, we preview the implications of this study, explain its scope, and conclude by outlining the rest of the book.

The Challenges of National Control in Coalitional War

To demonstrate some of the distinct and recurring problems inherent in multilateral warfare, we present a series of examples that illustrate how countries have controlled their forces in multilateral operations. National control of military forces in multilateral combat is not a new problem, and it is not unique to NATO in Afghanistan. We group these tasks into four categories: limits on what troops do, oversight of deployed forces, incentives to encourage correct behavior, and selecting appropriate commanders.

LIMITS ON DEPLOYED TROOPS

A Pop Star Prevents World War III with a Red Card

One key to multilateral military success is knowing that various national contingents in an operation will do their part as ordered. Yet national contingents frequently, if episodically, opt out of multilateral missions. In NATO parlance, national commanders have a metaphorical red card that they can play when they feel they cannot obey an order from their multinational commander.⁸ Red cards exist because each national contingent is still essentially beholden to its country, even in a multilateral effort. National commanders often prioritize their country's individual interests over those of the multilateral coalition of which they are a member. For instance, commanders can choose not to obey orders coming down the multinational chain of command if the local commander views the orders as being illegal, contrary to his or her country's national interests, or excessively reckless.

At the end of the Kosovo air campaign on June 12, 1999, a crisis developed over Russian control of Pristina International Airport in Kosovo. A Russian unit that had been part of the international effort in Bosnia moved to control the airport in an attempt to present NATO with a *fait accompli*. Whatever motivated the Russians, their actions upset NATO plans for setting up its stabilization effort. In the words of U.S. General Wesley Clark, the supreme allied commander for Europe (SACEUR), "The danger was that if the Russians got in first, they would

⁸ The "red card" analogy comes from soccer. To be clear, this is a term used widely among NATO countries and beyond.

claim their sector, and then we would have lost NATO control over the mission.”⁹ Clark ordered the lead British troops to block the runways at the airport and thus prevent the Russians from reinforcing their unit.

The commander of the leading British unit, James Blunt (now a famous pop singer), questioned the order as being far outside the expected mission.¹⁰ British general Sir Mike Jackson backed up Blunt and told Clark, “I’m not going to start the Third World War for you.”¹¹ Jackson played the red card, telling Clark, “Sir, I’m a three-star general; you can’t give me orders like this. . . . I have my judgment” (Clark 2001: 394). Clark understood that “Jackson remained under his national command authority, even though he was serving under me” (Clark 2001: 398). Clark tried to go over Jackson’s head to Charles Guthrie, the British chief of defense, to no avail.

This example suggests that contingents can opt out of particular operations in multilateral efforts. In most cases, the most senior member of a nation’s contingent is the red card holder, empowered to veto orders from the multilateral chain of command.¹² Clark (2001) reports in his memoir that “red-carding” is a normal practice in multilateral operations. “It was well understood *that nations always retained ultimate authority over their forces and had the right to override orders at any time, if they chose to do so*” (399; emphasis added). When do officers play the red card, and why? As we will see in the pages that follow, red-carding is just one method by which national contingents and concerns often trump multilateral imperatives in coalition military operations.

Caveat Emptor and Coalitions of the (Un)Willing

The red card situation described above addresses situations that are unanticipated. *Caveats* are restrictions placed upon a contingent anticipating what they will be asked to do and setting rules for those circumstances. The most obvious restriction is geographic: where a unit can serve. Countries can limit not only where a contingent is based but whether and under what conditions it can move outside of its sector to help allies elsewhere. Caveats may also limit the use of force. Some contingents can only engage in defensive operations. Some contingents are

⁹ See Clark 2001: chap. 15.

¹⁰ BBC News, “Singer James Blunt ‘Prevented World War III,’” November 14, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11753050>, accessed January 4, 2011.

¹¹ BBC News, “Confrontation over Pristina Airport.” Clark reports this conversation in his book as well, suggesting that the “frank argument” was due to “fatigue and frustration” (2001: 394–95).

¹² Pilots usually have this authority, as they must make decisions about whether bombing particular targets falls within their country’s rules given possible changing ground circumstances. For example, during the 2011 Libya operation, British planes aborted bombing missions due to the presence of civilians in the area. See BBC News, “RAF Tornados Abort Mission in Libya,” March 21, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12803217>, accessed March 21, 2011.

restricted from operating at night or in the snow.¹³ Some contingents are not allowed to operate with certain other participants in the mission. Some caveats restrict the size of units to be deployed so that a battalion or a brigade cannot be dispersed in smaller units to engage in counterinsurgency efforts.¹⁴

Caveats are perhaps the most prominent means by which countries control their militaries in multilateral operations. They have, as has been documented elsewhere, been a critical point of tension among the countries participating in the mission in Afghanistan.¹⁵ But caveats are not unique to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. In the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the United States was surprised to find that many of the countries contributing forces to the Operation Iraqi Freedom coalition of the willing significantly constrained what their troops were allowed to do. As Thomas E. Ricks notes, “The Japanese weren’t allowed to secure their own perimeter and had to rely on the Dutch to do it. Nor did their rules allow them to come to the aid of others under attack. The Thai battalion’s rules didn’t even allow them to leave their camp . . .” (2006: 346).¹⁶

Caveats are not just found in ad hoc coalitions of the willing, but also when an institutionalized alliance goes to war, as observers of NATO know well. In Bosnia, the Canadians stayed within their sector even though they had certain unique capabilities in their Coyote reconnaissance vehicles that could have been useful to other parts of the NATO Stabilization Force.¹⁷

National Capabilities as a Key Constraint

Rather than *telling* a military officer what he or she can or cannot do, the people at the top of the chain of command can limit what their contingent can *actually* do by deploying only limited capabilities. Helicopter shortages have been a recurring theme in Afghanistan, but this is not the first place that countries have chosen to deploy less than they could and by doing so critically constrain what their national contingent can accomplish in a multilateral effort.

During NATO’s spring 1999 intervention in Kosovo, for example, the Americans refused to use Apache helicopters, the weapon that NATO commanders believed would be most useful against Serb ground forces. The administration

13 In interviews with military officers, this was repeated frequently with regard to Afghanistan but with no one country mentioned. A Canadian member of parliament’s personal observation during a trip through Afghanistan revealed that the Germans—at least for some stretch of time—did not appear, as a rule, to operate at night. Claude Bachand, interview, Ottawa, March 27, 2007.

14 One could distinguish between legal and technical caveats or between geographic and operational ones, as Tronnes (2012) does. In the chapters that follow, we discuss a variety of restrictions and focus less on typologies.

15 For a few examples, see Jones 2009; Lafraie 2009; and Medcalf 2008.

16 See also Woodward 2006: 292.

17 Interview with Major General Tim Grant, Ottawa, February 7, 2008. Grant served as a commander of the Canadian contingent in Bosnia.

of President Bill Clinton did not want to start a ground war over Kosovo, and from the beginning of the conflict ruled out the use of ground troops. In a March 24, 1999, televised address, Clinton represented a near consensus in Washington when he said, "I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to start a war."¹⁸ So while senior officials allowed for the deployment of Task Force Hawk to Albania, the administration was not about to authorize using the task force's Apache helicopters in combat (Clark 2001: 224, 227, 230–33). The administration insisted that the helicopter crews undergo a rigorous training regime in Albania. They further constrained the Apaches by delaying the deployment of supporting units, including the ground spotters necessary for effective operations. The administration maintained these requirements and impediments until early June, ensuring that the task force was never authorized to operate within Kosovo or Serbia.

Phoning Home during a Bosnian Counterterrorism Mission

The use of red cards or obeying caveats are most likely when a deployed commander believes what is being asked of him by the multinational coalition exceeds his authority or violates common sense, in the former case, or violates his rules of engagement in the latter case. Situations will arise, however, in which the commander will seek advice before acting. A commander's first call is often to his national command authority rather than to his multilateral superiors. In an age of instantaneous telecommunications, we might think that such a phone call home is a relatively trivial exercise. However, as the following tale suggests, calling home is more complicated than it might seem and can seriously hamper multilateral interventions.

In October–November 2001, the Bosnian government arrested six Algerians who had allegedly been planning terrorist activities against American and NATO targets.¹⁹ In January 2002, the government was compelled to release them due to problems with both the evidence (the United States was not releasing the intelligence used to identify these individuals) and Bosnia's laws on conspiracy to commit terrorist acts. American commanders in Bosnia and in Europe needed guidance about how to respond to this event, so they called Washington, D.C., to get approval to send American troops from their base in Tuzla to pick up the six

¹⁸ Similar statements by the president and other senior administration officials over the next week are reprinted in Auerswald and Auerswald 2000: 755, 781, and 790.

¹⁹ This story was covered by local and international media after the fact. See "Bosna u borbi protiv terorizma: Deportacija uprkos zakonima" [Bosnia in the Fight against Terrorism: Deportation Despite Laws], *Dani*, January 25, 2002, <http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/241/t24112.shtml>, accessed December 16, 2010; Helen Gibson, "The Algerian Connection," *Time*, February 4, 2002, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,198990,00.html>, accessed December 16, 2010; and Craig Whitlock, "At Guantanamo, Caught in a Legal Trap: 6 Algerians Languish Despite Foreign Rulings, Dropped Charges," *Washington Post*, August 21, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/20/AR2006082000660_pf.html, accessed December 16th, 2010.

individuals in Sarajevo and fly them to Guantanamo Bay. Instead of getting a simple yes or no, these commanders had to wait a couple of days for the interagency process to play out.²⁰ The delays were significant, and they allowed protesters to organize outside the Bosnian prison. This risked turning a potentially quick handover into a possible riot. Ultimately, officials in Washington sent guidance to U.S. forces in Bosnia to pick up the six Algerians and put them on a plane headed to Guantanamo.

The need to get authority from home delayed resolution for a couple of days, which could have had significant political consequences. On the battlefield, as we will see in chapter 4 when discussing the French in Afghanistan, a delay in authorization of only twenty-four hours can be quite significant indeed. For some countries such as the Netherlands, as will be discussed in chapter 6, the phone serves as the primary means of influencing how troops are used.

THE OVERSIGHT OF DEPLOYED UNITS

Caveats, red cards, and requirements to call home will have their greatest impact if the people on the ground know that they will be caught if they do not follow the rules. Oversight, thus, is a critical part of any delegation process. The intent of those delegating power to subordinates will matter most when the people farther down the chain of command understand that their actions will be monitored. Absent oversight, there is every reason for far-flung commanders to implement policy in ways that they, rather than their superiors back home, believe is best. Oversight is particularly important when deployed commanders and superiors back home have different priorities, beliefs, or pressures facing them.

Belgian colonel Roger Housen's experience illustrates the problem facing many home governments. Colonel Housen commanded the Belgian contingent to ISAF from October 2003 to March 2004. His unit's primary responsibility was to secure Kabul International Airport in conjunction with German forces. He also worked in the ISAF Joint Operations Center, with responsibility for collecting heavy weapons from various subnational Afghan factions. This latter task required that he travel to the dangerous Panjshir Valley north of Kabul. Yet Belgian caveats prevented him from using Belgian troops outside ISAF headquarters or the Kabul airport, and no other coalition partner would provide security forces in the Panjshir Valley. When the Belgian defense minister refused to grant Housen's

²⁰ As observed by Steve Saideman from his desk on the U.S. Joint Staff. The key stumbling blocks in this case were the desire of the lawyer representing the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to make recommendations that were beyond his or her responsibility (the lawyer's job was to rule on the legality of the decision, nothing more) and the unwillingness of the people working in the OSD to bother Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld after 7:00 p.m.

request for an exception to that caveat, Housen went ahead and used his Belgian troops anyway, in large part because Belgian authorities had no oversight procedures with which to monitor his behavior and would not know what he did unless someone died during the mission.²¹ In the case studies discussed in subsequent chapters, we find that countries vary in how attentive they are to what their troops are actually doing. Some invest significant time engaging in oversight while others do not.

INCENTIVES FOR CORRECT BEHAVIOR

Just as caveats and other restrictions only matter if the deployed actors are monitored, oversight works best when those who exceed their authority or break the rules are punished and those who behave appropriately are rewarded. Sanctions for incorrect behavior are both a punishment and a deterrent in that sanctions not only hurt violators but send a clear signal to everyone else. Rewards are a positive incentive for the opposite behavior. The Canadian reaction to the 1993 beating death of a detainee in Somalia serves as clear contrast to the American response to the revelations about Abu Ghraib in 2004. The former sent a clear signal to the Canadian military, while the latter sent ambiguous signals to U.S. forces.

In 1993, Canada was a participant in the United Nations mission in Somalia, and the Canadian Airborne Regiment found itself dealing with Somalis trying to steal supplies. On March 16, members of the regiment captured Shidane Abukar Arone and beat him to death. Once the news got out, it became a significant controversy back in Canada. Not only were a group of soldiers court martialed, but consecutive chiefs of defense staff (John de Chastelain and Jean Boyle) were compelled to resign. The Airborne Regiment was disbanded. The official inquiry into the incident came to very blunt conclusions. According to the official inquiry report, “Somalia represents the nadir of the fortunes of the Canadian Forces. There seems to be little room to slide lower.”²² This incident is tied to a “decade of darkness” during which the Canadian Forces absorbed severe budget cuts and a sharp decline in morale and public confidence.²³ It also meant that years later the Canadian media, politicians, and military paid a great deal of attention to how detainees were treated by the Canadians and the Afghan authorities in Kandahar.

This reaction is quite distinct from the American response to the revelations about Abu Ghraib, when it was found that American soldiers had abused Iraqis at

21 Interview with Belgian Army Colonel Roger Housen, Brussels, July 12, 2007.

22 Somalia Commission of Inquiry, “Executive Summary,” *Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry*, <http://www.dnd.ca/somalia/vol0/v0s1e.htm>, accessed April 5, 2011. See also Bercuson 1996; Dawson 2007.

23 Hillier 2010: chap. 7 provides a good internal perspective of the bottoming out of the Canadian forces.

the site of one of Saddam Hussein's prisons.²⁴ Reservists from the 320th Military Police Battalion engaged in torture, taking pictures that eventually appeared in the *New Yorker* and on *60 Minutes* and other news programs.²⁵ As in Canada, the lowest-level soldiers involved faced courts martial. However, except for a reprimand and demotion for the facility's commanding officer, Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, no high-level U.S. officials faced any sanctions. The secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the theater commander, and the ground commander received no punishments at all.²⁶

The comparison illustrates that accountability varies across countries and conflicts. It should be no surprise, then, if senior officers in different militaries vary in how they respond to restrictions and oversight. Where officers know that they will be held accountable, they are more likely to stay within their lanes. Deployed officers are free to act as they want in the absence of accountability.

SELECTING MILITARY COMMANDERS

When all else fails, you can fire your commander. Replacing a high-level officer in the middle of a war is always controversial, but it may become the best way to change what the military is doing on the ground. The most famous case is perhaps President Harry S. Truman's firing of General Douglas MacArthur. This is not only a case of a leader sacking an insubordinate general, but also one of removing one's senior military representative in a multilateral effort.

At the time, General MacArthur headed not just the American effort but that of the United Nations force involved in ejecting North Korean forces from South Korea. Always a difficult person, MacArthur repeatedly undermined President Truman, first in the press and then by writing to Republican leaders of Congress to criticize the president's limited strategy in Korea (Pearlman 2008). Truman dismissed MacArthur, provoking a significant controversy at home in which Republicans repeatedly criticized the president in the media. It even provoked a Senate investigation (McCowan 1987). While Truman prevailed and was able to replace MacArthur with Matthew Ridgway, a general more suited to the task, Truman paid a significant political price at home for the incident.

While controversial, this case still stands as an object lesson that civilian officials will usually consider other means to control their troops, as firing commanders

24 There is significant literature on this event. For a start, see Gourevitch and Morris 2009; Strasser 2004; and U.S. Department of Defense 2005.

25 Seymour M. Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," *New Yorker*, May 10, 2004, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/10/040510fa_fact?currentPage=1, accessed April 5, 2011.

26 Lt. General Ricardo Sanchez claims that Abu Ghraib cost him a fourth star in his memoir (Sanchez and Phillips 2008), but this is doubtful given that Sanchez was widely viewed as performing quite poorly overall.

is likely to require a significant payment in political capital. Still, in any democracy with civilian control over the military, commanders who do not follow the intent of their civilian overseers can be removed. As we will see in chapter 4, U.S. secretaries of defense have frequently used this tactic to change military behavior.

Why Study National Control in Multilateral Interventions?

These vignettes illustrate many of the challenges facing the overall commander of a multilateral operation. In most such operations, there is a competition for control between individual states and the multilateral chain of command. Individual countries sign onto multilateral interventions, yet they have a variety of means to influence how their contingents operate within an alliance or coalition effort. The real puzzle is not that NATO commanders (or those of any coalition, alliance, or multinational organization) do not have complete control over the forces assigned to them; it would be surprising if they did. Rather, the crucial question is why there is significant variation in control mechanisms used by countries involved in multilateral interventions and by some countries over time. Why do some countries use particular mechanisms to influence their contingents while other countries rely upon other means? Why do some countries employ caveats while others focus on incentives and sanctions to make promises to or threaten their senior military representatives? Why do some countries more intensively constrain what their contingents do while other nations give their ground commanders more latitude to follow the multilateral chain of command?

The goal of this book is to demonstrate the existence and explicate the sources of such variations. Explaining why some allies are willing to fight and sacrifice while others are not is not a trivial exercise of interest only to scholars closeted in ivory towers. It is certainly not trivial for the outcome of NATO's mission in Afghanistan. Nor was it trivial to the conduct of NATO's 2011 intervention in Libya or in earlier NATO interventions in the Balkans. Differences in the willingness of NATO allies to fight to their fullest extent possible may fracture the alliance as the peacetime burden-sharing debates of the past become much more severe, with blood, the fate of nations, and votes at home in the balance. If recent debates are any guide, burden bearers in Afghanistan will be less enthusiastic about contributing to future missions. Those criticized for doing too little will not want to find themselves in a similar situation. And the United States could easily find itself back where it was after Kosovo: highly frustrated by NATO.

Each partner in an alliance or coalition effort will exert influence over how its military contingents are used. No country willingly surrenders this crucial element of sovereignty. Neither NATO nor any other institution can eliminate these

challenges of multilateral warfare. Developing a new *strategic concept*, streamlining command structures so that they look less like spaghetti, approving language to drop caveats in extremis, and hectoring allies will not eliminate caveats, red cards, and the like or give alliance commanders appreciably greater control over individual national contingents deployed under the alliance banner.

Any country interested in acting militarily alongside others will need to be aware of the domestic challenges of multilateral war. Crises and conflicts will continue to emerge in the world, and countries will align together to face them. And they will squabble with each other over how to proceed. The quotes at the start of the chapter indicate that Napoleon and Churchill knew whereof they spoke: fighting alongside other countries is challenging. Napoleon refused to accept those challenges. Churchill, unlike Napoleon, understood that there is often no other choice. For those whose thinking is more akin to that of Churchill's, this book provides some clues about where countries will tend to line up and which mechanisms they will use when operating in multilateral interventions.

Explaining Variation in National Control

Our argument in this book starts with the observation that explaining ISAF behavior requires a focus on individual ISAF participants and not just a review of what occurs at NATO headquarters. There is simply too much systematic variation in the behavior of ISAF contingents to suggest that the NATO alliance is determining the behavior of its members. Instead, we argue that NATO's procedures allow each member's political processes to shape what it contributes and what its troops do. To gain consensus, the alliance as an institution provides members with the ability to opt out of individual operations and even entire categories of missions. To do otherwise—for example, to require participation in all operations—would lead countries to vote against most, if not all, alliance missions. Getting less enthusiastic alliance members to assent to new missions requires allowing countries to play the red card. Indeed, NATO's procedure for gathering troops to deploy on a mission—the force generation procedure we explain in the next chapter—is entirely voluntary. To get enough contributions, NATO has to offer countries exit options.

The question then becomes why countries vary so much in their behavior both over time and within the alliance. We invoke principal-agent theory to highlight the importance of national decisions and to explain variation in behavior across nations. In terms of the former, we argue in chapter 2 that NATO's structure and processes establish what we call a hybrid principal-agent relationship between the multiple entities delegating authority to deployed military units and those military units themselves. The alliance's structure and processes gives an advantage to

the authority of individual contributing states when compared to the alliance as a whole. Members are able to exert more control over their militaries than can the collective alliance.

At the same time, we use lessons from principal-agent theory to understand which types of behavior are most important when we consider control over and direction of deployed military units. Principal-agent theory addresses problems of delegation: how do civilians back home make sure that the authority they give to military commanders in the field will be used as desired? Commanders on the ground will have more information about the conflict situation and their own actions in that conflict. They can potentially take action that their superiors would not approve of and might not have the tools to correct. The stakes are high and the potential power of those commanders is great; after all, the tactical actions of military units in modern war potentially have strategic effects, including the failure of the mission. Principal-agent theory thus tells us what sort of challenges to look for when examining the decisions of individual alliance members.

Though principal-agent theory can tell us what to look for, it is not particularly useful for explaining broad variations in the behavior of different alliance members. For that we turn to theories of domestic institutions in chapter 3. We differentiate between government institutions that decide on questions of war or peace via collective decision making or individual decision makers. Parliamentary coalitions engage in collective decision making. Coalition governments will not be able to respond to international pressures if it means that their governments will collapse. Minority governments face similar pressures, at least if it is relatively easy to replace them with new parliamentary governments. Presidents and prime ministers in single-party governments more often reflect the decisions of individual decision makers. Presidents and parliaments led by single-party majority governments have more domestic leeway to follow the alliance's guidance, but there is no guarantee that they will do so if it does not serve their interests.

Each type of government demonstrates specific behavioral patterns during NATO interventions. For instance, countries governed by parliamentary coalitions tend to place more restrictions upon their deployments in terms of caveats, requirements for phone calls, and limited capabilities than do either presidents or prime ministers leading single-party governments. This trend, we argue, is largely because of internal bargaining within the parliamentary coalition. The less enthusiastic members of a coalition government will demand conditions be placed upon the deployment, and the more enthusiastic coalition partners will have to relent if they want the mission to take place. In general, we find that parties to the left will be less enthusiastic about military interventions than those on the right side of the political spectrum. In government systems with single key decision makers, much will depend on that person's attitude toward risk. Some presidents

and prime ministers (and those to whom they delegate) will be more focused on the behavior of their deployed troops, minimizing the risks of the operation either in terms of the danger faced by their contingents or the strategic implications of their military's behavior. Others will focus more on outcomes, such as achieving mission success, even if that is a risky proposition. We find that the former category of individual will impose more restrictions on troops than will the latter.

Alternative Accounts: Threats, Public Opinion, and Strategic Culture

Surprisingly, few works develop a systematic understanding of why countries manage their roles in multilateral military efforts as they do.²⁷ Nora Bensahel (1999) develops the trade-off between political cohesion and military efficiency within a coalition, but is more focused on comparing different alliances than understanding variations within a single multilateral effort. Sarah Kreps (2011) and Patricia A. Weitsman (2013) address how coalitions and alliances differ and why the United States chooses various forms of cooperation from unilateralism to multilateral institutions, but they are less concerned with variation among members in coalitions and alliances. There has been a great deal of study about how civil-military relations influences military doctrine and grand strategy,²⁸ some comparative work that largely omits actual operations (Brooks 2008; Brooks and Stanley 2007; Diamond and Plattner 1996), and a great deal of work on NATO burden-sharing.²⁹ Work on alliance politics tends to focus on the creation of alliances and their duration rather than their operation during wartime,³⁰ and how alliances affect decisions to go to war (Pressman 2008; Snyder 2007).

We can distill from the various works in this area at least three alternative arguments that might help explain the patterns we observe within alliances. Specifically, we focus on the implications of realism, the potential constraints of public opinion, and the impact of strategic culture. Each approach is intuitively plausible and based on theories with long traditions in security studies. However, each fails to capture the significant variation either across nations associated with ISAF operations or within individual nations as the mission unfolded over time.

27 Bensahel (2003, 2006) and Weitsman (2004) address key dimensions of multilateral warfare but do not systematically address the varying patterns of the participants' means for controlling their forces within coalitions.

28 For the classics in the field, see Mearsheimer 1983; Posen 1984; and Snyder 1984.

29 See Hartley and Sandler 1999; Leggold 1998; Olson and Zeckhauser 1966; Oneal and Elrod 1989; Palmer 1990; Sandler and Forbes 1980; and Shimizu and Sandler 2002.

30 See Altfeld 1984; Bennett 1997; Gartzke and Gleditsch 2004; Leeds 2003; Leeds and Savun 2007; and Thies 2009. Bensahel (1999) makes the same point but at greater length—that alliance scholarship essentially never reaches the battlefield.

REALISM: WARS OF CHOICE AND REDUCED COMMITMENTS

One could argue that Afghanistan was a war of necessity for some while for others it was a war of choice.³¹ That is, for many participants, they were there to fulfill an alliance obligation but do no more, while others were motivated to do more by the threat posed by terrorism emanating from Afghanistan (and Pakistan). This builds on one of the classic approaches to understanding international relations: realism. A dominant theme in later realist writing asserts that countries respond to threats and little else (Walt 1987; Waltz 1979). Countries facing a greater threat are more likely to balance against that threat by forging alliances, arming themselves, or both. In terms of conflict behavior, a natural extension of balance-of-threat theory is that countries facing threats will allow their military to do what is necessary for success.³² Other countries that face less of a threat may still choose to participate in a conflict to please an ally or to respect treaty obligations, but will be more likely to restrict their forces from doing anything that endangers those troops or risks drawing the state deeper into the conflict.

The question then is which countries were most threatened by Afghanistan and/or terrorist threats that emanate from that part of the world and, thus, would respond most assertively and with the least restrictions on their troops. Logically, it would be those countries that have been hit hard by terrorists tied to groups formerly based in Afghanistan—al-Qaeda, to be specific.

Table 1.2 illustrates that a country's experience with terrorism is not at all correlated with its behavior in Afghanistan. Spain and Turkey have faced significant violence from terrorists tied to al-Qaeda, yet they continued to limit what their troops could do on the ground. Indeed, as later chapters will show, countries did change how they managed their ISAF contingents in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. Moreover, we see significant variation among those countries that have not paid a high price for al-Qaeda-related terrorism. In short, the notion of threat or national interest in the war in Afghanistan does not help us to understand why countries vary so much in how they approached this war.³³

31 See Brzezinski 2009; and Haass 2009, 2010.

32 Some realists, including Posen (1984), assert that civilians intervene more in military affairs when relative threat is high, as the civilians are better equipped to discern what is necessary to adapt to than military officers who are motivated by bureaucratic politics.

33 If one considers the size of one's Muslim population as an indicator of vulnerability to terrorism emanating out of Pakistan (which is a bit of a stretch), there is no correlation between that and the level of restrictions on the troops, although the case of Turkey may be instructive. We tested this using data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population," October 2009, <http://pewforum.org/newassets/images/reports/Muslimpopulation/Muslimpopulation.pdf>, accessed January 21, 2010.

Table 1.2. Terrorism and Caveats

Country ^a	Fatalities caused by AfPak-based terrorists, 2001–9 ^b	Caveats ^c
Australia	0 ^d	Medium
Belgium	0	Tight
Canada	0	Medium, then Loose
Denmark	0	Loose
France	0 ^e	Medium, then Loose
Germany	0	Tight
Italy	0 ^f	Tight
Netherlands	0	Medium
Norway	0	Medium
Poland	0	Loose
Romania	0	Medium
Spain	3/11/04: 191	Tight
Sweden	0	Medium
Turkey	11/15/03: 25 11/20/03: 28	Tight
United Kingdom	7/7/05: 56	Loose
United States	9/11/01: 3,000	Loose

^a This table and the following include only those countries providing 500 troops or more in 2009.

^b Center for American Progress, http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/09/alqaeda_map.html, accessed January 21, 2010. Double-checked with the Global Terrorism Database, <http://www.start.umd.edu/>, accessed January 21, 2010.

^c While caveats can range quite widely, we focus largely on two for the purposes of coding them here: whether troops could operate in the more dangerous southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan and whether the contingent could engage in offensive operations.

^d Australia has not been hit directly, but the Bali bombing of October 12, 2002 did kill nearly ninety Australian tourists. In addition, a September 2004 car bomb exploded near the Australian embassy in Jakarta.

^e This does not include terrorist acts committed by Basque or Corsican separatists.

^f A Moroccan blew himself up in Italy on March 28, 2004, but it is not clear what his ties were. Global Terrorism Database.

Of course, one could argue that terrorism thus far, even for those that have been hit relatively hard, is just not an existential threat (Mueller 2006, 2009; Mueller and Stewart 2010). Accordingly, countries could restrict their troops (or not) as they saw fit in Afghanistan and conflicts like it because the stakes were actually quite low. Failure in Afghanistan would not lead to the conquest of any country, so even the most interested of countries, such as the United States, could risk doing less than their fullest efforts without posing an existential threat to their homeland. If Afghanistan was so important, say critics, the United States would not have been so quick to put far greater effort into a second war in Iraq. For such critics, our focus on domestic institutions and politics might account for

Afghanistan and situations like it, but not for the big wars and existential threats of the past and future. Balancing against threats should matter more in those circumstances.

There are at least two responses to such a criticism. First, if our approach only applies to multilateral interventions since the end of the Cold War, then our book still has broad applicability and extended relevance, as such interventions continue to take place in Libya, Congo, and Darfur, among other places. Most uses of force since the end of—and even during—the Cold War were in multilateral contexts short of existential conflicts. NATO engaged in three conflicts before Afghanistan (Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia) and one since (Libya), along with continuing antipiracy efforts. The United Nations has engaged in over thirty armed interventions since 1990. The European Union and the African Union have recently engaged in military efforts. Iraq is not the only case of an ad hoc coalition military effort. So, even if our argument only applies to conflicts with limited stakes, this is not a rare phenomenon and is one of significance for both academics and policy makers.

Second, when existential threats do arise, allies may differ as to how best to react to them. Countries in the most dire of conflicts may disagree about how to deploy their troops, causing one or more to invoke red cards and other national means of controlling their contingents. During World War II, for example, Japan posed a very significant threat to Australia. Winston Churchill wanted to redeploy the Australian divisions that had been fighting in the Middle East to the Dutch East Indies in early 1942 and gave orders to that effect without seeking permission from Australia. Australia's prime minister John Curtin vehemently disagreed since he wanted the two divisions to protect his country from the approaching Japanese. After heated arguments, Curtin had his way.³⁴ So, even in the most destructive conflict in recent human history, one ally asserted national control despite the wishes of other allies.

The Soviet existential threat during the Cold War also produced its share of alliance friction. For example, there was extensive debate in the 1980s about how best to defend western Europe, and specifically West Germany, from a Soviet invasion (Mearsheimer 1983). NATO planning had to deal with two key conflicting imperatives driven by West German interests and domestic politics. For Germans, defense started at the border of West and East Germany. For the West Germans it was not politically possible to have a serious defense-in-depth strategy through which NATO forces would allow the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries to cross the border easily but then face NATO forces where the alliance chose.

³⁴ The story of Curtin confronting Churchill is still highlighted in Australia's War Museum, as well as the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library; see <http://john.curtin.edu.au/manofpeace/crisis.html>, accessed November 29, 2011.

West Germany would not surrender territory to buy the alliance time since that territory was inhabited by West Germans. At the same time, NATO could not build significant defensive structures at the inter-German frontier. Obstacles such as walls, fences, minefields, trenches, and the like would not only be reminiscent of the Berlin Wall but also make quite real and lasting the division of Germany.³⁵ While there may have been a military logic to forward defense (Mearsheimer 1981), it made little sense if NATO would not build significant defenses at the border. The contrast between the inter-German border during the Cold War and that between North and South Korea is quite instructive as West German domestic politics played a heavy role in what NATO could and could not do.

The point here is simply that domestic political imperatives will cause some alliance partners to impose restrictions on their forces, influencing alliance strategy and effectiveness even when the threat is actually quite high. To sum up, then: realism cannot account for the cross-national variation in how countries operated in Afghanistan. Realists would argue that the ISAF experience has limited generalizability because it is no longer a war of necessity. We would respond that such has been the case with nearly all of the major military activities countries have engaged in for the past twenty years. We would also point out that realists are not even right about that, given the frictions among allies even in the gravest of circumstances. Consequently, we believe that one need look beyond realism to understand why countries vary in how they operate in the midst of a multilateral effort.

PUBLIC OPINION AND HALF-HEARTED EFFORTS

It may be the case that countries are more likely to impose restrictions upon a mission if it is unpopular at home. Politicians seeking to maintain their positions may be less willing to pay the domestic costs of a distant and unpopular mission (Aldrich et al. 2006; Chan and Safran 2006; Holsti 2004). Instead, politicians may impose restrictions on their troops to keep deployments off the domestic radar. Limits on where troops can operate, restrictions on offensive operations, requirements to call home for permission, intensive oversight, and harsh penalties for commanders' less successful decisions can mitigate the political risks of an unpopular military effort because these strictures reduce the probability of casualties or military atrocities. Some of the countries widely reputed to have the most significant restrictions—Germany, to be specific—were precisely those where public support seemed to be the lowest.

³⁵ For typical articles that mostly assumed that there would be no barrier building due to West German objections, see Cross 1985.

Table 1.3. Public Opinion and Caveats

Country	Public Opinion ^a	Caveats	Country	Public Opinion	Caveats
Turkey	18%	Tight	Canada	41%	Reduced
Poland	21%	Loose	Sweden	43%	Medium
Spain	32%	Tight	Australia	47%	Medium
United Kingdom	35%	Loose	Netherlands	48%	Medium
France	37%	Reduced	Denmark	48% ^b	Loose
Italy	37% ^c	Tight	Norway	49%	Medium
Germany	38%	Tight	United States	57%	Loose

^a Mean public support from August 2006 to December 2008, from Kreps 2010, unless otherwise noted. Belgium and Romania are omitted here, as we could not find comparable surveys.

^b Angus Reid Public Opinion, “Danish Split on Ending Afghanistan Mission,” February 27, 2009, http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/danish_split_on_ending_afghanistan_mission/, accessed January 18, 2010.

^c The Italian number is based on a poll asking whether one supports a withdrawal (gradual or immediate) or opposes a withdrawal—the number here is the percentage opposing a withdrawal, which we take to mean support of the mission. Angus Reid Public Opinion, “Italians Want Troops out of Afghanistan,” August 3, 2009, <http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/33924>, accessed January 18, 2010.

The problem is that public support does not covary with caveats and other mechanisms used to manage risky troop deployments.³⁶ Table 1.3 lists major coalition contributors, ranked by levels of public support for the ISAF operation, from least to most supportive. The data show that hostile publics are a poor predictor of their countries’ policy decisions. Both Turkey and Poland had very unhappy publics, but their behavior on the ground varied tremendously. Polish troops were sent to some of the more dangerous parts of Afghanistan with few restrictions. Turkish troops faced significant geographic restrictions on their movements and could not engage in offensive operations. The ISAF mission had slightly less public support on average in Great Britain than in Germany, yet British troops were far less restricted than were their German counterparts. It would appear that general patterns of public opinion tell us very little about how countries manage their troops.

If there is a pattern, it is one of increased delegation to battlefield commanders as the ISAF mission lost popularity. France changed how it operated in Afghanistan quite significantly in 2007 (see chapter 4 for details), deploying troops into harm’s way at a time when the mission was declining in public support. Canada

³⁶ Kreps (2010) finds that public opinion does not correlate with ISAF troop levels deployed to Afghanistan either.

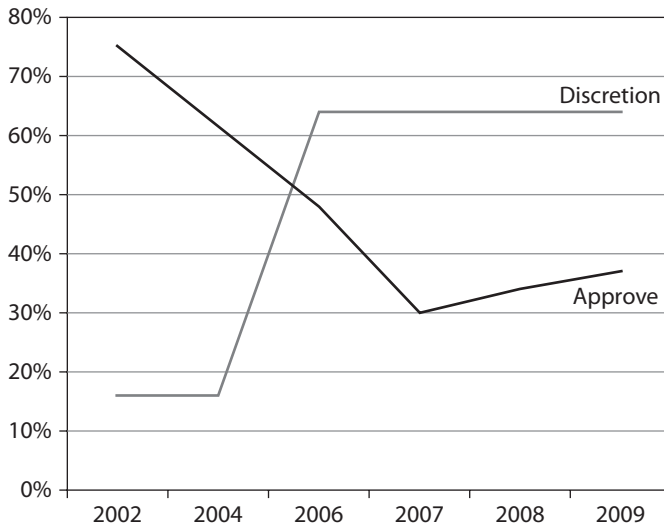


Figure 1.1 ♦ Trends in Canadian Public Opinion and Discretion

Note: The approval numbers come from Angus Reid Public Opinion, *Issue: Afghanistan*, <http://www.angus-reid.com/issue/afghanistan/page/9/>, accessed December 2, 2011. We use Canada here simply because we have more public opinion data on this case.

is an even clearer case, as figure 1.1 illustrates. The decrease in the ISAF deployment's popularity did not cause Canadian politicians or military officers to impose restrictions on their troops. Instead, the shift to Kandahar and to more war-fighting coincided with changes in how the Canadian forces operated, and these changes then produced a decrease in support for the mission, as we will see in chapter 5. While Canada ultimately pulled out of Kandahar in 2011 and shifted into a highly restricted training effort, the timing was not due to a collapse in public support but instead to how public opinion played out through domestic political processes—elections that produced minority governments.

The cases of Canada and France are not unique. Other countries gave their troops more latitude as public support declined. In short, public opinion almost certainly matters, but not as systematically as one might think. Instead, political institutions mediate the responses of politicians to unpopular missions, leading to varying responses to public pressure in different domestic institutional settings.³⁷

³⁷ See Auerswald 2004 for a discussion and application to Kosovo.

STRATEGIC CULTURE AS A CONSTRAINT

The third alternative is that countries and their militaries are bound by shared cultural understandings of the appropriate ways to behave, developing military doctrines and capabilities that constrain choices (Farrell 1998, 2005; Glenn 2009; Katzenstein 1996; Kier 1997; Legro 1995).³⁸ It is impossible to discuss German behavior in Afghanistan, for instance, without considering the weight of the past upon the present day: the pacifism produced by the World War II experience, the reluctance to kill or suffer casualties, and that the German military may have rules and procedures that are directly derived from these experiences. Certainly one could argue that German police and army units are restricted from operating together because of their post-World War II desire for strict separation of the military and police in Germany (see chapter 6). As a result, the fact that German training of Afghan police had to take place on military bases significantly hampered the training effort.³⁹

Despite its insights, there are three problems with applying cultural arguments to the question of military behavior in Afghanistan. First, some cultural approaches imply or explicitly assert that change is quite difficult, as cultural norms and mutual understandings take significant time to alter, especially if they are based on key historical moments or geography (Berger 1998; Johnston 1995; Katzenstein 1996; Meyer 2006), unless some sort of factor outside of the culture provides a significant shock (Farrell 2005). Yet as we will show in this book, countries have sometimes quickly changed how they operate. Second, some cultural approaches suggest convergence upon a particular way of doing things, especially in highly institutionalized settings such as NATO (Eyre and Suchman 1996; Farrell 2001; Terriff, Osinga, and Farrell 2010), yet we see significant variation in ISAF, even among democracies with extensive interaction and shared histories. We see value in the strategic culture approach and in focusing on organizational norms, but the patterns of variation we find in Afghanistan point elsewhere—to politics at the highest levels within each country that contributed troops. Third, our approach is more efficient for cross-national comparative analyses.

We address some of these alternative arguments as they arise in the chapters that follow. Ultimately, we find that neither security threats nor public opinion systematically covary with how countries manage their militaries in Afghanistan. Nor do we find strategic culture accounting for the changes countries make over the course of the ISAF mission.

³⁸ Again, the literature is extensive, but space constraints limit a fuller discussion.

³⁹ Interview with senior German Ministry of Interior official, June 2009.

The Plan of the Book

Chapter 2 considers NATO itself: how the organization works, how its origins give its members latitude to influence their contingents, and how the commanders of its multilateral efforts cope with the challenges of multilateral contingents. As caveats, red cards, phone calls, and other techniques for managing individual contingents have proven to be problematic, NATO has worked hard to mitigate those techniques' impact upon ISAF's effectiveness. Despite these efforts, we demonstrate that the alliance cannot hope to compete with national command chains. We demonstrate this empirically by briefly reviewing the alliance's force generation and command processes. We then compare the intervention venues states can use from a theoretical perspective, to include unilateralism, coalitions of the willing, and alliance actions. We find that NATO interventions provide individual alliance members with the benefits of multilateralism while maintaining ultimate national controls on deployed troops. In NATO interventions, national commands have authority over choosing their nation's commanders, delegating authority to those commanders, conducting oversight, and providing incentives for appropriate military behavior—authority that the alliance cannot match. In sum, chapter 2 assesses why NATO functions as it does, and why we must look inside individual alliance members if we are to explain their behavior in Afghanistan.

Chapter 3 presents one way of understanding how and why politicians delegate to their military commanders. We use domestic institutional analysis to highlight key differences between alliance members that operate under collective decision making, as exemplified by coalition governments, and individual decision making, as in the case of presidential political systems and those parliaments governed by single parties. We argue that institutional distinctions between governments can explain much and point to when and where additional information is needed, particularly with regard to the ideology and size of governing coalitions (in coalition governments) and the preferences of individual decision makers (in presidential and single-party parliamentary governments).

Chapter 4 focuses primarily on two presidential systems, those of the United States and France. In each country, an individual is empowered to make significant military decisions or delegate those decisions to subordinates. While we could write a book on the U.S. experience (as many have and will), we focus on two particular elements that distinguish how the Americans ran their war compared to many of the other countries: agent selection and incentives. Because the United States led an ad hoc effort (Operation Enduring Freedom) and only later became the leader of the NATO effort, the primary means of control was leadership selection and termination. The United States famously cycled through

a variety of generals. We then turn to the French case, where we see a significant change in behavior on the ground that followed the presidential transition from Jacques Chirac to Nicolas Sarkozy. Chirac placed significant restrictions on where the French were deployed and with what capabilities. Sarkozy lifted those restrictions but still answered the phone when questions arose in the field. We then briefly address the case of Poland.

Chapter 5 focuses on a second type of political system where individual leaders are empowered: parliamentary systems with a single party controlling the government. Great Britain and Canada have been important players in Afghanistan, with both showing significant variation in what they were willing to do over time. One key difference is that Canada was led by a minority government for nearly all of its time in Afghanistan. Thus, we have two countries with very similar institutions, similar political cultures, and large variations in how they have performed in Afghanistan and how they have been governed at home. These differences allow us to tease out the key forces shaping decision making when prime ministers are unencumbered by the requirements of maintaining a domestic political coalition. This chapter then touches on two other countries in this category: Spain and Turkey.

Chapter 6 examines parliamentary coalition governments. Leaders in coalition governments face great challenges, not least because members of the coalition will vary in their enthusiasm for the mission. As a result, most countries in this category have tended to place more significant restrictions upon their forces in Afghanistan. We consider three key cases in detail. Germany has been the poster child or exemplar of a country viewed as being far more capable in theory than in practice due to the restrictions imposed by a series of coalition governments. The Netherlands illustrates the domestic consequences of a coalition government fighting a war, as the Dutch government collapsed over Afghanistan. Denmark, the third case in this chapter, is quite exceptional: the Danes fought with few restrictions in the most dangerous part of the most dangerous province in Afghanistan. Comparing these three countries allows us to consider how variations in the kinds of coalition governments may help to explain why some in this category are more flexible on the ground than others. We conclude this chapter by briefly examining other coalition governments in ISAF: Belgium, Italy, and Norway.

Chapter 7 considers two countries, Australia and New Zealand, that are partners with but not members of NATO. Australia and New Zealand have British-style political institutions, with the key decisions made by the prime minister and his or her minister of defense. We consider these two cases to see if membership in NATO makes a difference. We find that nonmembership can actually be a shield that countries use to deflect harder choices and more responsibilities. Otherwise, the domestic dynamics work like they do in Great Britain or Canada,

demonstrating that the military constraints imposed by nations are driven far more by domestic politics than by NATO institutions.

Chapter 8 applies our model to the 2011 intervention in Libya, a conflict begun as a coalition of the willing that later evolved into a NATO intervention. We find that many of the same dynamics appeared in Libya as occurred in Afghanistan. Presidential and majoritarian parliamentary governments had wide discretion to act as they saw fit. Coalition governments were constrained by their need to maintain parliamentary confidence. Two other interesting findings were apparent in Libya. First, the intervention was a dramatic example of multilateral forum shopping, with the main participants trying two alternative organizational arrangements during the intervention. The fact that they settled on the NATO mechanism holds promise for the alliance's future. Second, the Libya case highlights some of the nuances required when explaining parliamentary coalition behavior, particularly with regard to the coalition's ideology and the viability of alternative governing coalitions.

In chapter 9 we assess the key factors shaping how countries manage their participation in multilateral military operations and develop implications for policy makers and academics. We develop suggestions for policy makers on anticipating and responding to challenges arising from the dynamics that we have found. Caveats and other means used to control national military contingents are inherent in modern democracies. Rather than publicly blasting recalcitrant allies, alliance leaders will need to understand which allies can do more and how to get them to do so. This has implications for the choice of coalitions versus alliance interventions, for the transition out of Afghanistan, and for NATO's recent Smart Defence Initiative. For scholars, we discuss the implications of our findings for the literature on forum shopping between alliances versus coalitions of the willing, principal-agent approaches to civil-military relations, and the broader role of domestic politics in foreign policy. We conclude with final thoughts on the future of the NATO alliance.

The Scope of the Project

Before moving on, we need to clarify what this book is and is not. This book is an effort to understand how countries manage their militaries in multilateral operations. Our study focuses almost entirely on the NATO effort in Afghanistan. We initially planned to compare ISAF to the NATO efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo and to the ad hoc effort in Iraq, but the Afghanistan story became sufficiently complex, with enough variation to warrant an entire book.⁴⁰ Our contention is that

⁴⁰ Davidson (2011) compares allies of the United States in how they responded to Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, but his Afghanistan chapter only touches upon three countries: the United Kingdom, France,

the problems NATO has experienced in Afghanistan are not unique to that one intervention. Indeed, our vignettes at the start of this chapter come from a variety of multilateral military efforts, and, as we show in chapter 8, are applicable to the Libyan effort of 2011. These additional cases demonstrate that the challenges we identify and explain in the Afghan case are relevant elsewhere.

We focus most of our attention on the major contributions to ISAF: those countries that consistently provided five hundred or more troops to the mission between 2003 and early 2010. This size restriction allows us to compare relatively serious commitments of forces. Countries deploying only very small contingents (i.e., Estonia's deployment of approximately 150 soldiers) do not face the same choices about the kinds of operations and deployments in the field as those having at least something that approximates a battalion. Studying New Zealand in chapter 7 allows us to get at the effect of size. While sending a small force is one way to limit risk, as Greece has ably demonstrated, our focus is more on variation among relatively capable contingents.

Sixteen countries provided five hundred or more troops to ISAF in Afghanistan. Of these, we focus detailed attention on eight key states: Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Why these cases? First, because our approach focuses on domestic institutions, we sought to study at least two cases in each category of presidential, single-party parliamentary, and coalition parliamentary governments. We explore two presidential or quasi-presidential systems in detail: those of France and the United States;⁴¹ two single-party parliamentary systems in the United Kingdom and Canada; and three coalition parliamentary systems: Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands. This allows us to assess variations between and within the domestic categories to assess the constraints of the domestic institutional design but also how actors within each institutional type have some room for making decisions. Second, we chose to place more attention on the countries that operated in Regional Command South (RC-South), which included Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.⁴² RC-South was the most multilateral sector in ISAF, with command rotating among the British, Canadians, and Dutch during the 2003–10 time frame, and it has been one of the most dangerous parts of the country. Together these two realities allow us to see how different countries react to similar stresses. Third, most of these

and Italy. Baltrusaitis (2010) examines allies and their contributions to Iraq. Neither presents an argument like ours that applies institutional analyses to modern democracies.

41 France is a premier-presidential system and, thus, not a purely presidential government, but the president reigns supreme in the realm of defense policy and military operations with parliament taking a very small role. Consequently, we include France with the other presidential systems.

42 The other significant contingent deployed to this area was Romania, but we were unable to do extensive fieldwork on the Romanian contribution to RC-S.

countries varied over time in terms of civilian leadership, and in some cases in terms of the command structure of their militaries, which provides variation in the causal mechanisms in which we are most interested. Fourth, we chose to study Australia because it was both a participant in RC-South and was not a member of NATO. We examined Australia's and New Zealand's contributions to ISAF to assess what effect variations in alliance membership might have on how countries operate in Afghanistan. Fifth, and finally, we address the contributions made by Italy, Poland, Turkey, and others in shorter discussions, and include them in our tables throughout the book.

Data for this project came from more than 250 interviews with senior civilian officials, military officers, and experts from ISAF-contributing nations as well as partner nations operating in Afghanistan. Civilians included a president, a former prime minister, three former defense ministers, and a variety of lesser but still senior policy officials. Military officers included two overall ISAF commanders, two overall commanders of U.S. Operation Enduring Freedom forces, dozens of flag officers, many colonel equivalents, and many officers who served as their country's senior military representative on the ground, often those empowered to play the red card. We also interviewed those who were on the other end of the phone back in the national capitals: the military and civilian officials in charge of international operations abroad.

In all, we conducted extensive and concentrated interviews with American, Australian, Belgian, British, Canadian, Danish, Dutch, German, French, New Zealand, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish officials, as well as the heads of eight ISAF delegations serving at U.S. Central Command. We interviewed members of the international staff at NATO headquarters, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, and Joint Forces Command Brunssum. Some interview subjects agreed to be cited by name. The majority, however, shared their views on the condition that we protect their anonymity. Interview subjects were asked to keep their comments to the unclassified level. We also gained some insights when Steve Saideman toured Kabul and Kandahar as part of a Canadian and NATO effort to inform "opinion leaders" about the mission in December 2007. Whenever possible, we verified claims with multiple sources, public record documents, or press reports before including information in the narrative.

Such interview-intensive research required us to limit the project's scope in two ways. The first limitation was one of time. We focus largely on the period from 2003, when NATO started to play a role in Afghanistan, up to the beginning of 2010. Studying an event that is ongoing is always difficult, and something that we repeatedly warn our students not to do. The fall of the Dutch government over Afghanistan and the start of the troop surge in early 2010 served as a key point in the history of the international effort in Afghanistan and as a natural

cutoff for a study on NATO in Afghanistan. We also chose the start of 2010 for practical reasons. Much of our research was conducted from 2007 through 2010. We realize that choosing any end date for this study is inherently problematic precisely because we do not know when the NATO effort in Afghanistan will end. The Lisbon Summit in November 2010 and the Chicago Summit in May 2012 suggest the transition will be well underway, if not completed, in 2014. We think this book will provide some insights into how NATO gets out of this conflict, as the dynamics discussed here will complicate the transition strategies developed by NATO, which we address in chapter 9.

The second limit is that we rarely address the management of special operations units. The information, including rules of engagement, for conventional units is often classified, but we have been able to get relatively good, publicly accessible information via interviews and media coverage. We have not been able to get comparable information consistently for the more secretive special operations units operating in Afghanistan. This is a problem since our interviews suggest that more than a few countries with relatively restricted conventional units have employed special operations units more freely. Indeed, using such units is one way to evade the limits placed on conventional forces. We try to address these dynamics in the case studies, but admit that we simply do not have the information to rigorously cover the special operations efforts.

The Bottom Line, Up Front

This book demonstrates that operating in a multilateral military effort is challenging, to say the least. NATO would be more effective if every contingent had no politically imposed restrictions, but that is not to say that the alliance or any multilateral effort is utterly ineffective and doomed to fail. Caveats, red cards, intrusive oversight, selection of officers, and incentives all matter in shaping how the contingents operate. These are political impediments to countries operating together on the battlefield, and they are not just about caveats.⁴³ It might seem like that at times because the public debates about caveats have been more extensive than discussions about red cards, phone calls home, oversight, incentives, or—with the United States as a notable exception—selection of commanders. As our cases illustrate, countries have varied in their reliance on caveats, sometimes using other means to manage their troops, sometimes using caveats in conjunction with alternative means of influence. To be sure, if our book only helps to clarify caveats, this would be a significant contribution given the paucity of systematic

⁴³ This book will not focus on the technical interoperability that NATO achieves on a regular basis: multinational medical teams, air support from several countries helping out yet another, logistical support for NATO and non-NATO countries in a very harsh and distant land, and the like.

study of such restrictions. However, we aim to do more than that. We hope this book provides a relatively comprehensive understanding of the means by which countries manage their participation in multilateral operations and the choices they make.

Restrictions driven by domestic political processes that emanate out of particular institutions cannot be wished away. Countries will vary systematically in how much they can contribute to the fight, wherever the fight happens to be. These dynamics will become increasingly problematic over the next several years, as most NATO countries (and many others) will be cutting defense spending due to various fiscal crises and associated budget constraints. For example, the processes discussed in this book have the potential to undermine one means by which countries could seek to alleviate their fiscal problems: via specialization—NATO's Smart Defence Initiative. Alliance members are already tempted to cut their defense budgets. To cope, the alliance has encouraged its smaller members to produce niche capacities and rely on allies to provide the various capabilities that the country will no longer be able to procure. In theory, this makes a great deal of sense, but in alliance warfare, allies sometimes do not always show up on the battlefield when needed. The restrictions imposed on some allies will mean that other countries with specialized militaries will be at great risk should firing start, hoping that political restrictions do not impede the support they expect and need from their domestically constrained allies.

These political restrictions have a dual-edged impact on the possibility of future NATO and other multilateral efforts. On the one hand, those who bear greater burdens (such as the Canadians from 2005 to 2011, the Danes, the British, and the Americans) because their allies are domestically constrained from doing the same will face more criticism at home for “carrying” the alliance, making it harder to maintain the mission. Indeed, the claim that Canada was alone in Kandahar made it harder for Canada to keep its combat mission going. The apparent unfairness within the alliance undercuts public and political support at home. On the other hand, the ability for countries to control their contingents while engaged in multilateral operations makes possible any participation at all. Countries would simply not hand over troops to another country's commanders without some way to influence how they are used. Modern democracies must maintain civilian control of their militaries even as or especially when they are formally under the command of a multinational institution. Countries will simply not contribute troops without retaining some influence. It is abundantly clear that the dynamics addressed in the pages ahead are going to remain relevant despite the hopes of the less restricted members of the NATO alliance.