CONTINUITY AND CHANGE OF ALLIANCE TRANSFORMATION: THE CASE
NATO’S INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Abstract:

This paper surveys the advancement of the International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan within broader context of NATO’s transformation. It is a part of a larger project that explores the patterns of NATO’s post-Cold War transformation in terms of new allies, missions and capabilities. The Alliance is approached as a heterogeneous club of members with different identities, whereby the advancement of the mission in Afghanistan is contingent upon the intra-club dynamic. The centrality of the argument is that, in order to enhance the capabilities of the individual allies, the NATO needs to stimulates the efficient allocation and use of the available resources by its members, which is also referred to as the concept of complementarities. The preliminary findings of this case study indicate that the contributions of the ISAF members follow a stop-and-go pattern that involves an extensive bargaining and marks the entire process of the NATO’s post Cold War transformation. It is more successful when major event occurs such as a Summit, force generation conference or the admission of members to the organization. The findings of the this case are also congruent with the argument that albeit the diverging identities of the allies inadvertently lead to a gap in the goals and perceived interests, the involvement of all allies is instrumental for the legitimacy and overall success of the mission.

IVAN DINEV IVANOV
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
MUSKINGUM COLLEGE
NEW CONCORD, OH 43762
EMAIL: iivanov@muskingum.edu

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As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization prepares to celebrate its 60th anniversary, scholars of international relations raise pertinent concerns about its management in the twenty-first century. Currently, the Alliance is involved in the largest operation in its history, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which has assumed control over the international military presence in Afghanistan. NATO forces have also been involved in ongoing efforts to train Iraqi security forces and within the framework of the NATO Training Mission (NTM) in Iraq and Operation “Active Endeavor” (OAE) designed to provide deterrence and surveillance capabilities by deployment of Standing Naval Forces to the Eastern Mediterranean.

At the time when NATO’s unprecedented involvement outside of its traditional area faces major challenges, the new administration in Washington made it clear that Afghanistan is going to be the top priority of the U.S. war on terror. The U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates expressed concerns at the 2008 Annual Munich Conference on Security Policy that NATO is, in essence, becoming “a two-tiered Alliance of those who are willing to fight and those who are not” and that such a development “would effectively destroy the Alliance.”¹ This statement raises the core question whether the allies are able to fulfill their allied obligations and whether the transformed NATO as a whole is able to reach consensus on core issues of its functioning in this format that includes new allies, missions and capabilities.

Unlike the case of Iraq, the International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan is authorized by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), whereby NATO is subsequently

charged with the command to fulfill the mission’s mandate. This paper surveys NATO’s burden-sharing from the perspective of the club goods theory to answer the question how the burden has been distributed among the allies and other nations participating in the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF). I will use the concept of complementarities that I developed in my previous research to explain the ongoing dynamic of intra-club bargaining among allies. Such a framework offers a better explanation the patterns continuity and change of alliance management.

THE CLUB GOODS FRAMEWORK

The club goods theory offers a relatively flexible and innovative approach to studying contemporary NATO politics. Richard Cornes and Todd Sandler define clubs as voluntary groups ‘deriving mutual benefit from sharing one or more of the following: production costs, the members’ characteristics or a good characterized by excludable benefits.’

Clubs have several important characteristics: ‘excludability’ (i.e. clubs discriminate between members and non-members), voluntarism and sharing a certain type of good. Therefore, members choose to join certain clubs because as rational actors they anticipate certain benefits from this membership. Thus, the utility jointly derived from membership and the consumption of other goods for each of the members must exceed the utility associated with non-membership status. For example, in the case of NATO the members expect that the benefits of membership outweigh the costs associated with it.

Clubs incorporate the idea of sharing. They may share the use of impure public goods or the enjoyment of the desirable attributes of the members. Whether this is a golf club

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membership, access to the club house or collective defence, club members inevitably need to share some sort of facilities or goods. Therefore, the idea of sharing resources and access to goods results in competition over the access to these goods. Because in most of the occasions these resources are limited, the competition results in rivalry for club benefits, thus, causing detraction in the quality of the services already received.\(^3\) Classical examples of such rivalry among nations are about the control of certain piece territory, especially if it has valuable natural resources or fishing whales in the open seas. Usually club members share partially rival public goods that are also excludable such as recreational facilities, tennis clubs, swimming pools, and highways. International security is a good example of an excludable good characterized with rivalry, i.e. it “has always been a ruthless and dangerous business,” whereby “the overriding goal of each state is to maximize its share of world power, which means gaining power at the expense of other states.”\(^4\) Alliances, on the other hand, illustrate a specific form of rivalry where states complete over maximizing the benefits from collective defence while sharing at the same time as little burden as possible.

The clubs have also important exclusion mechanisms whereby users’ rates of utilization can be monitored and non-members or non-payers can be barred. Without such mechanisms there would be no incentives for members to join and pay dues. The operation of these mechanisms must be at a reasonable cost, i.e. the costs should be lower than the benefits gained from allocating the shared goods. Also, the club goods framework distinguishes between two different types of costs and benefits: those related to the individual members and those associated with the club as a whole. When analyzing the clubs, it is necessary to distinguish between members with certain user privileges and non-members.

\(^3\) Richard Cornes and Todd Sandler (1986), p. 159.
The club goods theory distinguishes between two types of clubs based on their membership structure – homogenous and heterogeneous. Homogenous clubs includes members whose tastes and endowments are identical. If either tastes or endowments differ, then the club is called heterogeneous or mixed. Majority of clubs in the literature are labelled homogenous. The optimal membership size of these clubs is defined as the ‘core’ and implies that no individual or set of individuals can improve their situation by forming a different partition. In the cases of homogeneous clubs, it is easier to evaluate each member’s own payoffs because the club members are very similar and their contribution to the club is the same as everyone else’s. Studying heterogeneous clubs is, nonetheless, “considerably more elusive” because of the variation among the individual members. There is no uniform approach in the literature how to evaluate whether a member contributes more or less than the others. Some theorists suggest to partition the heterogeneous population into similar relatively homogeneous groups of members before the average net benefits of each member within the group and of the different groups are evaluated. Hence, the total net benefits to the heterogeneous clubs do not depend simply on the number of members but rather on the number and identity of the members as shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Club</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Relevance for Alliance Politics</th>
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| Homogeneous clubs| Members with identical tastes and endowment     | Golf Clubs, the Paris Club of public lenders | 1. The benefits depend on the number of the members.  
2. Multi-club world of provides safeguards against discrimination. |
| Heterogeneous clubs| Members with different tastes and endowment | NATO; the Axis powers; the Western allies during World War II | 1. The benefits depend on the number and identity of the members (club’s core).  
2. Sub-clubs provide near substitute and reduce the monopoly effect. |

The dynamics of NATO’s functioning and management indicates that it has always been a heterogeneous club that brings together a diverse group of members. Based on the size of its members and the amount of resources that they are willing to allocate for common defense, there are at least several relatively homogeneous sub-clubs. The main difference of the post-Cold War NATO is that the latest rounds of expansion in 1999 and 2004 introduced a whole new sub-club of members from Central and Eastern Europe with relatively similar characteristics.

The logic of homogeneous clubs assumes that if the alliance is at its core, it usually produces optimal outcomes. Alternatively, if NATO experiences congestion, it leads to crowding and depreciation due to the exceeding capacity of the club to meet its functions. As a result, some scholars argue that NATO has become an institution that plays “a largely supportive role” in the efforts to combat terrorism and that its contribution to the international efforts to quell terrorism is “somewhat tangential.”6 Instead of using the convenient structures of international institutions, NATO members participate in efforts to respond to terrorism outside of the Alliance “through bilateral activities or loose coalitions of the willing.”7 Applied to the club goods dynamic, it means that more outcomes have been produced within issue-oriented sub-clubs or various alignments which is an indication for crowing of the club and the depreciation of the good that it provides.

Do these findings imply that NATO has indeed become an inefficient institution that stimulates loose coalitions and favors sub-optimal outcomes? Such an explanation does not take into account the diverging identities of the individual members and sub-clubs of allies in a

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7 Ibid.
heterogeneous setting. In fact, the successful conduct of NATO’s out-of-the-area operations rests on two main pillars: (a) the willingness of the allies to reach across the sub-clubs and accommodate their differences and; (b) the capacity of the individual members to manage their resources efficiently and work with the other members in order to advance their specific allied capabilities.

THE CONCEPT OF COMPLEMENTARITIES

The concept of complementarities is the second core pillar of this study. Heterogeneous clubs helps us understand the nature of bargaining and consensus-building within NATO, while complementarities show how the allies undergo transformation, adapt their military structures to the new security environment and share the burden and the cost of alliance commitments. This concept originates in the economic literature where two goods are considered to be complementary if “the presence (or efficiency) of one increases the returns from (or efficiency) of the other.” Complements are those items that are normally consumed along with the product in question. If the demand for the product rises, then the demand for the complementary good rises, too.

Political scientists apply complementarities to the institutions of the political economy in order to reinforce the differences between the liberal and coordinated market economies. However, complementarities may also exist among the operations of a firm; an example of which will be the marketing arrangements that offer customized products and may offer higher returns when coupled with the use of flexible machine tools on the shop floor. While the firms are the core unit of analysis in microeconomic theory, the vast majority of security studies researchers agree on the states are the major unit of analysis in international politics. Although

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firms and states are essentially concerned with different issues, in both cases their primary job is reallocation of certain available resources. Translated to alliance politics, the concept of complementarities has direct implications for analyzing the management of relations within alliances, the distributions of various military resources and sharing of specific capabilities that the allies have been able to develop. Complementarities is a concept that can explain how allies manage resources within the club in a way that is consistent with the club’s strategy, what holds the alliance together and what keeps it an efficient component of international security. Despite the fact that NATO is approached as a heterogeneous club, there are commonalities among the different allies that tie them together as a club in the same way as there are differences among the different categories of allies or sub-clubs members.

The test of the theory in earlier studies indicated the presence of different dynamics among the old NATO members, the allies that subsequently joined the organization in 1999 and 2004 and those European Union countries that are not NATO allies. In the case of the old NATO members there is a strong relationship between their resources and the advancement of their capabilities, while in the case of the ten new NATO allies this relationship is much less powerful. Although the political elites in the new entrants faced major resistance to transform their militaries, they were able to coordinate their efforts and established various semi-institutionalized forms of coordination. In order to enhance the preparedness of the new entrants, NATO introduced a special program in 1999, the Membership Action Plan, which was tailored to the individual needs and comparative advantages of the applicants. The program was designed to help these countries streamline their resources, improve their capabilities and make them better prepared for full membership. Alternatively, in the case of the non-NATO European Union nations like Austria, Finland, Ireland and Sweden, as well as other participants in the
Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program, the study showed no relationship between military resources and allied capabilities, which means that these countries follow a different path of transformation that does not necessarily require the optimization of the available resources and development of specific allied capabilities.

The remaining part of this paper will seek evidence for the concept of complementarities in the case of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan in terms of two key variables: the dynamic of the individual members’ contributions to the ISAF mission and the ability of the allies to work together under the so-called Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs). The first variable shows the patterns of burden-sharing among the different members and non-member nations as a result of intergovernmental bargaining. The analysis focuses on troop contributions, involvement in “hard” versus “soft” security operations and number of casualties in relative and absolute terms. The functioning and management of CJTFs is indicative for the capacity of the ISAF participants to team up with the other allies and take lead in various combat and reconstruction efforts in the country. Thus, is also an indirect indicator of the pattern of military transformation among the allies and their capacity to deliver effective expeditionary forces. In a way, CJTFs also capture the level of allied interoperability, i.e. ability of the allies to work effectively and together toward successful accomplishment of the mission. At the same time, the chapter does not address other pertinent issues of the ISAF mission, such as whether it is necessary to re-define ISAF’s goals outside of the UNSC resolutions, how to measure the mission’s success, or whether the allies need to shift the strategy of waging the war on terror.
NATO’S INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN: INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND ASSISTANCE FORCE (ISAF)

Mission

The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of NATO’s transformation from a traditional institution of collective defense into a more comprehensive forum for cooperation. Scholars of international relations have argued that NATO preserved and further improved some of its traditional assets from the Cold War period such as integrated command structure, defense planning, and political and military consultations. Thus, the alliance not only strengthened its international credibility and legitimacy but also became “uniquely posed to play new roles and assume new missions” that respond to the challenges of the post-Cold War world. In this context, the mission in Afghanistan is an important ‘litmus test’ for the capacity of the organization to address successfully the new security challenges in the 21st century.

In response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, a U.S.-led international collation of about fifty nations conducted Operation Enduring Freedom that put an end to the Taliban rule in Afghanistan and opened the way for the new government to prepare the transition toward democracy. The Bonn Agreements between the prominent Afghan leaders and the international community rubberstamped outlined the establishment of new government institutions in this country torn by decades of civil war. The parties agreed on establishing an interim authority and administration, as well as a rule of law and judiciary system. The Bonn Agreements were followed by the UN Security Council Resolution 1378 from November 14, 2001 that endorsed the formation of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the area around the capital

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Kabul initially for six months to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in maintaining security.\textsuperscript{11} UNSC subsequently authorized NATO as a whole and the member-states participating in ISAF to “take all necessary measures to fulfill its mandate.”\textsuperscript{12} Initially the operation was under British command followed by Turkey. In August 2003 the NATO allies unanimously agreed to take command and responsibility for the mission. The subsequent UNSC Resolution 1510 expanded the ISAF mandate in support of the Afghan government beyond the capital Kabul. Thus, NATO took primary responsibility for security in Afghanistan which allowed the U.S. forces to focus on the search for Bin Laden and other al-Qaeda members.\textsuperscript{13}

Four different stages have marked the advancement of the ISAF mission under NATO command. During the first stage the involvement of the Alliance was limited to about five thousand troops, mostly from the member-states which operated primarily in Kabul and other “low risk” areas in the north. At its inception about 90\% of the mission’s force was from contributing NATO allies of which Canada had the largest single-member contingent of almost two thousand people. Gradually Germany, Italy, Spain and some of the new allies (such as Romania) also expanded their military presence. Georgia was the first country from the former Soviet Union to join the mission in 2004 with one hundred troops. Soon the participants realized the need to expand military presence in the area and decided to send additional helicopters, jets and personnel. ISAF’s first stage was completed in October 2004 under German command.

The second stage lasted about four months between May and September 2005, whereby ISAF expanded into the west, thus adding four more provinces under its direct responsibility – Badghis, Farah, Ghor, and Herat. Stage two was completed under the regional command of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} UN Security Council Resolution, Resolution 1386 (2001), adopted by the Security Council at its 4443rd meeting, 20 December 2001 \url{http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/mandate/unscr/resolution_1386.pdf}, 01/19/2009.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Resolution 1386 (2001), Resolution 1413 (2002), Resolution 1510 (2003) and subsequent resolutions.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Joshua Walker, (2007), p. 173.
\end{itemize}
Italy, which also prepared the transition to the next stage of operation. It was during the third stage between 2005 and July 2006 when the ISAF forces began to participate in actual combat operations against al-Qaeda in Helmand province. With additional contributions from most of the participating nations but primarily United States (4,000), Canada (2,000) and Netherlands (400), the international military presence in Afghanistan soared from 31,000 troops in 2005 to slightly over 40,000 troops in 2006.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Figure 1.} \textit{Actual Troop Contribution to the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation “Allied Harmony” in Afghanistan (2002-2008)}

![Troop Contribution for ISAF (2003-2008)](image)

This surge expanded the resources available to the mission and paved the way to the fourth stage that earmarked the largest territorial expansion into the south and southeast adding a total of twenty new provinces primarily from traditional Taliban and Al-Qaeda strongholds. Canada

\textsuperscript{14} The data presented below are based on the Military Balance, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, the data are from 2001/02 through 2007/08. Additional data have been collected from NATO Official Webpage \url{www.nato.int} and \url{www.globalsecurity.org}. 

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took the lead of the South Command centered in Kandahar where 8,000 ISAF soldiers started in September 2006 the mission’s biggest offensive against al-Qaeda in the Operation Medusa. ISAF’s expansion during Stage Four into south and southeast led the increase of Taliban insurgency there. The proximity of the border with Pakistan and the strong local support for the Taliban allowed the guerillas to cross the border, regroup unobstructed and launch frequent offenses against the NATO-led international troops. The insurgent attacks and casualties spiraled. While during ISAF’s first three stages the allies had on average about 50 casualties annually, in 2007 their number jumped to 232 and in 2008 they peaked at 294 as indicated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Allied Casualties in Afghanistan (2002-2008). Source:**

[Graph showing Allied Casualties in Afghanistan (2002-2008)]

This new dynamic can be attributed in part to the shift in strategy by the Taliban to target civilians, as well as the shift in the overall operation. In essence, parts of ISAF that were
stationed in the south and east experienced a shift of the overall mission to a combat operation. For the most part, the causalities came from the nations that took control in the new provinces where the battles with the insurgents were most intense – U.S., U.K., Canada, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Alternatively, those allies whose troops were located in the center and north had a much smaller share of the combat and a much lower death toll. That is why countries like Canada raised the issue of equitable burden-sharing and called on the other allies to relocate additional resources and become more actively involved in the allied efforts against the insurgency in the troubled areas.\textsuperscript{15}

The issue of equitable burden-sharing was discussed during the 2006 NATO Summit in Riga, Latvia, where two camps emerged – those who took the lead in the ISAF South and East commands, and others like France, Germany, Spain and Italy who were reluctant to send their troops into the troubled areas of operation. Germany made it clear that the mission and any the additional contributions need approval by the German Parliament, the Bundestag, which had stipulated that German soldiers could not be sent to the volatile southern part of the country.\textsuperscript{16} Most of the other nations said they would send help to the troubled areas only in cases of emergency. France agreed to send additional helicopters and aircraft in support of the mission, while Central Command of ISAF was able to re-locate about 2,500 troops from other areas in order to alleviate the mission conditions. The reluctance of some allies to become more involved in the south and southeast of Afghanistan prompted the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to express his concern that NATO is, in essence, becoming “a two-tiered alliance, in which you


have some allies willing to fight and die to protect peoples’ security, and others who are not.”\textsuperscript{17}

He even warned that this dynamic “puts a cloud over the future of the alliance if this is to endure, or perhaps even get worse.”\textsuperscript{18}

As a matter of fact the inter-allied tensions can be attributed, in part, to the shift of the mission itself. The transition from the second stage, where the ISAF mandate included only the capital and the peaceful north to the third and fourth stages that extended into high-risk areas, posed major security challenges. While the security situation was much easier to handle until 2006 due to the limited scope of the mission, its expansion after 2006 imposed very different requirements for which the allies were not prepared. In the same token, NATO lacked previously established mechanisms to deal with burden-sharing in situations when the individual allies are reluctant to make adjustments to their positions. Thus, the mission required not only additional resources for combat operations, but also new capabilities to work together in fighting insurgency. Therefore, the management of ISAF’s fourth stage became the biggest test for NATO’s ability to transform and adapt itself.

The centrality of ISAF’s success to NATO’s future can be attributed to three main factors. First, this mission is the largest out-of-the-area operation in the history of the alliance as a part of NATO’s shift to non-Article Five operations after the end of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{19} Second, ISAF is the largest operation in its history and the first one outside of Europe. Third, the successful accomplishment of the tasks of the mission would present evidence for the capacity of the

\textsuperscript{17} “U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has warned the future of NATO is at risk due to differences over Afghanistan and that it may become a two-tier alliance,” BBC News, Thursday, 7 February 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7231909.stm, 01/18/2008.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} On the evolution of NATO’s strategic concept of non-Article Five Operations see “Towards and Beyond the Madrid Summit,” Remarks by the NATO Secretary General, April 24, 1997, http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1997/s970424a.htm, 01/19/2009.
alliance to work as a club in maintaining its effectiveness as a part of its overall adaptation to the new security challenges in the context of the global war or fight against terrorism.

Scholars like Seth Jones argue that several factors influence the capacity of the foreign powers and international organizations to advance security during a military operation: number and performance of troops and police, amount of money, establishment of peace treaty and duration of the operation.²⁰ From this perspective a winning plan for Afghanistan should rest on several key pillars: surge in the number of international military presence and the number of local (i.e. Afghan) police, a comprehensive strategy for dealing with insurgents and warlords and, finally increased financial assistance. Such a recommendation addresses several groups of variables. The first group of variables is related to the functioning and management of the mission in Afghanistan. These include: (a) various aspects of bargaining (e.g. diplomatic negotiations within NATO or between the alliance and the other contributors); enhanced level of coordination among the allies often referred to as interoperability and; (c) availability of financial assistance. Other variables such as the presence of peace-treaty, the tactics to fight insurgency or duration of the operation are not directly related to intra-club bargaining and will not be address in this paper.

The next section will discuss two mission-related variables that are a direct result of inter-allied bargaining: the dynamic of military presence in terms of troop contributions by the allies and capacity to work together in various combined joint task forces (CJTFs). The troop contribution is an approximate indicator of the willingness and capacity of the ISAF nations to stand up to their commitments and carry their share of the burden. The capacity to work together and accomplish common tasks captures some ‘creative’ ways by which all allies “can contribute

more to this mission.\textsuperscript{21} In the same token, the CJTFs also reflect the degree to which allies are able and willing to share roles in performing civilian-military operations and assist the different Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRCs) to perform the role of a “blended” force that wages the peace after a violent conflict or “System Administrators” that manage the post-war reconstruction in the country.\textsuperscript{22}

The dynamic of troop contributions from 2002 to 2008 indicates several noticeable trends. First, in 2003 and 2004 fewer NATO members and only several non-NATO states participated in the International Security and Assistance Force. Most of the nations joined between 2004 and 2005 slightly before or during the transition from the first to the second stage. Second, since 2004 the ISAF troops have been on a steady rise from 2002 onwards: from under 20,000 in 2004 to over 60,000 in 2008. Third, the surge also reflects a major expansion of the mission’s territorial scope – while in 2002 and 2003 ISAF was active only in the capital and in the northern parts of Afghanistan, during the third and fourth stages the mission expanded into the high-risk regions of southern and eastern Afghanistan. This led to an increased intensity of combat operations with the local insurgency, significant jump in number of casualties and, ultimately, a growing demand for additional military presence.

As discussed earlier, ISAF comprises four relatively similar groups of allies – the United States, the old fifteen NATO members that have been incorporated into the Alliance before the end of the Cold War, the new allies, which joined NATO in 1999 and 2004, and the ISAF participating countries that are not NATO members. The distribution of burden among these nations has several inherent features. First, there is no equitability of burden sharing among the three groups of nations. For example, the U.S. and the other fifteen allies from Western Europe

\textsuperscript{21} Robert Gates, Speech at the 44th Munich Conference on Security Policy.  
have on average higher contributions relative to their size – while they constitute about 77 percent of the population of all participating nations, for the period between 2002 and 2008 they provide on average between 85 and 90 percent of all troops. The United States alone has a population share of about 30 percent and contributes between 35 and 50 percent. Alternatively, the other two groups of participants – the new allies from Central and Eastern Europe and the non-NATO nations have a disproportionately smaller share of their troop contributions to ISAF. In the case of the new allies, the troop contribution varies between 2-6 percent, while their population share is about 10 percent. The non-NATO participant have the smallest share of troops –about 5 percent with a population of about 13 percent of all contributors (Figures 3 and 4).

**Figure 3.** *Troop Contribution to the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan as a Percentage of All Troops (2002-2008)*
Second, the dynamics of burden-sharing indicates that the United States had the largest share in 2003 and 2004 and again in 2008. During the early stages of operation, a part of the U.S. military presence was under Operation “Allied Harmony,” while in 2008 most of the U.S. troops were sent a response to the growing insurgency in the southern and eastern provinces. Alternatively, Western Europe had the highest share between 2005 and 2007 during the second and third stages of the mission and before the expansion in 2006. This observation highlights an interesting dynamic – the U.S. share of military participation tends to increase when the mission shifts toward combat operations. Alternatively, the involvement of the other allies increases when the mission’s primary focus is on peace enforcement.

Third, the involvement of the new allies is low relative to their size. Eastern Europe’s involvement before 2005 was symbolic – only 2 percent of the overall contribution, but it tripled after 2005 to about 6-6.5 percent. This can be explained with the fact that seven of these nations
joined NATO in 2004 and had to increase their military presence in Afghanistan as apart of their new allied responsibilities. Nevertheless, Eastern Europe’s involvement remains below the anticipated contribution of about 10 percent. In the same token, the fourteen ISAF participants outside of NATO have only marginal contribution between 1.5 and 4.3 percent (Figure 3).

Fourth, there is also a significant variation within the three groups of participants. For example, United Kingdom, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark and Canada are among the highest contributors of the old members with about 100 to 140 troops per million. Not surprisingly, they also have the highest share of casualties. Most of the Western Europe contributes between 20 and 50 soldiers per million, whereby the average value for the group is about 75 soldiers. At the same time allies like Spain, Turkey, Portugal and Greece participate with fewer than 20 people per one million (Figure 5).
Figure 5. Troop Contribution to the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan for the Fifteen Old NATO Members (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom, 2002-2008)

The average contribution for the new NATO allies is slightly less than 40 soldiers per one million. Albeit to a smaller degree, some variation can also be observed across the group. With exception of Slovakia, the nations that joined NATO in 2004 seem to contribute to ISAF somewhere between 35 and 60 troops per one million people. Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland are among the top contributors in this group with over 40 soldiers, which is still slightly below the average value of 75 soldiers for the old members (Figure 6).
Lastly, the ISAF nations that are not NATO members have on average much lower contribution – under 20 troops per one million. The three countries currently invited to join NATO (Albania, Croatia and FYR of Macedonia) are among the highest contributors in this group along with Australia, Sweden and Jordan. Azerbaijan, Austria, Ireland and Ukraine, on the other hand, have a rather symbolic presence and do not bring significant capabilities to the mission. Australia, for example, contributes to the hard security aspects of ISAF with a contingent that is based in the troubled southern province of Uruzgan and assists with reconstruction, logistic and liaison personnel in Kandahar and Kabul. Sweden and Jordan, on the other hand, focus on peacekeeping and peace-enforcement; Sweden leads the provincial

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reconstruction team in Mazari Sharif while Jordan supports a medical training partnership in Qalat City, Zabul province and is in charge of the new hospital there\textsuperscript{24} (Figure 7).

\textbf{Figure 7.} Troop Contribution to the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan for the Fourteen non-NATO Countries (Albania, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Jordan, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, FYR of Macedonia and Ukraine, 2002-2008)

The distribution of burden among the different ISAF contributing nations has several important implications for NATO politics. While membership matters for the actual contributions of the participating nations, the relationship is not a linear, i.e. not all member-states contribute equitably. For example, the U.S. involvement peaks during periods that require capabilities to participate in combat operations or deal with insurgency and guerilla-type of war. In the same token, the U.S. troops increase during points where the other allies are unable or unwilling to provide additional support or when “the Alliance as a whole has not fulfilled its


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broader commitment […] to meet the force requirements of the commander in the field.”

Lastly, the increased American presence is followed by a strategy aimed at engaging the other allies to increase proportionally their contributions and match these of the Americans. For example, the U.S. decision to send the 3,200 marines to Afghanistan early in 2008 was followed by a letter by the Secretary of Defense addressed to each of his counterparts in NATO with a request to “to dig deep and find these additional troopers to send to Afghanistan.”

Does this observation imply that collective security theory is correct about the disproportionality of burden sharing among the different groups of allies? Should we expect that the U.S. involvement would continue increase disproportionately relative to the other allies? Collective goods theory underestimates important aspects of NATO politics with regard to ISAF, such as the shift of the mission from combat to peace enforcement and vise versa, the invitation and formal admission of new allies, or the specific context of intra-club bargaining. The logic of the club goods theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the way the United States manages the outcome of the intra-club bargaining. For example, the diverging identities of some allies might prevent them from becoming involved in combat operations, but their additional contributions may be directed in areas of low-intensity conflict, where additional peace enforcement or reconstruction efforts are needed. Thus, the successful distribution of the allied burden depends on the ability to manage successfully the intra-club bargaining and relocate resources aimed at optimizing the outcome for the club.

The logic of this bargaining can be further explained with the concept of complementarities. It holds that the allies manage their resources most efficiently in order to

advance their capabilities and, in the specific context of the ISAF missions, the concept implies equitable representation of burden sharing, as well as careful adjustment and accommodation of the positions of the individual members and sub-clubs. There are several instances that illustrate this logic.

First, some of the participants in the mission that have limited capabilities or face constraints due to the restricted mandate of their troops, could instead patrol areas of low risk and do static security job that would release others to relocate high risk areas and engage in combat operations there, as is the case of the U.S., Canadian, Dutch and Danish involvement in the southern and eastern parts of the country.

Second, the prospect to join the alliance tends to stimulate the potential members to become more active and increase their participation in the mission. This trend is illustrated with the new entrants, as well as countries like Albania, Croatia and FYR of Macedonia whose contributions to ISAF are about the average for the new NATO members. Therefore, the prospect to join NATO serves as a stimulus for these partners to become more actively involved in the allied efforts.

Third, the capacity of the allies to work and synergize their efforts as drafted in NATO’s Strategic Vision document requires a common set of training standards for everyone going to Afghanistan. As a result, the ISAF participating nations focus on specialization in developing niche capabilities that provide economies of scale or the ability of several allies to work together in coherent multinational structures. The Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs) and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are two such instances that require enhanced interoperability and illustrate the logic of complementarities.

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NATO’S INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN: COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCES

Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs) represent a military organization or grouping that is organized to carry out a specific mission or task. Usually it is furnished with manpower and equipment and involves two or more military services (such as army, navy, air force, etc.) accomplished by at least two or more nations. Therefore, CJTF is, in essence, “a multinational, multi-service deployable task force generated and tailored primarily, but not exclusively, for military operations” that include operations outside of the alliance territory, including but not limited to operations such as humanitarian relief and peacekeeping.

Historically, the first task forces came into being with the Gulf war in 1991, but their conceptualization within NATO was officially launched in 1994 when the Heads of State and Government endorsed CJTFs as a “means to facilitate contingency operations, including operations with participating nations outside the Alliance.” These forces are planned exclusively in response to peacekeeping activities outside of NATO’s traditional territorial domain. CJTFs require that NATO’s assets are made available on a case-by-case basis and they would be available not only to the allies, but also in operations “with participating nations outside the Alliance.” To the extent that it is permanently institutionalized, the concept of multinational task forces was a unique initiative for NATO. These task forces were put at test for the first time during Operation “Joint Endeavor” in Bosnia, where the Alliance deployed intelligence personnel and provided aircrews and staffs at several locations. The operation in Bosnia was followed by Exercise Strong Resolve in March 1998 where the NATO participants

and the partner countries participated jointly in such combined forces. In 2003 NATO began the full implementation of CJTFs in Afghanistan.

The advancement of CJTFs indicates at least three noticeable patterns of formation and management. First, the largest part of these task forces are led and managed by the United States, such as Task Force 76, Task Force Phoenix and Task Force-82, later CJTF-101. Second, CJTFs are led and managed by other key NATO allies such as Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany. Examples of such task forces are Task Force Aegis or CJTF – Afghanistan. Third, United States and NATO have been seeking “more creative” ways to reorganize dormant or inefficient structures and transform them into successful CJTFs within ISAF, as illustrated in the case of the Southeast European Brigade.

Combined Joint Task Force – 76 (or CJTF-76) is an example of a U.S.-led subordinate formation of Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan with headquarters in Kabul that reports directly to United States Central Command. While this task force command was deactivated by the end of 2006, its structure turned out to be a useful mechanism and remains active within ISAF’s Regional Command East. The mission of CJTF-76 has been designed to conduct a broad spectrum of operations ranging from enemy defeat and dealing with extremist movements to establishment of “an enduring security” that sets “conditions for long-term stability in Afghanistan.”

Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix (CJTF-P) is another example of U.S.-led CJTF that is charged with the responsibility to build a 70,000-strong Afghan National Army including a small army air wing. In addition, CJTF-P is also charged with the training and mentoring program for

30 Ibid.
the Afghan National Police. As a part of its mission, this task force delivered tons of critically needed supplies, including food, medicine and clothing to the Afghan population.\textsuperscript{31}

CJTF-82 and its successor CJTF-101 are other examples of U.S.-led subordinate task forces reporting directly to the Commander of the U.S. Central Command and ISAF’s Regional Command East. The focus of this task force is the advancement of security, governance and development in Nangarhar Province. CJTF-101 also works closely with the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team.\textsuperscript{32}

Task Force Aegis and Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF AFG) illustrate the concept of joint task forces led by key allies like Canada. Task Force Aegis operates in Southeastern Afghanistan, whereby the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Estonia and the United States are among the other contributing nations. It is responsible for provincial reconstruction in Kandahar, Lashkar Gah, Qalat and Tarin Kowt and is also known as the Multinational Brigade – Regional Command South or MNB RC South. Under the allied agreement, the command of CJTF Aegis was taken over by the Dutch at the end of 2006. Canada is also the leading nation in Joint Task Force Afghanistan (or JTF-AFG), which was launched during the ISAF’s Fourth Stage. It comprises nearly 2,500 members from all army professions, medical and legal branches. The contributing troops are trained to deal with a wide range of responsibilities, which mandates military training to address “hard” as well as “soft” security issues.\textsuperscript{33}

Lastly, the South East European Brigade (SEE BRIG) illustrates how the involvement of the United States and NATO stimulated cooperation among allies from a certain region and

\textsuperscript{31} Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix, \url{http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/cjtf-phoenix.htm}, 02/01/2009.
\textsuperscript{32} For details see CJTF-101 Homepage, \url{http://www.cjtf101.com/}, 01/31/2009.
\textsuperscript{33} For details see “Composition of Joint Task Force Afghanistan” (JTF AFG), \url{http://www.5gbmc.ca/spip.php?article557}, 01/31/2009.
brought dormant structures of international security cooperation back to life. The idea behind establishing the Southeast European Multinational Brigade (SEE BRIG) originated in mid-1990s and was a part of a strategy to foster regional security and stability within the framework of NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. The establishment of such a multilateral body in the late 1990s was prompted by developments in the region over the past decade, especially by concerns over fighting in the Serbian province of Kosovo. This brigade of about 5,000 troops comprises seven nations – Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey, while the United States, Slovenia and Croatia have observer status.

During the first four years after its establishment, the SEE BRIG remained inactive due to lack of organizational autonomy and institutional capacity, as well as insufficient commitment from the members and inability in coordinate their interests with regard to the specific missions. In the last several years following the last wave of NATO expansion, the brigade was certified by the Alliance and is fully operational for various peacekeeping and crisis management missions. The South East European Defense ministerial meeting in December 2005 in Washington came up with the decision to incorporate the brigade into the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. The brigade took over its first overseas mission between February and August 2006, where two support units participated in ISAF under “Kabul Multinational Brigade IX.” Currently, the brigade is a fully interoperable tactical unit of ISAF with three combat groups that conduct joint training and operations with the Afghan national police and army. The role of the brigade was officially recognized by the NATO Secretary General who emphasized that this form of cooperation “has clearly established itself as a framework in which participating nations

are able to share their experiences, help one another, and benefit from the advice and assistance of NATO countries,” i.e. it has “turned into a real success story.”

Nonetheless, these initial accomplishments of the brigade were followed by a candid advice from the U.S. Secretary of Defense that the group should analyze its capabilities, shortcomings, and requirements, and “carefully review what each nation contributes before deciding on any further deployments.”

The problem with the SEE BRIG is that, for the most part, it has been focusing on multilateral exercises and despite its certification has been stationed in Afghanistan and Iraq for only relatively short periods of time. Unless the brigade does not accept more active involvement in peace enforcement operations outside of Southeastern Europe, it faces the prospect of becoming once again a defunct structure of international cooperation.

The problems of SEE BRIG illustrate in some ways the nature of intergovernmental bargaining among the SEE BRIG participating nations and NATO. The U.S.-led CJTFs indicate that it is much easier to have a nation with major capabilities lead the multi-national security and military training efforts. The U.S. involvement is instrumental in overcoming the differences among the participants and in improving coordination and interoperability among the partners of this multinational defense structure. The other nations leading task forces and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are primarily old NATO allies or partners with significant capabilities and experience in peace enforcement: Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Italy, Spain and Turkey. Only several of the new allies and partners, notably Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary have been able to have a more leading role in the CJTFs and PRTs and,

while most of the new allies and partners participate in the ISAF efforts, their troops are concerned primarily with soft security and static peacekeeping.

Do these observations indicate a gap in the logic of the concept of complementarities? As indicated earlier, the dynamic of allied contributions does not follow a linear but a curved trend that can be explained with the intergovernmental bargaining per se. This pattern mirrors the entire process of the NATO’s post Cold War transformation, whereby the advancement of NATO’s new capabilities in the 1990s and early 2000s followed a similar stop-and-go pattern. Usually, when a new initiative is launched within NATO, the governments of the member states become involved in an extensive bargaining at various levels preceding the high-ranking meetings. As a result, the heads of state and governments usually incorporate in the final documents decisions with very ambitions targets that their countries are not able to meet within the expected timelines. That is why the allies need to check on multiple occasions with each other’s progress and revise the targets by setting more realistic goals and deadlines, while also incorporating various mechanisms to monitor the progress of every nation. Various external events trigger more active involvement of the allies such as the expected admission to NATO, the review and advancement of new transformational agenda set out at given Summit, the implementation of the expected military reforms or special agreements on force generation for a specific mission.

CONCLUSION

The case of NATO’s involvement in Afghanistan confirms the premise that the Alliance functions as a heterogeneous club whereby the allies are involved in a multi-layered bargaining. The survey of the troop contributions and allied participation in the CJTFs highlighted the
distinction between the different sub-clubs of allies: the old members, the new members and non-NATO nations that participate in ISAF. Despite some exceptions, for the most part the United States has the highest share of mission contributions in absolute and relative terms, followed by the old NATO allies. The new members tend to contribute less relative to their old counterparts, while the ISAF participants who are not NATO members have the lowest contributions.

The logic of complementarities indicates that the new members manage their military resources in a way that enables them to advance certain capabilities needed for the operations overseas. While for the most part the mission in Afghanistan confirmed this tendency, it also indicated that the optimization of resources is shaped by the patterns of bargaining among the allies. It is worth mentioning the role of NATO Secretary General, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and the U.S. Secretary of Defense who on several occasions have been on recruitment missions among the allies with request to contribute additional military capabilities to the allied operations overseas. Lastly, the United States plays a key role as an agent of military transformation and force generation for ISAF. The U.S. role is important not only for convincing the other allies and partners to expand their participation, but also in providing key support for the ISAF Central Command in areas where the Alliance as a whole lacks agreement or capacity to deliver. The troop surge in 2007 and 2008 in the areas of the ISAF South and East commands illustrates this tendency.

The findings of this chapter are not in complete contrast with the concern that NATO might become a “two-tiered Alliance of those who are willing to fight and those who are not.” The reality of the intra-club dynamic indicates that the United States cannot fix alone problems and the challenges that the mission faces. ISAF’s legitimacy and identity is determined by forty-one
nations that are currently an integral part of the mission authorized by the UNSC to act on behalf of the international community. Therefore, the United States cannot simply seek unilateral surge in its military presence but needs to find various “creative” forms to persuade the different allies and partner countries to step in and engage them effectively. While the diverging identities of the allies inadvertently lead to a gap in their goals and perceived interests, the involvement of all members is also instrumental for the legitimacy and success of the mission.

There is little doubt that ISAF is not going to be a quick-fix mission and that NATO will need to stay in the region for a longer period while at the same its members undergo major transformation of their armed forces. The uneven path of transformation inadvertently affects the capacity of the allies to deliver to the mission and meet the expectations outlined by the Central Command. Therefore, the adjustment of the expected outcomes by lowering the expectations for the mission in Afghanistan, as indicated by Secretary Gates, is an important step in redefining the NATO’s role for the successful accomplishment of its mission in Afghanistan.37

In conclusion, the accuracy of the applied analytical framework requires further research of two key variables – management of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and the advancement of allied interoperability. These variables highlight the distinction between hard and soft security and explore the causal link between military transformation, mission contributions and new allied capabilities.

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