

Why Different Powers Behave Similarly: A Neoclassical Realist Approach to  
American and Canadian Engagements in Afghanistan

2001-14

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In Political Science

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

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## Abstract

Over twenty years passed since American and Canadian forces arrived in Afghanistan to start the War on Terrorism as a response to 9/11, and during this period, there has been an enormous controversy about the nature and the scope of the Afghanistan intervention. Amidst this controversy, this dissertation aims to unravel a strategic puzzle: why and how the United States and Canada adopted similar engagement levels, especially similar counterinsurgency (COIN) strategies between 2005/2006 and 2011. During this time, the United States and Canada fought against insurgent groups, sought to maintain stabilized areas by mentoring Afghan forces, and invested in infrastructure and governance. These goals, which corresponded to the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ COIN components, entailed sending troops and civilian officials to a war zone and committing financial resources. According to structural realism as a dominant IR theory, the similarity of American and Canadian engagements constitutes a puzzle because this theory would expect that countries with different relative standings in the international system are meant to adopt different foreign and security policies.

To unravel this puzzle, this dissertation uses neoclassical realism. Like a realist theory, it examines the effects of relative material capabilities on foreign policy, which is an essential factor in comparing American and Canadian foreign and security policies. Yet, unlike structural realism, it considers dimensions other than states’ relative standing, such as perceptions and domestic politics, which, along with the relative standing, help to unpack the puzzle above. Based on this theory, the central argument of this dissertation is that the similarity of American and Canadian engagements resulted from similar systemic stimuli from the post-9/11 strategic environment, foreign policy executives’ (FPE) similar strategic beliefs, and comparable abilities to mobilize domestic resources. By showing the occurrence of factors on both American and Canadian sides bringing about the outcome above, this dissertation seeks to undermine the ideas of the “Americanization” of Canadian foreign and security policy and the syndrome of “parochialism” of the United States regarding its Northern neighbour.

## Acknowledgements

I want to begin by thanking the Departments of Political Science at Rosario and Carleton Universities in Colombia and Canada. The Department of Political Science at Rosario University believed in me by financing part of my doctoral studies and offering me a job as an assistant professor after finishing my Ph.D. Doing my BA and MA at Rosario also allowed me to get the required skills to succeed in a Ph.D. program of high standard. I thank my professors in Colombia, especially Dean Eduardo Barajas, for teaching me to navigate the world before entering it.

For its part, Carleton University provided a magnificent space to develop my dissertation. Even though I started to study American and Canadian foreign policies long before initiating my Ph.D., the Department of Political Science was where I could sophisticate the puzzle of my research. In Loeb Building, sixth floor, I found insights that helped me give form to this puzzle and solve it. My core courses' instructors on International Relations and Comparative Politics drove me to follow enticing ways of thinking to compare the United States and Canada's roles in the world. Similarly, most of the arguments that I developed about NATO in this dissertation were informed by the course on Transatlantic Security Issues. I thank professors Brian Schmidt, Fiona Robinson, Jeremy Paltiel, Laura Macdonald, and Elinor Sloan for teaching these courses in a rigorous and enticing way.

My Ph.D. committee members, professors Schmidt, Sloan, and Macdonald, deserve special thanks. Every time I asked them for help, they provided insightful and respectful guidance. I received extensive feedback through several meetings and detailed written comments, allowing me to enhance the Ph.D. final draft. It was an honour to debate every insight that I proposed in this dissertation with them. There are no words to express my gratitude regarding what I learnt with their comments and suggestions. There will always be a special place in my heart for them.

As an international student, my experience at Carleton was extraordinary due not only to the excellent program offered by the Department but, above all, to my work with my supervisor Professor Schmidt. I travelled to Canada with anxiety regarding doing a Ph.D. in a different academic environment. Nevertheless, Professor Schmidt helped make such a transition in the best way. He demonstrated empathy towards my condition as an international student, allowing me to feel comfortable and confident about my skills. The most extraordinary aspect of working with Professor Schmidt was to turn me into a better researcher. The Ph.D. years constitute the beginning of a researcher's career. I feel that such a beginning has been solidly grounded due to the comprehensive advice provided by Professor Schmidt. I could say that I became even a better person due to his kindness and generosity.

I would like to thank my wife and my family. Aleja is my engine and my inspiration, and without her love and support, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation. As an internationalist and business administrator, she was always able and willing to hear what I have to say about my dissertation. Yet what I appreciated the most about her was her faith in me during this process. Her strong spirit was a blessing in those moments when I felt lost. Above all, her love and patience helped me to come true one of my dreams: getting a Ph.D. in a high-standard university. Another dream coming true thanks to her was to forge a lovely family. In Canada, my wife and I took over the beautiful task of raising our son. Jerónimo was born just before I became

a Ph.D. candidate. I thank him for making me more efficient in writing my dissertation, especially to teach me to balance parenthood and Ph.D. research.

My mother-in-law and brother-in-law deserve special recognition because they helped my wife, my son and me, with unconditional love, make our return to Colombia easier. Without their support, I am sure that I would have spent much more time completing this dissertation from my home country. I would also like to thank my parents and my older sister. Although living in Colombia while I was busy researching and writing in Canada, they teach me to achieve my goals with discipline and love. Both factors were critical driving forces of this dissertation.

Finally, I am grateful to our Canadian and Colombian friends in Canada whose support was critical to keep working on my dissertation. When restrictions derived from the COVID-19 outbreak started to be imposed throughout the world, preventing us from returning to our country, Karen Temple and Dan Donovan, and Zulma Hernández and Fernando Echavarría hosted us in their homes for several weeks. In their homes, I managed to write several pages of this dissertation. Their support was one of the most beautiful tokens of friendship and generosity. During this time, I also had insightful discussions with them about the puzzle that informs this dissertation.

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

9/11	September 11, 2001
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
ASFF	Afghan Security Forces Fund
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
DND	Canadian Department of National Defence
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
CEFCOM	Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command
CFC-A	United States Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CCES	Cooperative Congressional Election Survey
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CSC	Correctional Service of Canada
CST-A	United States-led Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan
CT	Counterterrorism
DFAIT	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
DFATD	Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada
DND	Canadian Department of National Defence
DoA	United States Department of Agriculture
DoD	United States Department of Defense
DoS	United States Department of State
FPA	Foreign policy analysis

FPE	Foreign policy executive
FPEs	Foreign policy executives
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
IFOR	NATO-led Implementation Force
IPS	Canada's International Policy Statement
IR	International Relations
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate
ISR	Surveillance and Reconnaissance
JTF-AFG	Joint Task Force Afghanistan
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KPRT	Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team
NDP	New Democratic Party
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OMLT	Operational Mentor Liaison Team
OPB	Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PRTs	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RoCK	Representative of Canada in Kandahar
S&R	Stabilization & Reconstruction

Sat-A	Strategic Advisory Team
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SFOR	NATO-led Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
TCK	Task Force Kandahar
TPK	Canadian-led Task Force Kandahar
UAVs	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCETCOM	Commander of the United States Central Command
WoT	War on Terrorism
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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## The Research Puzzle: Countries with Different Material Capabilities Behaving Similarly

In *Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth Waltz, one of the most influential theorists within the field of International Relations (IR), sought to explain “why states similarly placed [in the international system ] behave similarly despite their internal differences.”<sup>1</sup> Waltz addressed this puzzle by focusing solely on great powers, since he argued that the analysis of their relative power allows the analyst to explain the international system’s core structure. This process yielded a theory of the international system focused on the arrangement and relative power of its central units. Still, Waltz’s theoretical puzzle, which brought about the core assumptions of structural realism, would suggest three others, namely, a) why states *differently* placed in the international system behave *differently*; b) why states *similarly* placed behave *differently*; and c) why states *differently* placed behave *similarly*.

The first puzzle could be addressed as a logical inference of Waltz’s theory. Great powers, major powers, middle powers, and minor powers behave and define their strategic objectives differently due to their different relative capabilities. The second puzzle has given rise to extensive theorizing among realists aimed at providing foreign-policy explanations. While Waltz developed a theory of international politics to explain the international constraints that apply to all states, neoclassical realists have provided explanations that apply to particular states by addressing their internal characteristics.<sup>2</sup> The third puzzle has not been explored at all, even though existing

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGrawHill, 1979), 72. See, above all, Waltz’s account of the similarity of the United States and the Soviet Union’s foreign policies during the Cold War despite their internal differences. Kenneth Waltz, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics,” *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993): 45-50.

<sup>2</sup> See Kenneth Waltz, “International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy,” *Security Studies* 6, no.1 (1996): 54-55.

foreign-policy explanations, mainly those provided by neoclassical realism, constitute a solid ground to address it. The present study seeks to address the third theoretical puzzle as it attempts to explain the similarity of Canadian and American foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention after the 9/11 attacks. That is to say, it aims to explain why two states *differently* placed in the international system behaved *similarly*.

It is worth noting that, during the Cold War, the United States and Canada undertook different foreign and security policies based in part on their ostensibly dissimilar power positions. Specifically, the United States, as a great power, carried out containment, deterrence, and counterinsurgency, which entailed long-term efforts and massive mobilization of resources. For its part, Canada, as a middle power, undertook peace-keeping operations, which often implied short-term efforts and logistical restrictions on already limited military capabilities.<sup>3</sup> To be sure, such differences would correspond to the predictions of structural realism, especially for the first puzzle derived from Waltz's original goal. Since the United States managed to hold a top-rank position within the international system by excelling in all state capability components, it was willing and able to project its power globally and shape the international order.<sup>4</sup> For its part, Canada placed in a middle rank between the top-tier powers, particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, but also the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan and probably China, and the small states.<sup>5</sup> Based on this structural condition, Canada developed a relatively

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<sup>3</sup> On the United States, see George Kennan, *American Diplomacy: 1900-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment. A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); and Paul Rich, "A Historical Overview of US Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 1. (2014): 5-40. On Canada, see Robert Murray and John McCoy, "From Middle Power to Peacebuilder: The Use of Canadian Forces in Modern Canadian Foreign Policy," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 171-188; and Tom Keating, *Canada and World Order: The Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 131; John Ikenberry, Michael Mastanduno, William Wohlforth, "Introduction: Unipolarity, State Behaviour, and Systemic Consequences," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 4.

<sup>5</sup> David Dewitt and John Kirton, *Canada as a Principal Power. A Study in Foreign Policy and International Relations* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1983), 22-23.

independent foreign policy, unlike those countries placed at the bottom of the ranking. Yet, its foreign and security policy solely aimed to maintain the international order as promoted by the United States.<sup>6</sup>

However, comparing American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the post-Cold War period implies a shift from the first to the third puzzle as mentioned above. Despite their different power resources, the United States and Canada have shared strategic objectives in some theatres of operations, such as the Gulf War (1991), Somalia (1992-1993), Bosnia (1992-1995), and the military intervention in Kosovo (1999). Among these theatres of operations, the Afghanistan intervention (2001-2014) is probably the best fit in the third puzzle. During this intervention, the Bush administration, on the American side, and the Martin and Harper administrations, on the Canadian side, adopted comparable strategies, especially at the moment when the United States and Canada replaced Counterterrorism (CT) and Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R), undertaken between 2001 and 2005, respectively, by Counterinsurgency (COIN), carried out between 2005/2006 and 2011. In this regard, both countries, following different strategic pathways during the early years of the intervention, found themselves embracing increased similar levels of engagement during the late years. During these years, the United States and Canada mobilized military and civilian resources based on a whole-of-government approach to conduct similar COIN strategies.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Christopher Kirkey and Michael Hawes, "Canada in an Age of Unipolarity: Structural Change and Canadian Foreign Policy," in *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy: Classic Debates & New Ideas*, ed. Duane Bratt and Christopher John Kukucha (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2015), 150.

<sup>7</sup> The high level of engagement of the U.S. and Canada in Afghanistan since 2006 was widely documented. On the American side, see John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy*, no. 133 (2002): 50-57; Paul Cornish, "The United States and Counterinsurgency: 'Political First, Political Last, Political Always'," *International Affairs* 85, no. 1 (2009): 61-79; James Russell, "Counterinsurgency American Style: Considering David Petraeus and Twenty-First Century Irregular War," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 1 (2014): 69-90; Maria Ryan, "'Full Spectrum Dominance': Donald Rumsfeld, the Department of Defense, and US Irregular Warfare Strategy, 2001-2008," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 1 (2014): 41-68; Paul Rich, "A Historical Overview of US Counterinsurgency," 5-40. On the Canadian side, see Alexander Moens, "Afghanistan and the Revolution in Canadian Foreign

The purpose of this Ph.D. research is to explain the factors that brought about a high degree of similarity between American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention. Specifically, it seeks to answer the question of why, despite their different positions in the international distribution of power, did the United States and Canada embrace relatively similar foreign and security policies, especially similar engagement levels, during the Afghanistan intervention from 2005/2006 to 2011? By foreign and security policy, this study means a particular public policy that consists of those strategies, actions, and decisions that are made by governments to conduct their nation's interactions with external entities to address mainly foreign threats faced by their nation or to contribute to peace and international security. Unlike defence policy, it entails mobilizing both military and civilian resources.<sup>8</sup> By engagement levels during the intervention, this dissertation considers the changing scope of American and Canadian intervention in terms of resource deployment, the incorporation of a long-term approach and risk escalation to civilian officers and troops.

With these definitions in mind, this study argues that the United States and Canada adopted comparable foreign and security policies, especially similar engagement levels, in Afghanistan due to a relatively permissive strategic environment, similar strategic beliefs and comparable abilities to mobilize domestic resources between 2005/2006 and 2011. To assess those

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Policy,” *International Journal* 63, no. 3 (2008): 569-586; Murray and McCoy, “From Middle Power to Peacebuilder,” 171-188; Paul Chapin, “Into Afghanistan: The Transformation of Canada’s International Security Policy since 9/11,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 189-199; Kimberly Marten, “From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 214-236. On a comparative perspective, see David Auerswald and Stephen Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2012), 86-103 and 127-137.

<sup>8</sup> This definition seeks to combine conceptual elements offered by several works: Valerie Hudson, “The History and Evolution of Foreign Policy Analysis,” in *Foreign Policy. Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Timothy Dunn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 14; David Bosold and Nik Hynek, “What is Canadian Foreign and Security Policy? How Should We Study it? Why Does it Matter?” in *Canada’s Foreign and Security & Security Policy: Soft and Hard Strategies of a Middle Power*, ed. David Bosold and Nik Hynek (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2010), xiii-xv; Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders. Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 2006), 12; Raúl Velásquez, “Hacia una Definición del Concepto ‘Política Pública’,” *Desafíos*, 20 (2009): 156.

factors, this dissertation makes a case for neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy aimed at precisely combining different levels of analysis, linking systemic and domestic factors, and incorporating intervening variables to explain foreign and security policy.

This research is relevant at both the empirical and theoretical levels. Empirically, it refers to a specific theatre of operations where American and Canadian foreign and security policies converged significantly. Such a convergence was not necessarily unexpected, taking into account the historical record of these policies during the 1990s. However, such military intervention contrasted with their sharp disagreements on other contemporary security issues, such as the 2003 Iraq War, the North American common security perimeter, and the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, this dissertation constitutes an alternative view to three dominant theses in the literature. The first thesis argues that the degree of similarity since 2006 resulted from Canadian subordination to American interests — the bandwagon-effect thesis.<sup>10</sup> The second thesis holds that it resulted from the Canadian need for compensating its decision not to intervene in Iraq — the compensation thesis. Finally, the third thesis affirms that the significant role played by the Canadian military interested in making the strategy more aggressive, as well as honouring the NATO alliance, conducted Canada to embrace the same strategic goals as advanced by the United States — the military ascendancy thesis. Such explanations are incomplete. They focus more on the overall Canadian decision to intervene in Afghanistan than on the international and domestic

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<sup>9</sup> Joel Sokolsky and Philippe Lagassé, “Suspenders and a Belt: Perimeter and Border in Canada-US Relations,” *Canadian Foreign Policy* 12, no. 3 (2005-2006): 15-29; Christopher Sands, “An Independent Security Policy for Canada in the Age of Sacred Terror,” in *An Independent Foreign Policy for Canada? Challenges and Choices for the Future*, eds. Brian Bow and Patrick Lennox (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 103-117.

<sup>10</sup> Bandwagoning means that weaker states throw in their lot with stronger states in the hope of getting future benefits, which would entail subordinating the interests of the former to the latter. This term has been traditionally opposed to balancing, seen as a strategy aimed at preventing anyone power from achieving dominance. See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126; Birthe Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics. A Theory and Its Implications* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 24; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton. 2014), 139.

strategic environment informing Canadian foreign and security policy. These explanations also prevent the analysis from finding answers from the perspective on both the American and Canadian sides by conducting a comparative analysis.

Theoretically, this dissertation is fruitful since it addresses the third puzzle derived from Waltz's theory of international politics by providing a neoclassical realist foreign policy perspective on the comparative analysis of American and Canadian interventions in Afghanistan. In other words, addressing the similarity of great powers and middle powers' engagement levels supplements Waltz's original puzzle, as well as the first and second puzzles derived from it. After all, this dissertation does not compare two countries with similar relative power (Waltz's original puzzle). Neither does it make sense by comparing countries with different relative capabilities behaving differently, excepting by the 2001-2005 period, when the United States and Canada adopted great power and middle power's strategic objectives (the first puzzle derived from Waltz's theory). It seeks much less to compare two countries with similar capabilities behaving differently (the second puzzle derived from Waltz's theory) because the most critical factor in comparing American and Canadian foreign policies is inevitably their dramatically different relative capabilities. By addressing the third puzzle through neoclassical realism, this dissertation helps advance the purpose of this theory of becoming "the logical and necessary extension of structural realism,"<sup>11</sup> especially when a comparative foreign policy analysis is conducted.

This introductory chapter is organized as follows. The first section summarizes the strategic context in which Canadian and American intervention in Afghanistan took place. The second section examines how such policies became similar during the intervention, establishing the years 2005/2006 as the tipping point, which is the point of departure of this dissertation. The third

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<sup>11</sup> Brian Rathbun, "A Rose by Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2. (2008): 294-321.

section clarifies the scope of the research question and hypothesis. The fourth section addresses the two primary gaps in the literature that this study seeks to fill. The first gap derives from the tendency of the literature on Canadian and American foreign policy to address the position in the international distribution of power, foreign policy executive perceptions, and domestic institutions of both countries separately in explaining each country's engagement in Afghanistan. The second gap is linked to the tendency of security studies literature to skip countries with different capabilities, even if they behave similarly. The final section explains this dissertation's structure, which is informed by a neoclassical realist foreign and security policy analysis.

### **1. Canadian and American interventions in Afghanistan: the strategic context**

One of the most critical milestones in the recent history of American and Canadian foreign and security policies has been the War on Terrorism (WoT) and its subsequent implementation during the Afghanistan intervention between 2001 and 2014. Regarding the WoT, both the United States and Canada adopted similar security strategies to take action at the domestic, regional, and international levels. At the domestic and regional levels, both countries adopted comparable anti-terrorist legislation and institutional efforts to transform homeland security, emergency preparedness, intelligence, law enforcement, and border security policies.<sup>12</sup> At the international level, both countries considered not only terrorism as a direct threat to their national security, but also that failed states should be reconstructed to prevent them from being safe havens for terrorist groups. About the Afghanistan intervention, it can be seen as the international component of the

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<sup>12</sup> Christopher Raj, "Canada and International Terrorism since 9/11," in *Canada's Global Engagement and Relations with India*, ed. Raj Christopher and Abdul Nafey (New Delhi: Manak, 2007), 158-157; Stephen Clarkson and Maria Banda, "Paradigm Shift or Paradigm Twist? The Impact of the Bush Doctrine on Canada," Special Report Presented at the Conference at York University *Canada, Free Trade and Deep Integration in North America: Revitalizing Democracy, Upholding the Public Good*, October 14-16, 2003, 5; Sands, "An Independent Security Policy for Canada in the Age of Sacred Terror," 110.

WoT, which both countries aimed to advance, particularly considering that after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Afghan Taliban regime and al Qaeda became one of the most significant threats for both countries.<sup>13</sup>

During the intervention, the United States assumed most of the operations waiting for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan, to advance throughout the country. Once the alliance named a different lead nation for a regional command, the United States took over the Regional Command East's responsibility.<sup>14</sup> For its part, Canada not only was one of the first nations — after the United Kingdom — to support the U.S.-led intervention but also to uphold the idea that such a response could be more efficient if NATO replaced the UN mandate. Among the roles it took over within the ISAF, Canada changed its mission in scope and intensity, from its participation in the warfighting mission from October 2001 to summer 2002, to the Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R) mission in Kabul between 2003 and 2005, and the military operation in Kandahar between 2005 to 2011, and the NATO Training Mission between 2011 to 2014. One of the most notable roles played by Canada was certainly to lead the Regional Command South.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that the Afghanistan intervention and the country's intended

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<sup>13</sup> On the American side, see The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (Washington D.C.: The White House, 2002); The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (Washington D.C.: The White House, 2010). On the Canadian side, see Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement. A Role of Pride and Influence – Defence* (Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada, 2005), 4-5, 8; Department of National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, 2008), 6; Government of Canada, *Building Resilience Against Terrorism. Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy* (Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada, 2013), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Jean Christophe Boucher and Stephane Roussel, "From Afghanistan to 'Quebecistan': Quebec as the Pharmakon of Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy," in *Canada Among Nations 2007. What Room for Manoeuvre?* ed. Jean Daudelin and Daniel Schwanen (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 273; Moens, "Afghanistan and the Revolution in Canadian Foreign Policy," 571. However, it is worth noting that after the death of 4 soldiers in a "friendly fire" with the US National Guard, which was known as the Tarnak Farm incident, Canada left the mission for almost a year to rethink its strategy in Afghanistan. It returns in 2003 within the NATO mission. See Mike Friscolanti, *Friendly Fire: The Untold Story of the US Bombing that Killed Four Canadian Soldiers in Afghanistan* (Mississauga, ON: John Wiley & Sons, 2005).

reconstruction were undertaken with the collaboration of several actors, conducted in different stages, and justified under distinct mandates. On the one hand, the actors that performed the intervention were the NATO and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council members, as well as the United Nations, the European Union, and some non-governmental organizations which undertook “complementary missions in support of reconstruction”.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, the intervention evolved through four critical transitions depending on its mandate’s nature. First, in late 2001, under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the United States led a coalition to overthrow the Taliban regime and dismantle al Qaeda operatives. Secondly, at the end of 2001, under the United Nations auspices, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was constituted with a narrow mandate to provide security in Kabul and help the Afghan people develop government capacities. Thirdly, once ISAF became a NATO mission in 2003, the operation began to spread its coverage and mission by addressing the entire country and including security, reconstruction, development, and governance objectives.<sup>17</sup> Such an operation implied progressively deploy five regional commands between 2004 and 2011, starting with Kabul in the north and advancing in “a series of counterclockwise steps around the country”.<sup>18</sup> Finally, ISAF ceased combat operations in 2014, leaving some troops to advise and train the reconstructed Afghanistan government’s forces exclusively. Discussed since 2009, when President Obama announced the U.S. withdrawal during NATO’s 2010 Lisbon Summit, this mission was assumed under the mandate of Operation Resolute Support.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> David Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014), 138.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 135-136.

<sup>18</sup> Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 32; see also Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 135-154.

<sup>19</sup> David Kilcullen, “Fumbling the Baton: US Civil-Military Relations in the Afghan War,” in *Reconstructing Afghanistan. Civil-Military Experiences in Comparative Perspective*, ed. William Maley and Susanne Schmeidl (London: Routledge, 2015), 18-19.

## **2. Countries with similar foreign and security policies but with dissimilar power positions: the point of departure for the research**

Much has been written about the United States and Canada's roles as a great power and a middle power and how these roles have impacted their foreign and security policies. Arguably, this substantial literature makes a detailed discussion about such roles unnecessary.<sup>20</sup> Suffice it to say that after the Second World War and during the Cold War, the United States became a great power and thus felt responsible for international peace and security globally for the first time in its history.<sup>21</sup> In particular, it undertook containment, deterrence, and counterinsurgency to achieve such a goal. For its part, since the Lester B. Pearson years, Canada began to act as a middle power between large and minor powers. Even though Canadian leaders felt that their country had to take on significant responsibility in building a liberal-based international order, Canada could not commit militarily and economically to accomplish that goal as much as the United States and other Western great powers.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, Canada defined itself as a peacekeeper aimed at simply building confidence and monitoring agreements between parties in distinct international conflicts.<sup>23</sup> To sum up, the United States and Canada followed different paths during the Cold War. Both were obsessed with stopping the spread of communism, yet the former followed the path of containment, deterrence, and counterinsurgency, whereas the latter followed that of peacekeeping.

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<sup>20</sup> On the Canadian side, see Lionel Gelber, "Canada's New Stature," *Foreign Affairs* 24 (Jan. 1946): 277-280; R.A. Mackay, "The Canadian Doctrine of the Middle Power," in *Towards a New World. Readings in the History of Canadian Foreign Policy*, ed. J.L. Granatstein (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992); Adam Chapnik, *The Middle Power Project: Canada and the Founding of the United States* (Vancouver: UBC, 2005). On the American side, see Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions. American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), chapters 3-5; Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders. Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 2006), chapter 4; Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," 45-50.

<sup>21</sup> Raymond Aron, *Peace and War. A Theory of International Relations* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1960), 1.

<sup>22</sup> Kendall Holloway, *Canadian Foreign Policy. Defending the National Interest* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2006), 86-112.

<sup>23</sup> Murray and McCoy, "From Middle Power to Peacebuilder," 172-177.

During the post-Cold War period, however, the United States and Canada started to adopt similar strategic objectives. Both of these countries were in the 1991 Gulf War to support the UN Security Council resolutions aimed at liberating Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation.<sup>24</sup> They were in Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) to ensure the Dayton Peace Accords' compliance between December 15, 1995, to December 20, 1996, and, then, continued participating in the Stabilization Force in this country (SFOR) from 1997 to 2014.<sup>25</sup> The United States and Canada also contributed militarily and diplomatically to a large extent to resolving the Kosovo crisis during 1998 and 1999.<sup>26</sup>

Among the post-Cold War military interventions, the Afghanistan intervention (2001-2014) is the one that best demonstrates how Canadian and American strategic objectives can converge. Both countries found themselves following the same path in deploying COIN strategies. This similarity occurred as a result of the progressive shift of their foreign and security policies. On the one hand, the Bush administration started its mandate criticizing the Clinton administration's engagement with nation-building. However, after the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration started a CT operation in Afghanistan and, then in 2006, performed a COIN campaign. On the other hand, the Chrétien administration supported the US-led military

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<sup>24</sup> National Defence and Canadian Forces, "The Canadian Forces in the Gulf War (1990-1991)", April 3, 1997. Last modified July 6, 2018. Accessed Jan 13, 2019. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=the-canadian-forces-in-the-gulf-war-1990-1991/hnm17y3>; Joseph Nye, "Why the Gulf War Served the National Interest," *The Atlantic Online* 268, no. 1 (1991): 56-64.

<sup>25</sup> Government of Canada, "Implementation Force (IFOR)". Last modified December 12, 2018. Accessed January 13, 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/past-operations/europe/alliance.html>; Steven Bowman, Julie Kim, and Steven Woehrel, "Bosnia Stabilization Force (SFOR) and U.S. Policy," *CRS Report for Congress*, September 1, 1998. <http://congressionalresearch.com/97-475/document.php?study=BOSNIA+STABILIZATION+FORCE+SFOR+AND+U.S.+POLICY>. These operations can be seen either as an active peacekeeping mission or as the second, third or fourth generations of peacekeeping. See United Nations (UN), *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305 S/2000/809)* (2000), par. 12; Jussi Hanhimäki, *The United Nations. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 76-77; Elinor Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2016), chapter 6.

<sup>26</sup> See Michael Manulak, "Canada and the Kosovo Crisis: A 'Golden Moment' in Canadian Foreign Policy," *International Journal* 64, no. 2 (2009): 565-581; Bruce R. Nardulli, et al., *Disjointed War. Military Operations in Kosovo, 1999* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002).

intervention in Afghanistan, yet the NATO-led S&R mission framed its commitment in Kabul. However, once the Martin administration decided to focus its foreign and security policy on Kandahar, Canada began to adopt the same strategic objectives of COIN as advanced by the United States. This convergence undoubtedly deepened during the Harper administration. The following sections showcase the shift of American and Canadian foreign and security policies and their high degree of similarity during the Afghanistan intervention.

*2.1. The early years of the Afghanistan intervention (2001-2005): allies with different strategic objectives*

Except for the Canadian participation in the warfighting mission under the U.S.-led OEF between October 2001 to November 2002, during the first years of the intervention, Canadian and American foreign and security policies were dissimilar.<sup>27</sup> The Bush and Chrétien administrations undertook CT and S&R operations, respectively, as opposed to COIN. On the one hand, although a rapid intervention of U.S. Special Forces, and CIA's Special Activities Division, collaborating with local forces led by warlords, resulted in the collapse of the Taliban regime, such a victory was incomplete: al Qaeda leaders managed to escape into Pakistan. At that moment, the United States started its CT campaign to defeat and dismantle al-Qaeda and prevent Afghanistan from being a terrorist safe-haven.<sup>28</sup> Specifically, during the Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld years, the United States focused on undertaking kinetic counterterrorism operations and supporting the newly formed Afghan National Army (ANA). Not only did it mean that the focus of operations would be the enemy force rather than the population — the classical distinction between CT and COIN —

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<sup>27</sup> Government of Canada, "History of Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan 2001-2014." Last modified June 19, 2014. Accessed January 13, 2019. <https://www.international.gc.ca/afghanistan/history-histoire.aspx?lang=eng>.

<sup>28</sup> Kilcullen, "Fumbling the Baton," 13.

but also it led to avoid deployment of a large number of troops, as well as commitments with nation-building initiatives — inevitably associated with a fully resourced COIN. After all, Rumsfeld aimed to get the United States out of Afghanistan as soon as possible and make the ANA responsible for the country's security, not to mention his intention to focus military forces on Iraq, while the ISAF was deployed across the country since 2003.<sup>29</sup> Above all, during the early years of the intervention, the American foreign policy executive (FPE) debated the utility of narrow and broad CT approaches. The former focuses on lethal operations against terrorist groups, whereas the latter proposed combining these operations with nation-building.<sup>30</sup> President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice embraced the broad approach, whereas Secretary Rumsfeld promoted the narrow approach to CT.<sup>31</sup> As this study will show, the narrow approach was dominant during this period.

On the other hand, after the 9/11 attacks, Canada became a security partner of the United States during the OEF. However, as a probable result of the Tarnak Farm incident in which four Canadian soldiers died during a friendly fire with a U.S. fighter aircraft, the Chrétien administration narrowed its participation in Afghanistan to S&R operations in Kabul, one of the less dangerous places in the country. This decision entailed merely guaranteeing the city's surrounding security and monitor the 2004 elections.<sup>32</sup> During this period, the Canadian FPE discussed the transition from a low-risk approach to S&R to a moderate-risk to S&R. The former includes supporting demobilization, new armed forces, constitutional reforms, electoral elections,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 13-14. See also Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 88-90.

<sup>30</sup> Prasad Rane, "NATO's Counter-Terrorism Strategies in Afghanistan," *Strategic Analysis* 31, no. 1 (2007): 74-80; United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*.

<sup>31</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), 205; Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor. A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2011), 84, 91 and 148; Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown. A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 682-3.

<sup>32</sup> Murray and McCoy, "From Middle Power to Peacebuilder," 177-178; Chapin, "Into Afghanistan," 194; see also Mike, *Friendly Fire*.

and economic reconstruction, whereas the latter entails combining these civilian operations with moderate warfighting missions.<sup>33</sup>

The low-risk approach to S&R informed the Canadian FPE's interest in participating in the ISAF mission led by European Forces between 2001 and 2003 to support the Afghan Interim Authority.<sup>34</sup> However, the United Kingdom did not consider the Canadian contribution necessary for the mission. In this regard, the Canadian FPE selected another option available: to join the U.S.-led OEF, which entailed adopting a moderate-risk approach to S&R by entering in Kandahar between October 2001 and November 2002.<sup>35</sup> After staying in Kabul between 2002 and 2005, Canada reaffirmed this approach again with the Martin Liberals' decision to go to Kandahar in 2005. That year, NATO kept broadening its mission to cover the country after the Afghan government proved incapable of keeping its authority beyond Kabul.<sup>36</sup> However, the Kandahar decision paved the way for involving a high-risk approach that would come in the form of COIN. It is worth noting that both Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin complained about their successors' risk escalation. The former criticized the Martin Liberals' transition from the low- to the moderate-risk approach to S&R<sup>37</sup> and the latter rejected the Harper Conservatives' decision to adopt a high-risk mission between 2006 and 2011.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, 106.

<sup>34</sup> Bill Graham, *The Call of the World: A Political Memoir* (Vancouver, BC: On Point Press, 2016), 225; UN Security Council, Resolution 1386, Adopted by the Security Council at its 4443<sup>rd</sup> meeting, December 20, 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 252. See also Jean-Christophe Boucher and Kim Richard Nossal, *The Politics of War: Canada's Afghanistan Mission, 2001-14* (Toronto, UBC Press, 2017), 16-17.

<sup>36</sup> See Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 18-19; Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 32; Yost *NATO's Balancing Act*, 135-154.

<sup>37</sup> Jean Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knoff, 2007), 305.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Martin, *Hell or High Water. My Life In and Out of Politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2008), 395.

### 2.3. *The late years of the Afghanistan intervention (2006-2011): American and Canadian COIN strategies*

During the late years of the Afghanistan intervention, the differences between the United States and Canada gradually lessened. Indeed, the Bush administration, and the Martin and Harper administrations adopted comparable strategies regarding COIN. Once Robert Gates became the U.S. Secretary of Defence on December 18, 2006, the Bush administration aimed to review its foreign policy towards Afghanistan. This review would inevitably keep the need for fighting against the Taliban and other insurgent groups, helping President Hamid Karzai to increase “the size and capabilities of the Afghan security forces [and] to work with [American] allies to strengthen the NATO force in Afghanistan.” These goals were critical components of the initial CT strategy. Nevertheless, three new objectives, all of them associated with classic COIN strategies, were introduced, namely, to “[a] to] improve provincial governance and develop Afghanistan’s — and to help develop Afghanistan’s rural economy [b] to] reverse the increase in poppy cultivation that is aiding the Taliban [and c)] to help President Karzai fight corruption”.<sup>39</sup>

During the Obama administration, the FPE kept COIN’s primary goals. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pointed out, the American COIN strategy focused on fighting against the Afghan insurgency, maintaining stabilized areas and reconstructing and developing the country. These objectives corresponded to the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ COIN components. Together, these components would help disconnect insurgents from the population and win the latter’s hearts and minds.<sup>40</sup> However, the American FPE discussed the utility of setting limits over the COIN

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<sup>39</sup> The White House, “President Bush Discusses Progress in Afghanistan, Global War on Terror.” February 15, 2007. Accessed October 2, 2018. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/02/20070215-1.html>.

<sup>40</sup> See Hillary Clinton, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 136; The United States, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5) (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), 1-121 – 1-136.

strategy. Indeed, President Obama's message started to turn to the assumption that the nation to be reconstructed by the United States should be his own.<sup>41</sup> After all, the 2008 fiscal crisis, along with the enormous economic cost of the Iraq War, calculated at about 2-3 trillion dollars, posed significant fiscal constraints.<sup>42</sup> Obsessed with limiting the military engagement, the Obama administration's strategy in Afghanistan ended up looking more like a selective COIN strategy and, after 2011, as a narrow approach to CT than as a fully-resourced COIN with a broad geographical scope. This administration's selective COIN strategy referred to narrowing the theatre of operations, whereas its narrow approach to CT implied using firepower and drone attacks to kill insurgents rather than conducting population security measures.<sup>43</sup>

During the same period, the Martin Liberals and, above all, the Harper Conservatives led Canada to transition from a strategy heavily burdened with caveats to a more aggressive strategy, giving rise to a vast room for manoeuvre to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in conducting the operations in the field.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Canada ended up abandoning the strategic ends and means of a peaceful S&R mission by adopting those of a selective COIN strategy.

Under Prime Minister Martin, Canada framed its COIN strategy within the 3D approach to failed states.<sup>45</sup> It established that "an integrated '3D' approach, combining diplomacy, defence, and development, is the best strategy for supporting states that suffer from a broad range of

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<sup>41</sup> Barack Obama, "Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan." West Point, New York. December 1, 2009. Accessed January 4, 2010. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

<sup>42</sup> Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes, *The Three Trillion Dollar War. The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict* (New York: W. W. Norton. 2008); Linda Bilmes, "The Financial Legacy of Iraq and Afghanistan: How Wartime Spending Decisions Will Constrain Future National Security Budgets," *Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, RWP13-006 (2013). <https://research.hks.harvard.edu/publications/getFile.aspx?Id=923>, 1-2.

<sup>43</sup> Kilcullen, "Fumbling the Baton," 17-18; Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 100.

<sup>44</sup> Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 127.

<sup>45</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement – Defence* (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, 2008).

interconnected problems.”<sup>46</sup> Such an approach, which was intended to project an international image of an autonomous agent with sufficient room for maneuver as to defining its strategic interests, resulted in justifying the decision to take command of the Kandahar PRT in August 2005. It was a significant decision not only for Canadians but also for the ISAF intervention as Kandahar had been one of the most dangerous and strategic provinces in Afghanistan. Not only had it been seized by the Taliban with an army of some 12,000 but its control, along with Panjawavi, had been considered the very heart of the ISAF’s strategy. In fact, without the control of Kandahar, the British and Dutch operations in Helmand and Uruzgan, contiguous to Kandahar, would not have mattered at the strategic and operative levels, and the new Afghan government would have fallen rapidly.<sup>47</sup> Along with the engagement with intensive military operations, during the Martin years, Canada started to support the “Afghan government’s ability to protect and deliver services to the people of the province,” which would be continued during the Harper years.<sup>48</sup> Not only did Canada help to improve the size of ANA in Kandahar and the training of correction and police officers, but it also attempted to enhance the provincial economy through Dahla Dam Project aimed at improving irrigation and providing jobs in the short term.<sup>49</sup> That is to say, the Canadian FPE adopted the same ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and “build’ COIN components as the United States.

Under the Harper Conservatives, Canadian COIN in Afghanistan was supported both financially and operationally. In the financial realm, the Harper administration allocated the highest percentage of the global defence spending to Afghanistan for a military operation in CAF operations history. The 5.2%, 6.04%, and 5.76% devoted to military operations in FY 2006-2007,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>47</sup> Chapin, “Into Afghanistan,” 195.

<sup>48</sup> John Manley (Chair), *Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan* (Ottawa, ON: Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan, 2008), 23.

<sup>49</sup> Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 60-61.

2007-2008, and 2008-2009 can be compared to the 4,61% allocated in FY 2003-2004. This percentage can also be compared to the 3.11% of 1999, when Canada participated in the Serbia bombing, and the 0.72% allocated to Balkan operations in 1996.<sup>50</sup> In the strategic and tactical realms, the operation in Afghanistan demanded a total transformation of the modus operandi of the CAF, which had embraced traditional peacekeeping during the Cold War and active peacekeeping (or S&R objectives) during the Balkan Wars during the 1990s and the early years of Afghanistan intervention. Among these transformations, the Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) and the Strategic Advisory Team (Sat-A) were the most critical. On the one hand, the CEFCOM, imitating the U.S. systems of combatant commanders, was designed to allow the commanders in the field to act with greater flexibility, especially when reallocating the forces according to strategic and tactical demands on the ground was needed. On the other hand, Sat-A allowed CAF staff to advise and work with the Afghan government to make better decisions regarding the allocation of resources, which was essential to support COIN objectives.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, as of 2011, the Harper administration decided to replace the high-risk COIN campaign with a training mission that lasted until 2014, when Canada withdrew its troops. In focusing solely on supporting the Afghanistan government and Afghan forces to assume full responsibility in their territory and undertaking development programs, this mission adopted a low-risk approach to S&R again. Besides focusing on the military training mission, Canada devoted attention to programs related to “Afghan children and youth; advancing security, the rule of law, and human rights; promoting regional diplomacy; and delivering humanitarian assistance.”<sup>52</sup>

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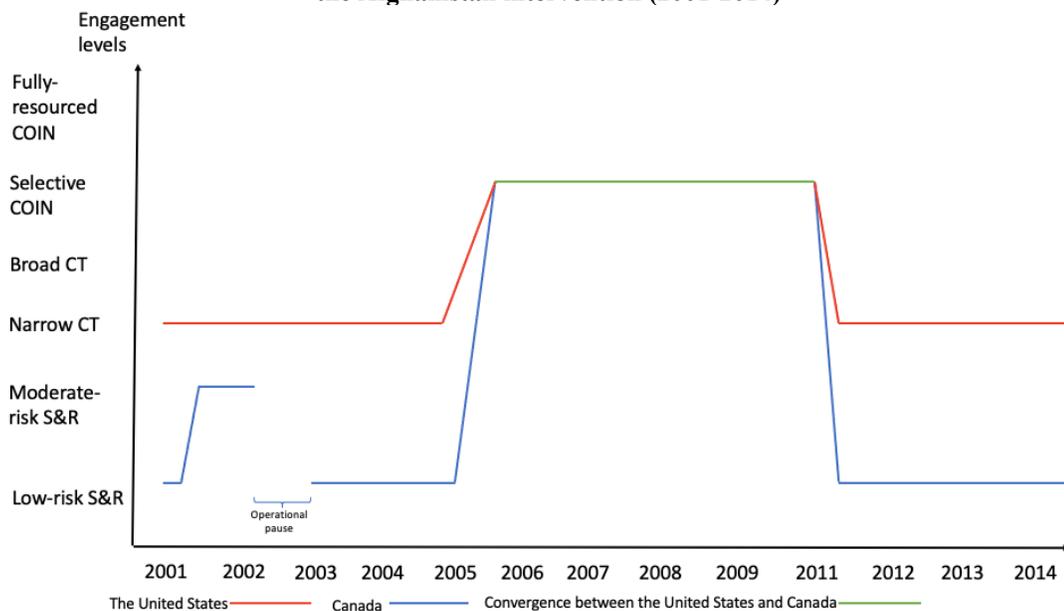
<sup>50</sup> David Perry, “Canada’s Seven Billion Dollar War. The Cost of Canadian Forces Operations in Afghanistan,” *International Journal* 63, no. 3 (2008): 703-725.

<sup>51</sup> Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 131; Marten, “From Kabul to Kandahar,” 221-3.

<sup>52</sup> Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 41.

Drawing on the previous reasoning, this study can point out two aspects. Firstly, the United States replaced CT with a selective COIN strategy in conducting its intervention in Afghanistan. Canada did the same by replacing its S&R mission. In this regard, both countries found themselves carrying out similar COIN strategies and, therefore, similar levels of engagement between 2005/2006 and 2011. S&R, CT, and COIN entailed different degrees of engagement involving different ways of resource mobilization and time frames. S&R, the preferred strategy chosen by most countries that intervened in Afghanistan, was hand in hand with strict rules of engagement, implied logistical constraints on military deployments, and was often conducted with a time limit. CT was conducted with a high leeway in terms of engagement and military deployment rules but implied short-term measurements. COIN implied a mobilization of military and civilian resources based on a whole-of-government approach and entailed a long-term engagement. Graph 1.1 illustrated the variations of American and Canadian levels of engagement during the Afghanistan intervention between 2001 and 2014.

**Graph 1.1: Convergence between the United States and Canada during the Afghanistan intervention (2001-2014)**



Secondly, despite their different places in the international system, both countries adopted relatively similar aggressive foreign and security policies, especially between 2005/2006 and 2011, which constituted a turning point in attempting to compare such policies. From the Canadian perspective, above all, the intervention entailed a dramatic change, even a revolution, *vis-à-vis* its traditional image of a middle power, as well as the middle-power theory related to it. This middle-power theory suggests that despite its middle-rank position between great powers, major powers, and minor powers, Canada could work multilaterally to guarantee consensus-building and promote innovative solutions to global security problems, such as peacekeeping during the Cold War and the human security agenda in the 1990s. Despite its rank in the international system as measured in terms of the size of its population, army, the levels of its defence spending, and per capita income, among other items related to material capabilities, Canada could maintain the international order. The former — its rank — was known as *middlepowerhood*, whereas the latter — its ability to maintain the international order — was conceptualized as *middlepowermanship*.<sup>53</sup> In Afghanistan, however, Canada showed to the world that middlepowerhood does not necessarily restrain Canadian foreign policy. In given circumstances, such as those conducive to the deployment to Kandahar, Canada can conduct strategies other than middlepowermanship and, accordingly, embrace strategies in the international security realm similar to those usually monopolized by great and major powers.

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<sup>53</sup> See Kim Richard Nossal, “‘Middlepowerhood’ and ‘Middlepowermanship’ in Canadian Foreign Policy,” in *Canada’s Foreign & Security Policy. Soft and Hard Strategies of a Middle Power*, eds. Nik Hynek and David Bosold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20-34.

### 3. Research question and hypothesis

With this strategic context in mind, this dissertation attempts to answer why and how, despite their different placement in the international distribution of power, did the United States and Canada adopt relatively similar foreign and security policies, especially similar engagement levels, during the Afghanistan intervention from 2005/2006 to 2011? This study hypothesizes that this outcome was the result of the combination of: (a) a relatively permissive strategic environment; (b) American and Canadian FPEs' similar strategic beliefs, and (c) these executives' comparable abilities to mobilize resources. Firstly, a unipolar structure, especially the absence of countervailing powers in Central Asia, facilitated a permissive international environment and, accordingly, meaningful options for both the United States and countries such as Canada, with sufficient capabilities and willingness to conduct military actions in Afghanistan.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the American and Canadian executives had to adjust such options to the Afghan irregular warfare evolution. Secondly, comparable justifications to intervene and beliefs about the strategies required to achieve their goals in Afghanistan allowed both countries' leaders to assume similar aggressive postures. Thirdly, similar levels of executive's structural autonomy offered by their political systems allowed American and Canadian FPEs to overcome legislative and public opposition to their preferred COIN strategy. The executives' ability to overcome domestic hurdles resulted in similar percentage levels of resource extraction in the form of legislative appropriations to conduct the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components.

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<sup>54</sup> See Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions. American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2; Christopher Kirkey and Nicholas Ostroy, "Why is Canada in Afghanistan? Explaining Canada's Military Commitment," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 200-213.

#### 4. Intellectual justification and literature review

The research question aims to fill the gap in the literature on Canadian and American intervention in Afghanistan. With some remarkable exceptions,<sup>55</sup> the existing literature addresses the relative power, leader perceptions, and domestic institutions of both countries separately in explaining the causes of such interventions, preventing it from achieving a better understanding of the intersection between such factors. The literature on military interventions also tends to skip the comparison of countries with different positions in the international distribution of power, even if they behave similarly.

##### *4.1. Understanding the intersection between international constraints, domestic institutions, and perceptions*

Canadian and American foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention have been analyzed from different perspectives. Some have evaluated how the United States and Canada's place in the global distribution of power have impacted their foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan.<sup>56</sup> Others have addressed how both countries' decision-makers assessed the

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<sup>55</sup> See, for instance, Justin Massie's neoclassical realist foreign policy analysis of the Canadian intervention in Afghanistan. It is worth noting that Massie's analysis adopts a version of neoclassical realism different than that adopted by this study. Massie sees neoclassical realism as a theory of mistakes, whereas this study regards it as a theory of foreign policy. Justin Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan: A Realist Paradox," *International Journal* 68, no. 2 (2013): 279.

<sup>56</sup> Laura Neack, *The New Foreign Policy. U.S. and Comparative Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003); Barry Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security* 28, no. 1 (2003): 5-46; Adam Quinn, "'The deal': The Balance of Power, Military Strength, and Liberal Internationalism in the Bush National Security Strategy," *International Studies Perspectives* 9, no. 1 (2008): 40-56; Frank Harvey, "Dispelling the Myth of Multilateral Security after 11 September and the Implications for Canada," *Canada Among Nations 2003. Coping with the American Colossus*, eds. David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson and Norman Hillmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 200-218; Moens, "Afghanistan and the Revolution in Canadian Foreign Policy," 569-586; David McDonough, "Afghanistan and Renewing Canadian Leadership: Panacea or Hubris?" *International Journal* 64, no. 3 (2009): 647-665; Murray and McCoy, "From Middle Power to Peacebuilder," 171-188.

terrorist threat posed by the Taliban regime and al Qaeda<sup>57</sup>, as well as the values, challenges, and costs of the strategy implementation.<sup>58</sup> Some thinkers have sought to explain the role of domestic actors and political institutions concerning American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan.<sup>59</sup>

Above all, the literature highlights some reasons aimed at explaining why Canada adopted an aggressive foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan as advanced by the United States. A significant number of studies suggest that Canadian strategic interests, in general, and in Afghanistan in particular, were highly conditioned by the Canada-U.S. interdependence in the form of defence agreements and bilateral trade. According to those studies, another factor conditioning Canadian foreign policy would be the unipolar distribution of power, favouring the United States and allegedly reducing Canadian room for manoeuvre. This is the bandwagon-effect

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<sup>57</sup> Jean-Christophe Boucher, "Selling Afghanistan: A Discourse Analysis of Canada's Military Intervention, 2001-08," *International Journal* 64, no. 3 (2009): 717-733; Chapin, "Into Afghanistan," 189-199; Kirkey and Ostroy, "Why is Canada in Afghanistan? 200-213.

<sup>58</sup> Walter Dorn and Michael Varey, "Fatally Flawed: The Rise and Demise of the 'Three-Block War' Concept in Canada," *International Journal* 63, no. 4 (2008): 967-978; Marten, "From Kabul to Kandahar," 967-978; David McDonough, "The Paradox of Afghanistan: Stability Operations and the Renewal of Canada's International Security Policy," *International Journal* 62, no. 3 (2007): 620-641; David Perry, "Canada's Seven Billion Dollar War," 703-725; Kim Richard Nossal, "Don't Talk About the Neighbours: Canada and the Regional Politics of the Afghanistan Mission," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 17, no. 1 (2011): 9-22; Nicholas Gammer, "The Afghanistan Task Force and Prime Ministerial Leadership: Tactical Retreat of a New Direction in Managing Canadian Foreign Policy?" *American Review of Canadian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2013): 462-476; Steven Hurst, "Myths of Neoconservatism: George W. Bush's 'Neo-Conservative' Foreign Policy Revisited," *International Politics* 42, no. 1 (2005): 75-96; Jonathan Monten, "The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy," *International Security* 29, no. 4 (2005): 112-156; Robert Trager & Dessislava Zagorcheva, "Deterring Terrorism: It Can Be Done," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005-2006): 87-123; Richard Andres, Craig Willis, and Thomas Griffith, "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005-2006): 124-160; Stephen Biddle, "Allies, Airpower, and Modern Warfare: The Afghan Model in Afghanistan and Iraq," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005-2006): 161-176; John Mueller and Mark Stewart, "The Terrorism Delusion: America's Overwrought Response to September 11," *International Security* 37, no. 1 (2012): 81-110; Geoffrey Swenson, "Why U.S. Efforts to Promote the Rule of Law in Afghanistan Failed," *International Security* 42, no. 1 (2017): 114-151.

<sup>59</sup> Boucher and Roussel, "From Afghanistan to 'Quebecistan'"; Gammer, "The Afghanistan Task Force and Prime Ministerial Leadership," 462-476; Richard Eichenberg, "Victory Has Many Friends: U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981-2005," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 140-177; Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, Chapter 3-5.

thesis.<sup>60</sup>

Others have highlighted the decline of Canadian liberal internationalism and peace-keeping operations and, consequently, the Canadian need for promoting NATO operations. In particular, some have stressed the remarkable roles played by the Canadian Department of National Defence and General Rick Hillier, the former Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) of the CAF, obsessed with the strategic repositioning within the NATO intervention in Afghanistan. This is the military ascendancy thesis, which has been presented chiefly by Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang.<sup>61</sup> Finally, the demonstration of solidarity with the United States in having rejected the Iraq invasion is another reason evoked to explain the Canadian rapprochement to the U.S. foreign and security policy. This is the compensation thesis.<sup>62</sup>

The scholars mentioned above shed important light on how international constraints,

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<sup>60</sup> Kenneth Holland, "How Unipolarity Impacts Canada's Engagement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18, no. 1 (2012): 51-64; J. Rioux, J. *Le Canada Face aux Événements du 11 Septembre 2001. Mondialisation et Sécurité. Sécurité Pour Tous ou Insécurité Partagée* (Roiba-Algeria: ANEP, 2002); David Bercuson, "Canada-US Defence Relations Post 11 September," in *Canada Among Nations 2003. Coping with the American Colossus*, eds. David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson, and Norman Hillmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 121-134; Dwight Mason, "US-Canada Defence Relations: A View from Washington," *Canada Among Nations 2003*, 135-155; Anthony Campbell, "Canada-United States Intelligence Relations and 'Information Sovereignty'," in *Canada Among Nations 2003*, 156-179; Clarkson & Banda. "Paradigm Shift or Paradigm Twist?"; Joseph T Jockel and Joel J. Sokolsky, J., "A New Continental Consensus? The Bush Doctrine, the War on Terrorism and the Future of the US-Canada Security Relations," in *Canada Among Nations 2005. Split Images*, eds. Andrew F. Cooper and Dane Rowlands (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 63-78; Raj, "Canada and International terrorism since 9/11," 158-157; Chirstopher Sands, "Fading Power or Rising Power: 11 September and the Lessons from the Section 110 Experience," in *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy. Classic Debates and New ideas*, eds. Christopher John Kukucha, and Duanne Bratt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Osvaldo Croci and Amy Verdum, "Canada: Taking Security Seriously after 11 September?" *Global Security Governance. Competing Perceptions of Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds. Emil J. Kirchner and James Sperling (London: Routledge, 2007), 137-157; Sandrine Tolazzi, "Living Together. Canada, 10 years after 9/11," *International Journal* 67, no. 4 (2012): 865-878; Jeffrey Ayres and Laura MacDonald, "A Community of Fate? Nonpolarity and North American Security Interdependence," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 18, no. 1 (2012): 92-105; Jean-Christophe Boucher, "The Cost of Bandwagoning: Canada-US Defence and Security Relations after 9/11," *International Journal* 67, no. 4 (2012): 895-914; Brian Bow and Patrick Lennox, *An Independent Foreign Policy for Canada? Challenges and Choices for the Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> Janice Gross and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War. Canada in Kandahar* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2007), 188-196.

<sup>62</sup> Murray and McCoy, "From Middle Power to Peacebuilder," 179; Marten, "From Kabul to Kandahar," 214-236; Stephen M. Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust. Lessons Learned from Canada's War in Afghanistan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 56; Chapin, "Into Afghanistan," 194.

decision-makers' perceptions, and domestic institutions affected the Canadian and American foreign and security policies in Afghanistan and the progressive Canadian rapprochement to American foreign and security policies during the intervention. However, in addressing such factors separately, they ignore to a large extent the intersection between relative power, decision-makers' perceptions and calculations, and domestic institutions — with particular regard to the domestic mobilization of resources — in explaining Canadian and American foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. Also, those aimed at explaining the similarity between such strategies as a result of the Canadian subordination to the U.S. interests have missed the opportunity to consider other hypotheses from both the Canadian and American sides.

Furthermore, the bandwagon-effect, military ascendancy, and compensation theses have some loopholes that make them inaccurate explanations of the high degree of similarity of American and Canadian intervention in Afghanistan. Firstly, the predominance of American influence on Canadian foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan was exaggerated.<sup>63</sup> The longstanding alliance with the United States and the U.S. agenda in Afghanistan indeed constituted central references for Canada in formulating its foreign and security policy toward that country. Yet, it does not mean that the United States would have been interested in exercising a high level of influence or that Canada would not have had concerns other than American interests. Both of those conditions would have been critical to underpin the bandwagon-effect thesis. On the one hand, the United States was focused on Iraq since 2003, which allowed the NATO members, including Canada, to enjoy more room for manoeuvre to conduct their preferred foreign objectives in Afghanistan, as well as to discuss with each other the best strategic path for them at the margin

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<sup>63</sup> See Joseph T. Jockel, "Canada and the Netherlands in Afghanistan," *Martello Papers* 38 (Kingston, ON: Centre for International and Defence Policy, 2014): 6-7.

of a distracted United States.<sup>64</sup> This is true even after the United States paid a renewed attention to Afghanistan in 2006 once Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was replaced by Robert Gates.

On the other hand, despite its alliance with the United States, Canada had in mind its alliance with European powers and the Atlantic Alliance during the entire intervention. As mentioned earlier, before deciding to join the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the Chrétien administration sought to be part of the European-led ISAF mission. Such an operation was less dangerous than OEF and fit better into Canadian goals at that moment as it was focused solely on S&R. However, the United Kingdom declined a Canadian contribution to the ISAF mission, which forced Canada ultimately to join the warfighting mission within OEF in 2002.<sup>65</sup> Also, the decision to get into Kandahar in 2005/2006 *vis-à-vis* other provinces was based on the Canadian need to count on strategic partners in the South and NATO dynamics. Canada counted on the United States' support in the South but, above all, on the United Kingdom and the Netherlands as NATO members. With the latter two, Canada had built common strategic thinking since their deployments in the Balkans. Such a common understanding of threats and ways to deal with them, rather than American pressure, were critical to guarantee their joint deployment toward the south.<sup>66</sup> Still, the most important reason, challenging the bandwagon-effect thesis, is that Canada considered Afghanistan as a "War for Prestige" since 2005/2006 rather than a mere contribution to the U.S. led-War on Terror in Afghanistan (Chapter 4 will devote significant attention to address it in analyzing Canadian perceptions of the Afghan irregular warfare).<sup>67</sup>

Secondly, the military ascendancy thesis misses the point that Canadian policymakers

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<sup>64</sup> Matthew Willis, "An Unexpected War, a Not-Unexpected Mission: The Origins of Kandahar 2005," *International Journal* 67, no. 4 (2012): 998.

<sup>65</sup> Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan, 279.

<sup>66</sup> Willis, "An Unexpected War, A Not-Unexpected mission," 979-1000; see also Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 35.

<sup>67</sup> This dissertation borrows the term "War for prestige" from Justin Massie. Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan," 274-288. See also Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 33-34.

were interested from the outset in increasing action in Central Asia, including a robust military engagement, in promoting NATO's article 5 actively.<sup>68</sup> This article defines the principle of collective defense, meaning that an attack against one Ally may be regarded as an attack against all Allies. Such a thesis also brushes aside the point that civilians controlled the military by being responsible for the Afghanistan deployment's most critical strategic decisions. The Chrétien administration decided to go to Kandahar after the 9/11 attacks and then to move into Kabul. The Martin administration picked up Rick Hillier as Chief of the Defence Staff because his views on the CAF's role were compatible with its understanding of the new "role of pride and influence" for Canada.<sup>69</sup> The Harper administration decided to extend the mission twice and did not consider anyone's feedback, including the military, to conduct a training mission between 2011 and 2014. To control the military, Harper also chose lesser vocal CDSs, as compared to Hillier, such as Walt Natyncsyk, Tom Lawson, and Jonathan Vance.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, the compensation thesis leaves out two central points. On the one hand, Canada considered a potential, robust role in the ISAF mission simply because it was an appropriate mission for Canada, long before the United States started the Iraq War. On the other hand, as documented by Janice G. Gross and Eugene Lang, John McCallum, the Canadian Defence Minister (2000-2003) and Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. Secretary of National Defense (2001-2006) met together in June 2003 to address different aspects of the U.S-Canada defence relationship, including their positions regarding the Afghanistan intervention and the Iraq invasion. Gross and Lang's summary of the meeting clarifies that the United States considered the Canadian mission in Kabul good enough and deployment in Kandahar not completely necessary. That is to say, the

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<sup>68</sup> Willis, "An Unexpected War, A Not-Unexpected Mission," 982.

<sup>69</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 37. See also Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement. A Role of Pride and Influence* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2005).

<sup>70</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 98-9.

compensation thesis misses the point that Canada's decision to go into Kandahar was beyond American expectations.<sup>71</sup> Also, the United States "was not at all interested in a Canadian military contribution to the Iraq War"<sup>72</sup> because Canada was already contributing indirectly to this war by providing naval vessels and aircraft.<sup>73</sup> In a nutshell, this thesis fails because there was nothing to compensate.

To fill the gaps in the literature and provide an alternative view to the mentioned-above theses, this research attempts to explain the intersection between international constraints, domestic mobilization of resources, and perceptions to understand the American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. What is more, by undertaking a comparison without overemphasizing the bandwagon-effect and military ascendancy theses and brushing aside the compensation thesis, this study attempts to go beyond the ideas of the "Americanization" of Canadian foreign policy and the syndrome of "parochialism" of the U.S. foreign policy regarding its Northern neighbour.<sup>74</sup>

#### *4.2. Comparing countries with different positions in the world power configuration*

Comparisons of state behaviour, especially in the terrain of international security in general and military interventions in particular, have tended to select countries with the same position in the configuration of power to evaluate their similar or different strategies.<sup>75</sup> Not surprisingly, within

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<sup>71</sup> Gross and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, 50 and 182.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>73</sup> Paul Celluti, Speech at the Economic Club of Toronto (March 23, 2003), [www.ourrant.ca](http://www.ourrant.ca), quoted by Willis, "An Unexpected War, A Not-Unexpected Mission," 984.

<sup>74</sup> Sands, "An Independent Security Policy for Canada in the Age of Sacred Terror?" 103-117.

<sup>75</sup> See, for instance, Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); William Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance. Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," 44-79; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2014); Randall Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing," *International Security* 29, no. 2 (2004): 159-201; Randall Schweller, *Unanswered Threats. Political Constraints on*

the existing literature, there have been scant attempts to compare Canadian and American foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan.<sup>76</sup> In terms of comparative political analysis, it can be consequently argued that such literature has privileged the “method of difference” rather than the “method of agreement” — in the familiar terms advanced by John Stuart Mill’s logic of comparison. That is to say, investigators on military interventions have explicitly or implicitly chosen “cases with similar general characteristics and different values on the study variable [foreign policy, strategy, military intervention or engagement levels]” — method of difference, and have brushed aside the selection of “cases with different general characteristics and similar values on the study variable” — method of agreement.<sup>77</sup> To fill the gap, this research seeks to compare a great power and a middle power with similar foreign and security policies during a specific time.

## 5. Theoretical approach

This study selects neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy to compare the United States and Canadian foreign and security policies because it addresses the most critical factor to conduct this comparison: apparent differences in American and Canadian power resources. After all, like a realist theory, neoclassical realism makes power resources the center of its analysis. Above all, neoclassical realism explains state behaviour in terms of power capabilities, which is

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*the Balance of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Randall Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances. Tripolarity and Hitler’s Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Mark Brawley, “Neoclassical Realism and Strategic Calculations: Explaining Divergent British, French, and Soviet Strategies Toward Germany between the World Wars (1919-1939),” in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Norrin Ripsman, Steven Lobell and Jeffrey Taliaferro (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 74-98.

<sup>76</sup> See Sloan, *Security and Defense in the Terrorist Era*; Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, chapter 2.

<sup>77</sup> Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 57.

critical to deal with interstate competition operating under conditions of scarcity and anarchy.<sup>78</sup> Scarcity means that the interstate competition looks like a zero-sum game, whereas anarchy entails the absence of a central authority willing and able to constrain state behaviour. Under these conditions, survival and self-help become the only possible state responses to international competition.<sup>79</sup>

Still, neoclassical realism can compare American and Canadian foreign and security policies by considering factors other than power resources. It considers that the analysis of state power depends not only on material capabilities but also on how foreign policy decision-makers perceive the strategic environment and mobilize domestic resources to implement their preferred strategic options. That is to say, neoclassical realism embraces a conception of power that includes not only power resources but also leaders' perceptions and domestic politics.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, perceptions and domestic politics become critical to understand how states, individually considered, seek to adapt themselves to the international system.<sup>81</sup> Also, these factors help explain why and how states, like the United States and Canada, playing central roles during the Afghanistan intervention, adopted similar foreign and security policies, even though their power resources were ostensibly different. Neoclassical realism helps highlight the conditions, at the systemic and domestic levels, under which perceptions and domestic politics bring about states' similar adaptation to the international system. More importantly, this theoretical framework can highlight these conditions due to its views about the strategic environment, executives' belief systems and state power.

The first condition encouraging high levels of similarity between Canadian and American

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<sup>78</sup> Randall Schweller, "Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism," in *Progress in International Relations Theory. Appraising the Field*, eds. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 326.

<sup>79</sup> Brian Schmidt and Tim Dunne, "Realism," in *The Globalization of World politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 104-106.

<sup>80</sup> Schweller. "Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism," 302 and 311.

<sup>81</sup> Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 151 and 157.

foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan has to do with comparable systemic stimuli from the strategic environment. According to neoclassical realism, the strategic environment is defined by the place that the states occupy in the international system, the international distribution of state capabilities, and the threats that the states must face.<sup>82</sup> With this definition of the strategic environment in mind, neoclassical realism would expect similar American and Canadian foreign and security policies if the international distribution of power had simultaneously offered the same freedom of action and equal opportunities for both countries to conduct these policies, despite their different places in the international system. Likewise, the similarity would result from the need to adapt to similar threats to their national interests.

The second condition would be high similarity between their FPEs' principled beliefs and causal beliefs regarding security and defence issues. The former refers to how FPEs distinguish right and wrong, and just and unjust strategic ends, whereas the latter correspond to the ideational justification of the best means to meet security ends.<sup>83</sup> Neoclassical realism would expect similar American and Canadian foreign policies only if their FPEs share the same principled beliefs and causal beliefs. If these countries, for instance, shared principled beliefs but disagreed in terms of causal beliefs, they would not carry out similar foreign and security policies. As mentioned earlier, this was the case during the Cold War when both countries embraced the need to contain communism, yet they adopted different strategies to achieve this goal: containment, deterrence, and counterinsurgency, in the case of the United States, and peacekeeping, in the case of Canada.

The third condition would correspond to comparable state powers, seen as FPEs' abilities

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<sup>82</sup> Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 38-56.

<sup>83</sup> Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy. Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*, eds. Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 9-10.

to overcome domestic hurdles, especially legislative and public opposition, and resource extraction capabilities. Neoclassical realism would expect comparable foreign and security policies if both American and Canadian executives enjoy similar structural autonomy within their political systems, especially in terms of their freedom of action to conduct foreign policies *vis-à-vis* legislative oversight.<sup>84</sup> The similarity would also depend on these executives' ability to forge elite consensus and social cohesion around their foreign and security policies. Elite consensus and social cohesion are often unlikely. In this regard, neoclassical realism would merely expect executives' similar ability to overcome hurdles from the legislative branch and the public.<sup>85</sup> Together, comparable structural autonomy and abilities to overcome legislative and public obstacles would bring about similar resource-extraction capabilities resulting in legislative appropriations.<sup>86</sup>

## 6. A three-step research design

This study adopts a three-step research design to operationalize neoclassical realism's assumptions and to examine the extent to which the conditions mentioned above were presented during the American and Canadian intervention in Afghanistan. It aims to appraise the effects of: i) the strategic environment; ii) the United States and Canadian FPEs' perceptions, and iii) domestic politics, especially these executives' ability to mobilize resources, on the American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. Specifically, to look into the causal

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<sup>84</sup> See Norrin M. Ripsman, *Peacemaking by Democracies. The Effect of State Autonomy of the post-World Settlements* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

<sup>85</sup> See Schweller, *Unanswered Threats*, chapters 2-3; Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power. The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); and Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries. Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>86</sup> On a historical account of states' resource-extraction capabilities, see Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2006): 464-495.

mechanism that drove similar American and Canadian foreign and security policies, neoclassical realism distinguishes between independent, intervening and dependent variables. This study establishes as the independent variable the level of permissiveness/restrictiveness offered by the strategic environment to the United States and Canada. The two intervening variables that, by definition, would limit, modify, leverage, or magnify the impact of the strategic environment's levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness on the United States and Canada's engagement levels are: a) American and Canadian executives' belief systems and b) these executives' ability to mobilize domestic resources.<sup>87</sup>

The dependent variable corresponds to the changing levels of American and Canadian engagements during the Afghanistan intervention. As mentioned, the United States and Canada increased their engagement levels, with the former adopting CT and the latter embracing S&R between 2001 and 2005/2006 and both undertaking similar COIN strategies between 2005/2006 and 2011. S&R, CT, and COIN entailed different degrees of engagement in involving distinct ways of resource mobilization and time frames. This study also measures these engagement levels in terms of the military contingent deployed in Afghanistan as a percentage of their armies' total sizes, the number of fatalities during the intervention, and their involvement in Afghanistan's most dangerous areas. The figures used to analyze these engagement levels came from Stephen Saideman's data gathering from iCasualties.org, NATO, Albanian Institute of Statistics, and US and Canadian census figures.<sup>88</sup> The remainder of this section addresses the three steps of analysis that this study's research design adopts to understand the effects of the independent and intervening variables on the dependent variable.

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<sup>87</sup> See Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, chapters 2-3.

<sup>88</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 16, 22, 131-132.

*6.1. The first step of analysis: assessing the effects of the strategic environment on foreign policy*

The first step of analysis aims to evaluate the extent to which the levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness of the post-9/11 strategic environment impacted the United States and Canada's engagement levels in undertaking their foreign and security policies. Specifically, these levels come in the form of freedom to choose among available foreign and security options. To be sure, neoclassical realism would expect that high levels of strategic permissiveness would pave the way for increased American and Canadian engagements in Afghanistan. To address this independent variable, this study considers that the strategic environment's levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness are inextricably linked to:

1. the place occupied by the states in the international system (which offers different opportunities),
2. the international distribution of material capabilities, and
3. the scope of the threats that states must face in carrying out their foreign and security policies.

Regarding states' place in the international system, a neoclassical realist foreign policy analysis would suggest that great powers, major powers, middle powers and minor powers found different levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness due to their distinct relative material capabilities. *Great powers* would enjoy the highest levels of permissiveness in the international system due to their ability to excel in all the items of material capabilities, including "size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and

competence.”<sup>89</sup> Among these dimensions should also be included the item of nuclear capability.<sup>90</sup> *Major powers* would enjoy higher levels of permissiveness compared to other states, excepting great powers, due to their ability to excel globally in at least one item of material capabilities. Major powers would also enjoy greater freedom of action to conduct their foreign and security policies due to their “sufficient capabilities to deter any state in the system [excepting great powers, plus] a plausible chance of avoiding defeat in an all-out defensive war against a potential aggressor.”<sup>91</sup> *Middle powers* would enjoy relative levels of permissiveness resulting in “considerable capability and political independence”<sup>92</sup> due to their middle-rank position (especially in terms of defence spending and the size of their armies) between great powers and major powers, on the one hand, and minor countries, on the other hand. As mentioned, it would correspond to *middlepowerhood*, which could be combined with their *middlepowermanship*.

This study considers the United States and Canada’s place in the international system by comparing American and Canadian military capabilities among the coalition forces intervening in Afghanistan. Specifically, this study considers three items: their annual average defence spending, their defence spending rank, and their armies’ size. The figures used to analyze such material capabilities come from Stephen Saideman’s data gathering,<sup>93</sup> and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)’s Military Expenditure Database for 2018.<sup>94</sup> Based on such capabilities, this research divided the coalition forces other than the United States as a great power into three categories: *major coalition forces* (United Kingdom, France, and Germany), *midrange*

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<sup>89</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 131.

<sup>90</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “The Continuity of International Politics,” in *Worlds in Collision. Terror and the Future of Global Order*, eds. Ken Booth and Tim Dunne (New York, Palgrave, 2002), 351.

<sup>91</sup> Nuno Monteiro, “Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful,” *International Security* 36, no. 3 (2011-2012): 14-15.

<sup>92</sup> Dewitt and Kirton, *Canada as a Principal power*, 22.

<sup>93</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 16 and 22.

<sup>94</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Military Expenditure for Country in Constant (2018) US\$, 2019*.

*coalition forces* (Australia and Canada), and minor coalition forces (the remaining coalition forces).

As far as the international distribution of material capabilities is concerned, neoclassical realism would argue that the number of great powers in the international system, resulting in multi-, bi- and unipolar structures, would also offer different levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness for the states. The critical point here is that this study's refined version of neoclassical realism argues that the international distribution of material capabilities constitutes another strategic dimension, which qualifies states' strategic environment. It is not only defined by the effects of states' relative material capabilities but also by the international distribution of material capabilities on their foreign policies. This theoretical framework argues that there would have specific implications for great powers and their allies, depending on the number of great powers in the international system. This consideration is significant to compare those foreign and security policies implemented by the United States as a great power and Canada as the U.S. ally.

In a multipolar structure — a system with at least three great powers — great powers would have to conduct moderate foreign policies to survive in an uncertain strategic environment made of several rivals and defined by multiple threats.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, great power's allies would gain relative capability and have more options to be policymakers than policy takers. That is to say, great powers and their allies' freedom of action would embrace distinct levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness, with great powers fearing their potential decline and facing

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<sup>95</sup> Morton Kaplan, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz appraised multipolarity's implications differently. Kaplan and Morgenthau argued that multipolarity implies low levels of instability because the impossibility of estimating great powers' changing intentions shapes an uncertain strategic scenario, which forces great powers to adopt moderate foreign policies. In contrast, Waltz argues that these factors make the international system more unstable because great powers depend more on their capabilities than those of their allies. However, both arguments would suggest limited freedom of action for great powers in the form of either required moderation or impediments. Morton Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics* (New York: Wiley, 1957); Hans Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics* (New York, Knopf, 1961); Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 168.

impediments from other great powers and great power's allies becoming more independent powers rather than agents for great powers.<sup>96</sup>

In a bipolar structure — a system in which there are solely two great powers — great powers should inevitably calculate their foreign policies in terms of great-power rivalry resulting in delicate, reactive balancing strategies.<sup>97</sup> Great powers' allies would find themselves carrying out limited foreign policies aimed at maintaining rather than shaping the “political, economic, and social order in the international political system.”<sup>98</sup> Also, great power's allies would not usually contradict great powers' foreign policy core direction and would tend to be highly dependent on great powers in becoming consumers rather than providers of security within great-power global competition.<sup>99</sup> That is to say, both great powers and their allies would face a restrictive strategic environment due to the zero-sum great-power global competition.

In a unipolar structure — a system in which there is only a great power — the lonely great power can mobilize its power resources to achieve its interests without having to deal with other great powers willing and able to check its supremacy. The only great power does not worry about “arms race, economic warfare [...] or an inadvertent escalation of war,” which are likely in multi- and bipolar structures.<sup>100</sup> For its part, unipolarity would offer the sole great power's allies the freedom to define by themselves their contribution to the burden-sharing of collective

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<sup>96</sup> In the literature on Canadian foreign policy, David Dewitt and John Kirton provided a thorough assessment of the implications of a multipolar system for Canada. Dewitt and Kirton, *Canada as a Principal Power*; David Dewitt and John Kirton, “Three Theoretical Perspectives,” *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy: Classic Debates & New Ideas*, eds. Duane Bratt and Christopher John Kukucha (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2015), 74-76; John Kirton, “Update: Canada as Principal Power 2010,” in *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy*, 85-90.

<sup>97</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War,” *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 13, 18-19, 28; Kirkey & Hawes, “Canada in an Age of Unipolarity,” 147-148; Kirkey and Ostroy, “Why is Canada in Afghanistan?” 206-7.

<sup>98</sup> Kirkey & Hawes, “Canada in an Age of Unipolarity,” 150.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>100</sup> Jeffrey Taliaferro and Robert Wishart, “Neoclassical Realism: Domestic Opportunities for Great Power Intervention,” in *Making Sense of International Relations Theory*, ed. Jennifer Sterling-Folker (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013), 52.

security.<sup>101</sup> This freedom is derived from unipolarity's generalized stability expressed in the lack of great-power wars and tensions and the lonely great power's involvement in international security building. Both conditions, which free up the great power's allies to make significant contributions to international security, would explain their different levels of commitments.<sup>102</sup> That is to say, unipolarity provided similar levels of permissiveness to both the sole great power and their allies. Indeed, unipolarity's high levels of systemic permissiveness make executives' perceptions and domestic politics more essential to understand the evolution of the lonely great power and their allies' foreign and security policies, as compared to other systems.

Based on conventional measures of power, seen as capabilities, this study addresses the international distribution of state capabilities according to the evolution of the global distribution of defence spending in absolute and perceptual terms, among other national power dimensions, such as science & technology, economic and nuclear capabilities. This study analyzes the evolution of defence spending, individually and comparatively year by year between 2001 and 2014, of the United States and Canada, along with China, Russia, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and India. Specifically, these countries' defence spending is analyzed as percentage of global defence spending to consider the evolution of the international distribution of state capabilities. The primary source of this analysis is the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. The analysis of the other dimensions of material capabilities comes from Stephen Brookes and William Wohlforth's data gathering.<sup>103</sup> The nuclear dimension of the international distribution of material capabilities comes from Keir A Lieber and Daryl G. Press.<sup>104</sup> The analysis of several items of

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<sup>101</sup> See Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan," 276-277.

<sup>102</sup> Birthe Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics: A Theory and its Implications* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2011), 3-4, 19 and 32-33.

<sup>103</sup> Stephen Brookes and William Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>104</sup> Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, "The End of MAD? The Nuclear Dimension of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 3, no. 4 (2006): 7-44.

relative material capabilities allows us to argue that one of the prevailing systemic conditions shaping the Afghanistan intervention was the international system's unipolar structure.

Finally, the strategic environment's levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness are defined by the threats that the United States and Canada had to face. Addressing these threats entails assessing their scope and, accordingly, distinguishing threats to United States and Canada's homeland and their military and civilian operations on the ground within the irregular Afghan warfare. As a result, this assessment suggests addressing the extent to which al Qaeda continued being a direct threat to the United States and Canada during the intervention. It also entails examining the extent to which the Afghan insurgent groups, which emerged as the intervention was performed, constituted a direct threat to the United States and Canada or merely a threat to American and Canadian campaigns on the ground. Since American and Canadian intervention entailed not only fighting directly against insurgent groups but also maintaining the stabilized areas and reconstructing and developing certain regions, it is necessary to examine the extent to which Afghan insurgents threatened equally these objectives. This assessment must also examine the historical, institutional, and socio-economic factors that allowed insurgency to emerge in Afghanistan.

This study conducts the aforementioned assessment based on scholarly literature, mainly journal articles from *International Security*, *Security Studies*, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, and *International Journal of Drug Policy*. This assessment also considers the U.S. 9/11 Commission Report,<sup>105</sup> reports to the U.S Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Canadian Senate Special Committee on Anti-terrorism and studies conducted

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<sup>105</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. Official Government Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004).

and disseminated by think tanks in the United States and Europe, such as RAND Corporation, Center for Security Studies, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism, and Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

All in all, in addressing the United States and Canada's place in the international system, the international distribution of material capabilities and the threats that these countries had to face during the Afghanistan intervention, this study establishes the strategic environment's levels of permissiveness. These levels allow us to identify the United States and Canada's freedom to choose between available foreign and security policy options during the intervention. What is more, these levels help understand the increased levels of American and Canadian engagement. Yet, these levels do not explain why and how the United States and Canada found themselves carrying out comparable COIN strategies between 2005/2006 and 2011. In this regard, this study needs to examine the evolution of American and Canadian FPEs' belief systems and resource-extraction capabilities to explain this puzzle.

### *6.2. The second step: examining the FPEs' perceptions*

The second step of the analysis seeks to assess the extent to which the FPEs' beliefs limited, modified, leveraged, or magnified the strategic environment's effects on the American and Canadian levels of engagement during the Afghanistan intervention. To be sure, neoclassical realism would expect that with similar strategic permissiveness levels, the variation of the levels of engagement would depend highly on the FPE's beliefs about the strategic environment. Indeed, once the options available for the intervening countries are pinpointed according to a permissive strategic environment, neoclassical realism argues that states select them primarily according to their executives' perceptions.

Before explaining how those perceptions are studied, it is necessary to explain why neoclassical realism focuses on the executive. Neoclassical realism is based on a “top-down” conception of the state since it considers that the FPE as the head of the state, instead of the state as a whole, are the primary actors in international affairs.<sup>106</sup> This conception is justified since the FPE, “sitting at the juncture of the state and the international system, has access to privileged information from the state’s politico-military and intelligence apparatus.”<sup>107</sup> This privilege makes them best equipped as compared to the other tiers of government, the legislative branch and societal groups, to assess systemic constraints and security threats, to devise opportunities and, in the final analysis, to deduce the “national interest.”<sup>108</sup>

In this regard, this study distinguishes the FPE from the whole foreign policy team, which includes “the foreign, defence, and intelligence bureaucracy,” to focus on the last-say decision-makers rather than on those actors or organizations charged with the strategic environment assessment, policy options formulation, and policy implementation.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, this study focuses exclusively on foreign and security policies designed by the FPE compared to its implementation at the tactical level by the military. According to a top-down conception of the state, the military represents the agent undertaking policies formulated by the FPE as the principal. In focusing on the American and Canadian FPEs, the analysis considers the President and the Prime Minister as the last-say decision-makers, and the senior levels of the U.S. departments of State and Defence, and the executive levels of the Canadian Departments of Foreign Affairs and

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<sup>106</sup> Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power*, 42; Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 14-16; Schweller, “Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism,” 336-337.

<sup>107</sup> Taliaferro & Wishart, “Neoclassical Realism,” 48.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 48 and 63; Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realism, State, and Foreign Policy*, 25-27.

<sup>109</sup> See Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 124; Dan Minddlemiss, and Denis Stairs, “Is the Defence Establishment Driving Canada’s Foreign Policy,” *Canada Among Nations 2007. What Room for Manoeuvre?* eds. Jean Daudelin and Daniel Schwanen (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 84-86.

International Trade and National Defence.<sup>110</sup> After identifying the FPEs, this study proceeds to examine how the perceptions of those executives shaped Canadian and American foreign and security policies. Drawing on Robert Keohane & Judith Goldstein's work,<sup>111</sup> this study explains the FPE's belief system through a discourse analysis based on two categories:

1. principled beliefs, and
2. causal beliefs regarding security and defence issues.

As mentioned, the FPEs' principled beliefs and causal beliefs are understood, respectively, as "normative ideas [aimed at] distinguishing right from wrong and just from unjust" and as "beliefs about cause-effect relationship," which, by definition, highlight the ideal operational path to achieve an end.<sup>112</sup> This study analyzes American and Canadian executives' principled beliefs in terms of their tendency to justify the intervention as result of either the need for protecting i) American and Canadian peoples, ii) Afghan's safety and quality of life iii) and/or preserving international security and maintaining the international order. Each rationale would correspond, according to Jean-Christophe Boucher, to the "us-," "them-," and "we-" justifications to intervene Afghanistan.<sup>113</sup> This study analyzes American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs also in terms of the extent to which these executives made the Afghanistan intervention a strategic priority, among other military campaigns and missions, and the way they regarded the intervention in the long run.

The analysis of American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs helps examine how these FPEs chose between a set of strategic options, as offered by the post-9/11 strategic environment,

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<sup>110</sup> Ripsman, Taliaffero, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 124; Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 134.

<sup>111</sup> Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy," 3-30.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 9-10.

<sup>113</sup> Boucher, "Selling Afghanistan," 720-2.

to meet their principled beliefs. As this study will show, this strategic environment offered the United States the freedom of choosing between offensive dominance, defensive dominance and disengagement.<sup>114</sup> It provided Canada with the room for manoeuvre to choose between free riding, flocking around the sole great power and adopting an opportunistic foreign policy.<sup>115</sup> This study will also show that American and Canadian FPEs' beliefs drove them to choose offensive dominance during the entire intervention in the case of the United States and transitioning from flocking to opportunism in the case of the latter. American and Canadian perceptions of the irregular Afghan warfare led them to operationalize offensive dominance as CT and COIN in the case of the United States and flocking as S&R and opportunism as COIN in the case of Canada.

The way American and Canadian FPE chose these foreign and security policy options is analyzed according to a logic of consequentialism. It means examining how the FPEs chose them according to these options' expected consequences in terms of utility for their campaigns' goals. During the early years of the intervention, the American FPE debated the utility of narrow and broad approaches to CT, whereas the Canadian FPE discussed the transition from a low-risk approach to a moderate-risk to S&R. Between 2005/2006-2011, both American and Canadian FPEs considered COIN as the best option to meet the principled beliefs in Afghanistan. Still, these executives examined different options to implement this strategy. The United States FPE assessed fully resourced COIN in the form of the massive troop surge and civilian assets' mobilization at the domestic, regional and international levels.<sup>116</sup> The American executive also considered the likelihood of undertaking CT plus, which entailed deploying a massive number of troops to directly

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<sup>114</sup> Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," footnote 36.

<sup>115</sup> Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, 33-35; Kirkey and Ostroy, "Why is Canada in Afghanistan? 200-213.

<sup>116</sup> See Robert Gates, *Duty. Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York, Alfred A. Knoff, 2014), 364, 379 and 381; Hillary Clinton, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 132-133; Barack Obama, "President Obama's Remarks on New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington, DC: March 27, 2009).

attack the insurgent groups in Afghanistan and training Afghan forces but brushing aside a civilian surge.<sup>117</sup> Finally, the American executive appraised selective COIN as another option to narrow the expectations of fully-resourced COIN by focusing on the south and east regions and taking a timeline in mind to prevent the United States from embracing an open-ended commitment. This option entailed keeping a population-centered approach implicitly embraced by every COIN strategy.<sup>118</sup>

For its part, the Canadian FPE initially considered the options of conducting selective COIN in the Southern provinces of Kandahar, Herat or Chaghcharan or keeping S&R where it was still possible.<sup>119</sup> After the Manley Report was published, the executive weighed the options of keeping COIN in Kandahar, focusing solely on training Afghan forces, returning to S&R in Kandahar, keeping COIN in regions other than Kandahar or withdrawing the CAF after February 2009.<sup>120</sup>

To identify the FPEs' principled and causal beliefs, this study collected American Presidents,' Canadian Prime Ministers,' U.S. Secretaries of States and Defense,' and Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence's central speeches on the Afghanistan intervention, which were identified and classified by using NVivo 12. It also examined official policy statements and American and Canadian FPEs' memoirs and declassified memos, several media sources, journalist and scholarly works, and military doctrine from both United States and Canada.

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<sup>117</sup> Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuter, 2011), 234; Gates, *Duty*, 379.

<sup>118</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 344, 375, 364 and 571.

<sup>119</sup> Bill Graham, *The Call of the World: A Political Memoir* (Vancouver: On Point Press, 2016), 380-383.

<sup>120</sup> Stephen Harper, "Prime Minister Harper Announces Independent Advisory Panel on Afghan mission" (Ottawa, ON, October 12, 2007).

### 6.3. *The third step: examining the FPEs' ability to mobilize resources*

As the third step of the analysis, neoclassical realism as a foreign policy theory seeks to evaluate the FPE's ability to mobilize required resources to conduct their preferred foreign and security policies. It assumes that the FPEs, based on their assessment of the strategic environment, define the "national interest" that informs their foreign and security policies. However, they are always subject to domestic political constraints. Even though executives are relatively autonomous, they must often bargain with different domestic actors and the legislative branch to extract human and economic resources to conduct its preferred policies.<sup>121</sup>

In particular, in considering military interventions like Afghanistan, executives can find legislative and public opposition that limits the intervention's scope. Arguably, the American and Canadian FPE enjoy a higher room for manoeuvre over foreign and security policy issues than over domestic issues areas, which allow them to define the broad strategic objectives of military interventions.<sup>122</sup> Yet, as Colin Dueck points out, in referring to American Presidents' decisions to go to war, which is equally valid for Canadian Prime Ministers, the legislature and the public provide incentives and set political constraints to the FPEs' decisions. They could have an impact on "the specific forms of intervention, including their timing, implementation, and public representation."<sup>123</sup> In the final analysis, the FPEs' capability to mobilize resources can be regarded as their ability to obtain support from, or skip hurdles from, the legislative branch and the public. This constitutes an analysis of state power, seen as the FPEs' ability to build elite consensus and

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<sup>121</sup> Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, *Neoclassical Realism, State, and Foreign Policy*, 25-26; Taliaferro and Wishart, "Neoclassical Realism," 49.

<sup>122</sup> On American Presidents, see Colin Dueck, "Neoclassical Realism and the National Interest: Presidents, Domestic Politics, and Major Military Interventions," in *Neoclassical Realism, State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 139-169. On Canadian Prime Ministers, see Philippe Lagassé, "Accountability for National Defence. Ministerial Responsibility, Military Command and Parliamentary Oversight," *IRPP Study* 4 (2010): 1-60.

<sup>123</sup> Dueck, "Neoclassical Realism and the National Interest," 148.

encourage social cohesion around their foreign and security policies.<sup>124</sup> To be sure, conducting this analysis implies:

1. addressing legislative and public oppositions to the American and Canadian interventions, with particular regard to the period when both countries undertook COIN;
2. analyzing the American and Canadian executives' structural autonomy within their political systems, especially in terms of constitutional and institutional arrangements shaping the executive-legislative relationships, and
3. examining American and Canadian FPEs' resource-extraction capabilities.

The legislative and public opposition levels constitute suitable indications of elite consensus and social cohesion around Canadian and American foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. This study assesses elite consensus regarding the degree of agreement between American and Canadian political parties' stances on the intervention within their electoral campaigns, ideological platforms, and legislative debates. Specifically, this study analyzes legislative debates based on the *U.S. Congressional Record's* publication of U.S. Senate and House of Representatives' debates and proceedings and *Hansard's* transcripts of Commonwealth countries' House of Commons debates and proceedings. It also considers U.S. representatives and U.S. Senators' and Canadian parliamentary members' interviews on the Afghanistan intervention given to the media.

This study addresses the evolution of public support levels concerning the Afghanistan intervention by considering major polls in the United States and Canada. Specifically, in the United States, it considers the polls conducted by CBS, Gallup, Post/ABC, CNN/ORC, AP-Gfk, and Cooperative Election Survey. In Canada, this study examines the polls carried out by Angus Reid

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<sup>124</sup> See Schweller, *Unanswered Threats*, chapters 2-3; Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power*; and Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*.

Institute, along with Jean-Christophe Boucher and Kim Richard Nossal's aggregate analysis of several pollsters' data. Apart from Angus Reid, it includes "Gallup, Ipsos Reid, Strategic Counsel, Harris/Decima Research, Innovative Research Group Inc., Léger Marketing, and Ekos."<sup>125</sup> Finally, it considers scholarly literature and media accounts of public opinion and legislative debates on the Afghanistan intervention.

To compare the American and Canadian FPEs' structural autonomy according to their political systems' constitutional and institutional arrangements, this study uses three bodies of scholarly literature. Firstly, it considers classical theoretical accounts of presidential systems and Westminster parliamentary systems on a comparative basis. Secondly, it analyzes historical accounts emphasizing the American and Canadian executives' structural autonomy. Thirdly, it examines seminal works about the room for manoeuvre enjoyed by American and Canadian executives *vis-à-vis* the legislative branch specifically during the Afghanistan intervention.

Finally, this study examines American and Canadian FPEs' ability to mobilize domestic resources by taking into account these executives' communication strategies and resource-extraction capabilities. Firstly, this study examines their communication strategies aimed at obtaining support from the public and legislative branch by addressing if these executives went "public" or "silent" during the intervention. Going public refers to the executives' purpose to get support from the public and legislature through "high-profile policy speeches," whereas going-silent strategy means not talking about a controversial topic.<sup>126</sup> This analysis also entails examining how American and Canadian executives attempted to control the public message about the

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<sup>125</sup> Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 154.

<sup>126</sup> Even though there is an extensive literature on this topic, the predominant work about it is Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1986). See also Tom Rice, "Review Work: Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership by Samuel Kernell," *The American Political Science Review* 81, no. 4 (1987): 1368-1369.

Afghanistan intervention.

Secondly, this study analyzes resource-extraction capabilities in terms of the American and Canadian interventions' fiscal cost by comparing the legislative appropriation of resources during the periods 2001-2005 and 2006-2011. The appropriation of resources during the second period, corresponding to the moment when the United States and Canada carried out COIN, is divided into the resources allocated to the 'clear', 'hold', and 'build' components of such policy. The first component accounts for the cost of deploying, supporting, and transporting troops, dealing with damaged and destroyed equipment, conducting intelligence activities, and supporting allies. The second component corresponds to resources allocated to train Afghan forces, whereas the third component is used to support diplomatic operations, development, and reconstruction programs. These costs appear in American and Canadian defence budgets as operating expenditures aimed at supporting the activities in Afghanistan of the U.S. Departments of Defense and States, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Canadian departments of National Defence and Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the Canadian International Development Agency.

The analysis of the Afghanistan intervention's fiscal costs relies on three sources of data: i) budgets directly reported by American and Canadian departments; ii) the U.S. Congressional Research Service's, the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's, the Canadian Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's (OPB) and Parliamentary Information and Research service's collection, estimation and explanation of the budgets directly reported by departments, and iii) the analyses of fiscal costs from think tanks, such as the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, Brookings Institute and Rideau Institute and scholarly accounts of budget debates.

It is worth noting that the analysis of the costs of American and Canadian military and

civilian operations in Afghanistan could not be undertaken on a similar basis. Unlike the sources of data used to address the effects of the strategic environment, perceptions, and communication strategies on the American and Canadian engagement levels during the intervention, the sources aimed at establishing the intervention cost do not keep the same reliability criteria. Thanks to the available sources, this study managed to establish the total and disaggregated cost of the U.S. Operation Enduring Freedom.<sup>127</sup> In contrast, Canadian operations were more difficult to establish because there were no “mission-specific Parliamentary appropriations.”<sup>128</sup> Also, Canadian Departmental Performance Reports and Departments’ Reports on Plans & Priorities do not accurately assess incremental costs. These costs account for the additional cost of maintaining military and civilian operations in Afghanistan compared to the maintenance of the same forces and civilian personnel in Canada.<sup>129</sup> As the OPB pointed out, “The Parliamentary appropriations (which provide departments with effective spending authority) and the costs are not one and the same. The cost can be higher or lower than the appropriations. Hence, a cursory review of the total Parliamentary appropriations or departmental spending will not reflect the actual fiscal impact.”<sup>130</sup> Finally, financial reporting is sometimes inaccurate. This is the case of the Department of National Defence (DND) reporting different figures to the OPB than those outlined by the DND’s Corporate Finance Services.<sup>131</sup> It means that this study’s analysis of costs of Canadian operations in Afghanistan was conducted to a large extent based on the second and third sources of data, as mentioned above. Graph 1.2 summarizes the operationalization of the independent, dependent and

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<sup>127</sup> Amy Belasco, “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11,” *Congressional Research Service* 7-5700 (2014): 6.

<sup>128</sup> Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (OPB) [Report prepared by Rammarayan Mathilakath, Ashutosh Rajekar and Sahir Khan], *The Fiscal Impact of the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan* (Ottawa, ON: October 9, 2008), 9.

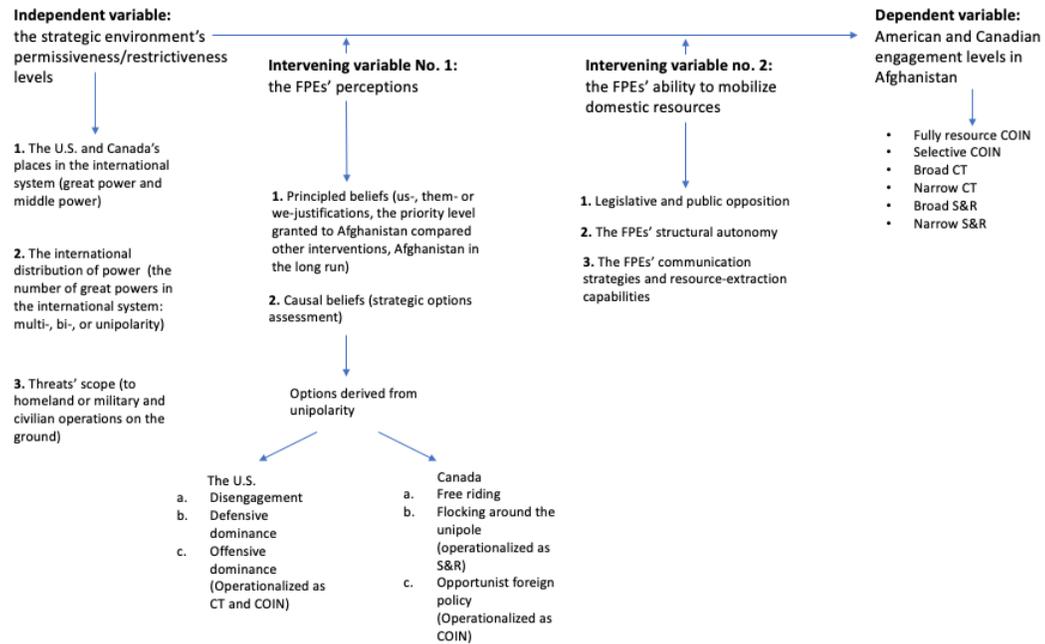
<sup>129</sup> Perry, “Canada’s Seven Billion Dollar War,” 707.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

intervening variables of this study.

**Graph 1.2: American and Canadian foreign and security policies: operationalization of variables**



## 7. Structure of the dissertation

This Ph.D. dissertation's point of departure is that despite their different positions in the global configuration of power, the United States and Canada adopted comparable, aggressive foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention by focusing on COIN from 2005/2006 to 2011. For the Bush and Obama administrations, it was not new insofar as their approaches to strategic ends were similar to some of their predecessors, undertaking strategies of massive resource mobilization. In contrast, Canadian aggressive foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan, during the Harper administration, constituted a dramatic turning point in the country's history as it implied abandoning the strategies of traditional and active peacekeeping — or S&R.

At the empirical level, this dissertation aims to explain the causes of the similarity of American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the period mentioned above. In doing

so, this study seeks to fill the gap regarding the scant attention paid by the studies about American and Canadian interventions in Afghanistan to the intersection between international constraints, decision-makers' perceptions, and domestic institutions. It also seeks to respond to the lack of interest in the literature concerning comparing countries with different material capabilities. At the theoretical level, this research aims to explain why countries placed differently in the international system behave similarly by using the American and Canadian interventions in Afghanistan as a case study. Even though other case studies should be considered to develop a more robust understanding of such a likelihood, as well as of the conditions that make it occur, the case addressed by this dissertation indeed constitutes a salient one to start exploring this puzzle.

To achieve this two-fold goal, the dissertation uses neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. On the one hand, this theory allows for explaining that both foreign and security policies were similar due to a permissive strategic international environment, comparable perceptions, and similar abilities to mobilize resources. It allows us to argue that factors were occurring on both American and Canadian sides, which brought about such a degree of similarity. This argument constitutes an alternative to the bandwagon-effect, compensation, and military ascendancy theses. It challenges the overemphasis of the alleged Canadian subordination to American security, which is explicit in the first two theses, and addresses American perceptions and domestic politics, which is absent in the third thesis. On the other hand, by analyzing the convergence between the United States and Canada through neoclassical realism, it is possible to see the vast potential of it to compare countries with different material capabilities behaving similarly. Using this theory in such a way helps supplement Waltz's theory of international politics aimed at explaining why states similarly placed in the international system behave similarly. By addressing one of the puzzles derived from structural realism, as mentioned at the beginning of

this chapter, this dissertation helps explain how neoclassical realism becomes an extension of structural realism, primarily when a comparative foreign policy analysis is conducted.

This dissertation's empirical and theoretical purposes entail making a case for neoclassical realism as the most suitable and reasonable approach *vis-à-vis* other foreign-policy approaches that could shed light on the similarity of American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. Chapter 2 aims to assess rational, organizational, bureaucratic, liberal, constructivist and realist foreign policy approaches. In explaining their core variables, their privileged level of analysis, their views of foreign policy rationality, and how these approaches would analyze the similarity of American and Canadian engagement levels in Afghanistan, this chapter argues that none of them is sufficient to examine such a high degree of convergence. These approaches are not enough to explain why states with different material capabilities, such as the United States and Canada, can sometimes behave similarly.

Above all, this chapter seeks to explain why and how neoclassical realism is a suitable and reasonable approach to address this study's puzzle compared to these alternative approaches. After examining neoclassical realism's ability to stand up against criticism, this chapter argues that neoclassical realism must be seen as a *theory of foreign policy* compared to a *theory of mistakes* to appropriately address this study's puzzle. In the literature on this theory, neoclassical realism has been seen as a theory of mistakes aimed at explaining anomalous or suboptimal foreign policy responses to systemic stimuli. It entails using a structural baseline, such as neorealism, offensive realism, defensive realism, or hegemonic realism, to pinpoint a normal or optimal foreign policy. In contrast, neoclassical realism as a foreign policy theory aims to explain preferences, rather than maladaptive behavior, derived from the strategic international environment, executive's

perceptions, and domestic politics.<sup>132</sup> The latter is more suitable than the former for this study in not requiring identifying a structural baseline, which would be impossible to find in the cases of the United States and Canada due to their different power positions and historical circumstances.

Chapter 3 explains the strategic environment in which the United States and Canada's decisions took place, which corresponds to the first step of this study's research design. This chapter argues that unipolarity, which constituted the international system's predominant systemic condition during the time the coalition forces performed the Afghanistan intervention, offered a high room for maneuver for both the United States as the sole great power and Canada as a U.S. ally. Specifically, critical conditions to enjoy the freedom of action to conduct their preferred foreign and security policies were met during the intervention. Firstly, no rival, such as China and Russia, attempted to balance the U.S.-led NATO campaign. Secondly, alliance politics became increasingly significant as the start of the Iraq War forced the United States to depend more on the division of labour with its allies to conduct the Afghanistan intervention. These conditions allowed the United States and Canada to adopt offensive dominance and transition from flocking around the sole great power to adopting an opportunistic foreign policy, respectively. However, the Afghan irregular warfare constituted a restrictive strategic environment that paved the way for both countries to operationalize their foreign and security policies as irregular warfare strategies. These strategies looked like consequential responses to al Qaeda's transformation, the emergence of the Afghan insurgency and the historical, institutional, and socio-economic factors conducive to this insurgency.

Chapter 4 examines the American and Canadian FPEs' belief systems and how they brought about similar foreign and security policies as of 2005/2006. This corresponds to the second

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<sup>132</sup> On a summary of these varieties of neoclassical realism, see Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 25-31.

step of this study's research design. Specifically, this chapter argues that the United States and Canada, based on their executive's belief system, operationalized offensive dominance as CT and COIN, flocking as S&R and opportunism as COIN. That is to say, amid the Afghan irregular war, the United States and Canada found themselves adopting comparable COIN strategies in operationalizing their offensive-dominance and opportunist foreign and security policies, respectively, between 2005/2006 and 2011. This chapter also holds that this transition cannot be solely explained through their executives' principled beliefs. After all, these beliefs were relatively constant during the intervention as both countries kept the same rationales during the intervention: protecting the American and Canadian people from attacks like 9/11, guaranteeing Afghan's security and quality of life and maintaining the international order. To examine the changing levels of American and Canadian engagements, this chapter devotes significant attention to explaining the evolution of American and Canadian causal beliefs. In doing so, this chapter shows that the American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs were critical to broadening their approaches to irregular warfare to respond to the Afghan insurgency's unexpected emergence in the south of the country as of 2005. The United States merged a narrow approach to CT, aimed at destructing and disrupting the Taliban and other insurgent groups, with a population-centered approach. Canada linked a moderate-risk approach to S&R, aimed at focusing on the factors conducive to terrorism, with an increased military engagement. For both of them, this transition came in the form of a selective COIN strategy compared to a fully resourced COIN.

Chapter 5 examines the FPE's ability to mobilize resources and to pursue their specific strategic options within the American and Canadian political systems. This constitutes the third step of neoclassical realism's research design. In particular, this chapter argues that both the American and Canadian FPE took advantage of their structural autonomy to implement their

preferred security policies. Such autonomy allowed them to control the public message about the intervention. American FPE went public, whereas the Canadian FPE went silent when both decided to increase their commitment levels. The former made high-profile public speeches to obtain support from the public and the legislature, whereas the latter stopped talking about the intervention to avoid a meaningful debate. Even if these executives adopted different communication strategies, both managed comparable fiscal resources to undertake their COIN strategy. The United States and Canada's fiscal resources were undoubtedly different in absolute terms. However, a percentage analysis of fiscal resource distribution shows the similarity of American and Canadian resources-extraction capabilities to carry out the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' components of the COIN strategy.

The concluding chapter addresses the theoretical and empirical implications of research undertaken in this dissertation. Theoretically, this chapter argues that neoclassical realism can be the extension of structural realism, as pointed out by Brian Rathbun,<sup>133</sup> when it attempts to compare countries with different material capabilities behaving similarly. Specifically, the puzzle analyzed here, along with Waltz' original puzzle — why and how states *similarly* placed in the international system behave *similarly* — encourage to consider two other puzzles: a) why and how states *similarly* placed behave *differently* and b) why and how states *differently* placed in the international system behave *differently*. These would be four puzzles in total that help advance the realist theorizing. Empirically, this chapter uses a process-tracing methodology to consider the interaction of all factors explained in chapters 3, 4, 5. In considering these pieces together, this chapter offers compelling empirical evidence to challenge the three alternative theses in the literature explaining the similarity of American and Canadian engagement levels in Afghanistan: the bandwagon-effect,

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<sup>133</sup> Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name," 294-321.

compensation, and military ascendancy theses. What is more, a process-tracing methodology allows us to consider factors occurring simultaneously in American and Canadian sides to explain the similarity mentioned above.

## Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign policy: Theoretical Accounts of American and Canadian Interventions in Afghanistan

Theoretically, this research is consistent with one of the most fundamental discussions regarding foreign policy: how states assess threats and respond to external challenges and opportunities. There is extensive literature on this topic within International Relations (IR) in general, and foreign policy analysis (FPA) in particular, that encompasses a wide array of theories. Some of them could help explain American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan in general, and address the puzzle informing this dissertation, in particular. Specifically, this chapter considers the contributions of Graham Allison's foreign policy models, classical and refined versions of democratic peace theory, Andrew Moravcsik's liberal theory of foreign policy, classical and radical variants of social constructivism, and classical realism, defensive realism, and offensive realism.<sup>134</sup>

However, as chapter 1 pointed out, this study makes a case for neoclassical realism. As a theory of foreign policy, neoclassical realism is a suitable and reasonable approach to understanding the relative weight of systemic pressures, ideas, and domestic politics as the necessary aspects to explain Canadian and American foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan. As chapters 3, 4 and 5 will show, all three factors are required to understand why and how the United States and Canada behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention despite their different places in the international system. Neoclassical realism can capture and intersect all

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<sup>134</sup> This chapter brushes aside other IR theories due to their disinterest in addressing foreign policy in general and foreign and security policy in particular. Also, this chapter addresses theories that could keep a dialogue with neoclassical realism. The latter is the reason this review brushed aside Marxist-oriented theories. On some Marxist-oriented approaches to American and Canadian interventions in Afghanistan, see the works collected by Jerome Klassen and Gregg Albo. Jerome Klassen and Gregg Albo, eds, *Empire's Ally. Canada and the War in Afghanistan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

three aspects to address the puzzle of this study by combining the core assumptions of realism with a neoclassical perspective. The realist character of this theory may be observed in its purpose of adopting relative capabilities as the primary sources of foreign policy, whereas its neoclassical approach may be seen in its aim of understanding the impact of such factors on foreign policy in a sophisticated manner. It entails incorporating ideational and institutional factors.<sup>135</sup>

Sections 1 to 5 aim to assess the theories mentioned above compared to neoclassical realism by analyzing their privileged variables, levels of analysis, and type of rationality. These sections show that even though theories other than neoclassical realism could offer relevant insights to explain American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan, they are not sufficient to capture the complexity of this study's puzzle. The theories assessed in this chapter consider only one or two of the three dimensions required to understand it, unlike neoclassical realism that addresses and intersects all three. Sections 6 to 8 summarize the analytical advantage of neoclassical realism *vis-à-vis* other approaches to foreign policy and its ability to respond to its critics. These sections also explain the two different ways that its proponents have operationalized neoclassical realism: as a *theory of mistakes* and as a *theory of foreign policy*. This distinction helps understand why this study selects the second version, underpinning the three-step research design explained in chapter 1. Finally, the analysis of several theories of foreign policy to clarify the analytical advantage of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy seeks to update Gideon Rose's 1998 review, which aimed to establish the foundations of neoclassical realism.<sup>136</sup> In using this review's title, the present chapter considers the evolution of neoclassical realist theorizing after Rose's proposal to make its case.

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<sup>135</sup> Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 146.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-172.

## 1. Comparison criteria: variables, levels of analysis, and types of rationality

This chapter adopts four criteria to compare the approaches to foreign and security policy: the type of variables and the levels of analysis selected by every approach, the role that rationality plays in each of them, and the way they may address the puzzle informing the present study. While the first three criteria help address their theoretical and methodological scope, the fourth one is essential to make a case for neoclassical realism.

Every section begins by explicating the primary theoretical propositions of each approach. In particular, it addresses the primary variables or categories, whether they be seen as (a) independent, (b) dependent, (c) intervening, or (d) constitutive. It also pinpoints the level(s) of analysis privileged by each approach, be it (a) systemic level, (b) unitary, national level, (c) nonunitary, national level, or d) individual level. By identifying independent and dependent variables, the approaches to foreign policy as analyzed here have managed to clarify the primary driving forces of foreign policy formulation, as well as the dimensions of foreign policy implementation. By clarifying the role of intervening and constitutive variables, some approaches have sought to explain or understand, on the one hand, transmission belts linking formulation and implementation and, on the other hand, the mutual constitution between agents and the strategic environment informing foreign policy. Most approaches attempt to clarify independent and dependent variables. However, defensive realism, neoclassical realism, and constructivist approaches are the only approaches that consider intervening and constitutive variables.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> A clarification about causes, consequences, and the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures informing the debate about the explanandum of foreign policy is needed. Some explanations of international politics and foreign policy distinguish between strategic settings and state preferences, as well as interests and state behaviour, as independent and dependent variables. However, some approaches, especially social constructivism, seek to consider the process of mutual constitution between agents and structures under the assumption that the international world is intersubjectively and collectively constructed. That is to say, foreign policy shaped by identities and state interests do not exist apart from “ideas about how the world works” and, accordingly, from the strategic setting in the form of the socialization process and collective knowledge, which is in turn impacted by every foreign policy behaviour. Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,

The selection of level(s) of analysis allows us to clarify the level of parsimony or thorough explanation of the approaches at hand. Those approaches adopting a parsimonious account of foreign policy tend to focus on one single level of analysis, normally the systemic level or unitary, national level. In corresponding to the totality of interactions within the international system (in the case of the systemic level) and in considering the state and national governments as single entities (in the case of unitary, national level), those levels lead the researcher to postulate a high degree of uniformity in foreign policy formulation and implementation. Both of them, accordingly, attempt to provide a reasonable basis for prediction. In contrast, those approaches embracing a thorough explanation of foreign policy tend to combine several levels of analysis and to consider functional differences between states, as well as the interaction with their surrounding society. In adopting those levels, the researcher manages to provide a reasonable basis for explanation and understanding, especially in terms of comparative foreign policy analysis.<sup>138</sup> Rather than making a general case in favour of explanation versus parsimony, as if the former entailed taken-for-granted advantages over the latter epistemologically, this study justifies such a decision because of its particular relevance to address its puzzle. A thorough explanation rather than a parsimonious account is more suitable for assessing countries with different power capabilities behaving similarly insofar as such a puzzle entails precisely addressing different levels of analysis and factors.

This chapter also explains the role that rationality plays in each approach. The purpose here

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*International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring, 1992): 399. This is the sense in which categories considered by social constructivism are constitutive rather than causal or consequential. On this argument, see also Alexander Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (1987): 335-370; Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3. (1997): 322, Anthony Giddens, *Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

<sup>138</sup> See David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (1961): 77-92. On the differences between Explanation and Understanding, see Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

is to provide a spectrum with two opposing extremes of rationality as being informed respectively by James March and Johan Olsen's distinction between the *logic of consequentialism* and the *logic of appropriateness*. Even if such a typology has been conjured up to underpin the new institutionalism, embracing an ontology of appropriateness that is not necessarily shared by all approaches considered here, including neoclassical realism, it helps classify different conceptions of rationality. However, it entails considering consequentialism and appropriateness as equally justifiable, alternative explanations of individual action. There is nothing in March and Olsen's work that indicates the contrary.<sup>139</sup> Above all, their work allows us to imagine a spectrum classifying rationalities in relation to one another. On one extreme, such a spectrum highlights foreign policy approaches explaining human actors willing and able to choose among different alternatives by evaluating their consequences in terms of the utility for actors' goals (consequentialism). On the opposite end of the spectrum, the framework identifies foreign policy approaches attempting to understand human actors following rules that link particular identities with particular situations (appropriateness).<sup>140</sup>

As a conceptual refinement, two types of logics of expected consequences and two types of logics of appropriateness may also be imagined: namely, the classical and refined logics of consequentialism, and the classical and refined logics of appropriateness. The first distinction is derived from Herbert Simon and Robert Jervis' conceptualization of bounded rationality and misperception within the organization theory, political psychology, and IR fields. Simon argues that comprehensive rationality, seen here as the classical logic of consequentialism, is attributed

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<sup>139</sup> James March and Johan Olsen, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Politics Orders," *International Organizations* 52, no. 4 (1998): 943-969; March and Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions* (New York: Free Press, 1989); March and Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *The American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (1984): 734-749.

<sup>140</sup> March and Olsen, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Politics Orders," 949 and 951.

to completely informed, self-interest, autonomous, maximizing actors. Such actors assess every course of action in terms of all consequences and utilities so as to choose the best option. This type of rationality does not simply exist in any human domain.<sup>141</sup> Instead, rationality is often limited to thinking capacity, uncertainty, and inability to access complete, noncontradictory, unified information, which corresponds to a refined logic of consequentialism.<sup>142</sup> Meanwhile, Jervis considers that misperception, being addressed equally by a refined logic of consequentialism, is derived from decision-makers' tendency to assess the strategic environment in terms of existing images and the inability to adjust their perceptions to new, conflicting information and time pressures.<sup>143</sup>

The second distinction is derived from Alexander Wendt's account of weak and strong understandings of the role of norms, rules, and institutions. The former reifies them in treating them as "analytically independent of the actions by which [they are] produced,"<sup>144</sup> whereas the latter considers their socially-generated constitution.<sup>145</sup> In its poststructuralist version, the refined logic of appropriateness allows even for understanding critically "heterogeneous ways in which people experience [norms, rules, and institutions]" without presupposing "master narratives."<sup>146</sup>

Drawing on the following sections' assessment, table 2.1 compares neoclassical realism and other theories of foreign policy. Neoclassical realism is the only theory capable of considering

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<sup>141</sup> Herbert Simon, *Models of Man, Social and Rational: Mathematical Essays on Rational Human Behavior in a Social Setting* (New York: Wiley, 1957).

<sup>142</sup> Herbert Simon, *Models of Bounded Rationality* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT, 1982).

<sup>143</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperceptions in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).

<sup>144</sup> Douglas Maynard and Thomas Wilson, "On the Reification of Social Structure," in *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, vol. 1, eds. Scott McNall and Gary Howe (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1980), 287, quoted by Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," 345.

<sup>145</sup> Wendt "Anarchy Is What States Make Of It," 392-3

<sup>146</sup> Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (2002): 715-6.

independent and intervening variables to study the primary drivers of foreign policy formulation and implementation and the complex transmission belt between them. It is also capable of considering several levels of analysis to explain the United States and Canada's international places, perceptions, and ability to deal with domestic politics. Above all, it is a suitable and reasonable approach to address the puzzle of this study as it considers a refined logic of consequentialism aimed at explaining state rationality as the result of systemic pressures, perceptions, and ability to mobilize domestic resources.

**Table 2.1: Neoclassical realism and other approaches to foreign and security policy**

Approach	Variables/categories of foreign policy	Levels of analysis	Type of rationality
<b>Allison's models</b>			
Rational Actor	Governmental choice (independent variable)	Unitary, national level	Classical logic of consequentialism: comprehensive rationality. Refined logic of consequentialism: bounded rationality. Undetermined
Organizational	Organizational output (independent variable)	Nonunitary, national level	
Bureaucratic	Political resultant (dependent variable)	Nonunitary, national level	
<b>Liberal approaches</b>			
Classical democratic peace theory	Regime type (democratic and non-democratic) (independent variable)	Unitary, national level and individual level (as human nature)	Classical logic of consequentialism, and classical logic of appropriateness (from a critical assessment). Refined logic of consequentialism, and potentially refined logic of appropriateness (from a critical assessment).
Refined democratic peace theory	Domestic decision-making environment (institutional structures, decision-making procedures, and procedural norms) (Independent variable)	Nonunitary, national level	
Liberal theory of foreign policy	Societal ideas, transnational economic exchanges, and domestic representation schemes (independent variables)	Nonunitary, national level	Refined logic of consequentialism: aggregated, endogenously defined rationality.
<b>Realist approaches</b>			
Classical realism	Human nature and national interest (independent variable), mobilization of national power (dependent variable)	Unitary, national level	Refined logic of consequentialism: incompletely informed rationality.
Neorealism (adopted for foreign policy analysis)	Distribution of capabilities (independent variable), state preferences (dependent variable).	Systemic level	Refined logic of consequentialism: constrained rationality
Offensive Realism	Distribution of capabilities (independent variable), power maximization (dependent variable).	Systemic level	Refined logic of consequentialism: constrained rationality
Defensive Realism	Distribution of capabilities (independent variables),	Systemic level, Nonunitary, national level	Refined logic of consequentialism: undermined

	material and ideational structural modifiers (intervening variables), security seeking (dependent variables).		rationality due to domestic factors.
<i>Neoclassical realism</i>	Strategic environment (independent variable), FPEs' perceptions and ability to mobilize resources (intervening variables), foreign and security policy (dependent variable).	Systemic level; nonunitary, national level; individual level.	Refined logic of consequentialism: imperfect rationality due to systemic pressures, leaders' perceptions and ability to mobilize domestic resources.
<b>Constructivist approaches</b>			
Classical constructivism	Strategic identity, common and collective knowledge, international culture (constitutive variables)	Systemic level.	Strong logic of appropriateness.
Radical constructivism	Discourses, narratives, identity (constitute variables)	Systemic level.	Strong logic of appropriateness.

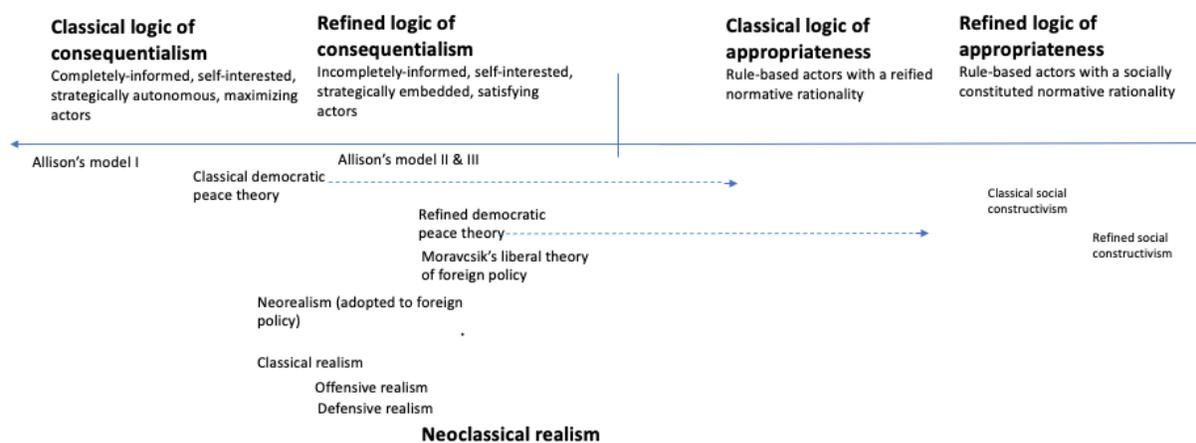
As a result, the last sections showcase how neoclassical realism manages to provide one of the most refined logics of consequentialism. Such a clarification helps put limits on the use of critical analytical categories in this study, such as ideas and domestic politics in the form of the foreign policy executive's (FPE) perceptions and ability to mobilize domestic resources. In addressing its puzzle, this study turns to leaders' perception not under the assumption that reality is socially and intersubjectively constructed but because of the difficulty of perceiving systemic stimuli and access to complete, noncontradictory, unified information.<sup>147</sup> Also, it turns to institutional constraints not to understand foreign policy decision-making *process* broadly seen in terms of a broad set of institutional constraints and the involvement of several domestic and transnational actors or of social meanings — as liberal and constructivist approaches would suggest. Instead, it turns to institutional constraints to define foreign policy as a *policy*, derived from foreign policy executives selecting courses of action to achieve given goals in an uncertain

<sup>147</sup> Brain Rathbun, "A Rose by Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 315.

strategic environment.<sup>148</sup>

Graph 2.1 shows the place of each approach within the rationality spectrum. The Rational Actor Model (Allison’s Model I) is the only one embracing the classical logic of consequentialism, followed by the classical version of democratic peace theory. Organizational and Bureaucratic Models (Allison’s model II and III), the traditional and refined versions of democratic peace theory, Moravcsik’s liberal theory of foreign policy, classical realism, neorealism, defensive realism, and offensive realism embrace the refined logic of consequentialism. Since classical democratic peace theory tends to reify democratic collective identity and its refined version considers democratically-generated preferences within different institutional settings, they could also be associated with the classical and refined logics of appropriateness. Classical and radical social constructivism are placed in the segment referred to the refined logic of appropriateness.

**Graph 2.1: Rationality spectrum and approaches to foreign and security policy**



Finally, each section clarifies how these theories would assess American and Canadian deployments to Afghanistan, pinpointing the aspects that such theories cannot address on a

<sup>148</sup> On the distinction between foreign policy as process and policy, see Walter Carlsnaes, “Foreign Policy,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (London: Sage, 2013), 204.

comparative basis. Specifically, it examines their tendency to focus on a single factor or level of analysis — such as the cases of organizational and bureaucratic politics models, and offensive realism — or to focus on several factors without clarifying the relative importance between them — such as the cases of some variants of liberalism, defensive realism, and constructivist approaches. Those are seen as vacuums taking into account chapter 3, 4 and 5’s empirical findings aimed at showing that the similar level of American and Canadian engagements during the Afghanistan intervention resulted simultaneously from systemic stimuli, perceptions and ability to mobilize domestic resources. Unlike the theories here considered, neoclassical realism identifies all three factors and establish the relationship between them to explain both the content and timing of American and Canadian engagement levels.

## **2. Organizational and bureaucratic politics models**

American and Canadian foreign and security policies can be assessed through the organizational and bureaucratic politics models. There is extensive literature about these models, yet they are usually considered in terms of Graham T. Allison’s original proposal.<sup>149</sup> Although such models share with neoclassical realism the purpose of looking inside the state, they focus primarily on organizational and bargaining processes underlying the decision-making process at the national, nonunitary level. In doing so, they attempt to supplement or supplant the rational actor model, which views the state as a black box or monolithic entity, making foreign policy decisions. As initially developed, the rational actor model’s basic unit of analysis, which ends up being the independent variable, is the “[g]overnmental action as choice” adopted by a nation or government

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<sup>149</sup> Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971); Morton Halperin and Priscila Clapp (with Arnold Kanter), *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006).

seen as a unitary and rational decision-maker.<sup>150</sup> Like other state-centric approaches, the rational actor model deems decision-makers to be *unitary* actors in focusing more on the ultimate choices made by governments as a whole than on the bureaucratic machine involving organizations and political actors partaking in the decision-making process. Like other rational-choice foreign policy models, it regards decision-makers as *rational* actors due to their ability to choose the course of action that meets the state's goals and objectives in the highest rank.<sup>151</sup>

In plunging into the rational actor model's conception of rationality, it can be argued that it is synonymous with *comprehensive rationality* (in Allison's terms), by definition, based on the classical logic of consequentialism. As such, it attributes to decision-makers the ability to pinpoint state goals exhaustively, to list all options and alternatives available to achieve such goals, to evaluate each option and alternatives in terms of all its consequences and utilities, and to choose subsequently the best option based on its feasibility to reach the defined goals.<sup>152</sup> It implicitly follows that decision-makers' access to information is complete, and their room for manoeuvre is extremely high as if they made decisions in isolation without considering other nations' decision-makers. Even though Allison argues that the rational actor model constitutes the primary guideline of canonical accounts of international relations and meets conventional rational choice theory assumptions, such a model paradoxically neglects these perspectives' central aspects. Both classical accounts of international relations and rational choice theory consider the pervasive uncertainty affecting government decisions and strategic interactions with other actors shaping states' preferences and calculations. To adjust such a model to foreign policymaking complexities, Jonathan Bendor and Thomas Hammond argue that its assumption of comprehensive rationality

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<sup>150</sup> Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 32.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, 6, 13-26, and 33.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

should be relaxed to include the expectation of rational actors with multiple goals, operating in uncertain strategic settings and reacting to other nations' moves.<sup>153</sup>

In any case, Allison built such a model to justify the relevance of his two subsequent models aimed at challenging the unitary and rational actor assumption by including categories of political process.<sup>154</sup> As initially formulated, the organizational model suggests focusing on large organizations' outputs and bureaucracies functioning according to standard operating procedures.<sup>155</sup> It means that its primary unit of analysis, seen as the independent variable, is the "[g]overnmental action as organizational output [which] is determined by previously established procedures."<sup>156</sup> Above all, governmental decisions are affected by a constellation of organizations with their own priorities, perceptions, standard operating procedures, programs, and repertoires.<sup>157</sup> Such organizations sometimes embrace their routines in a parochial manner, bringing about coordination and communication problems and even contending perceptions of external threats and opportunities.<sup>158</sup>

The bureaucratic model draws attention to the bargaining process between organizational players whose power are derived from their place in the organizations. In this regard, its primary unit of analysis, seen as the independent variable, is the "[g]overnmental action as political resultant."<sup>159</sup> This is a *resultant* because, rather than being a coherent and calculated response to the international strategic environment, it is a by-product of compromise, conflict, bargaining, and even confusion between officials as individual actors with parochial priorities and perceptions. It

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<sup>153</sup> Jonathan Bendor and Thomas Hammond, "Rethinking Allison's Models," *American Political Science Review* 86, no. 2 (1992): 303 and 305. See Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 14-28.

<sup>154</sup> Miles Kahler, "Rationality in International Relations," *International Organizations* 52, no. 4 (1998): 930.

<sup>155</sup> Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 2-7.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-96.

<sup>158</sup> Conor Keane and Steve Wood, "Bureaucratic Politics, Role Conflict, and the International Dynamics of US Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan," *Armed Forces & Society* 42, no. 1 (2016): 99-118.

<sup>159</sup> Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 162.

follows that the governmental actor to be studied is not a national actor or a constellation of organizations but, instead, individual players who derived their power and influence from their position in given organizations. This is a *political* resultant in the sense that it depends on bargaining processes between players with different interests and levels of influence.<sup>160</sup> In the final analysis, it can be argued that both of these models are based on structural and agency-oriented views of organizational processes of foreign policy decision making.<sup>161</sup>

In considering their conception of rationality, both of these models come to grips with the refined logic of consequentialism.<sup>162</sup> The organizational model is based explicitly on *bounded rationality*, as originally raised by Simon Herbert. Specifically, organizations adopt bounded rationality in defining strategic problems, pinpointing criteria to meet their goals, and clarifying procedures to deal with uncertainty at the international level. Firstly, strategic problems are factorized, that is, they are split up to assess a limited number of aspects, and they are assigned as sub-goals to organizational subunits. Secondly, maximizing as the ability to consider all courses of action and to choose that one that meets organizational goals optimally is replaced by satisficing as the ability to pick up the action, which is good enough to achieve these goals. Thirdly, organizations define repertoires of action which are acceptable in given recurring situations. These characteristics of bounded rationality informing organizational behaviour result in standard operating procedures affecting foreign policy strategic options. That is to say, organizations' inability to adopt comprehensive rationality forces them to adopt such procedures as an inescapable, plausible, reasonable alternative.<sup>163</sup>

The third model deepens the impossibility of comprehensive rationality in assessing

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 174-180.

<sup>161</sup> Walter Carlsnaes, "Foreign Policy," 338.

<sup>162</sup> Bendor and Hammond, "Rethinking Allison's Models," 304.

<sup>163</sup> Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 71-72.

bargaining games. Government behavior is much further from being rational not only in the sense of the first model but also of common parlance. After all, foreign policy options are “not chosen as a solution to a problem but rather results from compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence”.<sup>164</sup> The model is far from providing any explanation of rational behavior either as exhaustive calculation or adoption of operating procedures. It only attempts to rationalize the rules of the game irrespective of the rationality of its political resultant. Such rules define, among other issues, who are the primary players (according to their position), what determines their stand (parochial priorities, perceptions, goals, interests, deadlines), and what determines their ability to impact results (position, formal authority, control over resources, expertise, access to information, influence over other actors).<sup>165</sup> In not having to mention bounded rationality to underpin its insights, this model would be one of *ambiguous rationality*. At times, some well-positioned actors can make complex strategic calculations similar to those expected by the first model. Other times actors are seen as boundedly rational. Sometimes the President is seen as a superpower among other lesser powers and, at the aggregate level, nobody seems to be capable of controlling final outcomes.<sup>166</sup>

In considering the criticism of the rational actor model provided by organizational and bureaucratic models, the analysis of Canadian and American intervention in Afghanistan would focus on assessing the whole-of-government model informing the Provincial Reconstruction Teams’ functioning. This model was seen by the NATO intervening countries and some OECD members, especially the United States and Canada, as an alleged paradigm of interagency coordination, civil-military cooperation, and essential tool to mobilize critical military and civilian

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 164-169.

<sup>166</sup> Bendor and Hammond, “Rethinking Allison’s Models,” 304-305 and 315.

resources to undertake the COIN campaign coordinately.<sup>167</sup> That is to say, the whole-of-government approach ideally aims to drive governmental actors to behave more according to the expectations of the rational model. However, organizational and bureaucratic politics models would challenge such an account.

Specifically, such models would help assess some of the key individual players' role, such as the U.S. General David Petraeus and Canadian General Rick Hillier. Likewise, they allow for examining the contradictions between the different priorities, perceptions, and routines between the American and Canadian Departments of Defence and the military, on the one hand, and civilian agencies, on the other hand. The Departments of Defence and the military possessed more control over resources during the intervention and were naturally ready for warfighting missions, whereas civilian agencies were more constrained by spending priorities and were focused on stability and reconstruction operations. According to those models, an interesting puzzle could be to examine how COIN could have been seen differently by the military and civilians. The military deemed it sometimes as another warfare tool, sometimes as a goal demanding the expansion of their roles to cover non-military components of COIN campaigns, such as reconstruction and stabilization. In contrast, the civilian agencies were sometimes worried about the link between security, governance, and development programs in the long term and how they could be brushed aside from the decision-making process.<sup>168</sup>

Likewise, such models enable us to address the challenges to cooperation between the dominant civilian agencies themselves — such as the Department of State (DoS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Agriculture (DoA), on the

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<sup>167</sup> Keane and Wood, "Bureaucratic Politics," 103; OECD, "Whole-of-Government Approaches to Fragile States," *OECD Journal on Development* 8, no. 3 (2008): 185.

<sup>168</sup> Keane and Wood, "Bureaucratic Politics," 104-5; Stephen Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust. Lessons Learned from Canada's War in Afghanistan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 70-75, 98-100.

American side, and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), on the Canadian side. As documented by some studies, every agency embraced its own priorities and routines, making the intervention contradictory or even ineffective.<sup>169</sup> In attempting to explain the similarity between American and Canadian foreign policies in Afghanistan, those models probably lead us to make a case for the military ascendancy thesis, as mentioned in chapter 1. The organizational and bureaucratic analysis would suggest the pervasiveness of military ambition, among other ones, and the inability of civilian agencies to mitigate it in being entangled in their own contradictions.

However, their primary problem is that, even if such approaches provide a useful understanding of the organizational and bargaining process underlying the American and Canadian decision-making processes, they are insufficient when the purpose is to assess the evolution of these processes. A pre-fixed understanding of government actors' priorities and routines is inadequate when the purpose is precisely to assess how they have changed. As chapters 4 and 5 will also show, American and Canadian changing engagement levels in Afghanistan must be explained beyond the bureaucratic and organizational realms by including the international and domestic-politics ones. Both the strategic environment, which was defined by the international system's unipolar structure and the Afghan irregular warfare, and the American and Canadian executives' structural autonomy within their political systems allowed these actors go beyond their pre-fixed priorities and routines. Unipolarity and executive's structural autonomy *vis-à-vis* domestic actors and the legislative branch, above all, offered a high room for manoeuvre for the United States and Canadian FPE to adopt offensive-dominance and opportunistic foreign policies operationalized as COIN new priorities and routines in Afghanistan.

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<sup>169</sup> Keane and Wood, "Bureaucratic Politics," 107-110; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 70-82.

It is also worth noting that American governmental actors started to plan the intervention widely influenced by conventional warfare thinking that had affected their priorities and routines during the Cold War and, to a large extent, the early years of post-Cold War. Indeed, the first plan outlined to intervene in Afghanistan was “using conventional U.S military might.”<sup>170</sup> However, the governmental actors had to adjust to the fact that “Afghanistan would be [American] nation’s first major foray into a global, unconventional war aimed at preventing terrorist from launching future attacks against Americans.”<sup>171</sup> This strategic environment forced the American FPE to operationalize its offensive-dominance foreign and security policy as CT and then as COIN rather than as a conventional warfare strategy. Likewise, during the intervention, Canadian governmental actors, especially the FPE, accustomed to organizational and bureaucratic routines informing classical and complex peacekeeping routines — in the form of S&R — ended up replacing them with COIN due to the evolution of the Afghan irregular warfare in the south of the country. In a nutshell, the bureaucratic and organizational processes cannot explain the American and Canadian changing engagement levels in Afghanistan. It must be found through a thorough explanation aimed at combining governmental actors’ perceptions, systemic opportunities, strategic requirements on the ground, and domestic incentives.

### **3. Liberal approaches**

The second approach to American and Canadian foreign and security policies is liberalism, especially in the form of democratic peace theory and Andrew Moravcsik’s liberal theory of foreign policy. Unlike neoclassical realism as “a top-down, international system-based theory” of foreign policy, those liberal variants embrace “a bottom-up, domestic society-based theory” of

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<sup>170</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown. A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 371.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, 367-8.

foreign policy.<sup>172</sup> Specifically, they explain foreign and security policy according to the multiple domestic institutional and ideational sources of state preferences. Moravcsik also addresses “the configuration of interdependent state preferences” at the systemic level.<sup>173</sup>

The proponents of democratic peace theory, in particular, make the regime type its independent variable, particularly contrasting democratic and non-democratic regimes, to explain foreign policy. As originally developed, the primary contention is that liberal democracies are able and willing to build peaceful relations when interacting with each other. Such a peaceful orientation of foreign and security policy results from democratic culture and democratic procedures involving the decision-making process of such regimes. Both political culture — based on the rule of law, individual rights, representative government, and public opinion —, and procedures — such as checks and balances, accountability, and other legal-political restrictions — curb propensity for violence and, accordingly, make democracies hesitant to declare the war. Even though democracies tend to fight against authoritarian regimes since they can turn into threats to international liberal peace, democracies rarely fight wars for preventive reasons.<sup>174</sup> Not only do their domestic political culture and procedures prevent democratic political leaders from doing so, but also such types of wars are seen as “morally abhorrent and contrary to the collective identity of democratic states.”<sup>175</sup> After all, a preventive war compared to a pre-emptive war constitutes a response to a future, non-clearly defined threat rather than to immediate, more clearly defined

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<sup>172</sup> Kevin Narizny, “On Systemic Paradigms and Domestic Politics: A Critique of the Newest Realism,” *International Security* 42, no. 2 (2017): 155-6.

<sup>173</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, “Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics,” *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997): 520.

<sup>174</sup> Scott Burchill, “Liberalism,” in *Theories of International Relations*, eds. Scott Burshil, et al (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), 62; Miriam Fendius Elman, “Unpacking Democracy,”: Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Theories of Democratic Peace,” *Security Studies* 9, no. 4 (2000): 92; see also Michael Doyle, “Three Pillars of the Liberal Peace,” *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (2005): 463-466; John Oneal and Bruce Russett, “The Classical Liberals Were Right: Democracy, Interdependence, and Conflict, 1950-1985,” *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1997): 270.

<sup>175</sup> Jack S. Levy, “Preventive War and Democratic Politics,” *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2008): 8.

threat.<sup>176</sup> However, in attempting to conceptualize the War on Terrorism (WoT), along with other empirical and theoretical objectives regarding assessing the causes of war, Jack Levy aims to nuance the aforementioned classical argument of democratic peace theory by providing several cases of democracies fighting preventive wars. In particular, Levy argued that the Bush Doctrine, while having been conceived under democratic procedures and having sought to honour democratic principles, justified a preventive war during the Iraq invasion.<sup>177</sup>

Even considering democratic peace theory's argument that democracies rarely fight wars for preventive reasons, the original version of democratic peace theory would certainly have little to say in attempting to compare two democracies, such as the United States and Canada. This is because the original argument entails embracing a single, undifferentiated conception of democracy. As initially formulated, democratic peace theory's insights lead to examining similarities solely, leaving out structural differences between both of these countries and their different governments' orientations. Nevertheless, some thinkers try to fill this gap by offering a refined version of democratic peace theory. They attempt to test the hypothesis that different subtypes of democracy, such as those advanced in the United States and Canada, may behave differently and change their strategic goals by adapting themselves to political circumstances. Such an analytical objective enables them to undertake synchronic and diachronic comparative analyses. The former would explain different subtypes of democracies behaving differently in the same time frame, whereas the latter would appraise a single democracy behaving differently in different time frames.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 4, 8-9 and 16-17.

<sup>178</sup> Susan Paterson, *Crisis Bargaining and the State: The Domestic Politics of International Conflict* (Ann Harbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); David Auerswald, "Inward Bond: Domestic Institutions and Military Conflict," *International Organization* 53, no. 3 (1999): 469-504; Elman, "Unpacking Democracy," 91-126; Norrin Ripsman, "Neoclassical Realism and Domestic Interest Groups," in *Neoclassical Realism, State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 170-193;

In attempting to assess the way the proponents of both of these approaches address rationality, it can be argued that classical peace democratic theory embraces a classical logic of consequentialism. In contrast, the refined version adopts a refined logic of expected consequences. Yet a critical assessment of their assumptions could also reveal that they embrace a logic of appropriateness as democratic collective identity ends up being crucial to conduct foreign and security policy. That is to say, appropriateness would define the overall range of actions, whereas consequentialism would define their particular strategic options. Above all, the classical argument attempting to showcase that “the classical liberals were right”<sup>179</sup> and, accordingly, making a case for the virtues of democracy and internationalism, could have led their proponents to adopt a classical logic of appropriateness, by definition, aimed at reifying such virtues. For its part, the refined argument would have the potential — yet not the complete capacity — for involving the refined logic of appropriateness by explaining variations in ideational orientations and the exogenously-generated preferences within domestic and international institutional settings.<sup>180</sup>

In any case, this assessment goes beyond the purpose of this review. Suffice it to say that when the assumptions of both of these approaches to democratic peace are considered according to their own proponents, consequentialism is dominant. On the one hand, the classical version proponents argued that the war is costly and risky by precisely adopting consequential rationality and complete information assumption. Decision-makers know that a war can turn them out of office by audiences questioning their motives and opposing parties highlighting costs in blood and

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Brendan Rittenhouse Green, “Two Concepts of Liberty. US Cold War Grand Strategies and the Liberal Tradition,” *International security* 37, no. 2 (2012): 9-43.

<sup>179</sup> Oneal and Bruset, “The Classical Liberals Were Right,” 268-272.

<sup>180</sup> See Zeev Maoz’s summarization of “cultural critiques” and Sebastian Rosato’s account of the “flaws in normative logic” of democratic peace theory. Zeev Maoz, “Realist and Cultural Critiques of the Democratic Peace: A Theoretical and Empirical Re-Assessment,” *Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations* 24, no. 1 (1998): 3-89; and Sebastian Rosato, “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 4 (2003): 585-602.

treasure derived from fighting wars. Also, democracies, as opposed to non-democracies, can bargain more easily due to their informational advantages. Specifically, democratic political systems reduce uncertainty in an imperfectly informed strategic scenario by frequently revealing their motives.<sup>181</sup> On the other hand, the proponents of the modified version embrace imperfect rationality in addressing the different ideational orientations of democratic regimes, as well as their different institutional arrangements as the independent variable affecting the way democracies undertake their foreign and security policies, in general, and their propensity for waging the war, in particular.

Regarding the variations of ideational orientations, as considered by the refined version of democratic peace theory, Brendan Green developed “A Theory of Liberal Foreign Policy,” which is consistent with democratic peace theory. Green considers liberalism as an “antirealist ideology” seeing war as the result of “arms races, secret diplomacy, and shifting alliances,” and, accordingly, considering “the promotion of democracy, free trade, and basic international laws and rules” as the basis for peace.<sup>182</sup> His theory seeks to address two historical variations in American foreign policy: exemplarism and crusading — also seen as defensive liberalism and offensive liberalism —,<sup>183</sup> when Americans have been forced to deal with the evils of power politics.<sup>184</sup> Exemplarist —or defensive — liberal foreign policy would suggest that “foreign commitments [with democratic values] are internally dangerous, externally unnecessary, and ideologically

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<sup>181</sup> Jide Nzelibe and John Yoo showcase how the logic of consequentialism was adopted by seminal works within the literature of democratic peace theory. Jide Nzelibe and John Yoo, “Rational War and Constitutional Design,” *The Yale Law Journal* 115, no. 9 (2006): 2528-2529. See Kenneth Schultz, “Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War,” *International Organizations* 53, no. 2 (1999): 233-266; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., “An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace,” *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (1999): 791-807; see also James Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994): 577-592.

<sup>182</sup> Green, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” 11.

<sup>183</sup> Benjamin Miller, “Explaining Changes in U.S. Grand Strategy: 9/11, the Rise of Offensive Liberalism, and the War in Iraq,” *Security Studies* 19, no. 1 (2010): 26-65.

<sup>184</sup> Green, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” 11-17.

unwise;” thus, it would suggest promoting democratic peace through example.<sup>185</sup> In contrast, a crusading — or offensive — liberal foreign policy would suggest that such “commitments are internally manageable, externally necessary, and ideologically essential;” after all, democratic peace must be vindicated by liberal democracies to be achieved.<sup>186</sup>

Such forms of liberalism would allow us to test the hypothesis that the United States and Canada’s foreign and security policy in Afghanistan coincided significantly as their governments adopted comparable crusading liberal foreign policy. Based on this perspective, it can be argued that the American government adopted a crusading approach since the beginning of the intervention, whereas the Canadian government embraced such an approach in the late years of the intervention. Benjamin Miller’s analysis of the adoption of offensive liberalism during the Bush government,<sup>187</sup> as well as Kim Richard Nossal’s examination of the incorporation of sanctimonious idealism —an apparent variant of crusading or offensive liberalism— in Canadian foreign policy, would be fertile grounds to advance this hypothesis.<sup>188</sup>

As for how different institutional arrangements have an impact on the way democracies conduct their foreign and security policies, the refined version of democratic peace theory distinguishes between “presidential, coalitional parliamentary, Westminster parliamentary, and semi-presidential democratic systems.”<sup>189</sup> Their procedures impact differently the executives’ ability to conduct their foreign policies and the legislatures’ ability to either oversee or shape it.<sup>190</sup> Specifically, such systems embrace a particular “*domestic decision-making environment* (encompassing [...] institutional structures, decision-making procedures, and procedural norms)”

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>187</sup> Miller, “Explaining Changes in U.S. Grand Strategy,” 26-65.

<sup>188</sup> Kim Richard Nossal. “Right and Wrong in Foreign Policy 40 years on. Realism and Idealism in Canadian Foreign Policy,” *International Journal* 62, no. 2 (2007): 265-267.

<sup>189</sup> Elman, “Unpacking democracy,” 93 and 97.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

as the independent variable impacting distinctively “the structural autonomy of foreign policy decision makers.”<sup>191</sup> In majoritarian systems, such as the Westminster parliamentary adopted in Canada, war initiation, for instance, depends almost exclusively on the executive, which means that the FPE can adopt belligerent or moderate policies irrespective of MPs’ stances. In less majoritarian systems, such as the American presidential system, war powers are theoretically shared by the executive and legislative branches, which means that the latter are better situated, as compared to the parliament in the Westminster model, to have access to foreign-policy decision making.<sup>192</sup>

By adopting the refined version of democratic peace theory, it would be possible to understand how the Harper Conservatives seized the substantial room for manoeuvre enjoyed by the Canadian Prime Minister during the Afghanistan intervention. Such a room enabled them to assume a similar engagement, as advanced by the United States. While dealing with a less permissive domestic environment, the American executive enjoyed equally a favourable domestic decision-making environment after the 9/11 attacks to use military force. Such a hypothesis could be based on several works. Arend Lijphart’s examination of dominance patterns and the balance between the executive and legislative in presidential and parliamentary systems would be an inevitable point of departure.<sup>193</sup> In the case of the United States, Robert Dahl’s analysis of the American political system, as compared to other majoritarian systems, must be taken into account seriously. Dahl’s hypothesis that the tendency of the American political system to have three different majorities in the executive, the Senate and House — whose composition do not match

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<sup>191</sup> Norrin Ripsman, *Peacemaking by Democracies. The Effect of State Autonomy of the post-World Settlements* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 6.

<sup>192</sup> Elman, “Unpacking democracy,” 97.

<sup>193</sup> Arendt Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in the Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2012), chapter 7.

each other and whose representatives do not necessarily agree — must be considered to address the American executive’s room for manoeuvre to conduct foreign and security policy.<sup>194</sup> Finally, Phillippe Lagassé’s analysis of the war prerogative reform in Canada, which ended up benefiting significantly the executive during the intervention *vis-à-vis* other Westminster countries’ executives, such as the British, would be essential to advance the comparative foreign policy analysis at hand.<sup>195</sup>

While necessary to understand the differences and similarities between Canadian and American interventions in Afghanistan, the ideational and institutional variables suggested by the aforementioned approaches are not sufficient explanatory factors. They should be combined with other factors to grasp foreign and security policy’s specific orientation and timing. Benjamin Miller, for instance, argues that the emergence of offensive liberalism is indeed essential to understand the Bush doctrine — which can be conjured up to follow the Martin Liberals and the Harper Conservatives’ foreign and security policies as well — as mentioned above. Yet it depended on systemic factors, such as the combination of unipolarity and a high-threat environment, and on domestic factors, such as the high room for manoeuvre of neoconservatives and the subsequent changing perceptions of Bush Administration’s top officials after 9/11.<sup>196</sup>

According to chapters 3, 4 and 5’s empirical findings, ideational and institutional variables should also be treated as intervening variables to pinpoint the relative weight of capabilities, ideas, and institutional factors. On this matter, Norris Ripsman’s academic transition from democratic

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<sup>194</sup> Robert Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 110-116.

<sup>195</sup> Philippe Lagassé, “Parliament and the War Prerogative in the United Kingdom and Canada: Explaining Variations in Institutional Change and Legislative Control,” *Parliamentary Affairs* 70, no. 2 (2017): 280-300; Philippe Lagassé. “Accountability for National Defence. Ministerial Responsibility, Military Command and Parliamentary Oversight”. *IRPP Study* 4 (2010): 1-60.

<sup>196</sup> Miller, “Explaining Changes in U.S. Grand Strategy,” 40, 50-65.

peace theory<sup>197</sup> to neoclassical realism<sup>198</sup> so as to enhance the understanding of executive's structural autonomy is an indication of analytical progress. When addressed by the former, the executive's structural autonomy becomes a dependent variable within an institutional analysis. Yet, when analyzed by the latter, it ends up being an intervening variable within a more robust analysis involving capabilities, ideational, and institutional factors. Neoclassical realism merges institutional factors with other variables, such as the international distribution of power and the executives' perceptions, so as to propose a more nuanced hypothesis, such as that advanced by the present examination of two democracies intervening in Afghanistan.

Drawing on Andrew Moravcsik's work, liberals can reply that a liberal approach to foreign and security policy can involve a myriad of variables. Moravcsik's "Liberal International Relations Theory" or "Liberal theory of international politics" would explain foreign and security policy as the result of the state-society relationship, especially "the relationship between the state and the domestic and transnational society in which it is embedded."<sup>199</sup> That is to say, state responses as the dependent variable would be addressed according to different independent variables, such as societal ideas, transnational economic exchanges, and domestic representation schemes. Indeed, such an approach identifies and operationalizes variables at the level of state-society relationship by synthesizing core assumptions of critical variants of liberalism, such as ideational liberalism, commercial liberalism, and republican liberalism.<sup>200</sup>

By including those variables, Moravcsik's approach seeks to criticize, accordingly, the

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<sup>197</sup> Ripsman, *Peacemaking by Democracies*.

<sup>198</sup> Ripsman, Lobell, and Taliaferro, eds. *Neoclassical Realism, State, and Foreign Policy*; Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>199</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, "Liberal International Relations Theory: A Scientific Assessment," in *Progress in International Relations Theory. Appraising the Field*, eds. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendus Elman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 161; Moravcsik, "Taking preferences seriously," 513–53.

<sup>200</sup> Moravcsik. "Taking preferences seriously," 515, 524–533, 545.

assumption of state rationality, as advanced by realist approaches, or modified by different variants of liberalism focused on institutional settings' effects on such rationality — especially neoliberal institutionalism.<sup>201</sup> Appropriately understood, the assumption of state rationality would attribute, according to Moravcsik, analytical priority to state preferences *vis-à-vis* strategic environment and institutional arrangements at the systemic level. It would also skip the conception of rationality, as exogenously defined either as narrow egoism or bounded rationality.<sup>202</sup> To be sure, such an assumption entails explaining foreign and security policy as “*two-stages process* of constrained social choice.”<sup>203</sup> The first stage would be to analyze the configuration of state preferences, that is, “the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations,” which entails, as mentioned, assessing state-society variables.<sup>204</sup> The second stage would account for strategic interaction with other nations operating with similar constraints. All in all, Moravcsik’s approach embraces a sort of *aggregated and endogenously defined rationality* aimed at sophisticating the liberal account of international politics as a reflection of state preferences, which “in turn are the aggregation of individual preferences through domestic institutions that privilege some over others.”<sup>205</sup>

Moravcsik’s approach constitutes one of the most sophisticated alternatives to neoclassical realism insofar as it takes into account different levels of analysis. However, in considering American and Canadian foreign and security policies in Afghanistan from such a perspective, the analysis would still have the problem of not establishing linkages between power, ideational, and institutional factors. As sources of state preferences, such factors are also addressed by Moravcsik

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 536, 541-547. See also Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony. Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 111-116.

<sup>202</sup> Moravcsik, “Taking Preferences Seriously,” 542.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, 544.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 525-533 and 544-545.

<sup>205</sup> Rathbun, “A Rose by any Other Name,” 307.

as having the same analytical relevance. Without any qualification of such sources, it would entail making the same problem as *Innenpolitick* theories of foreign policy. As Gideon Rose points out, these theories focus on analyzing several sources of foreign policy, giving importance to everything and, accordingly, avoiding identifying what matters the most at every level of analysis.<sup>206</sup>

As a result, the liberal theory of foreign policy would be unable to explain the causal mechanism that drove similar American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention. As chapters 3, 4 and 5 will demonstrate, systemic, ideational, and domestic-politics dimensions matter. Yet these chapters allow for highlighting what matters most in explaining the American and Canadian increased engagement levels: the high room for manoeuvre offered by unipolarity at the international level, American and Canadian executives' structural autonomy at the domestic level, and these executive's causal beliefs at the individual level. Above all, these chapters' empirical findings underpin neoclassical realism's causal mechanism aimed at distinguishing these factors as independent and intervening variables. Finally, even if "the intervening liberal factors like domestic ideas, institutions and interests"<sup>207</sup> are essential to explain foreign and security policy, without an analysis of power capabilities in mind, Moravcsik's liberal account prevents us from comparing great powers and middle powers seriously. It is not the case in basing the analysis on a realist theory, such as neoclassical realism.

#### **4. Constructivist approaches**

The third approach to American and Canadian foreign and security policies is constructivism and its classical and critical variants. Unlike neoclassical realism combining

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<sup>206</sup> Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 148.

<sup>207</sup> Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously," 548.

ideational and material factors within a realist ontology, constructivists adopt an ideational approach to understand the constitutive relationship between agents — mainly states — and structures — that is, the social configuration of the international system. By adopting a social interpretation of international politics, constructivism aims to explain the relationship between strategic culture and identity, on the one hand, and foreign and security policy, on the other hand.<sup>208</sup>

In particular, as initially advanced by Alexander Wendt, constructivism aims to explain foreign and security policy through a constitutive-making rationale drawn through several steps. Firstly, states are seen as actors, whose strategic identity, ends and means are socially acquired through socialization processes.<sup>209</sup> That is to say, their agency is defined in terms of role-taking and alter-casting within “pre-existing shared understandings.”<sup>210</sup> Secondly, as a way of learning, socialization allows states to acquire common and collective knowledge regarding security and defence amid micro and macro structures of interaction, such as those advanced in North America or the very making of the Westphalian system.<sup>211</sup> Thirdly, taking the causal and constitutive effects of common and collective knowledge seriously allows us to define structures in cultural terms.<sup>212</sup> Above all, it helps understand that strategic cultures “tend[s] to reproduce [themselves insofar as] socially shared knowledge plays a key role in making interaction relatively predictable over time.”<sup>213</sup> Finally, the emergence of international cultures reaffirms state agency, repeating the loop

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<sup>208</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Peter Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security. Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Emanuel Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground,” 322; Richard Jackson and Matt McDonald, “Constructivism, US Foreign Policy and the ‘War on Terror’,” in *New Directions in US Foreign Policy*, eds. Inderjeet Parmar, Linda B. Miller, and Mark Ledwidge (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), 18-31.

<sup>209</sup> Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, chapter 5, and 197.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 142-3 and 159-164.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 142-3, 184, and 249.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

of the social constitution.<sup>214</sup> However, international cultures defining foreign and security policies can change, considering the different roles and meanings which dominate the international system. Such roles correspond to intersubjective meanings of enemy, rival, or friend within what Wendt called Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian cultures of anarchy.<sup>215</sup>

In terms of its conception of rationality, constructivist approaches to foreign and security policy seek, accordingly, to embrace the distinction between the logics of consequentialism and appropriateness to make a case for the latter. The point of departure is that approaches embracing consequentialism, as represented by realist and some liberal approaches, “treat the interests and preferences of actors as mostly fixed during the process of interaction.”<sup>216</sup> Such consequentialist approaches adopt instrumental rationality focused solely on maximization. Thus, classical social constructivism considers that such consequentialist approaches leave out the role of identities, norms, and institutions, shaping human actions. In this regard, social constructivism adopts the term *normative rationality* to indicate how human action is a “rule-guided behavior [which] differs from instrumental rational behavior in that actors try to ‘do the right thing’ rather than maximizing or optimizing their given preferences.”<sup>217</sup> As mentioned, it follows that rules, norms and institutions not only regulate human behaviour but also they bring about human agency in the sense the latter does not have meaning without referring the former. At the same time, human agency in the form of social interactions is critical to reinforce, transform, or qualify the social understanding that gives meaning to the social reality.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Stephano Guzzini and Anna Leander, “A Social Theory for International Relations: An Appraisal of Alexander Wendt’s Theoretical and Disciplinary Synthesis,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 4, no. 4 (2001): 326.

<sup>215</sup> Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, chapter 6.

<sup>216</sup> Thomas Risse, “‘Let’s argue!’: Communicative Action in World Politics,” *International Organization* 54, 1 (2000): 3.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>218</sup> Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

From this perspective, American and Canadian foreign and security policies, especially their high degree of similarity during the Afghanistan intervention, would be seen as a by-product of the growing Kantian culture in North America. After a period of enmity and hostility informing Hobbesian and Lockean cultures by the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, those countries, by the end of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth century, managed to forge a sort of democratic peace in North America. This culture was reflected in the Kingston Declaration in the 1930s, aimed at recognizing security interdependence between both countries, military assistance programs, such as the Hyde Park agreement during the Second World War, the NORAD, and their NATO membership. With those strategic agreements and its constitutive social practices in mind, these countries rejected the resort to force to resolve their disagreements and considered each other as friendly democratic allied countries.<sup>219</sup> Expressly, NATO, seen as the democratic alliance of the North Atlantic and transatlantic security community, would reaffirm such strategic culture and allows them to distinguish themselves from non-democratic and rogue states.<sup>220</sup> When the 9/11 attacks occurred, American and Canadian coordinated reactions through the WoT were simply drawn on such Kantian strategic culture based on normative rationality.

A more critical understanding of constructivism draws attention to the disciplining effects of discourses and narratives on foreign and security policies.<sup>221</sup> In telling agents about how the

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<sup>219</sup> Justin Massie. "Making Sense of Canada's 'Irrational' International Security Policy. A Tale of Three Strategic Cultures," *International Journal* 64, no. 3 (2009): 632; Caroline Patsias and Dany Deschênes, "Unsociable Sociability: The Paradox of Canadian-American Friendship," *International Politics* 48, no. 1 (2011): 98-99.

<sup>220</sup> David Haglund, "And the Beat Goes On: 'Identity' and Canadian Foreign Policy," *Canada Among Nations 2008: 100 years of Canadian Foreign Policy*, eds. Robert Bothwell, Jean Daudelin and Daniel Schwanen (Montreal and Kingston: Mc-Gill-Queen's University Press, 2009).

<sup>221</sup> Roxanne Lynn Doty, "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines," *International Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (1993): 297-320; Michael Barnett, "Culture, Strategy and Foreign Policy Change," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 1 (1999): 5-36; Jackson and McDonald. "Constructivism, US foreign policy and the 'War on Terror,'" 18-31.

social world works, their possibilities for taking action according to what constitutes legitimate behaviour, and how they could assume commitments, discourses and narratives are essential to shaping foreign and security policy. Like every policy, it is seen, according to critical constructivism, as a realm of intersubjective contestation and negotiation between several discourses and narratives about political communities' core values, what threatens such values, and the means to preserve them.<sup>222</sup>

By deepening into the ontology of language, such an approach goes beyond normative rationality as initially formulated by classical constructivism. The social world is not only socially and intersubjectively built but, above all, it is the by-product of language structures. That is to say, critical constructivism embraced the radical turn to linguistics conceptualized by the anti-positivist movement. In doing so, such an approach argues, accordingly, that consciousness and rationality cannot be studied without referring to language.<sup>223</sup> What is more, such a radical turn goes hand in hand with a robust conception of social agency, which implies considering human actions as involving a complex mental process aimed at interpreting a rule. Critical constructivism would suggest going beyond the classical constructivist understanding of actions and identities in a simplistic constitutive manner by assuming that human consciousness and “rationality” are derived not only from the structures of the language but also eventually from contradictory reasons which at times are ignored by actors, such as the premises of psychoanalysis would suggest.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Nicholas Onuf, “Constructivism: A User’s Manual,” in *International Relations in a Constructed World*, eds. Vendulka Kubáľková, Nicholas Onuf, and Paul Kowert (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 58-63, 67; Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989); Friedrich V Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Jackson and McDonald. “Constructivism, US Foreign Policy and the ‘War on Terror,’” 21-25.

<sup>223</sup> Emanuel Adler, “Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions, and Debates,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse-Kappen and Beth A. Simmons (London: SAGE, 2013), 115.

<sup>224</sup> Steve Smith, ‘Wendt’s World,’ *Review of International Studies* 26, no. 1 (2000): 158-159.

According to this approach, the WoT, and its subsequent implementation in Afghanistan, would be seen as a war for framing the American core values and those of its allies, such as Canada. It would be seen as a fight to frame the primary threats to such values and the most appropriate means to deal with such threats. As a result, not only did the United States and its closest allies, such as Canada, deem the 9/11 attacks as an act of war, but they also regarded terrorism as an existential threat to democracy and freedom as the quintessential pillar of the Western way of living. Such a threat was depicted by conjuring up good and evil language, which had strong precedents during World War II and the Cold War. For instance, well-known historical parallels and symbols, such as the Pearl Harbor attack and the threats posed by Nazis and Communists, were invoked to legitimize the WoT. In doing so, the American government and its allies speak to specific audiences and marginalize their identity's alternative conceptions.<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, this approach would help address the conflicting reasons involving American and Canadian intervention, building on either the collective identity of liberal democracies engaging with the building of liberal peace or strategic calculations based on dominant understandings of national interests.

All in all, drawing on constructivism and its classical and critical variants, the analysis of American and Canadian foreign and security policies would be oriented to addressing essential ideational factors, namely, strategic culture and identity. By informing decision-makers' perceptions, they would shape their coordinated deployments to Afghanistan under the narrative of WoT. However, while essential, those factors are insufficient to explain such policies, their transformation, and their coincidence in 2005/2006. By emphasizing ideational factors,

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<sup>225</sup> Jackson and McDonald, "Constructivism, US Foreign Policy and the 'War on Terror,'" 22-25.

constructivism diverts attention from material constraints both at the international and domestic levels, such as the relative distribution of power between states and domestic institutional hurdles to mobilize resources. In a nutshell, constructivism brushes aside the complex strategic context in which such interventions were performed, as the empirical chapters of this dissertation will show.

## 5. Realist approaches

Classical realism and structural realism constitute two other approaches to American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. Like neoclassical realism, these branches of realism have tended to explain foreign and security policy in terms of power capabilities and, particularly, the competition between states “under general conditions of scarcity”.<sup>226</sup> More importantly, every realist approach assumes that the international order is anarchic and, accordingly, survival ends up being the pre-eminent goal for every state. Likewise, in considering that international competition is seen as a zero-sum game, self-help becomes the only possible response to such competition.<sup>227</sup>

However, realists disagree about the primary sources of foreign and security policy. In particular, drawing on a reinterpretation of Kenneth Waltz’s three images of the causes of war, realist thinkers have discussed the feasibility of three independent variables, namely human motivations, national imperatives, and the international distribution of state capabilities.<sup>228</sup> Specifically, Waltz’s initial analysis of several political philosophers and types of thought, explaining the origin of war, either “within man, within the structure of the separate states [or]

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<sup>226</sup> Randall Schweller, “Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism,” in *Progress in International Relations Theory. Appraising the Field*, eds. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 326.

<sup>227</sup> Brian Schmidt and Tim Dunne, “Realism,” in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 104-106.

<sup>228</sup> Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1954).

within the state system,”<sup>229</sup> was operationalized by realist thinkers — including Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics* —<sup>230</sup> as the levels of analysis. Then, they select one or some of them to underpin their interpretation of international politics and foreign policy. Neoclassical realism merges Waltz’ three images, as operationalized as the systemic level, nonunitary, national level, and individual level, whereas the other branches focus solely on one or two levels of analysis. As mentioned, it does not mean that neoclassical realism is superior to other realist branches in abstract terms necessarily. What it indicates is that neoclassical realism attempts to offer a thorough explanation, whereas other branches of realism, especially structural realism, provide a parsimonious account.

As initially developed by Hans Morgenthau, classical realism highlights the first two variables — human motivations and national imperatives — studied on two different levels of analysis — individual level and unitary, national level. Drawing on the assumption that “politics [...] is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature,” classical realism would argue that the formulation and implementation of foreign and security policy depend on political actors defining their interests “in terms of power.”<sup>231</sup> In being governed by human beings pursuing power, states turn into power-maximizers whose interests collide with their rivals and enemies, making them entangled in international conflicts and war.<sup>232</sup>

With those assumptions in mind, Morgenthau’s account of foreign policy adopts a logic of consequentialism and, accordingly, instrumental rationality as advanced by Allison’s Rational Actor Model. Not only does such an account consider that states have fixed preferences as self-

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 12

<sup>230</sup> Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGrawHill, 1979).

<sup>231</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 4.

<sup>232</sup> Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power. The Unusual Origins of America’s World Role* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 19-20.

interested, maximizing actors but also they must assess every course of action in terms of its consequences in a world governed by selfishness and the lust for power.<sup>233</sup> Regarding the assumption of fixed state preferences, Morgenthau argues that the national interest in the form of survival and power maximization is the driving force of foreign policy as much as the “great generalities” of the Constitution guiding the political pathway of a nation. Like the great generalities of the Constitution, the national interest involves the minimal requirement while incorporating a residual meaning derived from specific circumstances that every nation must meet. In a world governed by the struggle for power, foreign policy’s minimal requirement is the protection of “[a nation’s] physical, political, and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations.”<sup>234</sup> What is more, the national interest ends up being a moral duty in the sense that in the absence of an integrated international society embracing the same common moral values as advanced within national societies, nations must choose the lesser evil, that is, self-preservation. Such a goal will guarantee “the attainment of a modicum of order” at the international level in which nations can coexist.<sup>235</sup>

As far as power maximization through consequential logic is concerned, three types of foreign policy options are particularly relevant for Morgenthau: namely, keeping power, acquiring more power, and demonstrating power. Such objectives are adopted respectively by the policies of the status quo, imperialism, and prestige. Based on historical cases, Morgenthau’s reasoning leads us to think that the actor responsible for the formulation of foreign policy must make strategic decisions not only to select one of such options (or a combination of them) taking into account

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<sup>233</sup> See Ghazi Algosabi, “The Theory of International Relations: Hans J. Morgenthau and His Critics,” *Background* 8, no. 4 (1965), 228, 231 and 238. On Morgenthau’s view of selfishness and lust for power, see Hans Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago-Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), 191-196.

<sup>234</sup> Hans Morgenthau, “Another ‘Great debate’: The National Interest of the United States,” *American Political Science Review* 46, no. 4 (1952): 972.

<sup>235</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1952), 38.

political circumstances but also to respond to other nations conducting one of those policies.<sup>236</sup> For instance, a policy of the status quo should be countered by policies of balance and compromise, while a policy of imperialism should be responded to through a policy of containment, such as the United States did during the Cold War to demarcate a military and geopolitical line between the Soviet Union and the Western world.<sup>237</sup>

Still, a closer analysis of Morgenthau's theory of foreign policy would reveal that it adopts a refined logic of consequentialism in addressing the constraints of foreign policy and the limitations to the understanding of international politics. That is to say, even if states are seen as self-interested, maximizing actors, they are not autonomous in making their decisions — that is, they are embedded in the strategic environment —, and they are not entirely informed actors. Both of these characteristics distinguish such an approach from the Rational Actor Model. On the one hand, foreign and security policy imperatives are shaped by specific political circumstances informing cost-benefit calculations. Such circumstances prevent states from expanding anywhere and anytime. Likewise, foreign and security policy is judged by their ability to acknowledge that “the moral aspirations of a particular nation” cannot be associated with “the moral laws that govern the universe.”<sup>238</sup> This is undoubtedly one of the most important principles of political realism. It follows distinguishing *utopianism* based on the morality of conviction — that is, a set of moral universals being held irrespective of political circumstances — and *realism* based on the morality of responsibility — that is, the calculation of consequences derived from actions in particular circumstances.<sup>239</sup> On the other hand, Morgenthau's theory of international politics takes into

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<sup>236</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, chapters 4-6.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>239</sup> Hans Morgenthau, “Another ‘Great debate,’” 963-971; Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 38-39; Edward Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), chapter 2; Raymond Aron, *Peace and War. A Theory of International Relations* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1960), 575-610.

account the “limitations to understanding [regarding] the ambiguity of the material with the observer has to deal.”<sup>240</sup> For this reason, in the final analysis, an appropriately formulated foreign policy depends not only on meeting the principles of realism but also on statesmen’s intuition and wisdom, allowing them to discern the character of international politics. That is to say, to deal with uncertainty, statesmen must be trained under the principles of political realism.

In considering American and Canadian foreign and security policies in Afghanistan, classical realism would assess the national interest and, subsequently, power-maximization strategies adopted during the intervention, and their ability to meet the principles of political realism, especially regarding Morgenthau’s rejection of a crusading spirit. On the one hand, classical realism would assess the extent to which the Taliban regime and al Qaeda’s physical, political, and cultural aggression undermined American and Canadian national interests during and after the 9/11 attacks. Then, such an approach would draw attention to these countries’ resource mobilization in the service of confronting the retribution campaign against them and enhancing their position in the Middle East and Central Asia to prevent terrorist groups from enjoying sanctuaries.

On the other hand, classical realism would probably judge such policies as having been based solely on the morality of conviction, especially during the late years of the intervention. What is more, it would appraise them as imperialism aimed, by definition, at changing the regional distribution of power. By transitioning from the destruction of al Qaeda through a counterterrorism strategy to the rebuilding of the Afghanistan according to Western values, American and Canadian campaign looked certainly like one based on the morality of conviction. Both countries could be seen as having turned into moral crusaders during the intervention. While having the Iraq invasion

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<sup>240</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 20.

in mind, Brian C. Schmidt and Michael Williams' analysis of how the Bush doctrine, based on neo-conservatism, contradicted the realist principle to skip "a moralistic and crusading spirit in American foreign policy," would be a fertile ground to analyze, for extension, the American and Canadian campaigns in Afghanistan.<sup>241</sup> Such an extrapolation is plausible even if Canada decided not to participate in Iraq. After all, COIN strategies used in Iraq as a theatre of operations, with their crusading spirit, were subsequently performed during the late years of the Afghanistan intervention due to their alleged success in the former.<sup>242</sup>

Structural realism — including neorealism, defensive realism, and offensive realism — focuses on the international distribution of state capabilities, which is studied at the systemic level of analysis. As Kenneth Waltz initially formulated, structural realism is a theory of international politics rather than a theory of foreign policy. Its purpose is to explain the international domain as a whole such that can be "studied in its own right [...] with structural and unit levels at once distinct and connected"<sup>243</sup> and defined by its structure, that is, by the arrangement of its parts —in this case, the states.<sup>244</sup> In particular, Waltz aims to demonstrate that international politics can be seen as an international political system as contrasted to domestic political systems. Such a system is defined in terms of anarchy, which is its organizing principle, the functional sameness of the states, and the distribution of state capabilities. Whilst anarchy and functional sameness are the enabling conditions to explain the international system as a whole, the distribution of capabilities is the independent variable needed to explain central international outcomes, such as periods of war and

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<sup>241</sup> Brian Schmidt and Michael Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 202.

<sup>242</sup> On the strategic goals involving COIN and the academic and doctrinal discussion about how the alleged success in Iraq had an impact on the strategy in Afghanistan, see Elinor Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 90-95.

<sup>243</sup> Kenneth Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): 23 and 29.

<sup>244</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 88.

peace and the balance of power.<sup>245</sup> Reasoning by analogy, Waltz argued that a theory of international politics is similar to the elegant and parsimonious economic theory of the market. It tells us how the organization of realm (international system functioning as a market) constrains the interacting units (states acting as firms), and accordingly, addresses how the states are pressed by structural forces (such as market forces) to behave in given ways.<sup>246</sup>

In such a version, structural realism would have nothing to say about American and Canadian foreign and security policies. After all, structural realism addresses a level of generality about the functioning of the international system that has nothing to do with foreign policies' particularity. As Waltz clearly argues, neorealism "does not tell us why state X made a certain move last Tuesday [...] what it does explain are the constraints that confine all states."<sup>247</sup> Ultimately, such a stance has brought about an analytical boundary between theories of international politics and theories of foreign policy, which would prevent this study from using neorealism at all to compare American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. More specifically, in terms of the research puzzle of this study, Waltz would suggest that his theory can solely explain why states with similar relative standing in the international system behave similarly,<sup>248</sup> which certainly was not the case of the United States and Canada. Subsequently, to address the objective of this study appropriately, that is, explaining why states differently placed in the international system behave similarly, it would be necessary to assess government performance and internal characteristics of the United States and Canada, which is not the purpose of Waltz's neorealism.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 82 and 88-89.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 72 and 89; Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," 21-37

<sup>247</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 121-122.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>249</sup> Such an inference is derived from Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 72 and Waltz, "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy," 54-55.

However, it is worth noting that there has been a controversy between Waltz and his critics regarding conceiving a neorealist theory of foreign policy. This debate can shed light on the present study as to how a systemic analysis can be relevant for addressing American and Canadian interventions in Afghanistan. It is worth noting that, amid this controversy, Waltz insists that neorealism must focus on the systemic level in a necessarily parsimonious way. As with the economic theory of the market skipping the explanation of the firms' characteristics, a theory of international politics depends on excluding the internal features of the states. States must be seen as unitary actors with a single motive — survival, or in the case of firms, profit-maximizing — to make his theory coherent and compelling.<sup>250</sup> What is more, in dealing with such a controversy, Waltz further distinguishes between theories of international politics and theories of foreign policy and argues that the latter are impossible to construct due to the underlying complexity of such a domain. Understanding such a domain depends more on a robust *analysis* embracing a myriad of factors than on a *theory*, which is, by definition, “sparse in formulation and beautifully simple” to make the complex and at times unpleasant reality intelligible and manageable.<sup>251</sup>

Some of Waltz's readers reject the analytical boundaries between international politics and foreign policy theories and pinpoint how neorealism paves the way for explaining foreign policy.<sup>252</sup> At the empirical level, they argue that international politics and foreign policy domains cannot be unlinked, given their apparent interdependence. The arrangement of the states in the international system shapes foreign policy options and subsequent behaviour, while the interaction between foreign policies has a significant impact on international outcomes and even systemic

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<sup>250</sup> Waltz, “International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy,” 54 and 57. See also Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 60-67.

<sup>251</sup> Waltz, “International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy,” 56.

<sup>252</sup> See Colin Elman, “Horses for Courses: Why Not Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy? *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996): 7-53; James Fearon, “Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (1998): 289-313; Schweller, “Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism,” 320-322; Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 80-90.

structure when the medium and longer terms are taken into account.<sup>253</sup>

At the analytical level, the critics of Waltzian neorealism conceive of international-politics and foreign-policy explanations as “two [interdependent] parts of a whole,”<sup>254</sup> which cannot be discarded under Waltz’s argument that theories explaining outcomes without reference to systemic causes are reductionist.<sup>255</sup> Both of these explanations “rather than being pure competitors, each depend on the progress of the other”.<sup>256</sup> To move beyond simply correlational observations, a theory of international politics must specify hypotheses linking systemic causes with expecting unit-level responses to external stimuli to be tested.<sup>257</sup> Likewise, to understand the role of domestic factors, a theory of foreign policy requires a systemic explanation of expecting states responses to pinpoint how such factors alter such an expectation.<sup>258</sup>

Aside from the interdependence between international-politics and foreign-policy explanations, which allows us to turn to theories like neorealism to explain foreign policy, Colin Elman showcases how structural realism — depicted not only by Waltz but also by others such as John Mearsheimer, Robert Gilpin, Joseph Grieco, and Stephen Walt — already provide foreign-policy explanations in three ways, namely: a) clarifying and operationalizing the key concepts of neorealism, such as anarchy, polarity, alliance, balancing, bandwagoning, offense-defense balance; b) merging systemic-level causes with secondary assumptions regarding, for instance, state motivations or the likelihood of cooperation; and c) making probabilistic predictions about state behavior based on the key core assumptions of neorealism. In any case, such a finding allows

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<sup>253</sup> Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 81-85.

<sup>254</sup> Rathbun, “A Rose by Any Other Name,” 311. See also Fearon, “Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations,” 289-313.

<sup>255</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, chapter 2.

<sup>256</sup> Fearon, “Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations,” 306.

<sup>257</sup> Schweller, “Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism,” 321.

<sup>258</sup> Fearon, “Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations,” 305.

us to acknowledge that neorealism has not been developed as far as it can go and, contrarily, its deductive framework can be unleashed to explain both international outcomes and state behaviour.<sup>259</sup>

The development of the neorealist deductive framework will be made all the more possible in considering the role of rationality within it, especially if it is seen as one involving a refined logic of consequentialism.<sup>260</sup> As Brian Rathbun points out, rather than a rational, deterministic theory, neorealism is a theory of constraints and incentives aimed at explaining how the structure disposes and constrains but does not determine a rational behaviour. That is to say, anarchy is not determinative, and comprehensive rationality cannot be assumed as if there were a market selector determining state behaviour.<sup>261</sup> Instead, neorealism supplements its explanation of the effects of the international system's structure with one that stresses the mechanisms of competition and socialization. For Waltz, states attempt to emulate their more successful competitors to survive, and such competition encourages them to accommodate their strategies to the "socially most acceptable and successful practices."<sup>262</sup> It follows that even though the theory focuses on how the international structure encourages searching for survival, it forcedly must appeal to domestic processes to explain the ability of states to emulate and compete. Neorealism's deductive framework would need to include a theory of domestic factors and, especially, a foreign-policy explanation, conceptualizing a refined logic of consequentialism to advance its account of international politics completely.<sup>263</sup>

Above all, neorealism embraces conceptions of optimal (closed to comprehensive

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<sup>259</sup> Elman, "Horses for Courses," 22, 26, 34-35, 44, 47. See also Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations," 305.

<sup>260</sup> See Miles Kahler, "Rationality in International Relations," *International Organizations* 52, no. 4 (1998): 924-5.

<sup>261</sup> Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name," 304-306

<sup>262</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 77.

<sup>263</sup> See Jennifer Sterling-Foker, "Realist Environment, Liberal Process, and Domestic-Level Variables," *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1997): 22.

rationality) and suboptimal rationality (similar to bounded rationality) implicitly. The former would be seen as states' ability to objectively assess the strategic environment, especially the implications of anarchy without illusion. It would mean embracing the same assumptions of perfectly competitive economies, making a theory of the firms (or foreign policy) unnecessary. The latter accounts for states' ability to compete and adjust to the strategic environment, which would be closer to an explanation of imperfect competition. In such an explanation, states (like firms), while constrained, are not determined and, subsequently, can maneuver among competitors with different levels of success, at times far from optimal behaviour.<sup>264</sup>

Accepting the possibility and relevance of a neorealist theory of foreign policy entails equally a potential explanation of American and Canadian foreign and security policies in Afghanistan from a perspective involving the systemic level. This approach would suggest beginning with the strategic environment during the intervention to explain how structural forces pressed American and Canadian governments to behave in given ways. This theoretical account would explain why Canada and the United States adopted different strategies during the early years of the intervention. As a great power and middle power, they embraced CT and S&R, respectively, which would allegedly constitute optimal foreign policies after the 9/11 attacks, according to their different power positions.

However, an optimal conception of rationality would be unable to explain American and Canadian transition to COIN, entailing massively resource mobilization with scant possibilities for success. Above all, the conception of suboptimal rationality, as implicitly proposed by Waltz, conceptualized by their critics — Colin Elman, James Fearon, Jennifer Sterling-Foker, Randall Schweller, and Brian Rathbun — and operationalized at an early stage by other structural realists

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<sup>264</sup> Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name," 305, 308-309, 311. See also Waltz, "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy," 55.

— John Mearsheimer, Robert Gilpin, Joseph Grieco, and Stephen Walt — would be critical to explaining American and Canadian similar deployments during the late years of intervention. In particular, such a conception of rationality inextricably linked to socialization mechanisms would explain how the countries that intervened in Afghanistan attempted to emulate certain practices: S&R, CT, and COIN. It would also explain how the United States and Canada found each other following the same strategic path by considering COIN as the most acceptable and successful practice during the late years of intervention. To do that, neorealism would need a foreign-policy explanation to advance such an understanding. This is precisely the purpose of neoclassical realism when it is understood as “the logical and necessary extension of structural realism.”<sup>265</sup>

Defensive realism and offensive realism have sought to elaborate more thoroughly the assumption that the strategic environment shapes foreign and security policies, which could offer more insights to explain Canadian and American interventions in Afghanistan from the systemic level of analysis. Nevertheless, they disagree about the specific systemic effects on foreign policy. Such differences are based on distinct conceptions of the international strategic environment and different approaches to a refined logic of consequentialism.

Defensive realism maintains that anarchy and the gross distribution of state capabilities are not the only factors affecting the strategic environment; material and ideational *structural modifiers* also shape it. Defensive realism sees structural modifiers as intervening variables that may mitigate or intensify the likelihood of conflict by modifying state rationality in ways that detach state behavior from comprehensive rationality expectations. Material structural modifiers may involve “the offense-defense balance in military technology, geographic proximity, access to raw materials, international economic pressure, regional or dyadic military balances, and the ease

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<sup>265</sup> Rathbun, “A Rose by Any Other Name,” 294-321.

with which states can extract resources from conquered territory.”<sup>266</sup> Ideational structural modifiers refer to decision-makers’ perception, leading states to underreact or overreact to the strategic environment imperatives. As advanced by Jack Snyder, defensive realism mainly argues that the international system, when considered alone, brings about moderate behavior, that is security-seeking rather than power-maximizing, as the optimal response. Accordingly, state overreaction must always be explained as a suboptimal policy derived mostly from domestic politics, primarily ideational factors.<sup>267</sup>

Likewise, for defensive realists, while the security dilemma is the primary feature of international politics, international conflict is not the only way states interact. Intense competition, aggression, and war are potential outcomes, among other possibilities, such as collaboration and cooperation.<sup>268</sup> The selection of such strategic options, mediated by a refined consequential logic, depends on the combination of anarchy, distribution of capabilities, and structural modifiers shaping state rationality. In the final analysis, defensive realism sees the state as a self-interested, nonunitary, satisfier but not an autonomous, completely informed actor. All in all, by arguing that the international strategic environment encourages expansion only under certain circumstances and that it is, in fact, the worst route to security, defensive realism would explain American and Canadian interventions as suboptimal or pathological policies of expansion derived from specific strategic circumstances and ideational factors. Among these, a permissive strategic environment derived from the absence of countervailing powers and, accordingly, the regional imbalance of power favouring the United States and its allies and offensive beliefs as advanced by American

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<sup>266</sup> Jeffrey Taliaferro, “Security Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revised,” *International Security* 25, no. 3 (2000-2001): 137.

<sup>267</sup> Jack Snyder, *The Myth of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>268</sup> Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (1978): 167-214.

Republicans and Canadian Conservatives would be critical factors to offer a defensive realist thesis.

Offensive realism considers that the strategic environment is, of course, shaped by anarchy and distribution of state capabilities. But it is also conditioned by the possibility that great powers hurt each other due to their offensive military capability, the uncertainty about other states' intentions, states' need to survive — especially in terms of their territorial integrity and autonomy—, and the state rationality informing foreign and security policies according to the strategic environment. That is to say, the assumption of state rationality is combined with uncertainty in a world governed by the struggle for power among potentially aggressive nations. Not surprisingly, offensive realism embraces a materialist conception of power that makes military capabilities the main component of state power or actual power. Socio-economic performance and the population's size are seen as the second component or potential power insofar as they help build up military power.<sup>269</sup>

With these strategic environment features and conception of power in mind, offensive realism considers self-help and power-maximizing as the only possible behaviour pattern in an international strategic environment governed by fear.<sup>270</sup> Unlike defensive realism, which argues that the primary purpose of the state is security, offensive realism holds that becoming the most powerful state is the primary goal; that is, global hegemony. However, this objective is impossible to achieve, making regional hegemony the best and most likely outcome for great powers, and the containment of countries with hegemonic aspirations in other regions the best strategy.<sup>271</sup> What is more, the selection of such strategies depends on a refined consequential assessment: offensive

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<sup>269</sup> John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton. 2014), chapter 3

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, 30-32 and 55-82.

<sup>271</sup> Brian Schmidt, "Realism as Tragedy," *Review of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (2004): 434-436.

realism sees the state as a self-interested, unitary, maximizer, but not an autonomous, completely informed actor. All in all, by arguing that the international strategic environment encourages expansion, offensive realism would explain the United States' intervention in Afghanistan as one aimed at guaranteeing not only the destruction of al Qaeda but, above all, American strategic position in the Middle East and Central Asia. It would challenge Russia's influence in its own region.<sup>272</sup> With limited room for countries other than great powers, offensive realism would explain Canadian intervention as a result of a bandwagon effect. The literature about the bandwagon-effect thesis explaining the subordination of Canadian foreign and security policy to American interests, as discussed in chapter 1, would provide the empirical basis to support the theoretical insights of offensive realism.

Both classical realism and structural realism, with their defensive and offensive variants, are inadequate to conduct the present study. Classical realism does not allow for establishing a specific link between systemic and domestic factors nor to theorize the conditions whereby domestic politics impact foreign policy. By analyzing America and Canadian interventions in Afghanistan, classical realism would be incapable of pinpointing the relationship between the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> environment, the relative distribution of power, Canadian and American foreign policies executives' perceptions, and domestic mobilization hurdles. By focusing on an overall understanding of the strategic environment, neorealism would have very little to say about the evolution of American and Canadian foreign and security policy options and, especially, why those changed in 2005/2006. Offensive realism would privilege a single level of analysis in examining Canadian and American interventions in Afghanistan. Specifically, it would highlight the American need to maximize "relative advantage" in an allegedly Hobbesian international order,

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<sup>272</sup> Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions. American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

overlooking the fact that the United States, like other states, does not simply react to systemic pressures.<sup>273</sup> Also, it would examine Canadian foreign and security policy solely through a bandwagon-effect approach, minimizing ideational and institutional factors. Defensive realism would end up explaining American and Canadian aggressive interventions in Afghanistan as anomalous foreign and security policies without clarifying the relative weight of ideas, capabilities, and domestic politics informing such aggressiveness.

## **6. The analytical advantage of neoclassical realism**

Neoclassical realism's relative advantage to explaining the similarity between American and Canadian interventions in Afghanistan rests on its ability to examine the relative weight of systemic pressures, ideas, and domestic politics. Specifically, its analytical advantage *vis-à-vis* the approaches mentioned above is its ability to provide a thorough approach aimed at distinguishing independent, intervening, and dependent variables and involving individual, non-unitary, national, and systemic levels of analysis to address the complexity of this study's puzzle. Neoclassical realism can also refine the logic of consequentialism as advanced by classical and structural realism.

At the independent variable level, neoclassical realism argues that state behaviour corresponds to the adaptation to the international system,<sup>274</sup> especially to the levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness of the strategic environment. These levels are defined by the state's place in the international system, the international distribution of material capabilities and the threats' scope that states face in undertaking their foreign and security policies. That is to say, neoclassical realism takes advantage of classical realism and structural realism by discussing the

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<sup>273</sup> Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 149 and 152.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid, 151, 157.

strategic environment in which foreign and security policy takes place. This variable is undoubtedly critical when comparing two states with vastly different power capabilities.

At the level of dependent variables, neoclassical realism addresses different types of state decisions: *responses to international crises*, expressed in the short time-span; (ii) *foreign policies* and *grand strategic adjustments*, advanced in the medium term, and (iii) *systemic adjustment* to structural changes, frequently derived from the dramatic transformation of international distribution of power observed in the long term.<sup>275</sup> This distinction, which is not conceptualized by any of the approaches mentioned in the previous sections, would allow us to argue that the primary objective of this study is to explain foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan — the second type of decision-making process — in a medium-term — a 14-year period.

At the level of the intervening variables, neoclassical realism explores state rationality in a complex way by adopting a refined logic of consequentialism shaped by ideational and institutional factors. By introducing ideational factors, neoclassical realism aims to study decision-makers' complex perceptions of their strategic environment under the assumption that state leaders' perceptions filter systemic pressures.<sup>276</sup> Empirically, the study of such perceptions rests on the need to adapt abstract conceptions of rationality, based exclusively on systemic imperatives, to analyze real decisions. After all, decision-makers' strategic decisions may be affected not only by systemic pressures but also by cognitive filters. As human beings, they also cannot process information rapidly, not to mention that the information to make decisions tends to be often incomplete and contradictory.<sup>277</sup> The analysis of American and Canadian FPEs' perceptions ends

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<sup>275</sup> Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 109-111.

<sup>276</sup> Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 158; William Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance. Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), chapter 10.

<sup>277</sup> Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 23, 62-70.

up being critical to understanding *why* both of these countries increase their level of engagement in Afghanistan since 2005/2006, despite the existence of similar systemic opportunities since 2001 in the form of a unipolar structure.

Also, neoclassical realism affirms that the extent to which a country responds to the international power configuration and threats' scope depends on the state's ability to extract resources from society within a given domestic institutional setting.<sup>278</sup> By incorporating domestic institutional intervening variables, neoclassical realism aims to explain the ability to extract and mobilize domestic resources as a central component of state capabilities, which is, in turn, a primary realist concern. Neoclassical realism refuses to assume that states have automatic access to human, material, and financial resources required to conduct their foreign and security policy. In this regard, it attempts to operationalize something that realist theories have taken for granted and that liberal theories do not necessarily link to national power: the more autonomy state enjoys *vis-à-vis* domestic groups, the more room for manoeuvre to conduct preferred foreign and security policy options and to devote resources to those purposes, and vice versa.<sup>279</sup> The analysis of American and Canadian foreign policy executives' structural autonomy or ability to mobilize resources ends up being equally critical to understand their similar deployments in Afghanistan since 2005/2006. It especially helps understand *how* they replaced S&R and CT between 2001 to 2005 with similar COIN strategies between 2005/2006 to 2011.

Together, ideational and institutional factors help clarify how the strategic environment impacts foreign and security policy in a complex manner. All in all, neoclassical realists argue that there is no direct transmission belt from the international system to foreign policy formulation and

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<sup>278</sup> Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 161.

<sup>279</sup> Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 25.

implementation. In the real world, such transmission is, indeed, limited, modified, leveraged, or magnified by ideational and institutional intervening factors.<sup>280</sup>

Despite providing clear theoretical statements regarding the link between the strategic environment as the independent variable, ideational and institutional factors as intervening variables, and foreign and security policy as the dependent variable, neoclassical realism has been subject to criticism. The following section examines this criticism and explains how neoclassical realist thinkers have responded to it.

## 7. Neoclassical realism and its critics

The opponents of neoclassical realism have considered it as incoherent and indistinctive approach in attempting to address capabilities, ideas, and domestic institutions simultaneously and, accordingly, disrespecting the boundaries of the realist theorizing.<sup>281</sup> However, the proponents of neoclassical realism have ingenuously responded to such criticism in considering it as a realist theoretical breakthrough and an insightful approach by precisely including those categories.<sup>282</sup>

Firstly, neoclassical realism constitutes a theoretical breakthrough within realist theorizing in considering power in a dynamic rather than a static way. If power is the critical concept for realism within an anarchical positional competition conducted by the states, then how power is mobilized according to different leaders' perceptions and state structures ends up being realism's

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<sup>280</sup> Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 168; Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 7, 33-34.

<sup>281</sup> Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still Realist?" *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): 6-22, 28-29; Kevin Narizny, "On Systemic Paradigms and Domestic Politics: A Critique of the Newest Realism," *International Security* 42, no. 2 (2017): 155-190; John Vasquez, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition," *The American Political Science Review* 91, no. 4 (1997): 899-912.

<sup>282</sup> Schweller, "Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism," 302, 311, 315-317 and 323-324; Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 16; Rathbun, "A Rose by Any Other Name," 294-321.

essential theoretical breakthrough.<sup>283</sup> It is particularly apparent when comparing state responses to the strategic environment from countries differently placed in the international system. In contrast, with fixed conceptions of power, state preferences, and functionality, realism would be unable to compare differences and commonalities between these state responses at specific times. Indeed, it would have little to say about the evolution of the American and Canadian foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan or about any comparison of countries with different power capabilities behaving similarly.

Secondly, neoclassical realism is an insightful realist approach since it helps understand that there are no “exclusive rights [as a sort of intellectual property] to the building blocks of international relations.”<sup>284</sup> Neoclassical realism’s theoretical statement entails that “each paradigm may use ideational and institutional factors in a way that serves and reflects the logic of its approach.”<sup>285</sup> Ideas and domestic politics are never understood by neoclassical realism as independent or constitutive variables, in terms advanced by liberalism and constructivism, but as intervening variables that help explain the problems of rationality and the need to mobilize domestic resources to achieve state goals.<sup>286</sup>

Neoclassical realism’s insightful proposal should not be “known by what it incorporates but rather where it begins.”<sup>287</sup> It begins with identifying as a point of departure the strategic environment, which corresponds to states’ roles in the international system, the international distribution of power and the threats they must face. Once the analysis identifies these factors, it proceeds to operationalize the particular way states respond to this environment. This point of

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<sup>283</sup> Schweller, “Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism,” 302, 311.

<sup>284</sup> Rathbun, “A Rose by Other Name,” 299.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, 300.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid, 311-315; Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 22-26.

<sup>287</sup> Rathbun, “A Rose by Other Name,” 312.

departure clarifies the causal arrow of realism and helps this study follow key steps of research design. As a conceptual refinement, such an operationalization leads this study to address Canadian and American governments' perceptions and American and Canadian state autonomy to mobilize resources. Explaining such factors' role is the logical path to be followed to analyze American and Canadian responses to the Afghanistan intervention's strategic environment from a realist perspective.

After explaining the analytical advantages of neoclassical realism and its ability to stand up against criticism, it is necessary to clarify how it operationalizes its analytical statements. After almost three decades of research, neoclassical realists have operationalized the link between the strategic environment, foreign and security policy, and ideational and institutional factors by offering three ways to conceptualize their theory. This chapter makes a case for a specific version of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy.

## **8. Varieties of neoclassical realism**

According to Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, neoclassical realism can be seen as a *theory of mistakes* (neoclassical realism type I), a *theory of foreign policy* (neoclassical realism type II), and a *theory of international politics* (neoclassical realism type III).<sup>288</sup> This subsection explains the analytical purposes only of the first two versions insofar as the third version explores neoclassical realist insights not only on foreign policy but also on international politics, which is not relevant for the present study. Then, it highlights some vital paradigmatic works of each to showcase specific ways to operationalize the assumptions of neoclassical realism and addresses the

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<sup>288</sup> Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 25-31.

disadvantages of the first version as compared to the second one in providing an account of American and Canadian interventions in Afghanistan.

As a *theory of mistakes*, neoclassical realism aims to explain suboptimal foreign policy responses to systemic imperatives.<sup>289</sup> This approach attempts to explain why the best option of responding to systemic pressures directly is frequently not achievable. Instead, states often end up following different courses of action based on a leader's perceptions and domestic politics. Because of these intervening factors, states can underact or overreact to the strategic environment, even if such an environment offers clear information about how national interests can be threatened or what optimal paths must be followed.<sup>290</sup> In this regard, in order to operationalize the analysis, this version of neoclassical realism aims to identify "a baseline, optimal foreign policy [...] as yardstick against to assess a state's actual foreign policy".<sup>291</sup> Above all, such an approach focuses on "specifying the appropriate structural realist baseline," which allows for identifying a systemic-level independent variable.<sup>292</sup> After pinpointing the structural baseline, this version aims to clarify the role of domestic factors affecting the extent to which states move away from the predictions provided by the selected baseline.<sup>293</sup>

Randall Schweller's interpretation of interwar great power politics, and Christopher Layne's explanation of American grand strategy after World War II, are paradigmatic examples

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<sup>289</sup> Aaron Friedberg, *The Weary Titan. Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Thomas Christensen, "Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940," *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (1997): 65-97; Thomas Juneau, *Squandered Opportunity: Neoclassical Realism and Iranian Foreign Policy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); Randall Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing," *International Security* 29, no. 2 (2004): 159-201; Randall Schweller, *Unanswered Threats. Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Randall Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances. Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Randall Schweller, "Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism," 337, 339-340; Justin Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan: A Realist Paradox," *International Journal* 68, no. 2 (June 2013): 274-288.

<sup>290</sup> Ripsman, Lobell and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 26.

<sup>291</sup> Juneau, *Squandered Opportunity*, 19.

<sup>292</sup> Ripsman, Lobell, and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 114.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid*, 26-29, 114.

of neoclassical realist assessments of underreaction and overreaction, respectively. Schweller explains why, despite the dangerous shift in relative power derived from Germany's rise before World War II, France and Britain did not attempt to contain this threat through balancing policies. Such a response — underbalancing or underreaction — resulted from low levels of elite consensus, social cohesion, and regime stability, which had a deleterious impact on French and British states' capacity to act.<sup>294</sup> On the other hand, Christopher Layne maintains that, despite not having faced an objective and direct threat to its homeland since the end of World War II, the United States has pursued extra-regional hegemony in Western Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf ever since to contain adversaries allegedly willing and able to undermine its vital interests. Such a suboptimal foreign policy was a function of the opportunity for expansion derived from American military superiority, economic dominance, and an expansionist Open Door policy.<sup>295</sup>

In providing their assessment of maladaptive state behaviour derived from domestic factors, both Schweller and Layne conjure up structural realist systemic theories as a baseline to pinpoint optimal foreign policies aimed at responding to systemic stimuli appropriately. Schweller uses neorealism — especially, a modified version of balance-of-power theory —<sup>296</sup> to set out appropriate balancing, that is “*timely and efficient* balancing behavior,”<sup>297</sup> as an optimal foreign and security policy as compared to overbalancing and underbalancing.<sup>298</sup> Meanwhile, Layne used

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<sup>294</sup> Schweller, *Unanswered Threats*, chapters 2-3.

<sup>295</sup> Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, 3, 5-11, 23-31, 201.

<sup>296</sup> Randall Schweller, “Neorealism’s Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?” *Security Studies* 5, no. 3 (1996): 90-121; Schweller, “Unanswered Threats,” 162-164; Randall Schweller, “Banwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In,” *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 72-107.

<sup>297</sup> Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro clarified what Schweller understands by appropriate balancing. Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 115.

<sup>298</sup> Schweller, “Unanswered Threats,” 167-168; Schweller, “Banwagoning for Profit,” 72-107.

the predictions provided by offensive realism and defensive realism to establish offshore balancing as an optimal foreign and security policy as compared to preponderance and hegemony.<sup>299</sup>

In attempting to operationalize neoclassical realism as a theory of mistakes to assess Canadian and American foreign and security policies, these policies could constitute overreactions to the strategic environment after 9/11. Even though the fight against the Taliban regime and the destruction of al Qaeda could be optimal and justifiable foreign and security policy for the United States and its allies, such as Canada, this version of neoclassical realism would cast doubts about COIN's scope. COIN could have driven the United States and Canada to adopt suboptimal policies as this campaign proved unnecessarily costly in blood and treasure.

Following neoclassical realism as a theory of mistakes to explaining this study's puzzle also raises enticing insights, such as advanced by the paradigmatic analysis of European and American grand strategies, as mentioned above. Nevertheless, it would have to assume the challenge of selecting an appropriate structural baseline to compare American and Canadian foreign and security policy during the Afghanistan intervention. In considering Schweller and Layne's work, it can be argued that the selection of neorealism, as well as defensive and offensive realism, were feasible analytical options. They focus on particular challenges posed by, and strategic options derived from, overbalanced power in Europe, on the one hand, and the need for defining the global role of the United States after World War II, on the other hand. They also take into account the historical circumstances of European great powers that had been interacting during the last century within a multipolar order when World War I and II occurred, and the United States becoming a great power after World War II. That is to say, they were appropriately selected by

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<sup>299</sup> Layne recalled that despite its different stances, "both offensive and defensive realism predict that the United States *should* be an offshore balancer". Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, 23 (for a broader discussion, see 5, 16, 19, 36-37). See also Christopher Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America's Future Grand Strategy," *International Security* 22, no. 1 (1997): 112-119.

taking into account the particular and historical circumstances of states at hand. Furthermore, they embrace synchronic and diachronic comparisons, which do not include significant differences in terms of power capabilities and, accordingly, not to undermine their structural baseline. Schweller compares two great powers, whereas Layne compares a great power's grand strategies in different periods of time.

As far as the comparison between the United States and Canada is concerned, it is hard, even impossible, to select a similar structural baseline to capture both countries' historical and particular circumstances, impacting their intervention in Afghanistan. In the Canadian as compared to the American case, there is no precedent of overreaction to systemic stimuli, such as advanced in Afghanistan. The same difficulty would be apparent in comparing them, taking into account their different positions in the international system. The option might be to select different structural baselines, yet they would involve different expectations and, accordingly, the analysis could judge American and Canadian foreign and security policies differently. Without having options regarding clear structural baselines, informing the interpretation of the strategic environment in which those policies took place, this form of neoclassical realism is unsuitable for the present study.

As a *theory of foreign policy*, neoclassical realism seeks to explain state choices among a range of foreign policy options by considering state adaptation to changes in relative power.<sup>300</sup> Unlike the first type of neoclassical realism, this approach is more interested in explaining choices than pathologies. Rather than seeking to assess maladaptive behaviour, this version considers that states rarely can discern optimal foreign and security policy due to the complex information

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<sup>300</sup> Ripsman, Lobell and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 29; Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 168, 151, 157.

provided by the strategic environment.<sup>301</sup> Without focusing on anomalies, it has broadened the scope of neoclassical realism by explaining several countries' international behaviour in distinct regions of the world and different historical periods.<sup>302</sup> Such a posture is not new since several foreign policy theories have sought to achieve such a goal.<sup>303</sup> However, what is new in this reasoning is the explanation of how the selection of specific strategic options depends on intervening unit-level variables. In this regard, to operationalize the analysis, this version of neoclassical realism aims to discern the broad range of foreign and security policy options available for the states according to their strategic environment.<sup>304</sup> Then, it explains why and how FPEs select particular foreign and security policies due to domestic factors. The most refined approach to such a way to operationalize neoclassical realism suggests that domestic factors include "elite perceptions of the international environment, state power in the form of mobilization and extraction capabilities, and domestic hurdles to such mobilization."<sup>305</sup>

Colin Dueck's assessment of American grand strategy since World War I and Colin Dueck, Jeffrey Taliaferro and Robert Wishart's explanation of American major military interventions are examples of this form of neoclassical realism. They identify available courses of action for the states based on the strategic environment and explain why they choose a specific one based on the calculation of international pressures and domestic factors.<sup>306</sup> Specifically, such studies allow us

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<sup>301</sup> Ripsman, Lobell and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 29.

<sup>302</sup> See Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 151, 157 and 168.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-157.

<sup>304</sup> Ripsman, Lobell and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 29-30.

<sup>305</sup> Jeffrey Taliaferro and Robert Wishart, "Neoclassical Realism: Domestic Opportunities for Great Power Intervention," in *Making Sense of International Relations Theory*, ed. Jennifer Sterling-Folker (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013), 48. See also Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance*; Zakaria, *From wealth to power*; Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries. Grand strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>306</sup> Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders. Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Colin Dueck, "Neoclassical Realism and the National Interest: Presidents, Domestic Politics, and Major Military Interventions," in *Neoclassical Realism, State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 139-169; Taliaferro and Wishart, "Neoclassical Realism," 47-65.

to understand the interplay between the strategic environment, elite perceptions, and resource mobilization.<sup>307</sup>

Colin Dueck explains *why* the United States chose specific strategic options after World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the 9/11 attacks. During these periods of strategic adjustment, the United States chose isolationism, containment, broad liberal internationalism, and American primacy, respectively, among several strategic options.<sup>308</sup> According to Dueck, the selection process of such choices relied on two contrasting cultural (domestic) drivers of American grand strategy, namely, *America's liberalism*, which has encouraged Americans to assume broadly defined interests, and the tradition of *limited liability*, which has restrained the cost of overseas commitments. Together such traditions have brushed aside specific strategic options and, accordingly, have brought about “culturally influenced results.”<sup>309</sup> America’s liberal culture ruled out options based exclusively on realist postures, such as balance-of-power alliances or sphere-of-influence arrangements after World War I and II. The tradition of limited liability led American leaders to rule out the U.S. membership in the League of Nations during the interwar period and American primacy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In adopting crusading strategies regarding the promotion of liberal values, yet unable to assume the total cost of such a promotion, Americans have been *reluctant crusaders*. As such, they have assessed courses of action based not only on the international circumstances but also on their two traditions.<sup>310</sup>

An “aggressive democracy-promotion and military pre-emption” based on liberal assumptions constituted the 2003 Iraq invasion’s primary strategic framework. However, the development of such an invasion embraced the limited-liability tradition as the United States did

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<sup>307</sup> Taliaferro and Wishart, “Neoclassical Realism,” 48.

<sup>308</sup> Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, chapters 3-5, and 155.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid*, 3-4.

not pay the cost of bringing about “a stable postwar Iraq.”<sup>311</sup> The same could be argued in addressing American foreign and security policy in the late years of the Afghanistan intervention as COIN were performed without accepting the costs that such strategies entailed.

Jeffrey Taliaferro and Robert Wishart and Colin Dueck’s subsequent works go further in explaining not only *why* but also *how* such strategic options are selected. For Taliaferro and Wishart, after the strategic options are selected based on “elite perceptions of the international environment,” governments conduct their foreign and security policy based on state power: the ability to extract and mobilize resources and overcome domestic obstacles to such mobilization.<sup>312</sup> For Dueck, even though American major military interventions have depended on the strategic environment and Presidents’ perceptions of such environment, domestic factors, mostly regarding the role of Congress and public opinion, setting limits to and monitoring foreign policy, constrain the nature of U.S. intervention.<sup>313</sup>

In particular, in considering American interventions in Korea, Vietnam and Iraq, Dueck argues that there was a permissive strategic environment to intervene in each case since the United States was “powerful enough [...] without encountering overwhelming opposition from other major powers.”<sup>314</sup> Taliaferro and Wishart held the same argument in explaining the Iraq invasion. Nevertheless, they add another significant structural factor affecting such intervention: the extent to which “the unipolar structure of the international system,” mainly during the 1990s, could have affected the debates on foreign and security policy during the Iraq invasion.<sup>315</sup> In any case, American Presidents found a highly similar room for manoeuvre in deciding the interventions

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>312</sup> Taliaferro and Wishart, “Neoclassical Realism,” 48.

<sup>313</sup> Dueck, “Neoclassical Realism and the National Interest,” 139 and 147.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid, 138, 149.

<sup>315</sup> Taliaferro and Wishart, “Neoclassical Realism,” 48, 57 and 63.

based on their perceptions in each case. Under the strategic framework of anti-communism containment — in the case of Korea and Vietnam —, and neoconservatism interpretation of rogue states and American primacy — in the case of Iraq —, American Presidents, however, had to deal with public opinion and domestic politics to mobilize resources. These factors ended up affecting the “public representation,” “implementation,” and “timing” of the interventions at hand.<sup>316</sup>

These works are undoubtedly the closest ones to the neoclassical realist approach adopted in this dissertation. Rather than accepting that American and Canadian foreign policy executives responded solely to the post-9/11 international environment, this study considers that their perceptions filtered such responses.<sup>317</sup> Likewise, rather than viewing American and Canadian states as black boxes or unitary actors, this study peers inside into their structure to examine their ability to extract the required resources to conduct its foreign policy.<sup>318</sup> By identifying executives’ perceptions and ability to mobilize domestic resources, this study seeks to explain *why* American and Canadian governments adopted specific strategic options among those available, during the Afghanistan intervention, and *how* they were undertaken during specific times. Methodologically, it operationalizes neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy through a three-step research design, as explained in chapter 1. Table 2.2. summarizes the differences between the two versions of neoclassical realism.

**Table 2.2.: Varieties of neoclassical realism**

Version of neoclassical realism	Type I: Theory of mistakes	Type II: Theory of foreign policy
Unit of analysis	Foreign policy anomalies	Foreign policy choices
Operationalization steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Specifying the structural realist baseline.</li> <li>B. Clarify the role of domestic factors affecting the extent to which states move away from the predictions provided by the selected baseline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Explaining <i>why</i> a foreign policy choice is selected (according to the strategic environment and the FPE’s perceptions).</li> <li>B. Explaining <i>how</i> a foreign policy choice is selected (according to the FPE’s ability to mobilize domestic resources).</li> </ul>

<sup>316</sup> Dueck, “Neoclassical realism and the national interest,” 148.

<sup>317</sup> Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” 158.

<sup>318</sup> See *Ibid*, 161.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to assess different approaches to foreign policy to make a case for neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. This chapter showed that this theory could appropriately identify the causal mechanism that brought about the similarity between American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. Specifically, neoclassical realism is a suitable theory to achieve this goal because it makes sense to chapters 3, 4 and 5's primary finding: the similarity between American and Canadian engagement levels must consider systemic pressures, executives' perceptions, and domestic politics, and how these factors relate to each other.

Among the theories under consideration, neoclassical realism can consider variables aimed at studying the primary drivers of foreign policy formulation and implementation and the complex transmission belts between them. It also highlights several levels of analysis that help explain systemic, ideational, and domestic-politics factors. Finally, by considering the subtleties of the puzzle at hand, neoclassical realism proved a suitable approach to guide this study, especially because it addresses a refined logic of consequentialism.

Assessing several theories of foreign policy entailed considering the variables informing their core assumptions, their privileged levels of analysis and type of rationality. Most of these approaches pay attention to independent and dependent variables to examine the foreign policy, which help identifying the primary driving forces of foreign policy formulation and implementation. Among the theories compared with neoclassical realism, defensive realism and constructivist approaches are the only ones, including intervening and constitutive variables. Those variables are critical to addressing complex transmission belts between foreign policy formulation and implementation. In comparing foreign policy theories in terms of their level of analysis, this

chapter shows that Allison's models, refined democratic peace theory, and offensive realism draw attention to a single level of analysis. In contrast, classical democratic peace theory, liberal theory of foreign policy, classical realism, and defensive realism highlight two levels of analysis. It means that none of them focus on several levels of analysis to address capabilities, perceptions, and domestic politics.

This chapter also divided these theories into two categories in considering their types of rationality. The first category corresponds to theories embracing a logic of consequentialism, whereas the second category comprises theories adopting a logic of appropriateness. Such classification is much more accurate by considering classical and refined logics of consequentialism and appropriateness. Allison's model I and classical democratic peace theory are the only ones embracing a classical logic of consequentialism. In contrast, Allison's models II and III, the liberal theory of foreign policy, and realist approaches adopt a refined logic of consequentialism.

Above all, in appraising the extent to which these theories include the dimensions required to make sense to this study's puzzle, this chapter argued the following: Organizational and bureaucratic models did not consider systemic pressures and executives' changing perceptions as the most relevant factors to connect the international system's variations and national political systems dynamics. Liberal and constructivist approaches do not focus seriously on the effects of power constraints on foreign and security at the domestic and systemic levels. Finally, classical realism and structural realism cannot explain the transmission belt between systemic stimuli, national preferences, and domestic politics.

With this assessment in mind, this chapter considers that all of those theories can offer insightful understandings of Canadian and American interventions in Afghanistan. Yet, unlike

neoclassical realism, they are not enough to capture the complexity of this study's puzzle. It is worth noting that this study does not make a case for explanation *vis-à-vis* parsimony in general terms. Instead, it makes a case for explanation to address the puzzle of this study. Also, this study does not make a case for neoclassical realism in abstract terms. Indeed, it considers neoclassical realism a suitable theory specifically to make sense of the empirical findings offered by chapters 3, 4 and 5.

After showing the analytical advantage of neoclassical realism, this chapter considers this theory's ability to resist criticism. Taking into account that it has been accused of incoherence and lack of distinctiveness, this study attempts to anticipate such charges and operationalize the responses of some neoclassical realists to their opponents by adopting a refined three-step research design, as explained in chapter 1. This research design implies adopting the version of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy compared to that of mistakes. As a theory of mistakes, neoclassical realism helps its proponents *evaluate* how foreign policy adapts to systemic constraints and opportunities and, especially, the extent to which ideas and domestic politics prevent the FPE from responding to such constraints and opportunities optimally. As a theory of foreign policy, neoclassical realism enables its proponents to *explain* how the FPE's perceptions and ability to mobilize resources limited, modified, leveraged, or magnified the effects of systemic pressures on foreign and security policy. This way to operationalize neoclassical realism allows us to address this study's puzzle: why and how countries with different power positions behaving similarly. Based on theoretical assumptions of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, informing this study's three-step research design, the next chapters seek to make sense of this puzzle by using the American and Canadian intervention in Afghanistan as a study case.

## Unipolarity and Irregular Warfare: Assessing the Afghanistan Intervention's Strategic Environment

This chapter aims to assess the post-9/11 strategic environment as the primary, yet indirect cause, of American and Canadian foreign and security policy during the Afghanistan intervention. This assessment constitutes the first analytical step in applying neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. Specifically, to examine the intervention's strategic environment, the version of neoclassical realism used in this study suggests assessing the international system's central features during the years the coalition forces carried out the intervention. Above all, it suggests addressing the levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness for the United States and Canada to undertake their foreign and security policy during this time at the systemic level. These levels resulted from their relative standing and the international system's structure. It also assesses the threats that both countries had to face during the intervention.<sup>319</sup>

As chapter 2 stated, neoclassical realism shares structural realism's assessment of the international system to a large extent. The point of departure of this assessment is that the international system's functioning is derived from its inherent anarchy and the international distribution of material capabilities. Anarchy is the enabling condition that allows the international system to work as a whole, whereas the international distribution of capabilities allows for explaining both central international outcomes, such as the likelihood of great-power confrontation and balance of power, and the evolution of state behaviour in the form of foreign policy.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 38-56.

<sup>320</sup> Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 82 and 88-89; Brian Rathbun, "A Rose by Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 312; Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 151, 157 and 168.

Still, the version of neoclassical realism adopted by this study goes further. In considering systemic factors, such as states' relative standing and the distribution of material capabilities, it seeks to define respectively the strategic options that are available to states and the room for manoeuvre to choose among such strategic options.<sup>321</sup> Even though great powers, major powers, middle powers and minor powers find different strategic options due to their different relative material capabilities, uni-, bi- and multipolar structures of the international system offer different levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness for both great powers and their allies. More importantly, the analysis of the permissiveness within a type of polarity, such as unipolarity, helps understand why certain states with different material capabilities can adopt strategic objectives similar to those advanced by great powers. This is the case of Canada behaving similarly to the United States during the Afghanistan intervention. Apart from assessing the strategic environment's levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness by focusing on the international system as defined above, neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy examines these levels considering the threats' scope to be faced by the states under analysis. In the case of this study, these threats derived mostly from the irregular warfare in Afghanistan.

The levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness of the post-9/11 strategic environment, shaped by American and Canadian relative power, the international system's structure, and the threats that the United States and Canada had to face, constitutes the independent variable of this study. In overall terms, these levels of permissiveness help explain the United States and Canada's increased engagement levels in carrying out their foreign and security policies. As explained in chapters 1 and 2, this study treated these increased engagement levels as the dependent variable.

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<sup>321</sup> Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 151 and 157.

With this conception of the strategic environment in mind, this chapter argues that the post-9/11 strategic environment was permissive for the United States and Canada due to the unipolar structure of the international system. In conducting their foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan within a unipolar system, the United States was free to choose offensive dominance, among other available options, such as disengagement and defensive dominance.<sup>322</sup> For its part, Canada could transition from merely flocking around the unipole to embracing an opportunistic foreign policy to meet its own interests.<sup>323</sup>

However, despite having enjoyed these permissiveness levels within the unipolar system, the United States and Canada had to face the Afghan irregular warfare's restrictive strategic environment, including increased threats to the coalition forces on the ground. Based on the foreign policy executives' (FPE) principled and causal beliefs, as explained in chapter 4, the United States operationalized offensive dominance as Counterterrorism (CT) and Counterinsurgency (COIN) and Canada implemented its transition from flocking to opportunism, respectively, as the replacement of Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R) — or complex peacekeeping — with COIN. In a nutshell, the combination of unipolarity's room for manoeuvre and the need for adapting to the Afghan irregular warfare paved the way for the United States and Canada to carry out similar COIN strategies.

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<sup>322</sup> Nuno Monteiro, "Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful," *International Security* 36, no. 3 (Winter 2011/12), footnote 36. See also Barry Posen and Andrew L. Ross, "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1996-1997): 5-53; Stephen Brookes and William Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 15-16; Daniel Nexon and Thomas Wright, "What's Stake in the American Empire Debate," *The American Political Science Review* 101, no. 2 (2007): 253 and 258-261.

<sup>323</sup> Birthe Hansen conceptualized the options of flocking and free riding as available for the unipole's allies, whereas Justin Massie and Christopher Kirkey and Nicholas Ostroy considered that of taking advantage of given circumstances in a unipolar system. Birthe Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics: A Theory and its Implications* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2011), 33-35; Christopher Kirkey and Nicholas Ostroy, "Why is Canada in Afghanistan? Explaining Canada's Military Engagement," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 200-2013.

Sections 1 to 3 examine how the unipolar structure offered distinct strategic options to both the United States and Canada. By understanding material capabilities broadly, section 1 provides empirical evidence to support that the international system's structure was unipolar during the research period. This section also examines the distribution of capabilities among the coalition forces intervening in Afghanistan with particular regard to American and Canadian relative power. Sections 2-3 analyze the conditions under which the sole great power and its allies enjoy greater freedom of action and how such conditions were presented during this period. For the United States, as the only superpower, the primary condition to enjoy a high room for manoeuvre is the actual absence of countervailing powers with roughly equal material capabilities, attempting to restrict or modify its strategic objectives.<sup>324</sup> This condition was met since neither China nor Russia tried to balance the U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan. For Canada as the unipole's close ally, the primary condition to enjoy greater freedom of action is the increased significance of alliance politics. This condition was equally met during the intervention because NATO became progressively more relevant during the intervention. Above all, the importance of NATO to carry out the intervention increased because the unipole started to mobilize a massive number of resources to fight in Iraq, preventing it from making Afghanistan its sole strategic priority. Thus, Canada had the option of taking advantage of the unipole's call for contribution to the alliance so as to pursue its interests.<sup>325</sup>

Sections 4-7 examine the restrictiveness of the Afghan irregular warfare for the United States and Canada. Those sections argue that even though the United States and Canada did not

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<sup>324</sup> See Jeffrey Taliaferro and Robert Wishart, "Neoclassical Realism: Domestic Opportunities for Great Power Intervention, in *Making Sense of International Relations Theory*, ed. Jennifer Anne Sterling-Folker (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc., 2013), 52.

<sup>325</sup> Justin Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan: A Realist Paradox," *International Journal* 68, no. 2 (2013): 8.

have to face countervailing powers restraining the Afghanistan campaign's strategic objectives, American and Canadian military and civilian operations faced increased resistance on the ground in the form of terrorism and insurgency. After explaining in section 4 the emergence of the irregular warfare in Afghanistan, section 5 examines al Qaeda's rise and fall. Specifically, it describes how the intervention significantly reduced al Qaeda's operational capabilities to carry out a second attack against the American and Canadian homeland.<sup>326</sup>

Even though this strategic achievement prevented al Qaeda from being a direct threat to the United States and Canada, like it was in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, section 6 argues that American and Canadian forces on the ground had to deal with insurgent groups embracing al Qaeda's radical jihadist ideology. After all, al Qaeda kept spreading its ideology from its new sanctuary in the border with Pakistan so as to promote a strong aversion and relentless fight against the West in Afghanistan. Section 7 argues that, apart from embracing al Qaeda's ideology, insurgency in Afghanistan was funnelled by the Pakistan government's support and the Afghan government's collapse after the intervention, resulting in the re nascent poppy economy.<sup>327</sup> Those factors went hand in hand with a long tradition of warlords controlling politically and economically small slices of territory, particularly in Southern Afghanistan, where the United States and Canada waged their bloodiest battles.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Alex Wilner, "Canada's Role in Combating Al Qaeda: International, Regional and Homegrown Dimensions," *Strategic Datalink* (Canadian International Council), no. 11 (2009): 2; Brian Michael Jenkins, "The Al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat. An Appreciation of the Current Situation." *Testimony before the Special Committee on Anti-Terrorism Senate of Canada* (Ottawa, December 6, 2010), 2-3.

<sup>327</sup> Seth Jones offered one of the most exhaustive studies identifying the relationship between the emergence of insurgency, al Qaeda's ideology, and the collapse of the Afghan government. Seth Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), chapter 4; Seth Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency. State Failure and Jihad," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 7-40.

<sup>328</sup> Conrad Schetter and Rainer Glasser, "Local Configurations of Violence: Warlords, Tribal Leaders and Insurgents in Afghanistan," *Sicherheit und Frieden (S+F)/ Security and Peace* 29, no. 4 (2011): 232-3; Kimberly Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," *International Security* 31, no. 3 (2006/2007): 54-58 and 69-71.

Examining the United States and Canada's place in the international system and the Afghan irregular warfare is critical to understanding the availability of strategic options for those countries and the level of permissiveness/restrictiveness to conduct their foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan. However, this examination is not sufficient to explain why exactly the United States chose offensive dominance and Canada transitioned from flocking to opportunism. Neither is it sufficient to explain why both of them operationalized such strategic objectives as CT, S&R, and COIN. Much less clear is why both countries carried out similar COIN strategies between 2005/2006 and 2011. By explaining the American and Canadian FPEs' beliefs, chapter 4 will explain this puzzle more directly.

#### 1. Assessing the international system during the Afghanistan intervention

Empirically, the structure of the international system during the time the coalition forces conducted the Afghanistan intervention remained undoubtedly unipolar. Not only did the United States keep the rank of superpower, but its overwhelming relative supremacy was undeniable. Even understanding capabilities broadly by considering military, economic, scientific, technological, and other dimensions of national power, the United States showcased its ability to concentrate power to a degree never seen before in the modern international system's history.<sup>329</sup> In focusing on the nuclear and military dimensions of such supremacy, the United States was unrivalled. The United States started to consolidate its atomic superiority for the first time in decades by developing the capability to disarm Russia and China through a nuclear first strike.<sup>330</sup> The United States also managed to consolidate its undisputed military supremacy in "[possessing]

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<sup>329</sup> Brookes and Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance*, 27-35.

<sup>330</sup> Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, "The End of MAD? The Nuclear Dimension of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 3, no. 4 (2006): 7-8.

command of the global commons [which account for] areas that do not belong to no one state and that provide access to much of the globe.”<sup>331</sup> Indeed, its supremacy was based on the ability to dominate the sea, space, and air globally, despite some contested areas with its rivals. What is more, the United States spent “more than virtually all of the world’s other major military power combined, most of which are U.S. allies.”<sup>332</sup>

Figure 3.1 compares defence spending of the United States, Canada, and major powers in absolute terms between 2001 and 2014. It reveals that the U.S. defence spending during the whole period was 5.8 times higher than China, its closest rival, and 1.6 times higher than the major powers’ defence spending combined. The U.S. defence budget was within the range of US\$400,000 to \$800,000 million. It started the period spending US\$432,941 million, which rose steadily until reaching US\$ 631,782 million in 2005. That year its defence spending levelled out, increasing slightly until reaching US\$658,438 million in 2007, when it started to rise markedly again until getting a peak of US\$784,435 million in 2010. Finally, it decreased until getting US\$631,513 million in 2014, which accounted for the same level as 2005.

Meanwhile, China managed to spend US\$191,627 million in 2014 after increasing steadily from US\$49,798 million in 2001. The European powers and Japan fixed their defence budgets within the range of US\$40,000 to 60,000 million over the entire period, whereas India’s spending in that of US\$30,000 to 40,000 million. Russian defense spending rose steadily from US\$26,298 in 2001 to US\$71,469 million in 2014, moving from the lowest to the highest defence budgets as compared to the European powers, Japan, and India during the period at hand. Finally, Canadian defense spending was in the range of US\$13,000 to 19,000 million. It increased slightly from

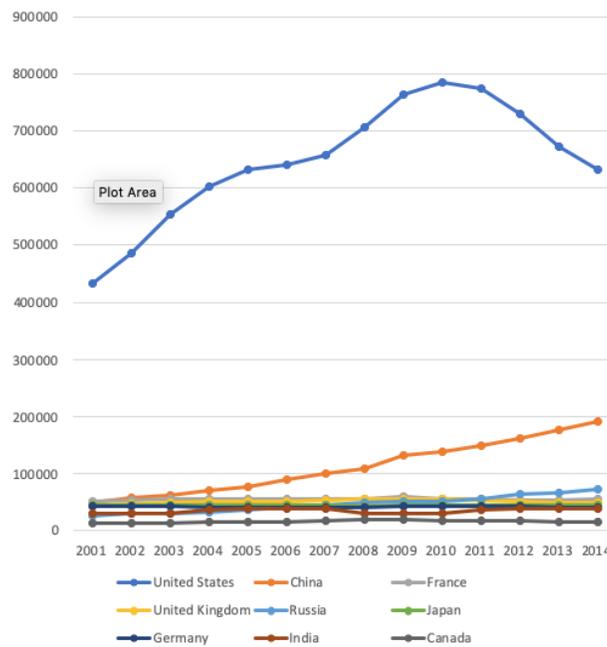
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<sup>331</sup> Barry R. Posen, “Command of the Commons. The Military Foundation of U.S. hegemony”, *International Security* 28, no. 1 (2003): 8

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

US\$13,314 million in 2001 to US\$13,628 million in 2003. That year, it started to grow more rapidly until reaching a peak of US\$18,985 million in 2009, when it began to decrease until reaching US\$17,148 million in 2010. Despite a slight recovery in 2011 with a spending of US\$17,727 million, from this year Canadian defence spending dropped steadily until arriving at US\$15,836 million in 2014, which accounted for the same levels as 2006.

**Figure 3.1: Defence spending for the U.S., Canada, and major powers, 2017 prices US\$m (2001-2014)**



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Military Expenditure for country in constant (2018) US\$, 2019.*

Such a comparative analysis allows for showcasing why the United States was “the only state capable of projecting major military power globally;”<sup>333</sup> not mention that given the size of the economy, the U.S. defence spending represented only 2.9% to 4.7% of its GDP during the

<sup>333</sup> John Ikenberry, Michael Mastanduno, and William Wohlforth, “Introduction: Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences,” *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 8.

intervention. The United States started the period spending 2.9% of its GDP on defence, which peaked at 4.7% in 2010. That year, it decreased steadily until reaching 3.5%, which was the same level as 2003.<sup>334</sup>

Table 3.1. compares the aforementioned defense budgets as percentages of global defence spending. It showcases that even though there was a slight change in the international distribution of capabilities, it did not impact the unipolar structure. Even if such a change benefited China to a large extent and Russia to a lesser degree *vis-à-vis* European powers and India — the former increasing from 4.5% to 11.4% and the latter from 2.4% to 4.3% —, the American defense budget as a percentage of the global defense spending kept relatively steady ranging between 37.6% and 45.6%. Regarding Canadian defence spending, it held fairly steady between 0.9% and 1.2%, being 2001 and 2008 the years when the Canadian share was the highest, and 2013 and 2014 the lowest.

**Table 3.1: Major military powers' defense budget as a percentage of global defense spending**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>United States</b>	39.5	41.6	44.3	45.4	45.6	44.8	44.2	45.0	45.3	45.7	45.0	42.7	40.0	37.6
<b>China</b>	4.5	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.5	6.2	6.6	6.9	7.8	8.0	8.6	9.4	10.5	11.4
<b>France</b>	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2
<b>United Kingdom</b>	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9
<b>Russia</b>	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.7	4.0	4.3
<b>Japan</b>	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7
<b>Germany</b>	3.9	3.7	3.4	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.4
<b>India</b>	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3
<b>Canada</b>	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Military Expenditure for country in constant (2018) US\$, 2019.*

<sup>334</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database*, 2019.

All in all, even though there were variations in the relative American power, such variations were minor and, accordingly, did not result in a change of the international distribution of power for the period 2001-2014. It is also true if the analysis considers Chinese and Russian defence spending's steady increase during the same period. Even though American defence spending decreased during the late years in absolute and percentual terms compared to global defence spending, it was not strong enough to challenge American supremacy. If a transition from unipolarity to multipolarity takes place, it will occur in a relatively distant future. Since such a transition goes beyond this study's period, the strategic environment's most apparent systemic condition was the international system's unipolar structure. In other words, the "Unipolar Moment," as proclaimed by Charles Krauthammer at the beginning of the 1990s, did not end during the Afghanistan intervention.<sup>335</sup>

In comparing the United States' relative power with that of the other countries intervening in Afghanistan, overwhelming American supremacy was even more apparent. Table 3.2 shows the unipolar structure in comparing capabilities in terms of annual average defense spending (column 1.1), defence spending rank (column 1.2), and the army's size (column 1.3). Based on such capabilities, states other than the sole superpower can be divided into three categories. The first category includes *major coalition forces*, such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. The second category comprises *midrange coalition forces*, including Australia and Canada. Finally, *minor countries*, accounting for the remaining coalition forces. A hardly classifiable country is Turkey since the size of its army is 1.9 and 2.5 times bigger than France and the United Kingdom, but its annual average defense spending was below Canada and Australia.

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<sup>335</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990-1991): 25-33.

Table 3.2 also displays the level of overall engagement as measured in terms of the maximum size of the contingent (column 2.1), the size of the contingent as a percentage of total combined contingent (columns 2.2.), and fatalities (column 2.3) of the coalition forces in Afghanistan. American supremacy is undeniable as it deployed 69.68% of the total combined contingents, whereas the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy deployed 6.62%, 2.79%, 3.48%, and 2.79%, respectively (column. 2.2). The United States also had the highest number of fatalities with 2349 (column 2.3).

**Table 3.2: Capabilities & engagement levels of coalition forces in Afghanistan**  
**1. Capabilities**                      **2. Engagement levels**

	<b>1.1. Annual average defense spending</b>	<b>1.2. Defense spending rank</b>	<b>1.3. Size of army</b>	<b>2.1. Contingent's maximum size</b>	<b>2.2. Percentage of total combined contingents*</b>	<b>2.3. Fatalities</b>	<b>2.4. Rank Fatalities (regarding contingent)</b>	<b>2.5 Rank fatalities (regarding army)</b>
Albania	155	24	8,150	286	0.20%	1	25	21
Australia	19,635	5	28,246	1,660	1.16%	41	6	10
Belgium	8,255	9	12,544	607	0.42%	1	26	15
Bulgaria	864	18	16,304	611	0.43%	0	27	19
Canada	15,845	7	34,800	3,079	2.15%	158	3	5
Croatia	1,541	16	11,390	320	0.22%	0	27	25
Czech Republic	-----	-----	12,833	623	0.43%	10	13	14
Denmark	3,945	15	9,925	780	0.54%	43	2	7
Estonia	358	20	5,300	163	0.11%	9	1	23
France	54,824	2	130,600	4,005	2.79%	86	8	24
Georgia	370	20	17,767	1,561	1.09%	27	10	6
Germany	41,432	3	105,291	5,000	3.48%	54	19	17
Greece	6,844	11	87,441	170	0.12%	0	27	31
Hungary	1,439	16	9,911	582	0.41%	7	15	11
Iceland	0	0	0	11	0.01%	0	27	32
Italy	30,070	4	107,500	4,000	2.79%	48	16	20
Latvia	320	22	1,137	174	0.12%	3	11	2
Lithuania	365	21	8,150	260	0.18%	1	24	22
Luxemburg	246	23	900	11	0.01%	0	27	27
Netherlands	10,211	8	20,836	2,200	1.53%	25	18	3
New Zealand	1,940	15	4,905	236	0.16%	11	5	16
Norway	5,285	12	8,900	580	0.40%	10	12	9

Poland	6,885	10	46,900	2,597	1.81%	40	14	12
Portugal	4,052	13	25,701	170	0.12%	2	17	30
Romania	2,032	14	41,500	2	0.00%	21	20	18
Slovakia	1,085	17	6,230	309	0.22%	3	22	13
Slovenia	569	19	7,600	80	0.06%	0	27	28
Spain	17,172	6	78,121	1,606	1.12%	34	9	26
Sweden	5,380	12	6,718	500	0.35%	5	21	8
Turkey	13,156	8	258,700	1,840	1.28%	14	23	29
United Kingdom	50,902	3	99,950	9,500	6.62%	453	4	4
United States	648,134	1	641,470	100,000	69.68%	2,349	7	1

**Source:** The figures of columns 1.1 and 1.2 were calculated drawing on SIPRI - 2019. Stephen Saideman directly gathered the figures of the columns 1.3 and 2.1-2.5 from iCausalties, NATO, Albanian Institute of Statistics, and US and Canadian census. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Military Expenditure for Country in Constant (2018) US\$, 2019*; Stephen Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust. Lessons Learned from Canada's war in Afghanistan* (Toronto, Toronto University Press), 16 and 22.

\* Column 2.2's figures are estimated percentages that account for not the varying total of military personnel deployed in Afghanistan but of the sum of the size of combined contingents at the moment when they reached their maximum level.

Alongside American supremacy, table 3.2 shows that Canada had the third-highest place regarding the number of fatalities and the fifth-highest place regarding its military contingent commitment. The former position was only after the American and British ranks, whereas the latter placed Canada above all major coalition forces except the United Kingdom (columns 2.3 and 2.5). Such figures can be understood by considering that Canada conducted COIN in Kandahar, one of Afghanistan's most dangerous provinces, as of 2006. Still, it is surprising if Canada, as a midrange coalition force, is assessed. After all, carrying out COIN in that province would be expected only of the sole great power and major coalition forces due to challenging resource mobilization schemes associated with such operation. As mentioned, Canada's level of engagement provided crucial evidence to support the puzzle of this study.

After having shown that the international system's structure during the intervention was unipolar, the next sections examine the implications of such a structure on American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. In considering that one of the primary

expectations within the unipolar system is that the unipole and its allies enjoy a high room for manoeuvre to meet their preferred strategies, those sections examine the conditions under which such room for manoeuvre is likely. According to neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, assessing such conditions allows for highlighting the United States and Canada's strategic broad options derived from the unipolar structure. Above all, examining such conditions helps understand the unipole and its allies' commitment to military engagements like that advanced in Afghanistan.

## **2. Unipolarity balancing dynamics and the United States' strategic options**

Addressing the unipole's room for manoeuvre to conduct its preferred foreign and security policy entails examining the primary condition that makes such freedom of action highly likely; namely, the absence of powers willing and able to balance or constrain the unipole's strategic ambitions. Considering such a condition suggests examining the likelihood or unlikelihood of balancing strategies that could come in the form of hard balancing, soft balancing, or asymmetric balancing.<sup>336</sup> Explaining such scenarios is critical to understand the United States' strategic options during the Afghanistan intervention.

The first scenario — the likelihood of balancing — is based mostly on Kenneth Waltz's balance-of-power theory. It predicts that anarchy as a systemic condition induces balancing among its units so as to prevent anyone power from achieving dominance. The underlying assumption of such rationale — as explained by Waltz and more recently by Christopher Layne — is that dominance can lead to the misuses of power. As a result, balancing is a systemic outcome in a

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<sup>336</sup> Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, 26-30; T. V. Paul, "Introduction: The Enduring Axioms of Balance of Power Theory and Their Contemporary Relevance," in *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds T. V Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michael Fortman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 13.

unipolar system as weaker states worry about a lonely great power succumbing to overextension vices. Even though the dominant power could behave with moderation and restraint, anarchy leads other states to mistrust its managerial skills because such skills do not necessarily result in these states' security. In an anarchical interstate system, they can only trust self-help strategies.<sup>337</sup>

The second scenario — the unlikelihood of balancing — was widely discussed at the conceptual and empirical levels by Stephen G. Brookes and William C. Wohlforth. They hold that those aimed at addressing systemic constraints against the unipole mistakenly assume that balancing dynamics in bi- and multipolar systems will be similar in a unipolar system. Brookes and Wohlforth argue that there is no empirical basis to support it. In a unipolar system, the sole great power has managed to pass the threshold of supremacy in such a way that Waltz's assumption is reversed, namely, that the stronger the leading state is there will be more incentive to check it.<sup>338</sup> In such a system, the causal arrow is instead as follows: "the stronger the leading state is and the more entrenched its dominance, the more improbable and thus less constraining counterbalancing dynamics are."<sup>339</sup> Even if the unipole is concerned about the likelihood of counterbalancing, Brookes and Wohlforth and others such as Colin Dueck, Birthe Hansen, Robert Jervis, Nuno Monteiro, Thomas Mowle and David Sacko, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro and Robert W. Wishart, and Stephen Walt, argue that unipolarity makes it highly improbable.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War", *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 13 and 28; Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 5-51.

<sup>338</sup> Brookes and Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance*, 3-4, 7-10, 23 and 35. See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 112.

<sup>339</sup> Brookes and Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance*, 48.

<sup>340</sup> Colin Dueck, "Neoclassical Realism and the National Interest: Presidents, Domestic Politics, and Major Military Interventions" in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, eds. Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 149; Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, 2; Robert Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 207-210; Taliaferro and Wishart, "Neoclassical realism," 52; Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 13; Thomas S. Mowle and David S. Sacko, *The Unipolar World. An Unbalanced Future* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 4. Stephen Walt, "Alliances In A Unipolar World," *World Politics* 61, No. 1 (2009): 96-97.

Three dominant reasons support it. Firstly, balancing entails a prohibitive cost in a unipolar system.<sup>341</sup> Since such a structure “resembles a monopoly of power [...] changing the structure by means of confrontation is comparatively [regarding other systems] unlikely.”<sup>342</sup> Secondly, balancing is unlikely due to the hurdles to the assembling of balancing coalitions aimed at effectively checking the unipole. After all, the formation of such coalitions entails high transaction costs and dilemmas of collective action. Not only would balancing imply diplomatic virtuosity to solving balancers’ disagreements, but it would also entail prioritizing balancing over regional and domestic concerns. Without such prioritization, it would be unthinkable to overcome significant differences in power between the unipole and potential balancers. Much more unthinkable would be a single balancer doing the whole job of balancing due, again, to the significant differences in power between the unipole and its rivals. Thirdly, potential balancers are all located on Eurasian lands, making them more worried about each other than the U.S. supremacy. In fact, rather than seeing the United States as a threat given its supremacy, they deemed it an ally against regional threats. At least, it was confirmed during the time the Afghanistan intervention was performed. Even though the third reason is not linked directly to unipolarity as it is more related to geography and perceptions, it is worth noting that it ended up buttressing unipolar dynamics.<sup>343</sup>

Operationalizing the stances mentioned above during the intervention entails proceeding to explain the different potential balancing strategies against the unipole: hard balancing, soft balancing, and asymmetric balancing. Hard balancing accounts for classical strategies of “military buildups, warfighting alliances, and transfers of military technology to U.S opponents.”<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> William Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 7-8.

<sup>342</sup> Birthe, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, 44.

<sup>343</sup> Walt, “Alliances in a Unipolar World,” 96-97; Brookes and Wohlforth, *World Out of balance*, 38-39.

<sup>344</sup> Robert. A. Pape, “Soft Balancing against the United States,” *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 9.

Specifically, hard balancing depends on internal and external balancing aimed respectively at increasing material capabilities through the massive mobilization of domestic resources to catch up with preponderant powers and at forming alliances as strength multipliers.<sup>345</sup> Soft-balancing — or indirect balancing — corresponds to the use of “international institutions, economic statecraft, and diplomatic arrangements,” to delay or undermine rivals’ military strategies.<sup>346</sup> Asymmetric balancing, which can include interstate interactions and confrontations between states and non-state actors, embraces mostly terrorism and insurgency.<sup>347</sup>

Unlike hard and soft balancing, asymmetric balancing does not imply counterweight strategies that can result in different international structures but merely a form of opposition or resistance against the unipole. That is to say, terrorist or insurgent groups do not have enough material capabilities to balance in the conventional sense. Accordingly, they can only afford to undermine the unipole and its allies’ strategic objectives by raising the costs of maintaining their supremacy through terrorist attacks and irregular warfare.<sup>348</sup> As Waltz pointed out, “terrorism does not change the first basic fact of international politics [today] — the gross imbalance of world power.”<sup>349</sup> Still, terrorism is related to unipolarity because the latter brings about a higher frequency of the former, especially compared to other systems. Specifically, the overwhelming supremacy of the unipole and the international system’s subsequent structure encourage some groups to resort to terrorism. Terrorism is always available for the weak, dissatisfied actors with

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<sup>345</sup> See Brookes and Wohlforth, *World Out of balance*, 35.

<sup>346</sup> Pape, “Soft Balancing against the United States,” 10.

<sup>347</sup> Paul, “Introduction,” 16-17.

<sup>348</sup> Christopher Layne, “The War on Terrorism and the Balance of Power: The paradoxes of American Hegemony,” in *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds. T. V Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michael Fortman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 106-107.

<sup>349</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “The Continuity of International Politics,” in *Worlds in Collision*, eds. Ken Booth and Tim Dunne (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 350.

the unipole's political project, who also does not count on another great power to advance its balancing objectives.<sup>350</sup>

In assessing the three types of balancing as mentioned above, this section argues that hard and soft balancing were unlikely because China and Russia did not become balancers. However, asymmetric balancing became apparent in considering the complexity of Afghan irregular warfare. Specifically, it meant that insurgent groups emerged to constrain the U.S.-led campaign's overall objectives in Afghanistan.

On the one hand, hard and soft balancing, which are common in bi- and multipolar systems, were undoubtedly absent in Central Asia during the period of this study. China and Russia, the two potential balancers in the region, were unable or uninterested to balance by forming a coalition against the U.S. (external balancing) or by themselves (internal balancing) to contain its strategic objectives in the region. Even if "extensive military coproduction arrangement and major arms sales"<sup>351</sup> between China and Russia were considered, the likelihood of hard balancing was unthinkable in such a region. Rather than being intended to counterweight the U.S. power in Afghanistan, those arrangements and sales sought to meet economic interests, mostly from Russia's perspective focused on dealing with the decline of its military-industrial complex.<sup>352</sup>

Even if both China and Russia had interests in conducting internal balancing by increasing their military capabilities, they could not be considered rivals for the United States, as showcased earlier in comparing their material capabilities. A consideration about China's internal balancing is here necessary due to the massive literature about it. On the surface, according to this literature, the unparalleled shift in relative economic power from the West to East and, subsequently, China's

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<sup>350</sup> Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, 84.

<sup>351</sup> Brookes and Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance*, 75.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

rise in economic and military terms could have resulted in its potential ability to balance against the U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan.<sup>353</sup> What is more, China's increasing economic and military capabilities could have resulted in it becoming a strategic rival to the United States not only in the Pacific Rim, but also in Central Asia.<sup>354</sup> Since the 1990s, it became apparent that China had begun to reopen the ancient Silk Road, which was bolstered through the Belt and Road Initiative officially launched in 2013. Such a strategy entailed, among other goals, connecting China with Afghanistan through pipelines and road routes and even connecting Afghan cities — for instance, Kabul and Herat — through large construction contracts, with the ultimate purpose of meeting Iran across the “Tajik Belt.”<sup>355</sup> Nevertheless, a deeper understanding of China's international position in the international system would show that it could not reach the rank of great power during the Afghanistan intervention, which would have increased the likelihood of balancing. Economic pragmatism, more than balancing the Western campaign in Afghanistan, also inspired Chinese strategies in Central Asia.<sup>356</sup>

Similarly, even though the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as the central Eurasian political, economy and security alliance, and its gatherings' rhetoric — promoting a multipolar world at the diplomatic level and denouncing the American military presence in Central Asia — were taken into account, soft balancing was not the main strategy undertaken by China

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<sup>353</sup> Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2008); Parag Khana, *The Second World: Empires and Influence in the New World Order* (New York, NY: Random House, 2008); Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere. The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008); National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008); National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative worlds*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012).

<sup>354</sup> Khana, *The Second World*, 260-261. For the potential instability derived from China's rise, see John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, Norton & Company, 2014), chapter 10. For the way such rise — in the context of the general growing prosperity of Asia — could be good for the world and especially for the Middle East and Central Asia, see Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere*, 1-2, 9 and 176-186.

<sup>355</sup> Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere*, 110; Elizabeth C. Economy, “China's New Revolution. The Reign of Xi Jinping,” *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 3 (2018), 65-66.

<sup>356</sup> On pragmatism informing Chinese foreign policy, see Jessica Chen Weiss, “A World Safe for Autocracy?” *Foreign Affairs* 98, no. 4 (2019): 92-102.

and Russia in the region.<sup>357</sup> Rather than seeking to contain the U.S. power, just as its announcements' rhetoric would suggest, the SCO sought to deal with threats to be faced by its members at the regional level. More importantly, like the United States and its allies in Afghanistan, the SCO countries deemed Islamic terrorism as its primary threat. For them, this threat came in the form of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, turning into a transnational guerrilla. In the words of Brookes and Wohlforth, "the U.S. deployment to Afghanistan created a contradiction between the SCO's rhetorical role as a balancing mechanism and its operational role as a regional security organization [aimed at facing Islamic terrorism]. At least initially, China and Russia resolved the contradiction by strongly supporting the United States in the war on terror".<sup>358</sup>

Asymmetric balancing was the only one likely during the intervention. Due to its significance, the next sections devote significant attention to addressing it. Specifically, these sections hold that even if al Qaeda's operational capabilities to conduct another attack in North America were significantly reduced during the intervention, there were still two clear and complex threats for American and Canadian forces in Afghanistan related to this form of balancing. Above all, both of them were paradigmatic examples of asymmetric balancing. The first threat came in the form of radical jihadist ideology as being promoted by al Qaeda from Pakistan, once Afghanistan was denied as a sanctuary. This ideology entailed a relentless fight against the Western campaign in Afghanistan. The second threat was the rise of the insurgency in Afghanistan, which took advantage of the Afghan government's collapse after the intervention, the Pakistan

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<sup>357</sup> Economy, "China's New Revolution," 73.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 74. Besides the aforementioned cases, the literature on hard and soft balancing has taken into account Iran and North Korea's internal hard balancing in the form of WMD programs, combined with their offensive rhetoric. Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, 29. The proponents of balancing have also addressed external hard balancing in assessing the Russia-Iran connection. They focus on Russian assistance of the Iranian nuclear program, cooperation in space technology, and military sales between these countries. Finally, several commentators considered the external soft balancing undertaken by Germany, France, Russia, and Turkey during the 2003 Iraq invasion. These cases have nothing to do with the Afghanistan intervention, yet they are mentioned to buttress that they are not strong enough to challenge the unipolar structure during the intervention. See Brookes and Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance*, 77-95.

government's support, a renascent poppy economy, and the long tradition of warlords in that country.<sup>359</sup>

All in all, except for asymmetric balancing, the unlikelihood of balancing against the United States and, by extension, its allies was apparent during the intervention. There were no rivals willing and able to counterbalance the unipole, resulting in a permissive strategic environment.<sup>360</sup> Without global competition, like what occurs in bi- and multipolar systems, the sole great power and its allies conducted their foreign and security policies with a high room for manoeuvre.<sup>361</sup> Unipolarity ended up creating a permissive rather than a restrictive strategic environment in the sense that it allowed the lonely great power to use their military capabilities to meet their interests without having to deal with great power threats and impediments.<sup>362</sup>

Taking into account the unipole's high room for manoeuvre to choose its preferred foreign and security policy, this section proceeds now to examine the United States' strategic options within the unipolar system. Drawing on Barry Posen and Andrew L. Ross' analysis of U.S. strategic options during the post- Cold War, Nuno Monteiro highlighted the different options for the United States in a unipolar system. In enjoying a high room for manoeuvre, the unipole may afford itself to adopt one of three strategies: namely, disengagement, defensive dominance, and offensive dominance. All three imply "different attitude[s] toward the global status quo," which is measured in terms of three components, namely, "territorial arrangements, international political alignments, and the global distribution of power."<sup>363</sup> Disengagement is synonymous with the lack of interest in maintaining the international status quo, enabling others to shape it. Defensive

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<sup>359</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, chapter 4; Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's insurgency," 7-40. On the long tradition of warlords in Afghanistan, see Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," 54-58 and 69-71.

<sup>360</sup> Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 9.

<sup>361</sup> Kirkey and Ostroy, "Why is Canada in Afghanistan?" 206-208.

<sup>362</sup> See Taliaferro and Wishart, "Neoclassical realism," 52.

<sup>363</sup> Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 14.

dominance suggests maintaining all of the status quo components, whereas offensive dominance entails revising at least one of them.<sup>364</sup> What is more, disengagement is associated with isolationism. Defensive dominance can be operationalized through offshore balancing (preventing the ascent of peer competitors), selective engagement (interventions solely in areas with a high strategic value), and collective security (contribution to security issues through international institutions). Offensive dominance is linked to primacy (controlling several areas of the world) or global empire (conducting a divide-and-rule strategy within a global center-periphery network).<sup>365</sup>

Some scholars agree that the United States adopted offensive dominance after the 9/11 attacks. However, such considerations tended to be associated more with the Iraq invasion and the preventive components of the Bush Doctrine than with the Afghanistan intervention.<sup>366</sup> When the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan is considered, a more nuanced statement must be taken into account. During the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the Afghanistan war could still fit nicely into defensive dominance because it was conducted “against an enemy who attacked the United States first, and also because the United States enjoyed broad multilateral support for the war.”<sup>367</sup> However, in considering the transition from the early operation to overthrow the Taliban regime, to CT to COIN, American foreign and security policy in Central Asia fit much better into offensive dominance. For much of the time the intervention was performed, the United States sought to install an accommodating regime in Kabul, reconstruct the country and control its international alignments. All of these are consistent with offensive dominance.

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> Monteiro, “Unrest Assured,” footnote 36; Posen and Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy,” 5-53; Brookes and Wohlforth, *World out of Balance*, 15-16; Nexon and Wright, “What’s Stake in the American Empire Debate,” 253 and 258-261.

<sup>366</sup> Benjamin Miller, “Explaining Changes in U.S Grand Strategy: 9/11, the Rise of Offensive Liberalism, and the War in Iraq,” *Security Studies* 19, no. 1 (2010): 50-64; Nexon & Wright, “What’s at Stake in the American Empire Debate,” 266-268; Monteiro, “Unrest assured,” 30-33.

<sup>367</sup> Miller, “Explaining Changes in U.S Grand Strategy,” 45, footnote 39.

### **3. The relevance of alliance politics for lesser powers in a unipolar system: strategic options for Canada**

Addressing the room for manoeuvre enjoyed by the unipole's allies to undertake their preferred foreign and security policies entails examining the critical condition that makes such freedom of action likely high. This condition is a permissive alliance system that allows allies to pursue their own interests. Considering such a condition suggests examining the unipolar system's alliance politics dynamics and the likely scenarios for the unipole's allies within such a system. These scenarios are a) free riding, b) flocking around the unipole and c) undertaking an opportunistic strategy, meaning taking advantage of the unipole's call for contribution to the alliance meaningfully so as to meet their own strategic interests.

To begin with, analyzing alliance politics in broad terms entails recalling, as Stephen Walt pointed out, that "the essential element in a meaningful alliance is a commitment for mutual support against some external actor(s)."<sup>368</sup> Within the unipolar system shaping the Afghanistan intervention, the formation of an alliance against the United States was unlikely due to its prohibitive costs, unsurpassed dilemmas of collective action among the U.S. rivals, and the fact that the United States did not constitute a direct threat to most of the major powers. That is to say, in that unipolar system, a commitment for mutual support against the United States tended to be unlikely. As a result, alliance politics revolved more around the interactions between the unipole and like-minded countries. Such a strategic situation affects both the United States and those countries. On the surface, the United States would not require many allies to advance its strategic objectives due to its overwhelming supremacy. As the sole great power, the United States would

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<sup>368</sup> Walt, "Alliance in a Unipolar World," 86.

also not be worried too much about defections, unlike what would occur in bi- or multipolar systems in which weaker powers could form alliances with other great powers.<sup>369</sup>

However, U.S. supremacy is incomplete because the unipolar system is still anarchical rather than an utterly hierarchized system.<sup>370</sup> Under such a systemic circumstance, the unipole can be concerned, under certain circumstances, with its allies' flocking and free riding, especially when it starts costly military campaigns, like the American adventures to Iraq and Afghanistan. It means that allies' flocking around the unipole and free riding could be potential scenarios within a unipolar system. Indeed, as Birthe Hansen pointed out, the flocking/free-riding dilemma, as the most dominant within the unipolar system, would replace the balancing/bandwagoning dilemma (counterbalancing or supporting dominant powers), which is often the case within bi- and multipolar systems.<sup>371</sup>

Flocking entails following the unipole and supporting its strategic goals. Accordingly, it increases the unipole's room for manoeuvre as it can share the military, economic, political, and diplomatic burden-sharing of military campaigns with its allies. In contrast, free riding means avoiding costs and risks associated with the contribution to collective security and, subsequently, can produce the opposite effect compared to flocking. From the perspective of the unipole's allies, flocking can occur when such allies have to deal with regional and local threats and, accordingly, need the unipole's protection. They also opt for flocking if they want to prevent them from being seen as weak allies or maintain a strategic relationship with the unipole, allowing them to request its help for years to come. Finally, unipole's allies can flock if the unipole defines strategic solutions to deal with security issues.<sup>372</sup> Free riding is another option for the unipole's allies

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<sup>369</sup> Mowle and Sacko, *The Unipolar World*, Chapter 5.

<sup>370</sup> Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 12-13.

<sup>371</sup> Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, 24.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid*, 31-33.

because of the general stability in the form of the lack of great-power tensions. It is also likely due to the strong involvement of the unipole, which brings about reasonable levels of security irrespective of the lesser countries' contribution and, accordingly, frees up the lesser powers of continually adopting robust foreign and security policies.<sup>373</sup>

To operationalize the scenarios mentioned above, this section proceeds to explain how the alliance politics evolved according to the unipole's critical decisions. Between 2001 and 2003, the United States conducted Enduring Freedom Operation (EFO) in Afghanistan with minimal support from its allies by choosing when acting within the framework of NATO institutions. During that period, the United States was not concerned with the free riding of its allies in such a way that some of them, especially in Europe, shared a "sense of irrelevance".<sup>374</sup> However, beginning with the Iraq invasion in 2003, the United States was more concerned with the willingness of its allies to help, especially with NATO support to conduct the Afghanistan intervention. To be sure, with two wars taking place and, above all, as the Iraq invasion turned into a quagmire, the United States started to depend more on its allies to carry out the intervention.<sup>375</sup> In depending more on outside support, the unipole made alliance politics more relevant and, accordingly, offered its allies opportunities and incentives to conduct robust foreign and security policies within a required division of labour.<sup>376</sup> Indeed, the most committed NATO intervening countries, such as the United Kingdom, Netherlands, and Canada, enjoyed a large room for maneuver to meet their interests in Afghanistan.

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>374</sup> Galia Press-Barnathan, "Managing the Hegemon. NATO Under Unipolarity," *Security Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 297; Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, 69.

<sup>375</sup> During the post-Cold War, the Iraq invasion was the only intervention in which the United States assumed the overall burden, unlike other campaigns, including the 1990-91 Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Libya, and the intervention analyzed here. Stephen Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, William C. Wohlforth, "Don't Come Home America: The Case Against Retrenchment," *International Security* 37, no. 3 (2012-2013): 31-2

<sup>376</sup> Press-Barnathan, "Managing the Hegemon," 297-30; Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan," 279.

Canada was unable to adopt a free-riding strategy due to its longstanding alliance with the United States and its interests in participating in the War on Terror. In considering its middle-rank position regarding defence spending and the size of the army, Canada would have been expected to merely flock around the unipole through a contribution restricted to its capabilities. However, Canada opted for a third option available for the U.S allies in a unipolar system, significantly when alliance politics had been activated: an opportunistic foreign policy. Without a countervailing power, unipolarity encourages U.S. allies with particular military capabilities, such as Canada, to get involved with, and provide solutions to, security issues that are important to themselves, as well as to seize opportunities to increase its influence. The only condition is not to challenge the unipole's overriding security interests or resist the unipole dominance itself. That is to say, rather than merely flocking around the unipole, Canada made one of the most vital contributions in Afghanistan, along with the United States and the United Kingdom, and adopted the same strategic objectives as advanced by the unipole. Since 2006, Canada also managed to treat Afghanistan as a "war for prestige"<sup>377</sup> due to the specific dynamics of unipolarity. (In explaining the Canadian FPE's belief system, chapter 4 will explain what a war for prestige meant for Canada in-depth). As Christopher Kirkey and Nicholas Ostroy maintained:

The dynamics embedded in a unipolar structure by definition imply and facilitate a relaxed, permissive environment for states — an environment that contains the necessary framework (especially with regard to the diminution of constraints and the increase in meaningful opportunities for external behavior) for states with sufficient capabilities, such as Canada, to undertake military actions (as in Afghanistan). With no one saying no (indeed, with the United States saying yes), in the absence of any countervailing power, and with the possibility to increase the scope and range of its foreign policy activities, Canadian decision-makers were well positioned to consider a military commitment to Afghanistan.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan," 275 and 277.

<sup>378</sup> Kirkey and Ostroy, "Why is Canada in Afghanistan?" 208.

Specifically, Canada conducted an opportunistic foreign and security policy when the ISAF expansion toward the South (the most tangible token of the division of labour) become more and more necessary. Drawing on discussions among the intervening countries between 2003 and 2005, which were possible thanks to the regular NATO meetings, the early stages of such expansion took place in 2005/2006. Given this context, in 2004 the United Kingdom proposed to merge Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the ISAF mission to make their goals more compatible. After all, the West's strategy had started to be overtly contradictory as the OEF embraced counterterrorism goals, and the ISAF mission promoted nation-building objectives. Such a proposal entailed undertaking negotiations with the United States to change the course of the intervention, implying a significant change of responsibilities for countries conducting the ISAF's expansion. Since 2006, they were responsible not only for reconstructing but also providing security in their areas of operations.<sup>379</sup> By impacting the intervention's goals, the United Kingdom managed to maintain its position as a "global strategic player [...] capable of working militarily with the U.S. on something approaching equal terms".<sup>380</sup>

During this transition, Canada seized the opportunity to define an equally vital contribution on its own terms. Canada considered the decision to get into Kandahar on its own — that is beyond American pressure — based on its historical experience in the Balkans, as well as on conversations with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, which were possible again thanks to the NATO framework and the increased relevance of the alliance politics as of 2003.<sup>381</sup> The Balkan experience — in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the NATO-led

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<sup>379</sup> Matthew Willis, "An Unexpected War, A Not-Unexpected Mission: The Origins of Kandahar 2005," *International Journal* 67, no. 4 (2012): 985-6, 988-9 and 991.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 987.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 979-1000.

Stabilization Force (SFOR) and Kosovo Force (KFOR) in the 1990s — left unforgettable lessons as to the type of contributions that Canada should conduct within multinational operations. It was apparent that those contributions should result in international recognition and an increased ability to influence NATO strategic planning. By concentrating resources, Canada would be capable of increasing the impact of its contribution.<sup>382</sup> These considerations were critical for Canada's decision to go South as it became the strategic core of the intervention since 2005/2006. What is more, the specific decision to get into Kandahar, instead of other Southern provinces, such as Herat and Chaghcharan, had to do with logistic reasons and talks with like-minded partners, which was once again likely due to the increasing relevance of alliance politics in a permissive unipolar structure.<sup>383</sup> Besides the fact that Kandahar met some operational requirements for a Canadian deployment, such as “accessibility” and “cost efficiency,” Canada conducted talks primarily with the United Kingdom and then with the Netherlands. Such talks were critical to defining the Southern deployment's division of labour while the United States “was now happy to be relieved of the south.”<sup>384</sup> The United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Canada not only decided to deploy their forces in Helmand, Uruzgan, and Kandahar, the most dangerous areas of the intervention, but also to assume the challenging objectives of COIN.<sup>385</sup>

In considering the flexibility of NATO rules of engagement, the level of commitment by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Canada was even more remarkable. Even though NATO is a powerful, longstanding alliance that enjoyed an indisputable relevance once the

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid, 990.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid, 990-4.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid, 994.

<sup>385</sup> On an assessment of British counterinsurgency using kinetic and non-kinetic operations in Helmand, see Theo Farrell, “Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006-2009,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 4 (2010): 567-594. On a comparative analysis of Canadian and Dutch counterinsurgency in Kandahar and Uruzgan, see Josep T. Jockel, “Canada and the Netherlands in Afghanistan,” *Martello Papers*, no. 38 (Kingston: Queen's University - Centre for International and Defence Policy, 2014).

division-of-labour strategy was activated in Afghanistan, its functioning depended heavily on its members' voluntary contributions to advance its strategic objectives. NATO members maintained national control over their contributions to Alliance operations through caveats. Such caveats implied imposing restrictions on how NATO members' military deployments are performed in terms of their area of operations, the work with certain allies, and their timing.<sup>386</sup> The result was different strategic postures and levels of commitment. Some members, such as Germany, insisted on seeing the intervention as a S&R mission, whereas others such as Canada transitioned from S&R to COIN.<sup>387</sup> While the United States and Canada, along with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, focused their operations on the most restive regions, as mentioned earlier, Italy, Germany, France, and Norway limited their operations to more secure areas.<sup>388</sup>

Having established that the unipolar structure was permissive for both the United States and Canada, it is necessary to address the extent to which the strategic environment was restrictive for both of them in terms of the threats derived from the Afghan irregular war. According to neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, conducting a broad threat assessment is equally critical to explain the strategic environment that paved the way for the United States and Canada to adopt similar foreign and security policies in Afghanistan. Undertaking this assessment allows this chapter to show that even though the unipolar system enabled Americans and Canadians to choose offensive-dominance and opportunistic foreign and security policies freely, their FPEs had to operationalize these policies as irregular warfare strategies. Specifically, those strategies came in the form, first, of S&R or complex peacekeeping and CT and, next, of COIN. Why and how

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<sup>386</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 21 and 23; Stephen Saideman and David Auerswald, *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 2-3 and 33-44.

<sup>387</sup> Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "Does a Multi-Tier NATO Matter? The Atlantic Alliance and the Process of Strategic Change," *International Affairs* 85, no. 2 (2009): 217.

<sup>388</sup> Jockel, *Canada and the Netherlands in Afghanistan*, 6; Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 105.

both countries found themselves undertaking COIN precisely between 2005/2006 and 2011 are questions that chapters 4 and 5 will address by analyzing the American and Canadian FPEs' belief system and their ability to mobilize domestic resources required to increase their engagement levels.

#### **4. The emergence of irregular warfare in Afghanistan**

The United States and its allies' immediate military response to al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks was to overthrow the Taliban regime because it had offered sanctuary to al Qaeda, allowing such a group to train and plan the attacks against New York City and Washington D.C. Accordingly, the justification of this response was the threat's clarity posed by al Qaeda to the United States and its allies' national interests.<sup>389</sup> U.S airpower started degrading Taliban communications throughout the theatre of operations. Simultaneously, Central Intelligence Agency Officers and Special Forces Soldiers fought on the ground, alongside 15,000 Afghans combatants led by local warlords, against the Afghan Taliban regime.<sup>390</sup> Since the overthrow of the Taliban was achieved successfully in only three months, this strategy — combining airpower, few troops on the ground and alliances with indigenous combatants— became known as the “Afghan model.”<sup>391</sup> It constituted the starting point of an UN-sanctioned campaign undertaken by the United States and its allies to reduce al Qaeda's operational ability to perpetrate other attacks in the United States' homeland and that of its allies. Like the overthrow of the Taliban regime, the reduction of al Qaeda's operational abilities was achieved successfully in the first years of the intervention: al Qaeda leaders were captured or killed, al Qaeda lost its primary training base in Afghanistan, and

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<sup>389</sup> The White House, *Declaratory Policy in Afghanistan* (Washington: The White House, September 27, 2001).

<sup>390</sup> Jones, “The Rise of Afghanistan's insurgency,” 7.

<sup>391</sup> Richard B. Andres, Craig Willis, and Thomas E. Griffith, “Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model,” *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005/2006): 127.

the last jihadist attack in the West associated with this terrorist group was the bombing in London in 2005.<sup>392</sup>

However, the victory was incomplete, and even transitory, insofar as the United States, Canada, and its allies had to deal with two serious subsequent threats; namely, a) the transformation of al Qaeda as the Afghanistan campaign was conducted and b) the emergence of insurgency in Afghanistan. Both of those threats made Afghanistan a bloody and costly irregular war.<sup>393</sup> On the one hand, al Qaeda's transformation entailed transitioning from a centralized terrorist group to a decentralized, diffuse organization operating from Pakistan and promoting a jihadist ideology in Afghanistan without being presented operationally in that country.<sup>394</sup> That is to say, al Qaeda shifted from being direct to an indirect threat to the United States and Canada. On the other hand, the Afghan insurgency was not only the by-product of the invasion itself, but also of pre-existing conditions, being deepened after the invasion. Apart from al Qaeda's radical ideology inspiring those groups on the ground, those conditions were their transnational supporting network operating mainly in Pakistan, the collapse of the Afghan government, the renascent poppy economy and the significant role of Afghan warlords.<sup>395</sup>

Still, with local strategic objectives in mind, the emergent al-Qaeda-inspired insurgent groups, the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, the Haqqani network, and Foreign Fighters, were equally an indirect threat to the United States and Canada. Unlike al Qaeda, embracing and promoting a global jihadist campaign against the West, these insurgent groups did not prepare themselves to attack

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<sup>392</sup> Wilner, "Canada's Role in Combating Al Qaeda," 2; Jenkins, "The Al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat," 2-3.

<sup>393</sup> See David Kilcullen, "Fumbling the Baton: U.S. Civil-Military Relations in the Afghan war," in *Reconstructing Afghanistan. Civil-Military Experiences in Comparative Perspective*, eds. William Maley and Susanne Schmeidi (London: Routledge, 2015), 10- 24.

<sup>394</sup> Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou, "The Rise and Fall of Al Qaeda: Lessons in Post-September 11 Terrorism," *Geneva Papers – Research Series* (Geneva Centre for Security Policy), no. 3 (2011): 22-32.

<sup>395</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, chapter 4; Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's insurgency", 7-40; Schetter and Glasser, "Local Configurations of Violence," 232-3; Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," 54-58, 69-71.

the United States and Canada's homeland but only to repel the coalition forces from Afghanistan. Therefore, the insurgent groups' strategy was similar to that set out by the Mujahideen against the Soviet invaders in the 1980s. However, unlike the Soviet Union, the United States and Canada dealt with different levels of strategic restrictiveness. Even though both countries fought a bloody irregular war, they did not compromise their integrity in the process, which did happen with the Soviet Union. As some historical accounts have pinpointed, the Soviet breakdown was caused not only by Gorbachev's reformist policies and systemic constraints but also by its war in Afghanistan.<sup>396</sup>

All in all, even though the United States, Canada, and the other coalition forces managed to reduce al Qaeda's operational capabilities in the first years of the intervention, the United States and Canada had to deal with the emergence of insurgent groups in Afghanistan being inspired by al Qaeda's radical ideology and funnelled by conditions before the intervention. In this regard, the initial success of the US-led intervention turned into irregular warfare. In explaining these threats, the following sections help understand the strategic environment in which American and Canadian foreign and security policies were performed and, above all, why such policies ended up looking like similar irregular-warfare strategies. It is worth noticing that this threat assessment is made possible within a realist foreign policy analysis due to neoclassical realism's broad conception of the strategic environment. Unlike structural realism, which solely focuses on threat assessment at the systemic level, neoclassical realism, as understood by this study, makes it possible to consider threats at different levels of analysis, including the irregular-warfare level, when required, like in this case.

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<sup>396</sup> Rafael Reuveny and Aseem Prakash, "The Afghanistan War and the Breakdown of the Soviet Union," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 4 (1999): 693-708.

## 5. Al Qaeda's transformation

Al Qaeda's rise and decline before and after this intervention is the first aspect that a threat assessment must consider. After all, this intervention's underlying rationale was al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks that this group planned from Afghanistan. Reports to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Canadian Senate Special Committee on Anti-terrorism and studies conducted and disseminated by think tanks in the United States and Europe indicated that al Qaeda became the centre of a global jihadist network between the 1980s and 9/11. Still, these reports concluded that its operational capabilities were reduced during the Afghanistan intervention.<sup>397</sup> During the early years of the intervention, al Qaeda's second attack against North America was likely, rendering it a direct threat to the United States and Canada's homeland.<sup>398</sup> In contrast, during the late years, the U.S.-led campaign brought about the decline of al Qaeda's operational capability to carry out another attack like 9/11.

### 5.1. *Al-Qaeda's rise*

Al Qaeda's rise is a by-product of a decade of conflict, from 1979 to 1989, in Afghanistan. This conflict started because the Soviet Union decided to invade Afghanistan to ensure Moscow's influence once a Communist government, coming to power in 1978, had been unable to maintain law and order. The invasion sought to enforce peace through the systemic resort to force and Soviet-style nation-building. Not only did it imply mobilizing 120,000 soldiers, heavy artillery, armoured divisions, and even using chemical weapons against the Afghan population, but it also

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<sup>397</sup> Marc Sageman, "Confronting al-Qaeda: Understanding the Threat in Afghanistan and Beyond," *Testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, October 7, 2009; Brian Michael Jenkins, "The al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat;" Brian Michael Jenkins, "Al Qaeda in its Third Decade: Irreversible Decline or Imminent Victory?" *Occasional Paper* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012); Mohamedou, "The Rise and Fall of Al Qaeda."

<sup>398</sup> See Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown. A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 403.

entailed destructing the pillars of the Afghan social structure and redistributing property nationwide. In the end, the invasion brought about 15,000 dead Soviet soldiers, the killing of a million Afghans, and almost 5 million refugees.<sup>399</sup>

As a response, young Muslims mainly from Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Southeast Asia arrived at Afghanistan to wage side by side a ‘Holy War’ or *jihad* against the Soviet invaders.<sup>400</sup> These Muslims, who would be consequently called the Mujahideen or “holy warriors,”<sup>401</sup> would receive financial support from the Islamic World, especially Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf States — a group of countries that would be known as the ‘Golden Chain.’ The Mujahideen would also receive financial support from the United States that funnelled billions of dollars through Pakistan.<sup>402</sup> It is worth noting that the then Pakistani President, Muhammad Zia ul-Haq and the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) ended playing a central role within the strategy against the Soviets. Specifically, the Pakistani government and intelligence services turned into the ultimate deciders regarding how and when distributing the supplies and arms obtained with American dollars to the Mujahideen.<sup>403</sup>

Among the young Muslims heading to Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet invaders, Osama Bin Ladin “understood better than most of the volunteers the extent to which the continuation and eventual success in Afghanistan [and beyond] depended on an increasingly complex, almost worldwide organization.”<sup>404</sup> As a result, after the defeat of the Soviet Union in

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<sup>399</sup> Milton Bearden, “Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires,” *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 6 (2001), 18; Robert M. Gates, *Duty. Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knoff, 2014), 360.

<sup>400</sup> Brian Michael Jenkins, *Countering al Qaeda. An appreciation of the Situation and Suggestions for Strategy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 3.

<sup>401</sup> On an accurate assessment of Mujahideen’ varying profiles, see Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>402</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. Official Government Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 55-56.

<sup>403</sup> See Gates, *Duty*, 335.

<sup>404</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 55.

1988, Bin Laden, along with Abdullah Azzam and other Arab volunteers, decided that its jihadist movement would not dissolve and “established what they called a base or foundation (al Qaeda) as a potential general headquarters for future jihad.”<sup>405</sup>

With the Soviet withdrawal and subsequent collapse in mind, Islamist extremists granted al Qaeda an increased social status in the Arab world, which encouraged Hasan al Turabi, one of the most influential politicians in modern Sudan, to invite al Qaeda to enjoy a haven in that country. In return, Bin Laden helped Sudanese Muslims fight against Christian separatists in the South and contributed to road-building projects. Turabi, one of the planners of the coup d'état that brought to the power Omar al Bashir, paved the way for al Qaeda to establish a “worldwide business operation” in Sudan. This operation included ties with radical Muslims in the Balkans, Northern Africa, the Horn of Africa, Middle East, Central Asia, the Arabian Peninsula and Southeast Asia. However, by the late 1990s, the United States and other Western powers, along with Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Libya, and Saudi Arabia, pressured Sudan to stop offering al Qaeda a haven. The United States and its allies feared the emergence of Islamic extremists threatening the West, a fear that came true with the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Libya had already been targets of groups supported by al Qaeda. For its part, Saudi Arabia had fallen out with Bin Laden due to his virulent denouncement of the Saudi participation within the U.S.-led coalition during the 1990 Gulf War and had, accordingly, revoked Bin Ladin’s Saudi citizenship.<sup>406</sup>

The international pressure forced al Qaeda out from Sudan in 1996, and its members returned to Afghanistan to find a haven again.<sup>407</sup> However, al Qaeda’s consolidation did not follow

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid, 57-58 and 62-63.

<sup>407</sup> Anthony Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power: The International Relations of Terrorists, Warlords and Insurgents* (London: Routledge, 2009), 112-113.

an easy pathway in Afghanistan. The Taliban, who would become al Qaeda's strategic allies, did not control key centers, including Kabul, when al Qaeda members arrived in Afghanistan. It is worth noting that, after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, a bloody conflict between the Mujahedeen, including the Taliban, to control Kabul defined the period between 1992 and 1996. Even though the Taliban gained control first of Jalalabad and then Kabul in 1996, when it founded the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, a new militia, the Northern Alliance, was created to resist the Taliban occupation. The geopolitical consolidation of the Taliban and the Northern Alliance's subsequent response brought about another wave of violence between 1996 and 2001.<sup>408</sup> (The last section assesses the extent to which the emergence of warlords defined this period and became one of the factors shaping the insurgency's emergence in the aftermath of 9/11).

It was during this phase that al Qaeda established a strategic alliance with the Taliban. At the beginning, there were tensions between Mullah Muhammed Omar, the leader of the Taliban and Bin Laden. The latter started to proclaim a new holy war against the West and Afghanistan as a new haven to achieve such purpose, which brought about a new international pressure against the recently constituted Taliban government. As a result, Muhammed Ommar forced al Qaeda to move to Southern Afghanistan to keep him under control. Nevertheless, this move ended up being in al Qaeda's best interests in consolidating its primary area of operations. In the end, as Bin Laden managed to bring economic benefits to the Taliban derived from its international connections with the Golden Chain, the Taliban started to enjoy freedom for manoeuvre higher than in Sudan.<sup>409</sup> The U.S. 9/11 Commission — created by Congressional legislation and made of five Democrats and five Republicans to provide strategic assessment and policy recommendations — concluded on this matter the following:

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<sup>408</sup> See National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 65.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid*, 47 and 65-66.

Al Qaeda members could travel freely within the country, enter and exit it without visas or any immigration procedures, purchase and import vehicles and weapons, and enjoy the use of official Afghan Ministry of Defense license plates. Al Qaeda also used the Afghan state-owned Ariana Airlines to courier money into the country. The Taliban seemed to open the doors to all who wanted to come to Afghanistan to train in the camps. The alliance with the Taliban provided al Qaeda a sanctuary in which to train and indoctrinate fighters and terrorists, import weapons, forge ties with other jihad groups and leaders, and plot and staff terrorist schemes.<sup>410</sup>

With greater freedom for action in Afghanistan, al Qaeda managed to plan the attacks against the West's periphery and its very core, whose most notable achievement was the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001.<sup>411</sup> This attack made al Qaeda not only one of the most serious threats to the United States and its allies but also the leader of a global jihadist network,<sup>412</sup> whose ties had started to be forged during its time in Sudan. Indeed, it can be argued that from the 1980s to 9/11, al Qaeda managed to change the scale of resentments in the Arab and Muslim world derived from Western colonization. Where other Islamic organizations and movements fought against local authoritarian regimes seen as the near enemy by using military means and occasionally participating in electoral contests and national debates, al Qaeda extended the Islamic fight against the far enemy, that is, the Western supporters of such regimes. Above all, al Qaeda managed to consolidate a jihadist army of professional and disciplined soldiers in the years before 9/11.<sup>413</sup>

It is worth noting that, although al Qaeda became the center of a global jihadist network before 9/11, this terrorist group evolved as a hierarchical, formal structure, especially in the top tier. Its central staff was made of two unique leaders, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Dhawahiri, and a consultative council called *shura majlis*. It directly supervised the most successful attacks against the United States, such as the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania

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<sup>410</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>411</sup> Sageman, "Confronting al-Qaeda," 1; Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, 112-113.

<sup>412</sup> Jenkins, "The al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat," 2.

<sup>413</sup> Mohamedou, "The Rise and Decline of Al Qaeda," 13-19.

and the 9/11 attacks.<sup>414</sup> Some plots were undertaken with a certain degree of local autonomy and limited management from the central staff, allowing lower tiers to embrace ample room for strategic innovation.<sup>415</sup> However, al Qaeda carried out its most successful attacks against the West at the moment when it enjoyed “unity, cohesion, and collective-action capacity.”<sup>416</sup>

### *5.2. Al Qaeda’s decline*

The U.S.-led counterterrorism campaign in Afghanistan forced al Qaeda to change its strategy. Al Qaeda had to transition from a centralized organization to a regionalized, decentralized and even diffused, network.<sup>417</sup> Al Qaeda was also forced to find a new secure base on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to operate more clandestinely. Between 2002 and 2005, from its new base of operations and depending more on local affiliates and allies, al Qaeda launched attacks in Spain and Britain, as well as in the West’s periphery, mainly in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia.<sup>418</sup>

Based on al Qaeda’s transformation, strategic and intelligence analysts agreed in distinguishing between “Al Qaeda Core controlled operations,” “Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist organizations controlled operations,” and “Al Qaeda inspired terrorist plots, carried out either on behalf of al Qaeda or other transnational terrorist organizations.”<sup>419</sup> Indeed, with such a distinction in mind, Marc Sagerman, pointed out that “78% of all global neo-jihadi terrorist plots in the West

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<sup>414</sup> Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Calvert Jones, “Assessing the Dangers of Illicit Networks: Why al-Qaeda May Be Less Threatening Than Many Think,” *International Security* 33, no. 2 (2008), 35.

<sup>415</sup> On an accurate assessment about how al Qaeda’s lower tiers and independent terrorist entrepreneurs were critical to undertake operations with high strategic innovative levels, see Assaf Moghadam, “How Al Qaeda Innovates,” *Security Studies* 22, no. 3 (2013): 466-497.

<sup>416</sup> Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Jones, “Assessing the Dangers of Illicit Networks,” 34.

<sup>417</sup> Mohamedou, “The Rise and Fall of Al Qaeda,” 8.

<sup>418</sup> Jenkins, “The al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat,” 2-3.

<sup>419</sup> Sagerman, “Confronting al-Qaeda,” 4-5; see also Wilner, “Canada’s Role in Combating Al Qaeda,” 1; Mohamedou, “The Rise and Fall of Al Qaeda,” 20-29.

in the past five years [2004-2009] came from *autonomous homegrown groups* without any connection, direction or control from al Qaeda Core or its allies” [emphasis comes from the original text].<sup>420</sup> From 2006 on, al Qaeda adopted a sort of “meta-commandment” aimed more at providing politico-religious guidance, as well as strategic advising to its affiliates, than at assuming strategic and operational direction. Such a transformation undoubtedly deepened the distance with its already autonomous affiliates.<sup>421</sup> With more difficulties in recruiting combatants, al Qaeda core also started to promote do-it-yourself terrorism. By framing the stigmatization of Muslim communities in the West into its radical ideology, it started inevitably to depend more on young Western volunteers who did not receive any training from al Qaeda.<sup>422</sup>

This transformation is relevant to this study because it indicates that al Qaeda ceased to be the center of the global jihadist network and was unable to plan another attack to the West as of 2005 from the Afghan-Pakistan border, where its new clandestine ‘headquarters’ ended up operating.<sup>423</sup> To be sure, al Qaeda stopped being an immediate threat for the United States and Canada due to its operational decline to carry out another attack in North America.

Al Qaeda’s operational decline coincided with the death of Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011. Although bin Laden was not conducting specific terrorist operations at the moment of his death, and that al Qaeda, by the very nature of its sacred, lengthy battle, was conceived to survive

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<sup>420</sup> Sageman, “Confronting al-Qaeda,” 6.

<sup>421</sup> Mohamedou, “The Rise and Decline of Al Qaeda,” 9.

<sup>422</sup> Jenkins, “The al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat,” 6-8. Homegrown terrorist attacks and attempts of attacks in Canada and the U.S. were conducted by alone people or small groups which were self-radicalized on the internet. The most known case of homegrown terrorism in Canada inspired by al Qaeda and its affiliates was the failed attempts to detonate a truck bomb in downtown Toronto and assassinate Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other officials in Parliament Hill in 2006. In the United States, the most emblematic cases of homegrown terrorism were the shooting provoked by a Muslim U.S. Army Mayor, Nidal Malik Hasan, at Fort Hood, Texas in 2009 and the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013. David G. Haglund and Dru Lauzon, “‘Homegrown’ in North America: The Changing Face of Radical Islamism, and Its Implications for Canada-United States Relations,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 20, no. 3 (2014): 307-309. Al Qaeda core became thus unable “to infiltrate professional terrorists in the West [...] probably due to good cooperation among intelligence agencies [...] good intelligence databases and increased vigilance and security at airports around the world”. Sageman, “Confronting al Qaeda,” 19.

<sup>423</sup> Sageman, “Confronting al-Qaeda,” 6-7.

after his death, his inglorious killing by U.S. Navy Seals in Abbottabad, Pakistan, undermined the image of al Qaeda within the global jihadist network. Jihadists had considered his ability to skip the American manhunt as a sign of God's will. As mentioned, Osama bin Laden's leadership had also become critical to al Qaeda. His achievements had transcended the ideology of its group, his "family connections, tribal code, or personal relationship" had allowed this group to forge alliances with the Taliban governing Afghanistan and then fighting as an insurgent group, and his connections with the Golden Chain had enabled his organization to receive permanent financial support.<sup>424</sup>

With the deterioration of its transnational leadership and its need to operate from a secret base in Pakistan, al Qaeda core ended up handing over the fight against the Westerners and the allied Afghan government to the insurgent groups emerging after the U.S and its allies' intervention. According to Seth G. Jones, the insurgency in Afghanistan was made of "the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, the Haqqani network, foreign fighters (mostly Arabs and Central Asians), tribes based on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and criminal networks."<sup>425</sup> They managed to control or have a significant operational standing over more than half of the country. Their areas of operations were located from Herat to Nimruz — the Western region —, from Nimruz to Helmand, Oruzgan, Zabul, and Kandahar — the Southern region — and from Ghazni and Paktika to Nurestan, surrounding Kabul by the South — the Eastern region. The Southern and, above all, the Eastern regions were highly compromised due to the Pakistani support for insurgent activities. Map 3.1 shows the three fronts — the Northern, the Central, and the Southern — around insurgent groups loosely organize themselves.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Jenkins, "Al Qaeda in its Third Decade," 4-5.

<sup>425</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 37.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid*, 37-39.

**Map 3.1: Insurgent fronts in Afghanistan**



Source: Seth Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 39.

Not only did the insurgency make the operations of civilian agencies outside Kabul insecure, but also it managed to inhibit the advance of U.S. and Canadian troops and other coalition forces. However, insurgent groups did not constitute a direct threat to the intervening countries' homeland. They could have fought aggressively and have operated together to expel the Western presence, yet their fight was locally based and linked to parochial interests. Unlike al Qaeda embracing a global jihadist battle against the United States and its allies and, accordingly, attempting to attack their homelands or at least their periphery, insurgent groups fought solely against the near enemy, that is, what they perceived as a predatory and corrupt Afghan government.<sup>427</sup> That is to say, there was no imminent threat to the United States and Canada's homeland directly associated with insurgent activity in Afghanistan. Still, those groups embraced al Qaeda's belief system, which informed their ideology and strategic thinking. The next section addresses the link between al Qaeda's radical ideology and the Afghan insurgency's

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<sup>427</sup> Sageman, "Confronting al Qaeda," 16-17.

emergence as a threat to the NATO countries, especially those most committed to the intervention, such as the United States and Canada.

## **6. Al Qaeda's radical ideology as an inspiration for Afghan insurgency**

Despite its operational decline, al Qaeda kept disseminating radical ideological messages for public consumption and strategic thinking for combatants in Afghanistan and beyond.<sup>428</sup> This ideology was critical to inspire the aggressive fight of insurgent groups against the coalition and Afghan forces, hindering stabilization, reconstruction, and counterinsurgent operations, resulting in a bloody and costly irregular war. The remainder of this section examines the primary ideological and strategic assumptions of al Qaeda's beliefs and how the Afghan insurgent groups embraced it.

### *6.1. Al Qaeda's radical ideology*

At the ideological level, al Qaeda, which proclaimed the sole authority to interpret the Islamic faith, promoted a new identity for its Afghan adherents and followers in Afghanistan based on the assumption that the Western infidels were seriously attacking Islam.<sup>429</sup> Such an identity was reaffirmed on transhistorical and transnational underpinnings. Not only did al Qaeda's radical ideology highlight a sacred Islamic history in which Allah favoured the true believers, making critical events of such history accessible to present consumption, but also it challenged the world

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<sup>428</sup> Al Qaeda's ability to capture the minds of Westerners perpetrating homegrown terrorist acts and to inspire other terrorist groups has been termed *al Qaedaism*. Such a term is also used in a broader sense to refer to an ideology and strategic thinking inspiring combatants and wannabe jihadists in Muslim, Arab and Western societies. See Wilner, "Canada's Role in Combating Al Qaeda," 2 and Mohamedou, "The Rise and Fall of Al Qaeda," 30-32.

<sup>429</sup> Jerry Mark Long and Alex S. Wilner, "Delegitimizing al-Qaida: Defeating an 'Army Whose Men Love Death'," *International Security* 39, no. 1 (2014): 143-149.

of nation-states. In particular, it replaced the inter-state world with a dichotomic world in which those areas where Islam is fully consolidated, corresponding to “the house of peace,” is distinguished from those where it is not, accounting for the “the house of war”. Al Qaeda’s radical ideology also renamed territories and reaffirmed the cultural background of honour to guarantee the transnational expansion of Islam across northern Africa, the Arab Peninsula, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Specifically, the renaming of territories entailed replacing “Afghanistan” as a privileged theatre of operations by “Khurasan,” a historical term including Afghanistan and its neighbours, whereas a reaffirmed culture of honour was achieved by conjuring up the Pastunwali, the unwritten code of practice for Pashtuns. This code was critical to support the transnational jihad through Afghanistan and Pakistan against the coalition forces in Afghanistan.<sup>430</sup>

At the strategic level, al Qaeda’s radical ideology allowed for effective recruitment in proclaiming that infidel Western culture corrupts Muslims’ souls and the extent to which the West has historically threatened Islam’s sacred values by committing the most heinous crimes. In particular, it insists on the need to take revenge on the Westerners due to their “crusader imperialism; the occupation of the Islamic patrimony; the use of munitions against women, children, and elderly believers; the use of torture against the mujahideen in Western prisons; and Westerners attempts to ‘hijack’ the revolutions of the (putative) Islamist-led Arab Spring”.<sup>431</sup>

By addressing the severity of such offences and, above all, the American, Canadian and coalition forces’ intervention in Afghanistan, al Qaeda justified armed resistance, including suicide bombings. According to a distorted interpretation of the Quran, al Qaeda considered that the appropriate response to the Western presence in Afghanistan must be jihad, seen as the personal duty of taking up arms rather than personal spiritual searching. God will judge the extent to which

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid, 131-132.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid, 134; Jenkins, “The al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat,” 4.

such duty is met in life during Judgment Day.<sup>432</sup> Their battle would accordingly be the most significant since the Prophet's times taking place on life and being rewarded in the afterlife. If a jihadist has a remarkable depth, "he will take new titles: for example, *batl* (hero), *asad* (lion), and *shaheed* (a martyr/witness)" and celebrate his victory eternally in the paradise.<sup>433</sup>

Holy jihad was used to guarantee recruitment and promote a timeless war to exhaust Western enemies in Afghanistan. According to al Qaeda's deep-rooted beliefs, the fight against the West started centuries ago and will extend until Judgment Day or at least until Islam reigns fully among men. Rather than seeing the battle in terms of strategic achievements within timetables as the West does, al Qaeda conceives its adherents' war as an eternal enterprise. During such a battle, moral superiority will defeat advanced military technology, and violent acts against infidels or even innocent Muslims will be morally justified or seen as collateral damage within broader strategic objectives.<sup>434</sup>

## 6.2. *Al-Qaeda-inspired Afghan insurgent groups*

The Afghan insurgent groups, such as the Taliban, Hezb-i-islami, and foreign fighters, sought to contain the American, Canadian, and other coalition forces. Specifically, those groups became the primary cause of the country's high levels of violence between 2002 and 2006 to precisely undermine the coalition forces' critical strategic objectives.<sup>435</sup> During this period, as documented by Seth Jones, "the number of insurgent-initiated attacks rose by 400 percent [...] the number of deaths from these attacks by more than 800 percent [...] between 2005 and 2006 [...] the number of suicide attacks quintupled from 27 to 139 [...] remotely detonated bombing

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<sup>432</sup> Jenkins, "The al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat," 4.

<sup>433</sup> Long and Wilner, "Delegitimizing al-Qaida," 133.

<sup>434</sup> Jenkins, "The al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat," 4-5; Long and Wilner, "Delegitimizing al-Qaida," 135-138.

<sup>435</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 44.

[increased] more than doubled from 783 to 1,677 [...] armed attacks nearly tripled from 1,558 to 4,542 [and i]nsurgent-initiated attacks rose another 27 percent between 2006 and 2007.”<sup>436</sup> More importantly, the Afghan insurgent groups’ engagement with such high levels of violence, which helps understand the increased levels of American and Canadian military commitment as of 2006, must be seen as a result of adopting al Qaeda’s radical ideology and strategic thinking.

At the ideological level, these insurgent groups adopted al Qaeda’s security beliefs, implicating an overt fight against the U.S. and allied coalition forces and Hamid Karzai’s mandate: firstly, as an interim government between 2001 and 2004, and secondly as an elected government for the periods 2004-2009, and 2009-2014. In particular, the Taliban adopted a radical Sunni interpretation of Islam based on the Deobandi School of thought. It follows to embrace the *Sunnah*, that is, a strict interpretation of the Prophet’s deeds and seek to impose the *shari’a* law to unify the Muslim community. Before the intervention, the Taliban had managed to control the entire country by imposing a radical ideology, which allowed them to forge, as mentioned, a strategic alliance with al Qaeda. During the intervention, the affinity between Mullah Omar’s ideology and Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri’s remained strong and became the basis of robust cooperation between the Taliban and al Qaeda against the Westerners in Afghanistan. Hizb-i-Islami embraced a similar understanding of Islam compared to al Qaeda’s radical ideology and, accordingly, considered it necessary to establish a pure Islamic state through Islamic revolution, which equally entailed a direct fight against the coalition forces. For its part, foreign fighters, which were made up of a complex amalgam of combatants from Chechnia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Libya, were inspired by the global jihadism that started with the Mujahideen fighting

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<sup>436</sup> Jones, “The Rise of Afghanistan’s Insurgency,” 7-8.

against the Soviet Union in the 1980s and that al Qaeda sophisticated to start attacking the West during the 1990s.<sup>437</sup>

At the strategic level, al Qaeda provided advice to the insurgent groups to recruit young Pashtun combatants from local madrasas. Al Qaeda's advice was also consequential to obtain financial support through compulsory religious contribution — sometimes accompanied by death threats —, construct improvise explosive devices — a tactical knowledge shared by al Qaeda fighters in Iraq — and promote suicide bombings through the social exaltation of martyrdom. With Salafi jihad in mind, insurgents also adapted to the CT campaign by embracing classical guerrilla warfare. They allowed U.S. and coalition forces to operate in major cities while operating in rural and inaccessible areas. Their attacks' main targets were coalition forces and their collaborators, such as Afghan government officials, clerics and teachers opposing the Taliban, NGOs' personal, and civilian agencies guaranteeing elections. These attacks, along with suicide bombings, aimed to create a sense of insecurity among the Afghan population and generate distrust Afghan and coalition forces' ability to stabilize, reconstruct and secure the country.<sup>438</sup>

The ultimate goals of this guerrilla warfare were to adopt exhaustion and displacement strategies. Firstly, an exhaustion strategy, by definition, implies “sapping the energy, resources, and support of the Afghan government and its international partners, making the country ungovernable and hoping that the international community will eventually withdraw in exhaustion.”<sup>439</sup> Indeed, the ISAF mission conducted its strategy based on the enemy's exhaustion strategy. Secondly, the Taliban and other insurgent groups carried out a protracted strategy or

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<sup>437</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 38, 43, 62; Jones, “The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency,” 28.

<sup>438</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 50-5 and 63-66; Assaf Moghadam, “Motives for Martyrdom. Al Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks,” *International Security* 33, no. 3 (2008/09), 59-62.

<sup>439</sup> David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla. Fighting Small War in the Midst of A big One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52.

displacement strategy, aimed, by definition, at building parallel hierarchies *vis-à-vis* the Western strategy governmental reform. Parallel hierarchies emerged in the form of Islamic governance, security, and justice systems to rule the most basic level of Afghan society and politics, namely, the village, where the population actually exists. The other levels, the central government in Kabul, provinces, and districts, as the primary target of the Western reform program, were disconnected from the level of villages and ended up being inoperative to reconstruct the country due to their high levels of corruption.<sup>440</sup> The American and Canadian transition to counterinsurgency as of 2006 can be seen as a logical response to those parallel hierarchies.

## **7. Factors encouraging the Afghan insurgency**

Apart from al Qaeda's radical ideology, several factors paved the way for the insurgency's emergence and endurance in Afghanistan: namely, a) Pakistan's transnational support, b) the collapse of the national government that operated more on paper despite the United States, Canada and other NATO intervening countries' efforts, c) the emergence of a strong poppy economy, and d) the historical emergence of warlords challenging the national government institutions. The latter, which has been known as 'warlordism' in the irregular warfare literature,<sup>441</sup> has been the basis of 'local configurations of violence,' especially in Southern Afghanistan.<sup>442</sup> During the intervention, both warlordism and the local configurations of violence were inextricably intertwined with the building of parallel hierarchies *vis-à-vis* the Western counterinsurgency.

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<sup>440</sup> Shivan Mahendrarajah, "Conceptual Failure, the Taliban's Parallel Hierarchies, and America's Strategic Defeat in Afghanistan," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 1 (2014): 91, 98 and 107.

<sup>441</sup> Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," 41-73.

<sup>442</sup> This section borrows the term "local configurations of violence" from Schetter and Glasser, "Local Configurations of Violence," 232-236.

To begin with, the scope of the insurgency in Afghanistan depended on the extent to which the Pakistan government, mainly ISI and Frontier Corps, and the Pashtun population in Pakistan, provided it active support. Firstly, Pakistan officials provided medical services, operational training, intelligence, financial support, and logistics to cross the border. The primary motives to adopt this supporting strategy were to contain a close relationship between India and the Afghan government, keep Pakistani influence in Afghanistan once the U.S. and coalition forces withdraw, and prevent a Pashtun transnational movement between Afghanistan and Pakistan from emerging, which would bring about instability for the latter. Secondly, insurgent groups operating in the southern Afghan provinces of Kandahar, Oruzgan, Helmand, and Zabol received support in the form of sanctuary from the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, especially the city of Quetta — the primary base of al Qaeda in Pakistan —, and Federally Administrated Areas.<sup>443</sup> Such transnational collaboration depended on common ethnicity between Afghan and Pakistani Pashtun populations.

The collapse of the Afghan government fueled the insurgency as well. Above all, the Afghan government could not provide critical public goods and services to the population, mainly in the rural areas, bringing about a marginalized population, which was susceptible to radicalization and indoctrination by the insurgency. In practice, the Afghan government managed to control only small portions of the country, including Kabul and surrounding areas, and, accordingly, it was incapable of providing minimal governance in the rest of the country. In large areas of the country, there were no institutional structures and bureaucracy guaranteeing taxing and economic policies, efficient and fair administration of the justice sector, the provision of essential in-home services, such as electricity, the consolidation of the rule of law and public

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<sup>443</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 54-60.

security through the strengthening of Afghan security forces, mainly police forces. Such forces were inappropriately trained and equipped, and the emerging poppy economy corrupted them.<sup>444</sup>

There was certainly a strong relationship between the Afghan government's collapse and the emergence of a strong poppy economy. When the Taliban governed the country, Islamic prohibitions against poppy cultivation resulted in "a 99% reduction in the area of opium poppy farming in Taliban controlled areas."<sup>445</sup> This reduction constituted a significant change in the illegal Afghan economy after having been, during the 1990s, "the main source of the world's illicitly heroin supply" derived from the opium poppy.<sup>446</sup> However, with the overthrow of the Taliban regime, poppy cultivation emerged even stronger than before. During the intervention, Afghanistan "produce[d] around 90 percent of the world's supply of illicit opium and nearly 85 percent of global supplies of heroin and morphine originate in Afghanistan."<sup>447</sup> In this regard, after the overthrowing of the Taliban regime, insurgent groups obtained vast incomes from poppy cultivation, which they used to recruit and train combatants, acquire weapons, bribe officials, transport equipment and soldiers and build alliances with other terrorist groups. These capabilities brought about an overall ability to fight against the coalition forces and undermine the Afghan authority.<sup>448</sup> There were also indirect effects of poppy cultivation, such as the emergence of "secondary illegal markets in weapons, illegal documents, illegal cross-border movements in persons, money laundering, and financial transactions that [were] exploited by terrorist groups."<sup>449</sup> Ultimately, as demonstrated by James A. Piazza, the Afghan provinces with the most significant

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<sup>444</sup> Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," 8, 16-17, 20-25 and 34-35.

<sup>445</sup> Graham Farrell and John Thorne, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?: Evaluation of the Taliban Crackdown Against Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan," *International Journal of Drug Policy* 16, no. 2 (2005): 81 (81-91).

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> James Piazza, "The Opium Trade and Patterns of Terrorism in the Provinces of Afghanistan: An Empirical Analysis," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2 (2012): 213-234.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid, 215.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid, 217.

areas of poppy cultivation, such as Helmand and Kandahar, witnessed at the same time the highest levels of violence as measured by terrorist attacks and casualties.<sup>450</sup>

Finally, Afghanistan has embraced a long tradition of warlords that have made the most of the lack of central authority and taken advantage of their charisma and patronage ties to impose political and economic control at the local level. Specifically, warlords' leadership has been critical for Afghan insurgent movements since the late 1970s. Some of them took over as the Mujahideen commanders leading the resistance against the Soviet Union with Pakistan's support. Others emerged as a result of revolt within Afghan armed forces to lead independent resistance groups. Before the Taliban rule, those warlords managed to control checkpoints to impose taxes on travellers and constitute an opium poppy economy, which allowed them to increase their authority *vis-à-vis* tribal leaders in providing jobs and security.<sup>451</sup>

However, an increased social discontent with some warlords in the 1990s enabled the Taliban to control territory until establishing the Islamic State of Afghanistan. After all, years of suffering that resulted from factional infighting between warlords and extensive atrocities, including the rape of several girls in the summer of 1994, encouraged Afghans to pledge the Taliban's assistance.<sup>452</sup> However, the increased acceptance of the Taliban did not entail stopping the tradition of warlords' leadership. Some warlords formed the Northern Alliance to conduct a relentless fight against the Taliban and al Qaeda to force them out from Afghanistan. Actually, the Northern Alliance's collaboration with American Forces was, as mentioned, decisive to overthrowing the Taliban regime.<sup>453</sup> What is more, "Since the intervention in 2002, virtually no

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<sup>450</sup> Ibid, 213 and 223-224.

<sup>451</sup> Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," 48 and 54-55.

<sup>452</sup> Robert M. Cassidy, *War, Will, and Warlords. Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 2001-2011* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press), 25-26.

<sup>453</sup> Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," 55.

influential Afghan political figure has escaped this label [warlord], which has subsequently become the category to describe all actors trying to spoil, or even cast doubts, on the international agenda of the Afghan reconstruction process”.<sup>454</sup> Even though several warlords took over government positions and managed to integrate their militias into the Afghan forces, most of them were inextricably associated with insurgent groups, particularly in Southern Afghanistan, especially Kandahar.<sup>455</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The primary purpose of this study is to explain why Canada and the United States behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention despite their different positions in the international system. As explained in chapter 1, despite having conducted, respectively, S&R — or complex peacekeeping — and CT during the early years, the United States and Canada found themselves adopting similar strategies of COIN. The present chapter addressed the first reason for such similarity, namely, the intervention’s strategic environment. Based on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, this chapter examined the strategic environment by explaining the international system’s primary features and the clarity and scope of threats faced by the United States and Canada. Both of those factors informed the levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness of the strategic environment during the intervention.

With this understanding of the strategic environment in mind, this chapter’s core argument was that the United States and Canada found a permissive environment derived from unipolarity dynamics that paved the way for them to choose offensive dominance and transition from flocking to an opportunistic foreign policy, respectively. Still, both of them faced a restrictive environment

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<sup>454</sup> Schetter and Glasser, “Local Configurations of Violence,” 232.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid, 232-3.

in the form of irregular warfare, especially the emergent insurgency fighting against the West. Pakistan's support, the Afghan government's collapse after the intervention, the poppy economy, and the long tradition of warlords — especially in Southern Afghanistan — also widened insurgency scope.

In addressing the international system, this chapter argued that unipolarity was the most salient systemic condition during the intervention. Theoretically, such a type of polarity offers greater freedom of action to the unipole and its allies. Empirically, two conditions must be met to simultaneously guarantee such freedom of action for the unipole and its allies, namely, the lack of countervailing powers and the increased significance of alliance politics. Both conditions were indeed met in Afghanistan: No countervailing power or counterhegemonic coalition emerged to contain or set limits on the U.S. foreign and security policy. Specifically, China and Russia, the potential balancers, were unable or uninterested in carrying out hard, soft, internal or external balancing against the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan. Also, in undertaking two wars at once, the United States depended more on the NATO division of labour, making the alliance politics and the U.S. allies more significant. In particular, it allowed Canada to promote its own interests in Afghanistan.

This chapter also argued that the assessment of the international system is necessary but not sufficient to understand the Afghanistan intervention's strategic environment. A complete assessment should include the Afghan irregular warfare threats to the United States and Canada's homeland and military and civilian operations on the ground. Addressing such threats entailed examining al Qaeda's changing role as the architect of the 9/11 attacks against the United States, the emergence of Afghan insurgency resulting from the intervention itself, and those pre-existing conditions that funnelled such insurgency.

With this purpose in mind, this study showed that al Qaeda ceased to be a threat to the United States and Canada's homeland like it was in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Specifically, American, Canadian, and other coalition forces managed to reduce its operational capabilities to conduct direct attacks on the West, including North America, by denying it sanctuary in Afghanistan. However, al Qaeda's radical jihadist ideology, resulting in a firm rejection of the Western way of living, relentless fight against coalition forces and disruption of civilian operations in Afghanistan, constituted a direct threat to both countries on the ground. This radical jihadist ideology, being promoted by al Qaeda from the border with Pakistan, inspired all insurgent groups operating in Afghanistan, such as the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, and Foreign fighters. These groups were the primary cause of the increased violence from 2002 and 2007, which encouraged coalition forces to assess the extent to which the increase of commitment with the intervention was necessary. The United States and Canada considered this increased commitment indispensable. The insurgent groups, above all, threatened American and Canadian military operations in undertaking an exhaustion strategy and challenged civilian operations in building parallel hierarchies *vis-à-vis* the Western government reform.

Furthermore, several conditions — some of them present before the intervention — paved the way for the emergence of insurgency in Afghanistan. Firstly, the Pakistan government, through ISI and Frontier Corps, and the Pakistani Pashtun population provided support to insurgent groups. Specifically, some members of these groups, along with al Qaeda members, found sanctuary in Baluchistan and Federally Administered areas. Secondly, the Afghan government, which had already been weak during the Taliban rule, collapsed. It could not provide basic public services, including public security, law and order, and consolidate well-trained Afghan security forces. Thirdly, the collapse of the government went hand in hand with the emergence of the poppy

economy. Prohibited during the Taliban rule, this economy flourished during the intervention was performed. Insurgent groups treated this economy as a significant income source, required to recruit and train combatants, obtain weapons and bribe officials, transport equipment and build alliances with other groups. Some provinces, such as Kandahar and Helmand, where the largest poppy cultivation areas were found, witnessed equally the high levels of violence. Finally, all of those factors were combined with, or deepened by, the long tradition of Afghan warlords, who became critical in the post-9/11 Afghan politics. In particular, in southern Afghanistan, warlords monopolized violence and became critical actors in building parallel hierarchies.

The strategic environment assessment allows for explaining the availability of strategic options for the United States and Canada. However, it cannot explain why both countries found themselves undertaking similar foreign and security policy objectives precisely between 2005/2006 and 2011. Chapter 4 will explain why the United States chose offensive dominance during the whole intervention and why Canada transitioned from flocking to opportunism as of 2005/2006. Specifically, based on American and Canadian FPEs' beliefs, it will analyze why the United States and Canada operationalized offensive dominance and flocking as CT and S&R or complex peacekeeping, respectively, between 2001 and 2005. More importantly, chapter 4 will address why both countries operationalized offensive dominance and opportunism, respectively, as COIN between 2005/2006 and 2011.

## American and Canadian Security Beliefs: Transitioning to Similar Foreign and Security Policies during the Afghanistan intervention

This chapter aims to assess American and Canadian foreign policy executives' (FPE) security beliefs as one of the secondary, yet direct causes, of American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention. This assessment constitutes the second analytical step of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. By examining American and Canadian security beliefs, the version of neoclassical realism used in this study operationalizes these categories by breaking them down into two types: principled beliefs and causal beliefs. As chapter 1 stated, principled beliefs, which distinguish “right from wrong and just from unjust,” inform and justify foreign policy goals, whereas causal beliefs, which correspond to “beliefs about cause-effect relationship,” justify the best way to meet these goals.<sup>456</sup> It means that these analytical categories refer to beliefs underpinning foreign policy ends and means.

With this distinction in mind, this chapter draws more attention to the evolution of the American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs during the intervention than to their principled beliefs. This analytical decision is justified not only because of the significant variation of the former as compared to the latter, but above all because of how the variation of American and Canadian causal beliefs sheds light on the puzzle of this study. As this chapter will demonstrate, Canadian and American foreign and security policies varied simultaneously with their FPEs' causal beliefs. Indeed, these beliefs explain, to a large extent, their similar increased level of commitment in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2011. In contrast, principled beliefs do not allow

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<sup>456</sup> Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane, “Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework,” in *Ideas and Foreign Policy. Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*, eds. Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 9-10.

for, with some exceptions, explaining this variation in foreign policy as these beliefs were relatively similar and static during the intervention. Both American and Canadian FPEs embraced three relatively invariable principled beliefs in conducting their interventions in Afghanistan: one, to protect Americans and Canadians from future terrorist attacks in North America, two, to enhance Afghans' security and quality of life, and three, to assume responsibilities for global stability.

This chapter's core argument is that the United States and Canada's choices of offensive dominance and opportunistic foreign policies were operationalized as counterinsurgency (COIN) during the period 2005-2011 based on their FPEs' causal beliefs. It made the United States and Canada's foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan not only similar but also more ambitious than their previous policies between 2001 and 2005. During this period, these countries had adopted Counterterrorism (CT) and Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R) that constituted adaptations of their strategies of offensive dominance and flocking around the unipole. This shift was also reaffirmed by their FPEs' permanent and variant principled belief systems during the intervention.

The first section examines the executives' principled beliefs that were relatively constant and addresses those that shifted during the intervention. The former helps understand why both the American and Canadian FPEs intervened in Afghanistan as like-minded partners, whereas the latter explains the turning point in 2005/2006. Regarding the principled beliefs that changed during the intervention, this section addresses two American and Canadian stances. Firstly, it scrutinizes how both of them made Afghanistan a top foreign policy priority during the period 2005-2011. Before and after these years, Canadians and Americans had diverse priorities, which competed with and occasionally overshadowed the Afghanistan campaign. Secondly, it examines American and Canadians' assessment of the Afghanistan war's implications in the long run. The American

FPE insisted since 2006 on avoiding an open-ended commitment in Afghanistan, so that they decided to increase their commitment to end it as soon as possible. It was a critical decision after having neglected the Afghanistan War in the previous years. The Canadian FPE made Afghanistan a “war for prestige” after 2005/2006 in the sense that its increased commitment would allow it to be seen as a reliable American and European ally in the long run.<sup>457</sup>

Due to the significance of causal beliefs to understand this study’s puzzle, sections 2 to 5 aim to address their evolution. These sections argue that between 2001 and 2005, the American FPE undertook CT, whereas the Canadian FPE focused on S&R to meet their security goals in Afghanistan. Different causal beliefs certainly informed these strategies. However, Americans and Canadians decided to broaden their approaches to irregular warfare so as to respond to the unexpected emergence of insurgency in the south of the country as of 2005. Americans decided to merge their CT strategy — focused on the destruction and disruption of the enemy — with a population-centered approach. Canadians linked their S&R strategy — aimed at focusing on the factors conducive to terrorism —, with a more direct, large-scale military engagement. For both of them, this transition came in the form of Counterinsurgency (COIN). Above all, in comparing the three strategies’ causal beliefs, these sections allow for inferring that CT and S&R would only partially embrace COIN’s goals. The version of the COIN strategy adopted in Afghanistan involved fighting against the enemy, maintaining the stabilized areas and reconstructing and developing certain Afghan regions. These objectives were known as the ‘clear’, ‘hold’, and ‘build’ components of COIN required to “separate the population from the insurgents” and to “win hearts

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<sup>457</sup> This chapter borrows the term “war for prestige” from Justin Massie to explain the Canadian FPE’s view of Afghanistan over this period. Justin Massie, “Canada’s War for Prestige in Afghanistan: A Realist Paradox?” *International Journal* 68, no. 2 (2013): 274-288.

and minds.”<sup>458</sup> CT focused solely on “clear” and “hold,” whereas S&R embraced only “hold” and “build.” It means that neither of them was as comprehensive as COIN.

In examining the transition from S&R and CT to COIN, this chapter traces the evolution of American and Canadian FPEs’ beliefs by adopting the logic of consequentialism, as suggested in chapter 2. This logic entailed identifying how Americans and Canadians FPEs assessed different strategic options by considering their consequences in terms of utility for their goals. It even entails addressing cleavages inside FPEs when they defended different strategies. In considering the FPEs’ principled beliefs and causal beliefs, this chapter privileged those advanced by American Presidents, Canadian Prime Ministers, U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense, and Canadian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence.

### **1. American and Canadian FPEs’ principled beliefs**

The American and Canadian FPEs’ principled beliefs were relatively constant during the intervention. As expected in their role as close allies, both of them adopted similar foreign policy principled beliefs aimed at justifying the Afghanistan intervention. In attempting to protect the American and Canadian people, contribute to Afghans’ security and quality of life, and maintain global stability, by intervening in Afghanistan, these FPEs adopted three types of rationales: namely, the “us-,” the “them-,” and the “we-” justifications — in the terms advanced by Jean-Christophe Boucher.<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> See Hillary Clinton, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 136; The United States, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5)* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army 2006), 1-121 – 1-136; Canada, Department of National Defence, *Counterinsurgency Operations (B-GL-323-004/FP-003)* (Ottawa, ON: 2008), Chapter 1, Section 1, 103.

<sup>459</sup> Jean-Christophe Boucher, “Selling Afghanistan: A Discourse Analysis of Canada’s Military Intervention, 2001-08,” *International Journal* 64, no. 3 (2009): 720-722.

On the American side, the three rationales were presented simultaneously in the Bush administration's Afghanistan Declaratory Policy,<sup>460</sup> and President Bush's central public speeches on Afghanistan and the War on Terror.<sup>461</sup> As documented, President Bush's speeches framed the Afghanistan intervention — and the Iraq invasion — in the dichotomies of good vs. evil, civilized vs. barbaric worlds, freedom vs. tyranny. As a result, the us-, them- and we- justifications would come in the form of defending the freedom-based American way of living, the liberation of Afghanistan, and the global commitment to freedom. All three would be threatened by terrorist tyranny.<sup>462</sup> During the Obama administration, the three rationales were equally presented.<sup>463</sup> Still, the Obama administration sought to adopt a new approach by limiting the mention of these dichotomies and introducing another dichotomy: 'good war' vs. 'bad war.' With this dichotomy in mind, the Obama administration justified the Afghanistan intervention and criticized the Iraq invasion. Afghanistan as the good war would be the war of necessity, which meets the just war and self-defence criteria, whereas the Iraq war as the bad war would be the unjust war of choice.<sup>464</sup> This dichotomy allowed the Obama administration to criticize the Bush administration for having invaded Iraq and, accordingly, for having distracted resources required to facilitate success in Afghanistan.<sup>465</sup> Barack Obama embraced this principled belief as a Senator during the rally against

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<sup>460</sup> The White House, *Declaratory Policy in Afghanistan* (Washington: The White House, September 27, 2001).

<sup>461</sup> George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People" (Washington D.C.: White House Press Office, September 20, 2001); "President Bush Speaks to United Nations. Remarks by The President to United Nations General Assembly" (New York, NY: White House Press Office, November 10, 2001); "President Delivers State of the Union Address" (Washington, D.C: White House Press Office, January 29, 2002); George W. Bush, "President Bush Addresses United Nations General Assembly" (New York: United Nations, September 23, 2003); "President Bush Discusses Progress in Afghanistan, Global War on Terror" (Washington, D.C: White House Press Office, February 15, 2007).

<sup>462</sup> Jim A. Kuypers, *Bush's War. Media Bias and Justifications for War in a Terrorist Age* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2006).

<sup>463</sup> See, for instance, the most emblematic speech of Barack Obama regarding Afghanistan: Barack Obama, "President Obama's Remarks on New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington, D.C., March 27, 2009).

<sup>464</sup> On the analysis of this dichotomy during the Obama years, see David Cortright, *Ending Obama's War. Responsible Military Withdrawal From Afghanistan* (London, Paradigm Publishers, 2011).

<sup>465</sup> See Robert M. Gates, *Duty. Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York, Alfred A. Knoff, 2014), chapter 6; Hillary Clinton, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 148.

the Iraq war in Chicago on October 2, 2002, and as a presidential candidate in July 2008. He would continue to embrace this view as President in August 2009.<sup>466</sup>

In considering other FPE members, it can be argued that, even though their thoughts included the three rationales, some of them privileged one or two of those. For instance, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld highlighted the us-justification.<sup>467</sup> For their part, Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton highlighted both the us- and them-justifications.<sup>468</sup>

On the Canadian side, the Chrétien Liberals, the Martin Liberals and the Harper Conservatives embraced the three rationalities when referring to the Afghanistan mission.<sup>469</sup> Prime Minister Harper's public speech for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in Afghanistan on March 13, 2006 epitomized how the Canadian FPE justified the Afghanistan mission, based on the three rationalities:

You have put yourself on the line to:

- Defend our national interest [the us-justification];
- Protect Canada and the world from terror [the us- and we-justification];
- Help the people of Afghanistan rebuild their country [the them-justification]
- Your work is important because it is in our national interest to see Afghanistan become a free, democratic, and peaceful country [the us- and them-justification] [...] Your work is about more than just defending Canada's interest. It's also about demonstrating an international leadership role for our country [the us-justification] [...] Finally, but no less important, is the great humanitarian work you're doing. Working with the Afghan government and Afghan people to enhance their security helps them. It helps them rebuild their country to make a better life for themselves and their children [the them-justification].<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Barack Obama, "Transcript: Obama's Speech Against the Iraq War [October 2, 2002]," *NPR*, January 20, 2009. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=99591469>; "Obama's Remarks on Iraq and Afghanistan [Obama's speech on Iraq and Afghanistan, as prepared for delivery and provided by his campaign]" *The New York Times*, July 15, 2008. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/15/us/politics/15text-obama.html>; "Barack Obama's Remarks at the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Phoenix, Arizona as Prepared for Delivery" (Phoenix, AZ: August 17, 2009).

<sup>467</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown. A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 355-6, 362, 367-8, 403.

<sup>468</sup> Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor. A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2011), 90-91 and 94, 108; Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 130-131.

<sup>469</sup> Boucher, "Selling Afghanistan," 720-721.

<sup>470</sup> Stephen Harper, "Address by the Prime Minister to The Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan (Ottawa, ON: March 13, 2006).

Still, as Jean Christophe Boucher argued, the Canadian FPE placed different emphasis on these rationales. Even though all of them prioritized the us-justification, there were some variations as to the other two rationales. The Chrétien and Martin Liberals highlighted more the we-justification than the them-justification, whereas the Harper Conservatives privileged more the them-justification than the we-justification. The Chrétien and Martin Liberals understood the we-justification in the form of their contribution to the global stability in seeing Afghanistan as the primary front of the War on Terrorism and as an apparent challenge of a failing state to the international security, respectively.<sup>471</sup> For both of them, the we-justification also came in the form of their commitment to NATO. As Prime Minister Chrétien pointed out, “Canada had been the first to talk about the use of NATO’s Article 5, which stated that an attack on one member was an attack on all.”<sup>472</sup> For their part, the Harper Conservatives simultaneously highlighted the us- and them-justifications. Since they made Afghanistan its highest priority, the Harper Conservatives needed to justify the intervention in terms of both Canadian national interests and the betterment of Afghan quality of life.<sup>473</sup> Several of Stephen Harper’s public speeches addressed the us- and them-justification simultaneously.<sup>474</sup>

Similar to the underlying dichotomies of Presidents Bush and Obama’s stances, the Canadian FPE considered that 9/11 had been an attack against the Canadian idea of civilization, and it would deserve a subsequent response. The Canadian FPE would embrace, with a less radical

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<sup>471</sup> Boucher, “Selling Afghanistan,” 725-728.

<sup>472</sup> Jean Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knoff, 2007), 304.

<sup>473</sup> Boucher, “Selling Afghanistan,” 727.

<sup>474</sup> Stephen Harper, “Address by the Prime Minister to The Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan” (Ottawa, ON: March 13, 2006); “Address by the Prime Minister to the Graduates of a Basic Infantry Soldier Course at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright” (Wainwright, AB: April 13, 2006); “Prime Minister Stands by Canada’s Commitment to Afghanistan (Ottawa, ON: May 17, 2006); “Address by the Prime Minister on New Canadian Government Assistance for the Reconstruction of Afghanistan” (Ottawa, ON: June 15, 2006); “Reviving Canadian leadership in the world,” (Ottawa, ON: October 5, 2006); “Prime Minister Stephen Harper Announces Additional Funding for Aid in Afghanistan” (Ottawa, ON: February 26, 2007); “Prime Minister’s Address in Kandahar” (Kandahar, Afghanistan: May 7, 2009).

tone, the Bush administration's principled beliefs regarding the civilized and barbaric worlds. However, the Canadian FPE would reject Bush's principled beliefs on the Iraq War and, accordingly, they would implicitly embrace the Obama administration's stance regarding the good war and bad war. Prime Minister Martin offered a good example of this posture in his memoirs in the following terms:

The attacks of September 11, 2001, were an assault on the very idea of our civilization, as the rhetoric of Osama bin Laden and his imitators and followers subsequently confirmed. They were not related to any particular grievance or any identifiable military, social, political or economic objective. There was no demand, however outrageous, that could be met. September 11 was simply an attack on our way of life [...]

If the transition from the Taliban regime to the government Afghans later chose has been a disappointment, it must be in part because the Bush administration became preoccupied with a larger and more dubious adventure in Iraq, whose relationship to September 11 was repeatedly suggested without ever being adequately explained.<sup>475</sup>

All in all, in considering the American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs, it can be argued that they were relatively constant during the intervention. Both of them embraced the us-, them-, and we-justifications, with some minor variations. It means that addressing the way the FPE embraced these rationales helps understand why, as like-minded countries, they decided to intervene in Afghanistan. However, because of their continuity, these rationales and their underlying principled beliefs, that is, what mattered the most for the Canadian and American FPEs — their people, the Afghan people, and/or global stability — do not help explain the evolution of American and Canadian foreign policy. Above all, these rationales do not allow us to understand their similar foreign policy implementation and comparable engagement levels between 2005/2006 and 2011.

Understanding these engagement levels makes it necessary to examine American and Canadian principled beliefs beyond the rationales mentioned above. Specifically, two principled beliefs must be considered to understand them, namely, the importance of the Afghanistan

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<sup>475</sup> Paul Martin, *Hell or High Water. My life In and Out of Politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2008), 390-1.

intervention, among other campaigns, and its significance in the long run. Both of these beliefs varied in the same way as American and Canadian foreign and security policies did.

Firstly, the similarity between Canadian and American foreign and security policy implementation between 2005 and 2011 resulted from similar geographical priorities. The United States and Canada found themselves making Afghanistan a top foreign policy priority precisely during this period. Before 2005 and after 2011, the American and Canadian FPEs had a number of diverse priorities. The American FPE made the Middle East and Asia Pacific top priorities from 2003 through 2006 and after 2011, respectively. In particular, American leaders deemed the Iraq invasion and deeper involvement in the Asia Pacific just and proper foreign policies, respectively, during these years, and such policies ended up undermining the Afghanistan policy.

Regarding the Iraq War, President Bush attributed the same importance to it as the Afghanistan intervention. Between 2002 and 2006, Bush repeatedly defined the Iraq War as a good war. The Iraq War would be a “good war” in the sense that it would be both a necessary and just war. Before 2006, the American FPE had not made the distinction between a good war and bad war and regretted that their opponents did.<sup>476</sup> For President Bush, the Iraq War was a necessary because the Saddam Hussein regime represented a threat to the world, the region, and the United States:

[After 9/11] we had to take a fresh look at every threat in the world. There were state sponsors of terror. There were sworn enemies of America. There were hostile governments that threatened their neighbors. There were nations that violated international demands. There were dictators who represented their people. And there were regimes that pursued WMD. Iraq combined all of those threats.<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 682. The opponents identified by Rumsfeld, who established this distinction, were David Rohde and David E. Sanger, “How a ‘Good War’ in Afghanistan Went Bad,” *New York Times*, August 12, 2007; Will Afghanistan Be Obama’s Iraq?” *The Week*, December 8, 2008; Don Gonyea, “Is Obama In An ‘Afghanistan Box?’” *NPR*, September 29, 2009.

<sup>477</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), 228.

The Iraq war was equally seen by President Bush as a just war because it would allow for transforming and liberating Iraq. Not only would it enable the US to deal with a threat to their national interests, but it also “would have [a positive] impact beyond [its] borders.”<sup>478</sup> Drawing on his Manichean logic, President Bush argued that the invasion would help to win an ideological battle between radical extremists and proponents of freedom:

The Middle East was the center of a global ideological struggle. On one side were decent people who wanted to live in dignity and peace. On the other were extremists who sought to impose their radical views through violence and intimidation. They exploited conditions of hopeless and repression to recruit and spread their ideology. The best way to protect our countries in the long run was to counter their dark vision with a more compelling alternative. That alternative was freedom.<sup>479</sup>

Two years after the invasion, President Bush deemed the Iraq War not only necessary and just but also more important than the Afghanistan intervention. In a public speech delivered to commemorate Veterans Day on November 11, 2005, President Bush not only presented a comprehensive strategy for guaranteeing victory in Iraq but, above all, making it the central front in the War on Terrorism. The underlying rationale was that the United States should make it a top foreign policy priority because the terrorists were now focusing their activities in Iraq:

Over the past few decades, radicals have specifically targeted Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and Jordan for potential takeover. They achieved their goal, for a time, in Afghanistan. And now they've set their sights on Iraq. In his recent letter, Zawahiri writes that al Qaeda views Iraq as, “the place for the greatest battle.” The terrorists regard Iraq as the central front in their war against humanity. *We must recognize Iraq as the central front in our war against the terrorists* [Italics added].<sup>480</sup>

This rationale would start to shift in 2006-2007 when President Bush replaced the Secretary of Defence and senior commanders conducting the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.<sup>481</sup> Even though

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<sup>478</sup> Ibid, 232.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

<sup>480</sup> George W. Bush, “President Commemorates Veterans Day, Discusses War on Terror,” (Tobyhanna, PA: White House Press Office, November 11, 2005).

<sup>481</sup> General Peter Pace (October 1, 2005 – September 30, 2007) was replaced by Admiral Michael Mullen (October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2011) as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with the all the Joint Chiefs. General John Abizaid (July 7, 2003 – March 16, 2007) was also replaced by Admiral William J. Fallon (March 16, 2007 – March

President Bush made this decision to get back on track with the Iraq war, it offered the possibility to vindicate the Afghanistan mission. After all, the new Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, came in with the idea that Afghanistan had been neglected and the Iraq War had been conducted on the wrong premise. That is to say, his stance, as advanced since 2006, anticipated the Obama administration's distinction between good war and bad war. Secretary Gates wrote:

As I often said while in office, only time will tell whether the invasion of Iraq was worth its monumental cost. The historical verdict, I suspect, will depend on how Iraq evolves and whether the overthrow of Saddam comes to be accepted as the first crack in decades-long Arab authoritarianism that will eventually bring significantly greater freedom and stability to the entire Middle East. *However the question is ultimately answered, the war will always be tainted by the harsh reality that the public premise for invasion—Iraqi possession of chemical and biological weapons as well as an active nuclear program—was wrong. As much as President Bush detested the notion, our later challenges in Afghanistan, especially the return of the Taliban in force by the time I became defense secretary, were, I believe significantly compounded by the invasion of Iraq. Resources and senior-level attention were<sup>482</sup> diverted from Afghanistan.* [Italics added].<sup>483</sup>

What is more, Secretary Gates provided the time frame in which the Afghanistan mission had been neglected as the Iraq War was prioritized:

the war in Afghanistan was being neglected [...] While we were preoccupied with Iraq, between 2002 and 2005 the Taliban reconstituted in western Pakistan and in southern and eastern Afghanistan. Headquartered and operating in Pakistani cities including Peshawar and Quetta, virtually unhindered by the Pakistan government, the Taliban recovered from their disastrous defeat [by the end of 2001] and again became a serious fighting force.<sup>484</sup>

With this diagnosis in mind, Secretary Gates would start a campaign in Washington to adopt a different and more robust strategy in Afghanistan. His ultimate goal would be to have the United States transition from CT to COIN in Afghanistan. It would imply not only a new principled belief, making the intervention as important as the Iraq invasion, but also provide a new way to implement

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28, 2008) as the U.S. Central Commander. It is worth noting that the U.S. Central Commander's area of responsibility is Central Asia and Middle East and mostly Afghanistan and Iraq. See Gates, *Duty*, 574.

<sup>482</sup> In the original text, the word "were" is in italics.

<sup>483</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 568-9.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid*, 198.

the Afghanistan policy through new causal beliefs (Section 5 will address this point in addressing American FPE's COIN causal beliefs extensively).

As of 2011, the American FPE started to review their foreign policy once again, which would result in a strategic turn to the Asia Pacific region as being materialized through the 2012 U.S. Defense Strategic Guidance. Not only did this review entail prioritizing the Asia Pacific but also reducing the significance of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars. Thus, Afghanistan would represent a secondary priority after 2011. At this moment, the American FPE's primary concern was the changing global distribution of power favouring this region and especially China at the military and economic levels rather than the security situation in Central Asia and the Middle East. The reason behind this transition was that China's rise would prevent the United States from guaranteeing regional stability and accessing commercial and financial markets in that region.<sup>485</sup>

Secretary Clinton summarized this strategic turn in the following terms:

As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the United States stands at a pivot point. Over the last 10 years, we have allocated immense resources to those two theaters. In the next 10 years, we need to be smart and systematic about where we invest time and energy, so that we put ourselves in the best position to sustain our leadership, secure our interests, and advance our values. One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore be to lock in a substantially increased investment — diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise — in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific has become a key driver of global politics.<sup>486</sup>

On the Canadian side, the FPE assessed Afghanistan's importance *vis-à-vis* other multilateral, complex peacekeeping operations between 2001 and 2003<sup>487</sup> and other missions in failed and failing states between 2003 and 2005.<sup>488</sup> During those years, Canadian leaders were interested in conducting campaigns in East Africa and Central America as much as in Afghanistan. The Martin

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<sup>485</sup> Kevin Marsh, "Managing Relative Decline: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis of the 2012 US Defense Strategic Guidance," *Contemporary Security Policy* 33, no. 3 (2012): 491-496.

<sup>486</sup> Hilary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy* 189 (2011): 57.

<sup>487</sup> Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 304.

<sup>488</sup> Martin, *Hell or High Water*, chapter 23.

Liberals were even prepared for a potential peacekeeping mission to guarantee a peace pact between Israel and Palestine. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Bill Graham described Prime Minister Martin's view on Afghanistan in the following manner: "when Paul Martin became prime minister in December 2003, I think it's fair to say that he wasn't really interested in staying on in Afghanistan."<sup>489</sup> Indeed, Prime Minister Martin was more interested in Darfur and Haiti between 2003 and 2005. Such a stance was established in a meeting with General Rick Hillier, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) between 2005 and 2008. In that meeting, Martin held that the Afghanistan mission should be weighed up in the context of other priorities:

Soon after his appointment, I had an important meeting with General Hillier [...] I laid out my priorities. I knew that General Hillier was a strong proponent of Canada's role in the NATO mission to Afghanistan, which had been triggered, of course, by the 9/11 attacks. They had been masterminded from al-Qaeda's bases in Afghanistan, which were under the protection of the Taliban government of the day. *I, too, supported the mission, but I also wanted to make sure that it was set in the context of other priorities.*

'Canada's role in the world is not simply to support a great power,' I said at the outset. 'Canada has its own perspective that it needs to articulate through its military and foreign policies.' First I believed that the world community could not stand passively by in the face of the slaughter in Darfur region of Sudan. I was certain there would have to be a substantial increase in the number of international peacekeeper in the region, and although the African Union might not think it right for our troops to be on the front line, we would want to put in more military advisers and supply funding for the equipment and training of troops from Africa. In addition, as the hemisphere's largest francophone nation, I said we should shoulder special responsibilities in Haiti. Finally, I advised him that I believed we might one day be called upon to play a military role as peacekeepers if there was ever an Israeli-Palestinian peace pact, and that I wanted us to be in position to do so [Italics added].<sup>490</sup>

With Canada moving from Kabul to Kandahar in 2005/2006, Afghanistan became a priority for the Harper Conservatives until 2011. Over this period, Afghanistan was not only their most critical overseas deployment, but also one of their central foreign policy objectives. Conservatives deemed this deployment as necessary as the search for new economic opportunities and the relationship with the Americas. On March 16, 2010, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon presented the Harper Conservatives' foreign policy priorities in the following terms:

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<sup>489</sup> Bill Graham, *The Call of the World: A Political Memoir* (Vancouver: On Point Press, 2016), 378.

<sup>490</sup> Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 330.

In the recent Speech from the Throne and in the budget statement, the government reaffirmed the four priorities of Canadian foreign policy, through which we have promoted a strong Canada in a changing world: pursuing economic opportunities for Canada, particularly in growing and emerging markets; strengthening and advancing our relations with the United States of America and with our neighbours and friends in the Americas; *contributing to peace and security in Afghanistan as well as preparing for the transition there*; and exercising and strengthening our sovereignty over the Arctic” [Italics added].<sup>491</sup>

However, the intervention transitioned from a combat COIN campaign to a training mission in 2011. It meant that Afghanistan ceased to be a priority for the Harper Administration. Prime Minister Harper stated his position on this matter in the following terms: “We have made tremendous contributions, at tremendous cost, to the Afghanistan mission. As Parliament resolved earlier this year, we will continue to transform Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan *to focus on reconstruction and development in preparation for the end of our military mission in 2011* [Italics added]”.<sup>492</sup>

Secondly, the similarity between Canadian and American foreign and security policy implementation between 2005 and 2011 resulted from their perceptions of the Afghanistan mission in the long run. After 2006, the American FPE deemed Afghanistan a ‘good war’ that should end rapidly, which implied a progressive, robust commitment to fulfill this objective. Above all, it would avoid an open-ending burden in the long run. Even though the need for ending the war promptly was embraced in the previous years, the American FPE had, as mentioned, prioritized the Iraq War and, accordingly, had not taken the Afghan War seriously, making its prompt end unlikely.<sup>493</sup> For Secretary Gates, replacing CT with COIN would precisely entail a change of priorities to end the Afghan War (Section 5 discusses this point in-depth).

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<sup>491</sup> Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs), *House of Commons (Hansard)*, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, no. 3 (*Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development*) (May 14, 2014).

<sup>492</sup> Stephen Harper, “Strong Leadership to Protect Canada’s Future: Address by the Prime Minister in Reply to the Speech from the Throne” (Ottawa, ON: November 2008).

<sup>493</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 197-8; Matthew Willis, “An Unexpected War, A Not-Expected Mission: The Origins of Kandahar 2005,” *International Journal* 67, no. 4 (2012): 986.

For its part, after the Kandahar deployment in 2005, the Canadian FPE deemed Afghanistan a “war for prestige”<sup>494</sup> in the long run. Based on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, the pursuit of prestige, seen as “reputation for strength,”<sup>495</sup> is critical to understanding the Canadian FPE’s decision to provide military support to the U.S. campaign. It also explains the increase of their commitment through an expeditionary mission in Afghanistan’s most dangerous province.<sup>496</sup> In Kandahar, Canadians would seek to show the successful use of military capabilities in the form of “victory in war,” such as occurred during Operation Medusa.<sup>497</sup> It would undoubtedly entail being a reliable U.S. and transatlantic ally, and increasing their prestige in the long run.<sup>498</sup> From their fight in Kandahar, Canadians would start to be seen as peace-enforcers rather than peacekeepers, willing and able to fight battles hand in hand with the Americans. It occurred in a moment when the American FPE had precisely distinguished between two groups among NATO members, depending on their level of commitment. Condoleezza Rice distinguished between ‘fighters’ and ‘peacekeepers’ in addressing the NATO mission in Afghanistan.<sup>499</sup> Similarly, Robert Gates deemed NATO a “two-tiered alliance of those who are willing to fight and those who are not” in referring to the Afghanistan mission, especially to the Southern campaign, during the Munich Conference on Security Policy on February 10, 2008.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Massie, “Canada’s War for Prestige in Afghanistan,” 274-288.

<sup>495</sup> Ralph Hawtrey coined this term and Robert Gilpin developed it conceptually. See Ralph Hawtrey, *Economic Aspects of Sovereignty* (London: Longmans, Green, 1952), 64; Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 32-34.

<sup>496</sup> Massie, “Canada’s War for Prestige in Afghanistan,” 280.

<sup>497</sup> The victory in war would be the most important indicator of the reputation for strength. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 32.

<sup>498</sup> Massie, “Canada’s War for Prestige in Afghanistan,” 280.

<sup>499</sup> Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 668.

<sup>500</sup> Robert Gates, “Speech at the 44<sup>th</sup> Munich Conference on Security Policy,” *Munich Security Conference 2008* (Munich: February 10, 2008). See also Peter Spiegel, “Gates says NATO Force Unable to Fight Guerrillas,” *Los Angeles Times* (January 16, 2008). <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-jan-16-fg-usafghan16-story.html>.

With this context in mind, several of Prime Minister Harper's public speeches on the Afghanistan mission inextricably linked the Kandahar campaign to Canada's prestige.<sup>501</sup> According to Prime Minister Harper, prestige implied to "regain the trust of our allies to demonstrate that we will pull our weight [in this kind of missions]".<sup>502</sup> Specifically, in addressing the Kandahar campaign during the Conference of Defence Associations on February 21, 2008, Prime Minister Harper held

that countries that cannot or will not make real contributions to global security are not regarded as serious players. They may be linked by everybody; they may be pleasantly acknowledged by everybody. But then the hard decisions get made, they will be ignored by everybody. That's not what Canadians want. They want to make a positive difference in a dangerous world. They want us to lead. Our government is resolved to provide that leadership."<sup>503</sup>

Prime Minister Harper made the same argument in presenting the Canada First Defence Strategy on May 12, 2008:

Ladies and gentlemen, if a country wants to be taken seriously in the world, it must have the capacity to act. It's that simple. Otherwise, you forfeit your right to be a player. You're the one chattering on the sidelines that everybody smiles at but nobody listens to. Our government is committed to ensuring that Canada not only has an opinion, but that Canada is heard, that Canada is protected, and that Canada is a force for good, for positive change in the world.<sup>504</sup>

To sum up, it can be argued that even though American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs were relatively constant during the intervention, there were variations in these beliefs that help to understand American and Canadian foreign and security policy's transformation and similarity between 2005 and 2011. On the one hand, both of them made Afghanistan a top foreign

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<sup>501</sup> Stephen Harper, "Address by the Prime Minister on New Canadian Government Assistance for the Reconstruction of Afghanistan" (Ottawa, ON: June 15, 2006); "Address by the Prime Minister to the Graduates of a Basic Infantry Soldier Course at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright" (Wainwright, AB: April 13, 2006); "Reviving Canadian Leadership in the World (Ottawa, ON: October 5, 2006); "PM Addresses the Council on Foreign Relations" (New York, NY: September 25, 2007); "Prime Minister Harper Announces Independent Advisory Panel on Afghan mission" (Ottawa, ON: October 12, 2007); "PM Unveils Revised Motion on the Future of Canada's Mission in Afghanistan" (Ottawa, ON: February 21, 2008).

<sup>502</sup> Stephen Harper, "Address by the Prime Minister on New Canadian Government Assistance for the Reconstruction of Afghanistan" (Ottawa, ON: June 15, 2006).

<sup>503</sup> Stephen Harper, "PM Unveils Revised Motion on the Future of Canada's Mission in Afghanistan" (Ottawa, ON: February 21, 2008).

<sup>504</sup> Stephen Harper, "PM Unveils Canada First Defence Strategy" (Halifax, NS: May 12, 2008).

policy priority during this period. On the other hand, American and Canadian leaders, despite their different reasons, decided to increase their engagement levels. The following sections examine the evolution of American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs by distinguishing between the periods 2001-2005 and 2005-2011 to understand how these renewed engagement levels were operationalized. In a nutshell, these sections scrutinize how Canadian and American FPEs' causal beliefs transitioned from Counterterrorism (CT) and Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R) to Counterinsurgency (COIN).

## **2. Counterterrorism (CT): American FPE's causal beliefs, 2001-2005**

CT constituted the American FPE's primary causal belief during the Afghanistan intervention, especially in the period 2001-2005. According to President George W. Bush, once Afghanistan was liberated, three goals remained: "striking al Qaeda, removing the Taliban, and liberating the suffering people of Afghanistan."<sup>505</sup> Such a purpose would be framed — according to the 2002 National Security Strategy — within a global campaign to "disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations" worldwide by "denying further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary."<sup>506</sup> Afghanistan would be the first battleground of the "War on terror [that would] not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated."<sup>507</sup>

It is worth noting that the American FPE did not adopt CT homogeneously as some members of the executive took on a narrow approach to CT, whereas others, under certain circumstances, embraced a broader approach. As chapter 1 explained, the narrow approach

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<sup>505</sup> Bush, *Decision Points*, 197.

<sup>506</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: White House, 2002), 6.

<sup>507</sup> George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, 2001" (Washington, D.C.: White House, September 20, 2001).

focussed on kinetic and offensive operations to disrupt and destroy terrorist groups, whereas the broad approach sought not only to conduct such operations but also to prevent the emergence of the factors conducive to terrorism. Specifically, the broad approach highlighted the significance of nation-building to prevent terrorism from emerging.<sup>508</sup>

Over this period, the distinction between narrow and broad approaches to CT informed three central debates about the US foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan. Firstly, this distinction underpinned the discussion between conservative nationalism and neoconservatism as two central American foreign policy doctrines during this period. Such doctrines attribute different importance to nation-building during or after military interventions. Even if both of those doctrines promoted American global preponderance and the need to respond to the 9/11 attacks subsequently through kinetic operations in Afghanistan, they disagreed about the significance of nation-building. Neoconservatism embraced nation-building overtly, whereas conservatism was less convinced by its utility.<sup>509</sup> That is to say, each would justify narrow and broad CT strategies, respectively, to address this theater of operations.

Secondly, the distinction between broad and narrow approaches to CT helps understand the gap between the expected and actual implementation of American foreign and security policy during this period. After all, the Bush administration's foreign and security policy had great expectations during this period by embracing the broad approach to CT in the form precisely of democratic nation-building within the CT strategy.<sup>510</sup> Still, the Bush administration had to adapt

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<sup>508</sup> Prasad Rane, "NATO's Counter-Terrorism Strategies in Afghanistan," *Strategic Analysis* 31, no. 1 (2007): 74-80; United Nations (UN), *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305 S/2000/809)* (2000).

<sup>509</sup> Steven Hurst, "Myths of Neoconservatism: George W. Bush's 'Neo-conservative' Foreign Policy Revisited", *International Politics* 42, no. 1 (2005): 77-84.

<sup>510</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, chapter I-II.

itself to the Afghan irregular warfare by conducting the narrow approach.<sup>511</sup> That is to say, even though the Bush administration attempted to make Afghanistan not just safer through kinetic operations against al Qaida and the Taliban but also better through nation-building, it had to content itself with pursuing reasonable levels of safety in the country. The latter would be a purpose that the United States, Canada and its allies would not be capable of achieving.

Above all, the distinction between narrow and broad approaches to CT informed contending stances inside the American FPE regarding the Afghanistan intervention's implementation during this period. Such differences would embrace the debates mentioned above, between conservatism and neoconservatism, and between expected and actual foreign and security policies. Specifically, President Bush and Secretary Rice embraced the broad approach, whereas Secretary Rumsfeld promoted the narrow approach to CT.

It is worth noting that George W. Bush's causal beliefs after the 9/11 attacks contrast with those advanced during the 2000 electoral campaign. On this transition, indeed, his critics acknowledged a sharp contradiction regarding his approach to nation-building. In 2000, as a presidential candidate, Bush campaigned against "nation-building corps from America," yet, after 9/11, overtly promoted nation-building in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>512</sup> President Bush held that rather than being a contradiction, this constituted a legitimated change of mind, taking into account that new circumstances favoured a broad approach. Rejecting the role of Americans as nation-builders during military operations seemed to him justified to prevent the overextension of military efforts

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<sup>511</sup> See David J. Kilcullen, "Fumbling the Baton. US Civil-Military Relations in the Afghan war," in *Reconstructing Afghanistan. Civil-Military Experiences in Comparative Perspective*, eds. William Maley and Susanne Schmeidl (London: Routledge, 2015), 13

<sup>512</sup> The Washington Post, "Bush a Convert to Nation Building," *The Washington Post*, April 7, 2008. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/apr/7/bush-a-convert-to-nation-building/>; Paul D. Miller, "Shadow government: Bush on Nation Building and Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy*, November 17, 2010. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/11/17/bush-on-nation-building-and-afghanistan/>.

before 9/11, such as in Somalia and Bosnia. However, after 9/11, to him nation-building constituted an essential causal belief to meet American security:

[...] Afghanistan was the ultimate nation building mission. We had liberated the country from a primitive dictatorship, and we had a moral obligation to leave behind something better. We also had a strategic interest in helping the Afghan people build a free society. The terrorist took refuge in places of chaos, despair, and repression. A democratic Afghanistan would be hopeful alternative to the vision of the extremists.<sup>513</sup>

Similarly, Secretary Rice argued that a CT strategy “required not just pursuing and defeating terrorists [but also helping] failed states heal [through] building stable democratic institutions that could provide for their people and prevent the use of their territory for dangerous transnational networks.”<sup>514</sup> Rice expected that American foreign and security policy was based thus on “a new security concept [linking] defense, democracy, and development —each integral to success of the strategy.”<sup>515</sup> Such a broad approach to CT would help not only to “leave [Afghans] better off than [Americans] had come,”<sup>516</sup> but also to

“redraw the map of the region [...] An American military presence in Afghanistan and surrounding states —necessitated by the events of 9/11—could ultimately contribute to stability in South-Central Asia. And the emergence of a friendly government in Afghanistan and stronger relations with the ‘stans’ would anchor American geostrategic influence.”<sup>517</sup>

Together President Bush and Secretary Rice’s beliefs would epitomize the American FPE’s rationale that gave rise to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)’s original goals, as conceived by General Tommy Franks. It would start connecting the Special Forces with CIA teams to pave the way for conventional troops’ advancement. Then an extensive air campaign aimed at destroying al Qaeda and Taliban targets, followed by a ground campaign to hunt down remaining fighters, would be conducted. Finally, the US would seek to stabilize and democratize the country.<sup>518</sup> The

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<sup>513</sup> Bush, *Decision Points*, 205.

<sup>514</sup> Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 148

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>518</sup> Bush, *Decision Points*, 194.

last goal would entail the expectation to transition from a narrow to a broad CT approach insofar as it would inextricably embody nation-building.

Nevertheless, the American FPE eventually realized that the United States was not prepared for nation-building and, over time, it had to limit its expectations in Afghanistan. That is to say, the goal as mentioned above was substantially limited as George W. Bush himself cast doubts on the real possibilities of nation-building in Afghanistan, which was apparent in his comment in 2010 about the campaign:

As I write in 2010, the war in Afghanistan continues. The Taliban remain active, and the Afghan government is struggling to gain full control of its country. From the beginning, I knew it would take time to help the Afghan people build a functioning democracy consistent with its culture and traditions. The task turned out to be even more daunting than I anticipated. *Our government was not prepared for nation building. Over time, we adapted our strategy and our capabilities* [italics added].<sup>519</sup>

It is worth noting that a large project of nation-building would have implied efforts to build government capacities and cohesive national identity and political culture, bringing about citizen loyalty to the reconstituted state.<sup>520</sup> With a clearer view of nation-building's implications, President Bush's causal beliefs turned out to focus solely on the mere support of the Afghan government's legitimate leadership. According to the president, the bulk of the political effort should support the Afghan government's ability to provide security and order, and other essential services, such as education and health care. It should also guarantee the democratic electoral process and drafting a new constitution in 2004, as conceived by the Afghans.<sup>521</sup> That is to say, his concern revolved more around modest state capacity-building than on large nation-building, which contrasted with the broader nation-building attempts in Iraq after 2003.<sup>522</sup> Finally, President

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid, 220.

<sup>520</sup> See Conor Keane, *US Nation-Building in Afghanistan* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 7-23.

<sup>521</sup> Bush, *Decision Points*, 205-208 and 219.

<sup>522</sup> Paul Bremer, Presidential Envoy to Iraq led the drafting of a special report on US nation-building missions in Germany, Japan, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan to examine historical experiences as guidance to

Bush recognized the utility of “maintain a light military footprint,” which set limits to troops’ increase from 13,000 in 2002 to 21,000 in 2006. Such limits sought to prevent the Americans from being seen as “occupiers”, as occurred with the British in the nineteenth century and the Soviets in 1980s.<sup>523</sup>

For his part, the fiercest proponent of the narrow approach to CT was Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. On the surface, such a stance could be seen as a contradiction as Rumsfeld was associated more with neoconservatism that, as mentioned, embraced the broad approach. It must not be forgotten that Rumsfeld was one of the signatures of the Project for the New American Century’s letter to the Clinton administration, making a case for the Iraq invasion since 1998.<sup>524</sup> What is more, as Secretary of Defence, Rumsfeld made a case for regime change in Iraq,<sup>525</sup> which constituted one of the most well-known neocon arguments during the post-Cold War.<sup>526</sup>

However, a deeper examination would reveal that his specific view on Afghanistan ended up being more conservative than neoconservative. His careful self-limitation in invoking nation-building and setting limits to troops’ increase within the American CT foreign and security policy in Afghanistan underpinned this stance. Indeed, Rumsfeld’s primary plan was not to have a post-war plan in Afghanistan, unlike President Bush and Secretary Rice, who often considered it a common theme. From the beginning of the intervention until the end of his time as Secretary of

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conduct nation-building in Iraq. This report, which was attached to an unclassified memo sent by Ambassador Bremmer to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, held that the Bush Government “adopted a more modest set of objectives [...] in Afghanistan [as compared to Iraq, where] Administration’s efforts to reverse the trend toward ever larger and more ambitious American led nation building operations has proved short lived [...] In Iraq the United States has taken on a task comparable in nature to the transformational attempts still underway in Bosnia and Kosovo, and in scope to the earlier American occupations of Germany and Japan.” Ambassador Paul Bremmer, *Nation-Building: Lessons Learned*, Memo to Secretary Rumsfeld, May 4, 2003.

<sup>523</sup> Bush, *Decision Points*, 207 and 212.

<sup>524</sup> Donald Rumsfeld et al., “Letter to the President Clinton on Iraq,” *The Project for the New American Century*, January 26, 1998. <https://zfacts.com/zfacts.com/metaPage/lib/98-Rumsfeld-Iraq.pdf>.

<sup>525</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, Part X.

<sup>526</sup> See Richard N. Perle, “Iraq: Saddam Unbound,” in *Present Dangers. Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy*, eds. Robert Kagan and William Kristol (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2000), 99-110.

Defense, Rumsfeld made a case against combining CT efforts and nation-building.<sup>527</sup> What is more, in retrospect, Rumsfeld firmly held the need to skip nation-building and to focus solely on the most modest goal of CT.

My position was that we were not in Afghanistan to transform a *deeply conservative Islamic culture into a model of liberal modernity*. We were not there to eradicate corruption or to end poppy cultivation. We were not there to take ownership of Afghan's problems, tempting though it was for many Americans of goodwill.

[...]

If some later contended that we never had a plan for *full-fledged nation building* or that we under-resourced such a plan, they were certainly correct. We did not go there to try to bring prosperity to every corner of Afghanistan. I believed—and continue to believe—that such a goal would have amounted to a fool's errand. It struck me that sending U.S. servicemen and -women in pursuit of an effort to remake Afghanistan into a prosperous American-style nation-state or to try to bring our standard of security to each of that nation's far-flung villages would be unwise, well beyond our capability, and unworthy of our troop's sacrifice.

*Our more modest goal was to rid Afghanistan of al-Qaida and replace their Taliban hosts with a government that would not harbor terrorists*. We were willing to let Afghan traditions and processes determine the political outcomes. Our objectives reflected a healthy sense of the limitations of what we could achieve in a country suspicious of foreign influence [Italics added]<sup>528</sup>

In being the most fierce and consistent proponent of CT, Secretary Rumsfeld's causal beliefs epitomize the primary assumptions behind American foreign and security policy unambiguously, as actually conducted in Afghanistan during this period.<sup>529</sup> For Rumsfeld, a narrow approach to CT in Afghanistan was critical because it allowed the United States to focus on preventing additional attacks, acting promptly and efficiently, and honouring the lessons of history.

Firstly, Secretary Rumsfeld attempted to refine the terminology aimed at framing the Afghanistan campaign to draw attention without distractions to the primary goal “[of preventing]

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<sup>527</sup> Weeks after the 9/11, Rumsfeld argued that “Nation-building does not have a brilliant record across the globe. It's a very hard thing to do. It's a hard thing for the people in a country to make a nation work well, and it's even harder for foreigners, strangers, to go into a country and think that they know what the template, what the model ought to be for that country.” The Washington Times, “Rumsfeld Opposed to Any U.S. Role in Nation Building.” *The Washington Times*, December 2, 2001. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2001/dec/2/20011202-033625-9284r/>.

<sup>528</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 682-3.

<sup>529</sup> The White House, *Declaratory Policy on Afghanistan*, Memorandum from Condoleezza Rice, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs to the Deputies, September 27, 2001.

additional attacks against America and [its] interests”.<sup>530</sup> Specifically, Rumsfeld attempted to adjust the term “War on Terror,” as President Bush established from the outset,<sup>531</sup> to avoid broad objectives as those advanced by the broad approach to CT.<sup>532</sup> Even though the Secretary agreed with the term “war” due to its utility to prevent the United States from “treating terrorism as a law enforcement matter and terrorists as common criminals,” Rumsfeld disagreed with the term “terrorism.”<sup>533</sup> Without clarification, such a term would refer more to enemies’ tactics than the enemy itself or would draw unnecessarily broad attention to “generic terrorist” rather than “*Islamist* Extremists [italics in the original].”<sup>534</sup> As a result, the strategy’s primary aim would be hunting down several terrorist networks, diverting attention from who were the actual attackers of the United States and, above all, who could attack it again. Drawing on a narrow approach to CT, Rumsfeld would also suggest preventing the United States from mistakenly “including all Muslims” as a threat within the strategy. Accordingly, it would reject the false assumption that the primary threat to the United States’ national interests was Islam as a religion rather than Islamism as a totalitarian political ideology seeking to destroy the way of living of liberal democratic societies. All in all, the United States would not attempt democratic nation-building to root out a conservative Islamic culture but solely to destroy and disrupt al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.<sup>535</sup>

Secondly, the narrow approach to CT was convenient for Secretary Rumsfeld as it, unlike the broad approach, could be conducted promptly. The broad approach is synonymous with the

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<sup>530</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 352.

<sup>531</sup> Bush, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, 2001.”

<sup>532</sup> According to Rumsfeld, “How we describe and set up the problem determines how we will deal with it —what priorities we establish and, in short, what we and our allies do to deal with the problem”. Donald Rumsfeld, “What Are We Fighting? Is It A Global War On Terror?” Memorandum to President George W. Bush, June 18, 2004.

<sup>533</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 352.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid*, 353.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid*, 682.

deployment of overwhelming force, implicating successive surges of thousands of troops in several months; not to mention civilian surges of diplomats and development officers required to complete nation-building efforts. For Rumsfeld, the use of a massive force in such a way would have given the Taliban and al-Qaeda the operational capability to respond to the intervention and the time to relocate, respectively. In a nutshell, a broad approach would have implicated months of preparation and implementation, giving rise to a high room for manoeuvre in the short time to Islamist extremists in Afghanistan to conduct additional attacks against the United States.<sup>536</sup>

Finally, during the intervention, Rumsfeld felt compelled to mull over the historical lessons learned from other military engagements that embraced unnecessarily broad objectives and, accordingly, failed colossally. Rumsfeld's assessment occurred in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, when the Afghanistan intervention commentators started to associate it with the Vietnam War's quagmire. These commentators also forced the American FPE to establish their position vis-à-vis the Soviet invasion in the 1980s.<sup>537</sup> As far as the Vietnam war is concerned, Secretary Rumsfeld argued that one of President Nixon and Secretary of Defense Mel Laird's main shortcomings was their attempt to play a leading role rather than a supporting one in the fight, which led the United States to an increased entanglement. Such an interpretation encouraged Rumsfeld to promote the strategy of mentoring and training Afghanistan forces to hand over them the responsibility to provide security to their own country in a post-Taliban era. In his view, this

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<sup>536</sup> Ibid, 377.

<sup>537</sup> Rumsfeld drew his historical interpretation of the Afghanistan intervention on and responded to the next list of sources: Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2009); Milton Bearden, "Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 6 (2001): 17-30; Kathy Gannon, "Afghanistan's Terrain a Challenge," *Associated Press*, September 18, 2001; Editorial, "The Quagmire Issue: U.S. Should be Prepared for a Long Struggle," *Dallas Morning News*, October 26, 2001; Maureen Dowd, "Liberties: Can Bush Bushkazi?," *New York Times*, October 28, 2001; R. W. Apple, Jr. "A Military Quagmire Remembered: Afghanistan as Vietnam," *New York Times*, October 31, 2001.

would be the only way to guarantee a practical exit from Afghanistan without compromising American interests in the long run.<sup>538</sup>

Regarding the Soviet intervention, Secretary Rumsfeld agreed with the conventional wisdom that it had been a failure due to its brutality against the Afghan people, its attempt to destroy their culture and the need to keep the permanent Soviet control through a puppet government.<sup>539</sup> The Soviet invasion would have adopted a broad approach in combining the use of heavy artillery and armoured divisions — enforcing the peace through a systematic killing of Muslims — and Soviet-style nation-building. Unlike the Soviets, Americans would seek to undertake a light footprint military intervention and favour a process to help Afghans select their leaders and guarantee their own security and stability. For Rumsfeld, by preventing the Americans from being seen as invaders or conquerors, the United States would increase the likelihood of a successful mission.<sup>540</sup> According to Condoleezza Rice’s review of the Afghanistan intervention’s planning, the historical lesson above was undoubtedly a dominant belief informing the intervention. The bulk of the effort was to attack al-Qaeda and the Taliban but attempting to “show the Afghan people a different face than the Soviet Union had at the beginning of the war.”<sup>541</sup>

A final clarification is required to understand the scope of Rumsfeld’s approach to CT within his broader belief systems. It is worth recalling that Rumsfeld’s strategic thinking was inextricably associated with the revolution in military affairs (RMA). On the surface, the notion of RMA would contradict Rumsfeld’s approach to CT. RMA has been traditionally synonymous with a dramatic transformation of military doctrines and organizations and ways to fight wars

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<sup>538</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 393.

<sup>539</sup> Bearden, “Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires,” 18.

<sup>540</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 373-4, 377-8, and 404.

<sup>541</sup> Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 91.

derived from extraordinary advances in technology.<sup>542</sup> Specifically, RMA has been equated to “high-technology conventional warfare.”<sup>543</sup> In contrast, as being undertaken in Afghanistan, CT made technology part of, yet not the core of, a successful strategy. CT was also seen as an irregular-warfare strategy far from including conventional warfare means.

However, a deeper examination of his belief systems would reveal that Rumsfeld proposed a different notion of RMA from that traditionally seen by the scholarly community. Rumsfeld equated it to “revolutionary and unprecedented” ways to mix new and old means to respond to an ever-increasing uncertain world rather than to the simple adoption of new technological capabilities.<sup>544</sup> In this regard, the CT campaign in Afghanistan closely squared with his notion of RMA due precisely to its purpose of combining in a revolutionary and unprecedented way different means to guarantee successful operations without making high technology the core of the strategy.

Rumsfeld established this stance since the battle for Mazar-i-Sharif in the following terms:

[Afghanistan] shows that a revolution in military affairs is about more than building new high-tech weapons — although that is certainly part of it. It is also about new ways of thinking and new ways of fighting [...] Coalition forces took existing military capabilities — from the most advanced (such as laser-guided weapons) to the antique (40-year-old B52s updated with modern electronics) to the most rudimentary (a man with a gun on a horse) — and used them together in unprecedented ways, with devastating effect.

This is not to suggest that this same combination of tactics and capabilities should be a model for future battles. The lesson from the Afghan experience is not that the U.S. Army should start stockpiling saddles. Rather, it is that preparing for the future will require new ways of thinking, and the development of forces and capabilities that can adapt quickly to new challenges and unexpected circumstances. The ability to adapt will be critical in a world defined by surprise and uncertainty.<sup>545</sup>

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<sup>542</sup> On a thorough analysis of different definitions of RMA and related doctrines, see Elinor Sloan, *The Revolution In Military Affairs* (London: McGill-Queen’s UP, 2002), 3-17

<sup>543</sup> Maria Ryan, “‘Full Spectrum Dominance:’ Donald Rumsfeld, the Department of Defense, and US irregular Warfare Strategy, 2001-2008,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 1 (2014): 42.

<sup>544</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, “Transforming the Military,” *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (2002): 22.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-2.

### 3. Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R): Canadian FPE's causal beliefs, 2001-2005

S&R constituted the Canadian FPE's primary causal beliefs during the Afghanistan intervention from 2001 through 2005. According to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Canada decided, "after the overthrow of the Taliban government [...] to position [...] troops to stabilize the situation, protect the new government and the Afghani people, and help to keep the peace."<sup>546</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Bill Graham pointed out that this purpose would be consistent with "many skills and specialties that the Canadian Forces had employed for decades with the UN."<sup>547</sup> However, according to Prime Minister Paul Martin, it would also imply balancing conflicting tasks of reconstruction efforts and military engagement.<sup>548</sup>

The Canadian FPE adopted two approaches to S&R depending on the level of the risk that they were willing to take during the intervention. First, a low-risk approach to S&R, and secondly, a moderate-risk approach to S&R. Ultimately, the Canadian FPE would adopt a high-risk mission during the period 2006-2011 when the United States and Canada both assumed high levels of risk similarly. As chapter 1 explained, a low-risk approach to S&R embraces the fundamental goals of stabilization and reconstruction, including the support for the demobilization of fighters, the building of new military and police forces, the supervision of constitutional reforms, the monitoring of democratic elections, and the promotion of economic reconstruction.<sup>549</sup> A moderate-risk approach to S&R focuses not only on the tasks above mentioned but also may include moderate warfighting campaigns.

As far as the low-risk approach to S&R is concerned, it was adopted when the Canadian FPE attempted to negotiate their country's participation in the ISAF mission between 2001 and

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<sup>546</sup> Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 305.

<sup>547</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 374.

<sup>548</sup> Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 395.

<sup>549</sup> Elinor Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 106.

2003. The European-led forces in Kabul were promoting this mission as a response to the 2001 Bonn Agreement and the UN Security Council's 1386 resolution on December 5 and 20, 2001, respectively. The Bonn Agreement established an Interim Authority, provided a legal framework as the new Constitution was discussed and issued and attempted to pave the way for integrating all armed forces within an overall reconciliation plan.<sup>550</sup> The resolution 1386 supplemented such an agreement in establishing the ISAF "to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas."<sup>551</sup> All in all, such a mission fit in well with the low-risk approach. Foreign Minister Graham recognized this level of risk, which also conjured up the level of commitment Canada had been adopting in previous missions of peacekeeping:

Established under the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, ISAF was a UN-mandated mission to provide security as the Afghans established a transitional government. It seemed, therefore, the type of *modest, low-risk mission* with which Canadians were familiar and comfortable, more like *classical peacekeeping* under multilateral auspices than open combat alongside the Americans [emphasis added].<sup>552</sup>

However, the United Kingdom rejected the Canadian contribution to the European-led forces. Therefore, the Canadian FPE had to select the second option at that moment, namely, to join OEF and to adopt a moderate-risk approach to S&R. Regarding this decision, Minister Graham held the following:

When the Europeans dragged their heels on our offer to join to the International Security Assistance Force to help in Kabul, we contributed in another way in February 2002 by sending a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry to join the Americans in the southern province of Kandahar, where the Taliban were still strong. *This operation was obviously a combat mission, not a peacekeeping one* [...] [Italics added]<sup>553</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> United Nations, *Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions*, December 5, 2001.

<sup>551</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1386, Adopted by the Security Council at its 4443<sup>rd</sup> meeting, December 20, 2001.

<sup>552</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 225.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid, 252.

In this regard, it can be argued that the European allies' rejection and the negotiation with the United States made risk escalation inevitable for the Canadian FPE.<sup>554</sup> It is worth noting that both prime ministers Chrétien and Martin worried about risk escalation during the mission insofar as their successors increased their level of engagement with the Afghanistan mission. Such worries made sense within the progressive transition from the low- to moderate-risk approach to S&R. Firstly, the Canadian FPE decided to take over the leadership of the ISAF mission in 2003 when the mission was still focused on Kabul.<sup>555</sup> Even though the mission's responsibility passed from the UN to NATO, there were some reasons to consider this mission as a low-risk one. The alliance was "in no mood for expansion," and the primary goal was still stabilization and reconstruction.<sup>556</sup> Accordingly, the Chrétien administration considered that it would constitute a low-risk mission appropriated for both Canada's skills and consistent with their traditional deployments. When the mission started to expand to cover the entire country, this administration decided to stay in Kabul as it constituted a reasonable risk for Canadians. For this reason, Prime Minister Chrétien complained that his successor decided to go south because of the inherent risk escalation attached to such a decision. About the 2003 mission and his complaint about Martin deciding to go south in 2005, Chrétien argued the following:

Even though the commitment [in 2003] would require on our part many troops and a lot more money, we were going to get our soldiers into a more secure place where their assignment was *closer to traditional peacekeeping*. When ISAF's mandate expanded to include other regions of the country, I made sure that we remained in or around Kabul. In retrospect, it was a very good deal for Canada. *Later [in 2005], unfortunately, when my successor took too long to make up his mind about whether Canada should extend our term with ISAF, our soldiers were moved out of Kabul and sent south again to battle the Taliban in the killing fields around Kandahar [Italics added].*<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> See Justin Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan," 279.

<sup>555</sup> Government of Canada, "International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)." <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/past-operations/asia-pacific/athena.html>

<sup>556</sup> Elinor Sloan, *Canada and NATO: A Military Assessment* (Canadian International Council, 2012), 4.

<sup>557</sup> Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 305.

Secondly, the Canadian FPE decided to go to Kandahar in 2005 within the NATO mission aimed at securing the country when the Afghan government proved incapable of exercising authority beyond Kabul. In attempting to explain the rationale behind this decision, Prime Minister Martin argued that the moderate-risk approach to S&R would inform it. Not only would this decision include Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) aimed at providing security, stability and reconstruction, but also the military campaign would be limited in scope and length. For this reason, Martin considered that the Harper Conservatives abandoned the core of the mission when they chose to focus extreme attention on the military campaign and failed to set a time limit on it. Like Chrétien accusing Martin of risk escalation, Martin would do the same with the Conservatives:

It is important to understand the strategy as it was originally devised, because as the troops moved into Kandahar and began military operations under the Conservatives, its two principal thrusts were largely abandoned. The plan General Hillier presented to me was based on Provincial Reconstructions Teams, meaning the gradual restoration of order by the military in expanding circles, with reconstruction intimately linked and immediately underway once the area was secured. There was no point in dominating an area militarily if we did not win the fight for ‘hearts and minds’ once we got there. In my time as prime minister, we never envisaged a *broad military campaign that would make reconstruction effort more difficult, if not impossible, as we bit off more than we could chew. In my view, the change in strategy under the subsequent government was unfortunate.* I don’t think anyone, including me, expected the Taliban resurgence that Canadian troops encountered when they moved to Kandahar. I do believe, however, that the virtual abandonment of reconstruction efforts in the first year or so of the new government was a mistake. Second, when I was prime minister, I made a *one-year commitment to Kandahar [...] a short-time limit was necessary* if we were going to retain flexibility for our forces and have maximum leverage with NATO [Italics added].<sup>558</sup>

As these reflections from the prime ministers involved in decision-making regarding the Afghan intervention show, the Canadian FPE was particularly aware of how the mission ended up transitioning from a low- to moderate-risk approach to S&R. To capture such a transition, they used a specific conceptual distinction between classical peacekeeping, on the one hand, and the

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<sup>558</sup> Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 395.

new generations of peacekeeping, on the other hand. The former aims to monitor ceasefires between warring parties and constituted the primary rationale behind Canadian operations during the Cold War. The latter may include the support of the implementation of complex and multidimensional peace agreements, the enforcement of cease-fires through low-level military operations, and the combination of combat missions and peacebuilding efforts.<sup>559</sup> Not only did it constitute the primary framework for Canadians since the Bosnian war, but it also was reaffirmed between 2001 and 2005 in Afghanistan.

Specifically, on this matter, Chrétien held that “By March [2002], our soldiers fought alongside the Americans in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan. Even more than Bosnia, this operation was really about *peacemaking more than peacekeeping* [Italics added].”<sup>560</sup> Similarly, Martin said, “I understood that this [mission] was more a *peacemaking than a peacekeeping mission* [Italics added],”<sup>561</sup> and Minister Graham sought to frame the Afghanistan mission into the term “peace-keeping heavy,” as compared to classical peacekeeping in the following terms:

Traditional peacekeeping, sometimes referred to as ‘peacekeeping lite,’ presumes that you’re there to help warring parties keep a peace they both want by means of lightly armed troops operating under restrictive rules of engagement. But most peacekeeping these days is peacemaking or ‘*peace-keeping heavy*.’ It often takes place in a combat situation between highly armed opponents, many of whom are non-state actors. As a result, when a Canadian government decides to put our troops into such a dangerous environment, both our military and our civilian leaders must ensure that they are properly equipped, properly trained, and operating under rules of engagement that will allow them to protect both themselves and civilians [Italics added].<sup>562</sup>

That is to say, when the Chrétien and Martin Liberals used such terms as “peace-keeping heavy” and “peacemaking,” they referred to the need to move away from classical peacekeeping

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<sup>559</sup> Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, chapter 6. See Jussi Hanhimäki. *The United Nations. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press., 2015), 76-77.

<sup>560</sup> Chrétien, *My Years as a Prime Minister*, 305.

<sup>561</sup> Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 392.

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid*, 378.

to meet their security goals in Afghanistan. Above all, they referred to these terms to justify the need to embrace the moderate-risk approach to S&R.

Even though transitioning from classical to complex peacekeeping entailed risk escalation, this process did not imply that the Canadian FPE adopted a similar level of risk during the period 2001-2005 as that advanced by the American FPE. It must not be forgotten that the Americans embraced a high-risk approach during the entire intervention. Indeed, based on their place in the international system, Canadian leaders drew different historical lessons from military interventions. Rather than being worried about the failures of great powers' overextension, such as the Vietnam War or the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, the Canadian FPE evoked historical cases much more in line with Canada's role as a middle power. Such an overextension would be an unlikely mistake to make for middle powers due to their limited capabilities.

Specifically, the Canadian FPE had in mind the lessons learned from the Balkan wars and the Haiti intervention to justify the moderate-risk approach to S&R in Afghanistan. In the Balkan wars, especially with the transition from UNPROFOR to a more robust NATO-led operation aimed at implementing the 1995 Dayton Accords, it was apparent that a classical peacekeeping mission had been ineffective. There was no peace to keep there, and impartiality *vis-à-vis* the warring parties was impracticable.<sup>563</sup> In Haiti, it was evident that the use of force alone was not enough to conduct stabilization and, accordingly, reconstruction became equally required to guarantee population support and maximize security gains. In a nutshell, the security-development nexus

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<sup>563</sup> See Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, 104. Regarding the historical lessons learned from the Balkans and why Canadians had to transition to complex peacekeeping in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Martin pointed out the following: "Canadians have long treasured our distinguished service as peacekeepers, dating from the era of my father [ Paul Martin, Secretary of State for International Affairs between 1963 and 1968 ] and Lester Pearson — and rightly so. During the recent decades, however, it became clear that the 'classic' peacekeeping role we played for so many years [...] was no longer what world events were demanding. We had moved into an era in the Balkans, for instance, in which peacekeepers were called upon to play a much more *robust role, helping to create the peace rather than just preserving it, and even helping to rebuild failed and failing states [Italics added]*." Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 329.

became imperative,<sup>564</sup> and Canadian leaders considered that their country as a middle power had the capacity to mobilize resources to meet this goal, rather than to overextend their capabilities to conduct a high-risk mission like the Americans were doing in Afghanistan.<sup>565</sup>

During the Martin years, the lessons learned from the Balkans and Haiti ended up justifying the 3D and “whole-of government” discourses as the ultimate way to deal with interconnected threats in failed and failing states. Both of these doctrines aim to combine diplomacy, defence and development strategies and mobilize resources in a coordinated form between government agencies to deal with interconnected threats in Afghanistan.<sup>566</sup> These objectives ended up refining Canada’s foreign and security policy during this period.<sup>567</sup> At the specific level of security, this approach was combined with the doctrine “Three-block War,” aimed at broadening Canadian forces’ tasks. These forces now would conduct combat operations against militias, then would undertake stabilization to keep the peace, and finally would provide humanitarian relief.<sup>568</sup>

It is worth noting that, unlike peacekeeping, the 3D, whole-of-government and Three-Block War approaches were not originally Canadian contributions to strategic thinking. The 3D

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<sup>564</sup> Government of Canada - Embassy of Canada in Haiti, “Canada-Haiti Relations”. Available from [www.canadainternational.gc.ca](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca). Accessed September 9, 2018; Government of Canada, *Canada and the Americas. Priorities & Progress*, 2009; Stephen Baranyi. “Canada and the Security-Development Nexus in Haiti: the “Dark Side” or Changing Shades of Gray?” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 20, no. 2 (2014): 163-175.

<sup>565</sup> Based on lessons learnt from Haiti, Prime Minister Martin explained how Canadians had to think of stabilization-reconstruction nexus seriously: “I [...] strongly believe that you cannot do much good in failed or fragile states with military force alone. You need to engage people’s hearts and minds, and the way to do this is rebuild economic infrastructure along with social and political and judicial institutions. One of the lessons of Haiti is that military intervention without this kind of follow-through means that you have to come back time and time again, intervening in crises but never fixing the underlying problems.” Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 392.

<sup>566</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 379.

<sup>567</sup> The rationality behind such approaches was established by the *Canada’s International Policy Statement* in the following terms: “The Government of Canada believes that an integrated ‘3D’ approach, combining diplomacy, defence and development, is the best strategy for supporting states that suffer from a broad range of interconnected problems. In short, our official aid programs and our broader international policies must operate in tandem. This requires government departments to work more closely together—from planning through to execution—so that contributions as disparate as police force training, civil engineering and private sector development combine into one, comprehensive approach to capacity building.” Government of Canada, *Canada’s International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence – Overview* (Ottawa, ON: 2005), 20.

<sup>568</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada’s International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence – Defence* (Ottawa, ON: 2005), 8.

and whole-of-government approaches were being used during this period by different OECD countries, including the United States, to intervene in failed and failing states,<sup>569</sup> whereas the Three-Block War was initially proposed by the U.S. General Charles Krulak for the Marine Corps in the late 1990s.<sup>570</sup> This doctrine was also close to that of ‘war amongst the people,’ as developed by the British General Sir Rupert Smith.<sup>571</sup>

However, the Canadian FPE, compared to the American FPE, referred to such approaches with a different intensity level. While Americans assigned these approaches a secondary role, Canadians deemed them their most critical foreign policy guidance during this period. After all, for Americans, the means offered by these approaches were accessory measures to their CT campaign, whereas, for Canadians, these approaches were, by definition, the pillars of their S&R mission. Even though the actual implementation of them by the Liberal and Conservative Canadian FPEs was subject to criticism,<sup>572</sup> the truth was that they constituted the Canadian FPE’s primary expectations. Not only did Ministry Graham call Afghanistan the “3D war,”<sup>573</sup> but he also argued that the approaches, as mentioned above, provided critical means to achieve Canadian security goals in Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, he attached significant importance to each of them:

From the beginning, Canada saw ISAF as a ‘whole-of-government’ or ‘3D’ mission, in which defence, diplomacy, and development came together to establish long-term stability by mobilizing the resources of DND, DFAIT, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). My own thinking had been influenced by Rupert Smith’s *Utility of force*, in which he discussed the demands of the recent complex operations he termed ‘war amongst the people’. The US Marine Corp’s concept of the ‘Three Block War,’ which evolved from the American experience in failing states [...] also had

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<sup>569</sup> OECD, “Whole-of-Government Approaches to Fragile States,” *OECD Journal on Development* 8, no. 3 (2008): 179-232.

<sup>570</sup> Marie-Eve Desrosiers & Phillipe Lagassé, “Canada and the Bureaucratic Politics of State Fragility,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 20, no. 4 (2009): 659-778.

<sup>571</sup> Smith distinguished the old paradigm of the interstate industrial war from that of the new one in which the war occurred “amongst the people.” Using cases like that of the Balkan wars, Smith argued that the new type of war does not occur on a battlefield upon which armies engage. Instead, it occurred “in the presence of civilians, against civilians, in defense of civilians. Civilians are the targets, objectives to be won, as much as opposing force.” Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force. The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), 3-4 and chapter 9.

<sup>572</sup> Stephen Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust. Lessons from Canada’s War in Afghanistan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), chapter 6.

<sup>573</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, chapter 15.

a major impact on our vision for the Afghanistan mission. That idea referred to the fact that our Armed forces were being asked to carry out overlapping missions at any one time.<sup>574</sup>

The two previous sections indicate that the American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs supported their CT and S&R strategies in Afghanistan. On the one hand, the American FPE discussed the utility of broad and narrow approaches to CT and ended up implementing the latter. The American executive justified the narrow approach because it focused on preventing additional attacks without distractions, especially avoiding unnecessarily broad objectives, which constitute a lesson learned from the Vietnam War and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Canadian FPE discussed the utility of transitioning from a low-risk to a moderate-risk approach to S&R. The latter was reaffirmed with the executive's decision to enter Kandahar in 2005, paving the way for adopting a high-risk engagement since 2006. Like the American FPE, Canadian leaders had in mind lessons learned from his interventions. Specifically, they learned from their participation during the Balkan wars and the Haiti mission how ineffective classical peacekeeping could be and how critical a whole-of-government approach could be to advance security objectives in failed states. In a nutshell, American and Canadian executives found themselves perceiving the Afghanistan intervention through different causal beliefs. However, the differences between American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs would be lessened as of 2005/2006.

#### **4. Transitioning to Counterinsurgency (COIN)**

During the period from 2005/2006 to 2011, the American and Canadian FPEs adopted similar causal beliefs. Rather than perceiving the frontal fight against the enemy or the stabilization and reconstruction of the secured areas as the sole, most effective way to meet their security goals in

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<sup>574</sup> Ibid, 379.

Afghanistan, respectively, both the United States and Canada considered it necessary to transition to a more robust commitment. These increased engagement levels occurred due to the emergence of the Afghan insurgency in the South and the growing insecurity levels in the entire country. Americans merged CT, which was focused on the destruction and disruption of the enemy, with a population-centred approach, whereas Canadians linked their S&R goals, aimed at focusing on the factors conducive to terrorism, with a more direct military engagement. For both of them, this transition came in the form of COIN.

According to the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2009-2013), “The slogan for the [COIN] strategy became ‘Clear, hold, and build.’ The goal was to rid an area of insurgents, defend it so they couldn’t return, and invest in infrastructure and governance so residents saw an improvement in their lives and would begin defending themselves.”<sup>575</sup> Such goals would depend, as pointed out by the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (2006- 2011), on “the effective partnering of military efforts with civilian experts,” to guarantee the combination of “military operations with robust reconstruction efforts, with Afghan [forces and government] fully integrated.”<sup>576</sup> On the Canadian side, COIN in the form of ‘clear, hold, and build’ was publicly recognized only after the Manley Report was issued in Canada in 2008 and the American FPE conducted a threat assessment based on General McChrystal’s analysis of the security situation in Afghanistan in 2009.<sup>577</sup> However, it can be argued that Canada started to embrace the spirit of this approach since the moment when the Canadian FPE combined the 3D and whole-of-government approaches with the intensive war mission in Kandahar. Combining stabilization and

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<sup>575</sup> Hillary Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 136.

<sup>576</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 211.

<sup>577</sup> Elinor Sloan, *Canada and NATO: A Military Assessment* (Canadian International Council, 2012), 10. See also Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2007), 187.

reconstruction with a direct fight against the Afghan insurgency paved the way for embracing the COIN campaign's primary causal beliefs — clear, hold, and build.<sup>578</sup>

Based on the convergence between American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs, the departments of defence and strategic doctrine centers in both countries — the Land Force Doctrine and Training System in Kingston, Ontario, and the U.S. Counterinsurgency Center in Kansas — were capable of developing similar COIN doctrines.<sup>579</sup> Specifically, the Canadian COIN doctrine, as developed by the Department of National Defence (DND), set out the same central objectives as those advanced by the *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24*.<sup>580</sup> After riding an area of insurgencies through offensive operations, stabilization and reconstruction operations would seek to a) “to win and hold popular support,” b) “[focus on] breaking the link between the insurgent and the people [which] include measures to address and resolve grievances that lend support and credibility to the insurgency,” and c) help provide a legitimate government as a real alternative to insurgency's political project through “a comprehensive approach, with multiple agencies and other government departments, often enabled through a coalition effort.”<sup>581</sup>

Still, promoting COIN was not an easy task at home. Both American and Canadian FPEs' primary proponents of COIN had to battle with other FPE members, as well as with other Washington and Ottawa officials to implement the strategy. This battle was particularly intense at the senior level in the American presidential system, compared to the Westminster Canadian parliamentary system. After all, the American political system is based on the de-concentration of

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<sup>578</sup> See Graham, *The Call of the World*, Chapter 15.

<sup>579</sup> Caroline Leprince, “Living Among the Population in Southern Afghanistan. A Canadian Approach to Counterinsurgency,” in *Elusive Pursuits: Lessons From Canada's Interventions Abroad*, eds. Fen Osler Hampson and Stephen Saideman (Ottawa: Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, 2015), 105.

<sup>580</sup> See The United States, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5)* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army 2006), 1-121 – 1-136.

<sup>581</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, *Counterinsurgency Operations (B-GL-323-004/FP-003)* (Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence, 2008), Chapter 1, Section 1, 103.

power. Not only does it limit the executive *vis-à-vis* the legislative branch, but it also results in a significant room for manoeuvre for senior and deputy actors. Ultimately, the American political system's functioning makes opposing views inside the American FPE more likely. In contrast, the Canadian political system draws on the concentration of power in the prime minister's hands and on the strict party discipline in the House of Commons. Both of those factors make more unlikely cleavages inside the FPE, even though it is always a potential possibility.<sup>582</sup> (Chapter 5 will return to this matter in addressing American and Canadian abilities to mobilize domestic resources).

Even though every comparison of Canadian and American foreign and security policies must consider the aforementioned institutional arrangements, these arrangements acquired a particular significance between 2005 and 2011. The American FPE prioritized the Afghanistan War during this period and, subsequently, this decision brought about a huge controversy inside the American FPE about the strategy to be implemented to make Afghanistan precisely a top priority. For its part, the Canadian FPE's primary decisions ended up being controlled by the prime minister, especially during the Harper administration, who took advantage of the Canadian political system to monopolize the Afghanistan intervention's decision-making process. During the Martin years, controversies inside the FPE occurred, but not with the same intensity as their American counterparts. During the Harper years, interdepartmental struggles were more common than opposing views within the FPE.

It does not mean that Canadian FPE dealt with lesser challenges than their American counterparts. Interdepartmental struggles made the Canadian FPE's strategy implementation just

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<sup>582</sup> Derek Burney, Fen Osler Hampson, and Simon Palamar, "The Call of Duty. Harper's Doctrine on Military Intervention," in *Elusive Pursuits: Lessons from Canada's Interventions Abroad*, eds. Fen Osler Hampson and Stephen Saideman (Ottawa: Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, 2015), 201. See also Arendt Lijphart, *Patterns of democracy. Government Forms and Performance in the Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2012), chapter 7; Robert Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 110-116. On an analysis of the impact of such institutional arrangements on US foreign and security policy decision-making process, see Rice, *No Higher Honor*, 3-4, 14-22.

as difficult as on the American side. Neither does it mean that the American FPE did not have to deal with interdepartmental disputes. These disputes occurred on both American and Canadian sides as the Departments of Defence and the Military had more resources and were ready for warfighting missions. In contrast, civilian agencies, such as the Department of State (DoS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Agriculture (DoA), on the American side, and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), on the Canadian side, dealt with budgetary constraints and were more inclined to promote S&R. On both sides, the military and civilians focused on different aspects of the COIN strategy and did not necessarily have an interest in reconciling their opposing preferences.<sup>583</sup> This study argues that focusing on how the American and Canadian FPE proponents of COIN had to deal with top-tier controversies and interdepartmental struggles, respectively, captures well their primary challenges under the aforementioned institutional arrangement and political circumstances.

On the American side, the FPE proponents of COIN, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, engaged in intense debate with Vice President Joe Biden and other senior advisers in the White House.<sup>584</sup> Vice President Biden and President Barack Obama's advisers overtly criticized COIN as being implemented in Afghanistan. Indeed, some of them, especially Vice President Biden, recommended maintaining the CT strategy, but with a slight increase of troops. It was known as CT plus. On the Canadian side, the original proponent

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<sup>583</sup> Conor Keane and Steve Wood, "Bureaucratic Politics, Role Conflict, and the International Dynamics of US Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan," *Armed Forces & Society* 42, no. 1 (2016): 104-5; Stephen Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 70-5, 98-100.

<sup>584</sup> Robert Gates held a hotly debate with Thomas E. Donilon, Deputy National Security Advisor between 2009 and 2010 and National Security Adviser between 2010 and 2013; Denis McDonough, Deputy National Security Advisor between 2010 and 2013; David Axelrod, Senior Advisor to the President between 2009 and 2011; Douglas Lute, Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan between 2007 and 2010; and Rahm Emmanuel, White House Chief of Staff, between 2009 and 2010. Gates, *Duty*, 352, 385, 482-3.

of COIN was Minister of Defence Bill Graham. As early as July 2005, Minister Graham implicitly supported the model, as being implemented in Afghanistan and Pakistan months later, and backed Rick Hillier's appointment as the Chief of Defence Staff,<sup>585</sup> whose plan would be to combine precisely the combat mission and the PRT strategy.<sup>586</sup> This model, which was the pillar of Canadian COIN strategy, would eventually be reaffirmed by the Harper Conservatives. Minister of Defence Graham had to battle in Cabinet meetings to promote the developing strategy. For their part, while working cohesively, the Harper Conservatives had to deal with interdepartmental jealousies between DND, DFAIT, and CIDA, which ended up undermining COIN goals.<sup>587</sup>

In the final analysis, it can be argued that dealing with these controversies allowed the American and Canadian FPEs to refine their perceptions about the scope and utility of COIN *vis-à-vis* other strategic options. The next two sections address this point.

## **5. American FPE's COIN causal beliefs (2006-2011)**

Even though COIN represented the American FPE's primary causal beliefs during the Afghanistan intervention since 2006, they examined different strategic options to refine their foreign and security policy towards that country. Secretaries Gates and Clinton criticized two strategic options during this period, namely, *fully resourced COIN* (option 2) and *CT plus* (option 3) and, accordingly, proposed a *limited COIN* strategy (option 1) due to its strategic usefulness as compared to these options. A fully resourced COIN came in the form either of a massive increase of troops (option 2A) or of a comprehensive strategy aimed at mobilizing civilian and military resources at the domestic, regional, and international levels (option 2B). Firstly, since it required

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<sup>585</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 383 and 399.

<sup>586</sup> Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 395.

<sup>587</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 389 and 391.

a massive increase of troops, fully resourced COIN (option 2A) would entail specifically transitioning from 68,000 troops in 2009 to 108,000 in 2011, which would continue the rise that had already taken place from 32,000 to 68,000 during the period 2006-2009. As promoted by the military, especially General Stanley McChrystal, the U.S. ISAF commander between 2009 and 2010, and Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the period 2007-2011, this increase would have been necessary to meet the ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ goals of the COIN strategy.<sup>588</sup> It is worth noting that the military even dared to propose 80,000 additional troops, which would have resulted in 148,000 troops in total.<sup>589</sup>

During the debate about the increase of troops, Secretary Gates was supportive of the military, even though this matter brought about a civilian-military fracture.<sup>590</sup> Gates considered that an increase of troops was critical to guarantee the success of the COIN strategy, but he was skeptical about McChrystal and Mullen’s proposal of additional 40,000 troops. For him, it would have scant usefulness in the short term. The military had requested additional troops to disrupt the Taliban’s expected summer offensive in 2009 and to guarantee the August presidential election taking place that year. Yet, since this number of troops could only be sent through successive

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<sup>588</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 364, 379, 381.

<sup>589</sup> Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 132-133.

<sup>590</sup> President Obama, Vice President Biden, and the White House advisers felt that the military had attempted to pressure them publicly to obtain the required increase of troops, as well as to criticize their leadership. On the one hand, General David Petraeus, Commander of the United States Central Command (USCETCOM) between 2008 and 2010 and Commander of the ISAF between 2010 and 2011, held, in an interview with the Washington Post Journalist Michael Gerson, that the military could not guarantee success in Afghanistan without more troops. On the other hand, Stanley McChrystal, Commander of ISAF between 2009 and 2010 gave an interview to the Rolling Stone journalist, Michael Hastings, allowing Hastings to criticize the US Afghanistan strategy and reveal the military’s dissatisfaction about the civilian leadership, especially President Obama and Vice President Biden. Gates, *Duty*, 367-368, 487-488; Michael Gerson, “In Afghanistan, No Choice But to Try,” *The Washington Post*, September 4, 2009, A23; Michael Hastings, “The Runaway General: The Profile that Brought Down McChrystal,” *The Rolling Stones*, June 22, 2010. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/the-runaway-general-the-profile-that-brought-down-mcchrystal-192609/>.

phases due to logistical constraints, they would be incapable of getting there in time to achieve the goal, as mentioned above.<sup>591</sup>

Gates also began to think of the likelihood that the massive increase of troops would encourage Afghans to see Americans like the Soviets, provoking a disconnection between the Americans and the Afghan people.<sup>592</sup> Finally, like Rumsfeld, Gates was worried about the likelihood of ending up promoting nation-building that a fully resourced COIN would imply:

I began to have misgiving about whether the foreign military presence in Afghanistan was growing to the point where most Afghans would begin to see us as ‘occupiers’ rather than allies. Up to that point, all indications —polling and the like— suggested that most Afghans still saw us as allies. But more than anyone else at senior levels in Bush 43’s administration, I had been involved with Afghanistan and Pakistan during the 1980s and had watched the Soviets fail despite having nearly 120,000 troops there: their large presence (and brutal tactics) turned Afghans against them. Historically, Afghanistan has not been kind to foreign armies. *I began to worry aloud about where the tipping point in terms of the number of foreign troops might be* and to act on that worry. [Italics added].<sup>593</sup>

Secondly, a fully resourced COIN would be synonymous with “a stronger, smarter and comprehensive strategy” (option 2B).<sup>594</sup> It would aim to adopt a regional approach — including Afghanistan and Pakistan — to mobilize “all elements of [US] national power” to build Afghan forces to provide security and to bring major international efforts from allies and those with a stake in Afghanistan. As proposed by President Obama’s televised speech on March 27, 2009, and known as the AfPak strategy, it sought to meet the COIN strategy’s three components. Not only did it address the ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ components, just as the military’s increase-of-troops strategy proposed, but it also focused on the ‘build’ component.” The former would imply the approval of 17,000 soldiers, reaching a total of 85,000, whereas the latter would result in a civilian surge of

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<sup>591</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 337-338.

<sup>592</sup> See Frederick W. Kagan, “We’re not the Soviets in Afghanistan,” *Washington Examiner*, August 21, 2009. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/were-not-the-soviets-in-afghanistan>.

<sup>593</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 218.

<sup>594</sup> Barack Obama, “President Obama’s Remarks on New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan” (Washington, DC: March 27, 2009).

“agricultural specialists and educators [...] engineers and lawyers,” which would be critical “to advance security, opportunities, and justice — not just Kabul, but from the bottom up in the provinces.”<sup>595</sup> According to Secretary Gates, it was a robust strategy because even though the President “never used the words *counterinsurgency* or *counterterrorism* in the speech [...] the strategy that he announced was clearly a blend of both [Italics in the original]”.<sup>596</sup>

Secretary Gates had his own doubts about this second way to conduct COIN. Specifically, he questioned the likelihood of meeting the two criteria required to be successful with such a strategy, namely, the massive deployment of civilians, especially from the Departments of State and Agriculture and the Agency for International Development, as well as Pakistan’s disposition to work with the United States, granting to the fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda the same strategic value. On the one hand, a massive civilian surge comparable to the military one was unlikely as the American FPE’s assessment often focused on the strategy’s military component. In other words, a massive civilian surge would have entailed thinking of civilian strategy seriously and the American FPE were not willing to do it.<sup>597</sup> On the other hand, over the entire intervention, it was clear that Pakistan would not have the same strategic goals as those advanced by the United States and its allies. Not only was Pakistan more worried about its potential confrontation with India, but it also tended to adopt a hedging strategy in preparation for the US troops’ withdrawal and in response to its distrust of the Western campaign in Afghanistan. As a result, Pakistan ended up being more tolerant of the Afghan Taliban, including permitting their leaders to enjoy sanctuary in Quetta.<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

<sup>596</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 343.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid, 476.

<sup>598</sup> Rice, *No higher honor*, 126 and 128; Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 688-689; Gates, *Duty*, 343.

CT plus (option 3), which Vice President Biden primarily proposed, focused on lethal attacks on the Taliban and other forces and the training of the Afghan army and police.<sup>599</sup> As a result, this option would be made up of direct and indirect CT measures against the enemy, brushing aside the population-oriented COIN approach. This option implied sending 20,000 additional troops, the half for direct CT and the other half for indirect CT, which would have resulted in 88,000 troops in total in Afghanistan.<sup>600</sup> To be sure, it would have entailed the same military surge as proposed by AfPak strategy, but without a civilian surge.

For the proponents of CT, it would be better than COIN as it focused solely on the fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan. It would reduce the dependence on the partnership with Pakistan, would decrease the number of casualties and would temper the jihadist narrative. It would also avoid a massive effort at reconstruction — which proponents of CT call nation-building in a pejorative way — in a country where there is little infrastructure. Finally, it would improve the quality of intelligence. The last point was an essential difference between COIN and CT in Afghanistan. For the proponents of COIN, it is a better strategy to gather adequate intelligence due to direct contact with the population. In contrast, the proponents of CT argued that theirs is better for collecting intelligence because the Afghan population would be more available to cooperate with the U.S. and allied forces when a lesser intrusive strategy in the daily Afghan life is being conducted.<sup>601</sup>

Secretary Gates made a case for COIN and against CT precisely because, for him, an adequate intelligence relies on “significant U.S. presence in Afghanistan,” plus CT had already

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<sup>599</sup> Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuter, 2011), 234.

<sup>600</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 379.

<sup>601</sup> Cristine Fair, “False Choices in Afghanistan,” *Foreign Policy* (January 11, 2011). <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/01/11/false-choices-in-afghanistan/>. See also Secretary Clinton’s summary of Vice President Biden’s CT strategy. Clinton. *Hard Choices*, 138.

failed in the previous decades. Having adopted a remote-control CT, the United States had been incapable of preventing the 9/11 attacks, and in having conducted CT plus or COIN minus during the early years of the intervention, it had failed to stabilize the country, giving momentum to the Taliban insurgency.<sup>602</sup> Secretary Clinton similarly backed this stance in the following terms:

The problem [...] was that if the Taliban continued to seize more of the country, it would be harder to conduct effective counterterrorism operations. We wouldn't have the same intelligence networks necessary to locate the terrorists or the bases from which to launch strikes inside or outside Afghanistan. Al Qaeda already had safe havens in Pakistan. If we abandoned large parts of Afghanistan to the Taliban [as suggested by Biden's CT], they would again have safe havens there as well.<sup>603</sup>

With all of these considerations in mind, the American FPE chose selective COIN (option 1), as proposed by Secretary Gates and backed by Secretary Clinton, despite the fact that Vice President Biden had vehemently opposed it. This strategy aimed to break the stalemate, as brought about by the strengthened Taliban insurgency between 2006 and 2009, by going further than CT plus. However, it sought to narrow the expectations of fully resourced COIN by focusing on disrupting and defeating the Taliban with lesser military forces and paying particular attention to the south and east regions with a timeline in mind. In a nutshell, selective COIN attempted to take advantage of the COIN strategy's primary causal belief, namely, 'clear, hold, and build.' But it attempts to prevent the United States from embracing a broad, open-ended commitment.<sup>604</sup>

According to its proponents, the most crucial advantage of this strategic option was that despite the increase of troops, as requested by the military, or President Obama's AfPak strategy, it did not entail abandoning CT. Firstly, selective COIN deemed CT necessary to meet the 'clear' and 'hold' component of counterinsurgency, that is, "to degrade the Taliban's capabilities to the point where larger and better trained Afghan security forces could maintain control of the country

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<sup>602</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 374.

<sup>603</sup> Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 138.

<sup>604</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 344, 375, 364 and 571.

and prevent the return of al Qaeda.”<sup>605</sup> Secondly, selective COIN entailed sending 30,000 additional troops and pushing the allies to obtain the remaining 10,000 troops required to meet McChrystal’s plan. Finally, selective COIN sought to embrace the primary goals of the President’s March strategy by focusing on “providing security in Afghanistan’s cities, bolstering the government, and delivering services to the people, rather than waging a battle of attrition with the Taliban insurgents.”<sup>606</sup> However, as the gap occurred during the Bush administration between the expected broad approach to CT and the actual narrow approach to CT, the Obama administration had to narrow further selective COIN. In the final analysis, the discourse of “a stronger, smarter and comprehensive strategy” in the form of selective COIN was replaced by that of “Afghan good enough.” It meant recognizing success in the campaign when Afghans “doing something barely adequately was better than [the United States] doing it excellently.”<sup>607</sup>

## **6. Canadian FPE’s COIN causal beliefs (2005-2011)**

Like the American FPE, the Canadian FPE adopted COIN as their primary causal belief during the Afghanistan intervention between 2005 and 2011. This posture did not result from a heated debate at the senior level, as observed on the American side. For example, as Minister Graham pointed out, “The prime minister, the Cabinet, the Quebec ministers, and the caucus all came on board for a rapid, combat-type mission to supplement the efforts of our PRT in Kandahar and the SAT in Kabul”.<sup>608</sup> This would be the basis of the nascent COIN strategy. As the core of the new strategy, the deployment of troops to Kandahar (option 1) rather than to other Southern

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<sup>605</sup> Ibid, 344.

<sup>606</sup> Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 130.

<sup>607</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 344. See also Mark Landler, “The Afghan War and the Evolution of Obama,” *The New York Times*, January 1, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/01/world/asia/obama-afghanistan-war.html>.

<sup>608</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 382-383.

provinces — Herat (option 2) and Chaghcharan (option 3) —, was not subject to controversy. Based on a set of causal beliefs, Canadian FPE acknowledged the political, strategic and logistic importance of option 1. At the political level, Canadian FPE considered the Kandahar deployment critical to respond to the urgent claim from several actors, including President Karzai; the British; the Americans, the Canadian General Ray Henault, acting as the Chairman of NATO’ military committee (2004-2008); and Chris Alexander, the Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan (2003-2005).<sup>609</sup>

At the strategic level, the Canadian FPE highlighted the value of choice to focus on Kandahar insofar as there were like-minded countries in Southern provinces Canada could work with, such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Their shared experience in the Balkans showed all three that they share “similar psychological rules of engagement,”<sup>610</sup> as being shaped by their “similar military capabilities, political and military outlook, ways of operating, and general ethos.”<sup>611</sup> In contrast, a deployment to Herat or Chaghcharan, instead of Kandahar, would have implied working with Italians or Belgians, who did not precisely share the same engagement rules.<sup>612</sup> Furthermore, as compared to Herat and Chaghcharan, Kandahar would also increase Canada’s international recognition and the ability to influence NATO strategic planning as the core of the NATO mission in the South began to revolve around Kandahar.<sup>613</sup> As mentioned, Afghanistan also ended up being a war for prestige. In remembering what General Hillier and DND officials considered in deciding the Kandahar deployment, Minister Graham explained the strategic rationale underpinning the Kandahar deployment in the following terms,

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<sup>609</sup> Ibid, 380-1. See also Sloan, “Canada and NATO,” 5.

<sup>610</sup> Ministry Bill Graham borrowed these words from his Norwegian counterpart, Kristin Devold. Graham, *The Call of the World*, 380.

<sup>611</sup> Willis, “An Unexpected War, A Not-Expected Mission,” 991.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid, 992; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 30; Stein and Land, *The Unexpected War*, 182

<sup>613</sup> Willis, “An Unexpected War, A Not-Expected Mission,” 990.

Though General Hillier was a huge admirer of the United States, he often said to me, ‘The people I want on my wing are not the Americans, because whenever they get into trouble, they just call in the B52s and bomb the shit out of everybody, and that causes more political problems than they solve with their military stuff. I want the nice, solid Brits and the Dutch, and we’re going to go at this in our own way.’ DND officials concurred, pointing out that working with Britain and the Netherlands would also allow us to build on our previously successful partnership with both countries in Bosnia. We conducted long negotiations with them, and ultimately, we all decided to send our PRTs south [...].<sup>614</sup>

At the logistic level, the Canadian FPE realized that Kandahar met all of the operational requirements for a Canadian deployment such as ‘accessibility’ and ‘cost efficiency,’ taking into account that the move from Kabul to Kandahar would be easier operationally. The minimal conditions necessary to guarantee such deployment in Chaghcharan were, for instance, more difficult to meet as there was no suitable airfield. It is worth noting that some critical analysts argued that the Canadian FPE, especially the prime minister, took too much time in deciding the contribution during the new phase of expansion of the NATO mission South and, accordingly, they were forced to choose Kandahar logistically.<sup>615</sup> After all, those analysts held that, in a moment when NATO members had already taken over their commitment, “There was no place left in Afghanistan for Canada to deploy.”<sup>616</sup> Prime Minister Martin responded to this criticism highlighting, however, the logistical reasons underlying the mission.

General Hillier and the senior people at Defence worked out the plans for our future deployment to Kandahar. Some confusion later arose about whether Canada ended up in Kandahar because it was all that was available by the time we made the decision to redeploy. The fact is we could not have deployed earlier because our overstretched troops needed an ‘operational pause’ to recuperate and retrain. Moreover, there were logistical advantages to Kandahar because of its proximity to Kabul, which would allow us to draw on the supply chain we had already set up there.<sup>617</sup>

Despite the consensus on the Kandahar deployment, there were occasional debates inside the FPE. At that moment, keeping S&R where it was still possible — especially in Kabul — (option 4) was presented as an alternative to the COIN strategy in Kandahar (option 1). This debate

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<sup>614</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 380.

<sup>615</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 30; Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, 182.

<sup>616</sup> Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*, 182.

<sup>617</sup> Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 394.

was epitomized by Minister Graham and Minister of International Development Aileen Carroll (2003-2006) during a Cabinet meeting. Secretary Graham was interested in having CIDA spent money in Kandahar to support the military strategy and undertake a genuinely COIN strategy there — or in his terms: a 3D war. However, Minister Carroll was more interested in spending foreign aid dollars to strengthen the Afghan finance ministry because her primary purpose was to avoid a financial crisis in Afghanistan by helping the central government in Kabul.<sup>618</sup> Graham perceived this controversy as a frequent debate between DND and CIDA and held that, unlike the American commanders, who never have to fight for resources to undertake reconstruction efforts, Canadians did, making their strategy comparatively more inefficient:

One thing that particularly annoyed me was that a lot of the money CIDA did spend took the form of government-to-government aid to the central government in Kabul. A feature of the way the Americans did things in Afghanistan that I admired was that military commanders on the ground had substantial aid budgets under their direct control, which they could use so that security and reconstruction efforts in the same area dovetailed. An American general could order the digging of a well or the building of a hospital on his own authority, and the same soldiers who provided security could bring tangible proof to the population that their lives were improving. Canadian officers could not do that: all they could do was call Ottawa, where we had to fight to get the money from CIDA.<sup>619</sup>

For their part, based on the Martin Liberals' decision to get to Kandahar in 2005, the Harper Conservatives reaffirmed and strengthened the COIN strategy (option 1). Under the premise that “it's time to consolidate those gains on the ground and use them to advance reconstruction, because the long-suffering Afghan people desperately need hope for a better future for their families and communities,”<sup>620</sup> the Harper Conservatives took advantage of the Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-AFG) to conduct COIN in Afghanistan. The JTF-AFG served well for this purpose. Not only had it gathered the efforts of all Canadian Armed Forces assets deployed in southwest Asia, but it

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<sup>618</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 391.

<sup>619</sup> Bill Graham, “Afghanistan – Some Lessons Learned: A Personal Political Perspective,” in *Australia and Canada in Afghanistan: Perspective On A Mission*, eds. Jack Cunningham and William Maley (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2015), 67.

<sup>620</sup> Stephen Harper, “Prime Minister Stephen Harper Announces Additional Funding for Aid in Afghanistan” (Ottawa, ON: February 26, 2007).

also was made up of several elements that allowed the Harper conservatives to meet the ‘clear,’ ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components. After all, the JTP-AGF, whose headquarters were located at Kandahar airfield, included mostly a battle group, the Operational Mentor Liaison Team (OMLT), the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT-A), and the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT).<sup>621</sup> The battle group aimed to provide security in Kandahar by supporting the Afghan National Army and cooperating with other ISAF forces and, above all, ‘clearing’ armed groups of insurgents. The OMLT and SAT-A sought to meet the COIN’s ‘hold’ component. The OMLT aimed to train and advise the Afghan National Army units in Kandahar, whereas the SAT-A, which was mostly made up of Canadian colonels positioned at the top of several Afghan government ministries, sought to advise the entire Afghan government to implement a cohesive strategy against the Taliban insurgency.<sup>622</sup> This team also set out to refine the PRT’s performance and connect the Canadian and Afghan governments’ strategic goals in Afghanistan.<sup>623</sup> Finally, the PRT met the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components. By facilitating the reconstruction and development efforts from several international donors and contractors, the PRT sought to strengthen the Afghan government’s legitimacy and authority.<sup>624</sup>

Like the Martin Liberals, the Harper Conservatives faced similar challenges regarding increased interdepartmental controversies, which resulted in hurdles to conducting their preferred COIN strategy (option 1). One of the most salient controversies was about the Strategic Advisory

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<sup>621</sup> Government of Canada, “Joint Task Force Afghanistan.” Date modified April 11, 2014. Accessed January 13, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/recently-completed/operation-athena/joint-task-force-afghanistan.html>.

<sup>622</sup> Jim Cox, “Afghanistan: The Canadian Military Mission,” *INFOSERIES* (Ottawa, ON: Parliamentary Information and Research Service, November 6, 2007), 1-5. Kimberly Marten, “From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 223; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 75.

<sup>623</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Michel-Henri St-Louis, “The Strategic Advisory Team in Afghanistan – Part of the Canadian Comprehensive Approach to Stability Operations,” *Canadian Military Journal* 9, no. 3 (2009): 60; Marten, “From Kabul to Kandahar,” 223; David Auerswald and Stephen Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2012), 67.

<sup>624</sup> Cox, “Afghanistan,” 3.

Team (SAT-A), which was part of the Kandahar original plan, as proposed by General Hillier and backed by Prime Minister Martin and Minister Graham. Despite its strategic usefulness for COIN strategy, SAT-A was subject to criticism from DFAIT and CIDA and even DND's civilian personal. Civilian personal at home and Afghanistan deemed it a token of military overreaching, duplicating civilian efforts.<sup>625</sup> For them, the SAT-A could have even duplicated the efforts of international agencies, ISAF and U.S. Headquarters (Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan, CFC-A) in Afghanistan.<sup>626</sup> Of particular interest was how DFAIT shifted its stance as to this initiative. While Ambassador Alexander was one of the SAT-A's key promoters, his successor Arif Lalani was one of his primary opponents. In the end, the Canadian FPE terminated this program in 2008 and did not supplant it with another similar initiative.<sup>627</sup> Even though Bill Graham was not in office when this issue intensified between 2006 and 2008, he was worried about this controversy as it epitomized "flaws in [the] 3D strategy." Graham explained this issue in the following terms:

Instead of DND, DFAIT, and CIDA working in harmony toward common objectives, they often clashed over fundamental differences or petty feuds. Among the casualties was the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) [...] some Ottawa officials—including some in Defence— argued that [the SAT's] functions would be more properly performed by civilian personnel, whether from DFAIT or CIDA, despite all the evidence that few civilians with the necessary qualifications were willing to work in the violent conditions in Afghanistan. They also worried that the SAT had become Hillier's personal 'embassy' in Kabul, offering strategic advice directly to Karzai and his government without going through the proper channels, maybe even for the benefit of DND itself. Many who were most familiar with the on-the-ground situation in Kabul saw the closing of the SAT as a significant loss. In my view it was driven by inter-departmental jealousies rather than a genuine disagreement over the best way to achieve our national goals.<sup>628</sup>

Since this controversy occurred at the mid-managerial level, and there were no cleavages at the senior level, the Harper Conservatives managed to keep their COIN strategy. Above all, with

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<sup>625</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 75.

<sup>626</sup> St-Louis, "The Strategic Advisory Team in Afghanistan," 61.

<sup>627</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 75; Marten, "From Kabul to Kandahar," 222 and 224.

<sup>628</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 389.

a prime minister controlling the strategy and how it was presented to the public,<sup>629</sup> the Harper Conservatives managed to renew the COIN mission in 2006 and 2008. Conservatives also managed to divide the opposition and, accordingly, to define the strategy with a high room for manoeuvre at home (Chapter 6 will return to this issue).<sup>630</sup> This room for manoeuvre was also favoured by the unipolar permissive strategic environment (as discussed in chapter 3). In this regard, the COIN strategy evolution depended more on the Canadian FPE's perception and the development of Afghan irregular warfare than on domestic and international constraints.

At this point, it was apparent that having chosen Kandahar as its theatre of operations, the Canadian FPE perceived it necessary to engage not only with the 'clearing' of insurgency but also with stabilization and reconstruction. Yet, the evolution of Afghan irregular warfare forced them to think of COIN's 'clear' goal as the dominant component between 2006 and 2008. Indeed, the Canadian-led Medusa Operation aimed at fighting against the Taliban in the Panjwawe and Zhari districts of Kandahar Province marked this period. During this battle, CAF and their American, Dutch, and British allies had no alternative but to stop an enemy that was threatening the Western campaign by massing their troops and by using conventional warfare strategies in the form of "Soviet tactical defence."<sup>631</sup>

Despite having trained for undertaking COIN's three goals, CAF saw themselves forced to react to the relentless, large-scale battle only. What is more, even if CAF and their allies were capable of "clearing" the area, the scale of the battle made COIN intelligence a difficult and even impossible task to fulfill. This type of intelligence would have been critical to undertake the 'hold'

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<sup>629</sup> Boucher, "Selling Afghanistan," 722 and 724-725.

<sup>630</sup> Stephan Saideman, "What the Afghanistan Mission Teaches Canada," *International Journal* 72, no. 1 (2017): 137-138.

<sup>631</sup> Adam Day, "Operation Medusa: The Battle for Panjwai," *Legion. Canada's Military History Magazine*, January 26, 2008. <https://legionmagazine.com/en/2008/01/operation-medusa-part-3-the-fall-of-objective-rugby/>.

and ‘build’ components of COIN as it would entail knowing the Afghan tribal system and the Taliban’s deep connection with the Afghan social fabric.<sup>632</sup> With Operation Medusa, Canada and its allies prevented Kandahar and probably the entire country from falling into the Taliban’s hands. However, the lack of counterinsurgency intelligence allowed the Taliban to transition from conventional to guerrilla warfare.<sup>633</sup>

However, the overemphasizing of the ‘clear’ component of COIN was untenable in the face of mounting casualties. Thus, the Canadian FPE decided to review the strategy in 2008. Not only did this review implicitly include the debate regarding the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ or the civilian components of COIN, as occurred in the American case, but it also anticipated by several months U.S. General McCrystal’s assessment. In a public speech on October 12, 2007, Prime Minister Harper announced a committee’s formation, which would help move the debate in that direction.<sup>634</sup> As chaired by John Manley, Liberal MP between 1988 and 2004 and deputy Prime Minister between 2002 and 2003 and Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2000 and 2002, this committee would examine four options and deem others, if necessary, as suggested by Prime Minister Harper. Taking into account that the option of keeping the COIN strategy in Kandahar (option 1) was never left out, the Harper Conservatives and the Manley committee considered five options in total in 2008.

Option 2 would be “to continue training the Afghan army and police with the goal of creating self-sufficient indigenous security forces in Kandahar province so Canadian troops can start withdrawing in February 2009.”<sup>635</sup> This option, while already being undertaken by the OMLT

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<sup>632</sup> Adnan R. Khan, “It’s Time for a Hard Look at Operation Medusa,” *Macleans*, May 29, 2007. <https://www.macleans.ca/news/world/its-time-for-a-hard-look-at-operation-medusa/>.

<sup>633</sup> Yet, Canada adopted a similar selective COIN strategy, as advanced by the US, that is, a COIN strategy aimed at clearing, holding and building a determined area. Graham, *The Call of the World*, 399.

<sup>634</sup> Stephen Harper, “Prime Minister Harper Announces Independent Advisory Panel on Afghan Mission” (Ottawa, October 12, 2007).

<sup>635</sup> Harper, “Prime Minister Harper Announces Independent Advisory Panel on Afghan Mission.”

at that moment, would imply leaving out the ‘clear’ component.<sup>636</sup> Option 3 would be “to focus on reconstruction in Kandahar province, which would require some other country or countries to take over our security role.”<sup>637</sup> This option would similarly entail brushing aside the ‘clear’ component and, accordingly, negotiating with NATO to get an equivalent battle group to replace the Canadian one.<sup>638</sup> Option 4 would be “to shift Canadian security and reconstruction efforts to another region of Afghanistan.”<sup>639</sup> This option would imply keeping COIN’s three components, yet a sensitive negotiation with NATO would be necessary to find another appropriate place that meets the alliance’s requirements.<sup>640</sup> For Canada, this option would also require re-examining the political, strategic and logistical reasons considered in choosing Kandahar as a theatre of operations, as appraised by the Martin Liberals. Finally, option 5 would be “to withdraw all Canadian military forces after February 2009 except a small contingent to provide security for our remaining aid workers and diplomats.”<sup>641</sup> This option would simply end the Canadian involvement in NATO-ISAF mission.<sup>642</sup> In a nutshell, options 2-5 would imply modifying, or reversing the COIN strategy.

The Manley Report “concluded that [the options 2-5] are deficient.”<sup>643</sup> They precisely left out a comprehensive approach, like that adopted by the COIN strategy, brushed aside the strategic advantages of fighting in Kandahar without “setting artificial deadlines in time”<sup>644</sup> or failed to acknowledge how hard it could be to find a replacement in Kandahar from other NATO member

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<sup>636</sup> Cox, “Afghanistan,” 4.

<sup>637</sup> Harper, “Prime Minister Harper Announces Independent Advisory Panel on Afghan Mission.”

<sup>638</sup> Cox, “Afghanistan,” 4.

<sup>639</sup> Harper, “Prime Minister Harper Announces Independent Advisory Panel on Afghan Mission.”

<sup>640</sup> Cox, “Afghanistan,” 4.

<sup>641</sup> Harper, “Prime Minister Harper Announces Independent Advisory Panel on Afghan Mission.”

<sup>642</sup> Cox, “Afghanistan,” 4.

<sup>643</sup> John Manley (Chair) et al., *Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan. Final Report* (Ottawa, Ontario, 2008), 30.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

in the case of Canadian withdrawal.<sup>645</sup> In deeming those options deficient, the Report sought to provide another option aimed at reorienting the Afghanistan mission. It came in the form of a refined version of the COIN strategy.

The COIN strategy between 2006 and 2008 had overemphasized the ‘clear’ component, so that the Report drew attention to recovering the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components. Yet, the Report was cautious that the pendulum would swing too far, by brushing aside the first component. After all, recovering the COIN strategy’s original goals would imply granting all three components the same strategic value. The Report held that “a successful counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan requires [...] more ISAF forces,” which makes Canadian contribution critical to the alliance’s success.<sup>646</sup> It also stated that “Canada’s contribution to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan should be revamped giving higher priority [...] to direct, bilateral project assistance that addresses the immediate, practical needs of the Afghan people, especially in Kandahar province, as well as longer-term capacity building.”<sup>647</sup> The Report finally argued that this renewed, balanced commitment with the COIN strategy should go hand in hand with an equivalent effort from the allies. Indeed, the Report made the Canadian commitment contingent on ISAF allies’ effort in the following terms.

[T]o improve the safety and operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces in Kandahar, the Government should secure for them, no later than February 2009 [...] “an additional battle group (of about 1,000 soldiers) to Kandahar by NATO and/or other allies [...] To better ensure the safety and effectiveness of the Canadian contingent, the Government should also secure medium helicopter lift capacity and high-performance Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance before February 2009.”<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> Ibid, 30-33.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid, 35 and 38.

The Manley Report thus helped the Harper Conservatives to refine their COIN causal beliefs. The Report allowed the Harper administration to recognize that a new position aimed at coordinating the whole civilian effort in Kandahar, especially undertaking a cohesive development and reconstruction strategy, was critical to the mission's success. It came in the form of the appointment of the Representative of Canada in Kandahar (RoCK), aimed at coordinating all Canadian civilian efforts, including those being undertaken by "DFAIT, CIDA, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Department of Public Safety and the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC)".<sup>649</sup> In being "coequal with the CF commander," the RoCK allowed civilian agencies to have more direct access to foreign policy implementation. Meanwhile, the Harper Conservatives managed to control the three components of the strategy more efficiently.<sup>650</sup>

The Harper administration also took advantage of the Report's recommendation suggesting to pressure allies to support the Canadian involvement in Kandahar in the form of a battle group, heavy-lift helicopters and Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR). The battle group was necessary to continue with the 'clear and 'hold' components, whereas UAV and ISR were critical to protecting CAF from Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) from the Taliban and other insurgent forces. All of those criteria were met. The United States provided the battle group, and the Canadian government was capable of buying the required helicopters and UAV from the U.S. army and a Canadian firm, respectively.<sup>651</sup>

Those factors, along with the 2009 U.S. troop surge, allowed the Canadian COIN effort to be concentrated on a narrower area of operations. As the American FPE decided to send 30,000 troops, most of them to the Kandahar province, the Canadian-led Task Force Kandahar (TPK)

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<sup>649</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 47.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid.

<sup>651</sup> Sloan, *Canada and NATO*, 8-10.

managed to focus its activities on Dand and Panjwavy Districts in that province. According to a study conducted by Caroline Leprince on Canadian COIN in Kandahar, in those districts, Canadians were able to develop the village approach aimed at empowering districts and villages. The purpose was to provide security and infrastructure in return for local chieftains' promise to guarantee fiscal transparency, contribute to developing a security network and encourage other communities to undertake the same efforts.<sup>652</sup> Above all, security would be provided by the Afghan National Army troops after being mentored by the Canadian forces. Once COIN's three components were achieved, Canadian troops would move on village by village to replicate the model.<sup>653</sup>

According to its proponents, the essential advantage of the Canadian selective COIN in the form of the village approach in specific districts was that it would help to leverage Canadian leadership and prestige in Afghanistan. In theory, with a more focused, balanced strategy in mind, Canada would demonstrate its ability to conduct a successful COIN strategy while its allies would acknowledge its efforts. There is evidence that the Canadian implementation of the village model in Afghanistan allowed the Canadian FPE to meet their leadership and reputation expectations. As implemented in the Deh-e-Bagh village in the Dand District since June 2009, Canada's village model was praised by General McChrystal. He argued that "more model villages around the country, adding that such sustainable-development projects are key to winning the support of the population."<sup>654</sup> Indeed, General McChrystal's rearrangement of the COIN strategy essentially drew on Canada's village model.<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> Leprince, "Living Among the population in Southern Afghanistan", 106.

<sup>653</sup> The Globe and Mail, "In Accord with Canadian Thinking," *The Globe and Mail*, August 8, 2009, A 16.<https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/docview/382624698/fulltext/9F3C15B25BD54810PQ/1?accountid=9894>.

<sup>654</sup> CBC News, "Canada's Afghan 'Model Village' Praised by U.S. General," *CBC News*, June 25, 2009. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canada-s-afghan-model-village-praised-by-u-s-general-1.838092>

<sup>655</sup> The Globe and Mail, "In Accord with Canadian thinking," A16.

What is more, Caroline Leprince's study, as mentioned above, demonstrated that Generals Jonathan Vance and Dean Milner managed to have a strong influence on American officers, allowing for revisioning the American COIN strategy in practice. Indeed, they enhanced the strategy itself. Canadians sought to upgrade the 'clear-hold-build' approach by replacing it by the 'define-shape-clear-hold-build-enable' model. That is to say, the 'define', 'shape' and 'enable' components were added to the strategy. The 'define' component aimed to gather intelligence information to undertake better operations. As mentioned, one of the COIN strategy's failures was the lack of knowledge of the tribal system, the role of the local leaders and the significance of both of these factors to success in the implementation of COIN. The 'define' component would fill this gap. The 'shape' component would seek to provide options other than kinetic operations, based on deeper knowledge of local leaders, population and the insurgent forces in place. The final stage, informed by the 'enable' component, would provide permanent stability by encouraging locals to find their own solutions.<sup>656</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Contrary to structural realism's expectation that countries placed *differently* in the international system will behave and define their strategic objectives *differently*, American and Canadian FPE found themselves adopting similar foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan between 2005 and 2011. Drawing on the analysis of American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs and causal beliefs during the intervention, this chapter's primary argument was that this similarity was the result of comparable beliefs during this period.

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<sup>656</sup> Leprince, "Living among the Population in Southern Afghanistan," 111-112.

They embraced similar principled beliefs as close allies. Such beliefs allowed them to perceive similarly the need to intervene in Afghanistan by following us-, them-, and we-justifications during the entire intervention. The American and Canadian FPEs embraced not only similar justifications to intervene in Afghanistan but also equal engagement levels after 2005. The former does not necessarily conflict with structural realism's central tenets, but the latter undoubtedly represents a challenge. Even though structural realism could explain allies justifying military interventions similarly, it would hardly be capable of explaining similar engagement levels of allies with different material capabilities.

Based on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, this chapter explained these engagement levels taking into account American and Canadian FPEs' changing geographical priorities and perceptions of what would imply staying in Afghanistan in the long run. These priorities and perceptions were analyzed as principled beliefs, along with the us-, them-, and we-justifications. On the one hand, American and Canadian FPEs perceived Afghanistan as their top foreign policy priority between 2005 and 2011. Before 2005, the American FPE regarded the Iraq War not only right and just but also the central front of the war on terrorism, whereas the Canadian FPE deemed Darfur and Haiti as important as Afghanistan. After 2011, the American FPE made a strategic turn to the Asia-Pacific region due to their changing perceptions of the global distribution of power, whereas the Canadian FPE started to prepare their exit from Afghanistan, changing from a combat to a training mission. On the other hand, the American FPE resolved to increase their commitment to end the war promptly and, accordingly, to avoid an open-ended commitment, whereas the Canadian FPE made the same commitment, but for different reasons; they saw Afghanistan as a war for prestige. It would allow Canada to be a reliable American and European ally, as well as a global player in the long run.

This chapter, however, drew more attention to the American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs because they help to understand the nature of the United States and Canada's increased engagement after 2005 in-depth. Specifically, examining the evolution of these beliefs allows for understanding that, despite their similar ends in Afghanistan, Americans and Canadians varied in how they attempted to achieve these ends. Indeed, they chose different means, namely, Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R), Counterterrorism (CT) and Counterinsurgency (COIN). These means attempted to operationalize in Afghanistan the options offered by the strategic environment. Gravitating toward the sole great power and opportunist foreign policy were operationalized as S&R and COIN in the Canadian case, whereas offensive dominance was operationalized as CT and COIN in the American case.

Even though the American FPE debated narrow and broad approaches to CT, depending on their perceptions regarding the utility of merging the fight against the enemy with nation-building, they ended up choosing the narrow approach. Not only did this approach fit with U.S. conservative nationalism and the evolution of Afghan warfare, but it also derived from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's causal beliefs. During this period, the Canadian FPE selected S&R as a lesser-risk operation as compared to CT. Yet, they transitioned from a low-risk approach to a moderate-risk approach. This constituted risk escalation depending on the level of military engagement. Not only was it a result of Canadian negotiation with the United States and other NATO members, but it also derived from Prime Minister Martin and Minister Graham's causal beliefs. They were interested in seeing Afghanistan as a 3D war.

Since 2005, both American and Canadian FPEs were forced to shift their approaches to the irregular warfare in Afghanistan. Americans and Canadians realized that their respective approaches aimed at fighting directly with the enemy and stabilizing and reconstructing the secure

areas, respectively, were not enough. They had to increase their engagement, which came in the form of COIN. As being conducted in Afghanistan, COIN was more ambitious than CT and S&R. At the strategic level, it can be argued that COIN was a blend of both CT and S&R by addressing ‘clear’, ‘hold’, and ‘build’ objectives.

The analysis of how American and Canadian FPEs sought to meet their security goals in Afghanistan — to protect the Canadian and American peoples, to enhance the Afghan quality of life, and to contribute to the global stability — relied on neoclassical realism’s refined logic of consequentialism. Thus, the chapter focused on identifying how they selected strategic options, among others, based on their utility to fulfil such goals. The refined logic of consequentialism was particularly relevant to understand American and Canadian perceptions of their strategic options after 2005. On the one hand, the American FPE examined three options, namely, selective COIN (option 1), fully resourced COIN (option 2) in the form of the increase of troops (option 2A) and a stronger, smarter and comprehensive strategy (option 2B), and CT plus (option 3). On the other hand, the Martin Liberals examined four options, namely, to conduct COIN in Kandahar (option 1), in Herat (option 2) and Chaghcharan (option 3), or to keep S&R where it was still possible (option 4). For their part, the Harper Conservatives examined four options, namely, to keep the COIN strategy in Kandahar (option 1), to focus solely on the training of the Afghan army and police (option 2), to return to S&R in Kandahar (option 3), to keep COIN, but in another region (option 4), or to withdraw the CAF after February 2009 (option 5). In examining these options, the Obama and Harper administrations both ended up reaffirming their COIN strategy. This chapter termed this strategic option as selective COIN to refer to the American and Canadian intention to narrow their COIN theatre of operations.

In the final analysis, based on their own preferences, both of these countries followed their own strategic paths, finding themselves adopting comparable belief systems between 2005 and 2011. In this regard, the present chapter constituted the second piece of the puzzle of this study. Chapter 3 addressed the first puzzle in examining the strategic environment shaping American and Canadian foreign policies towards Afghanistan and, especially, in examining the impact of the unipolar structure and the nature of the Afghan irregular warfare. That chapter argued that unipolarity allowed Canada and the United States to enjoy a high room for maneuver. Yet, the United States and Canada adapted themselves to the evolution of Afghan warfare, especially to the strengthening of the insurgency in 2005/2006. Chapter 5 will examine the third piece of the puzzle of this study, namely, the American and Canadian PFE's ability to mobilize domestic resources to meet their principled and causal beliefs.

## Domestic Hurdles, Canadian and American FPEs' Structural Autonomy and Resource-Extraction Capability

This chapter aims to assess the American and Canadian foreign policy executives' (FPE) ability to mobilize domestic resources as another secondary, yet direct, cause of American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention. This assessment constitutes the third and final analytical step of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. To examine Canadian and American FPEs' ability to mobilize domestic resources, the version of neoclassical realism used in this study suggests examining “domestic hurdles to such mobilization” and “state power in the form of [resource] extraction capabilities” to conduct their preferred foreign and security policy.<sup>657</sup>

As chapter 2 stated, domestic hurdles come mostly in the form of public and legislative opposition. It means that such hurdles are derived from the level of public satisfaction and the degree of elite consensus – as expressed in the level of agreement between the FPE and the legislative branch or between the governing and opposition parties – regarding the FPE's foreign and security policy. Neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy considers that state power depends on the structural autonomy of the FPE to make foreign and security policy decisions within their respective political systems. Specifically, it analyzes the FPE's structural autonomy according to constitutional and institutional arrangements informing the executive-legislative relationship, meaning the executive's room for manoeuvre to make decisions *vis-à-vis* legislative oversight.<sup>658</sup> State power also refers to the FPE's ability to forge elite consensus and promote social

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<sup>657</sup> Jeffrey Taliaferro and Robert Wishart, “Neoclassical realism: Domestic Opportunities for Great Power Intervention,” in *Making Sense of International Relations*, eds. Jennifer Anne Sterling-Folker (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc), 48.

<sup>658</sup> See Norrin M. Ripsman, *Peacemaking by Democracies. The Effect of State Autonomy of the post-World Settlements* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

cohesion around their foreign and security policy. When elite consensus or social cohesion are unlikely, neoclassical realism addresses the FPE's ability to overcome the legislative branch and the public's obstacles.<sup>659</sup> Both structural autonomy and agential ability to deal with opposition impact the FPE's capabilities to extract domestic resources in the form of legislative appropriations. In the end, those resources are critical to implementing their foreign and security policies.<sup>660</sup>

Because chapter 4 showed the convergence of Canadian and American COIN belief systems from 2005/2006 through 2011, the current chapter focuses on the same period to assess American and Canadian state power. Neoclassical realism equates state power to the FPEs' ability to mobilize domestic resources to conduct their foreign policies by overcoming domestic hurdles and taking advantage of their structural autonomy. This means that this chapter's assessment of American and Canadian state power is synonymous with examining the aforementioned ability. In focusing on the period between 2005/2006 and 2011, this chapter helps examine the link between American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs and causal beliefs and American and Canadian state power during this period.

This chapter's core argument is that both the American and Canadian FPE managed to implement their preferred security policies due to their ability to take advantage of their structural autonomy to overcome domestic hurdles. Such autonomy allowed them to deal with increasing legislative and public opposition to the intervention between 2006 and 2011. Above all, during this period, American and Canadian FPE showed their ability to extract fiscal resources to

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<sup>659</sup> See Randall Schweller, *Unanswered Threats. Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), chapters 2-3; Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power. The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); and Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries. Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>660</sup> See Jeffrey Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2006): 464-495.

undertake their COIN foreign and security policies. Such abilities were by far more profound than during the period between 2001 and 2005.

Sections 1 to 4 examine the elite consensus and broad public support informing Canadian and American foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention's early years. These sections also explain how the elite consensus broke apart and the public support dropped in the United States and Canada when the FPE started to formulate and implement the COIN strategy. Even though the decline of the legislative and public support was more and more apparent between 2005 and 2011, section 5 explains that American and Canadian FPE enjoyed a similarly high structural autonomy to deal with those domestic hurdles. This section contradicts the conventional wisdom that presidential and Westminster parliamentary systems are different in terms of the FPE's room for manoeuvre to make decisions. American presidents' bold assertions of unilateral power regarding security and defence issues since the Cold War and the culture of Congress' deference to the president as a commander in chief have rendered the American FPE's structural autonomy similar to that enjoyed by the Canadian Prime Minister. In practice, therefore, the American FPE's room for manoeuvre is similar to the Canadian Prime Minister's war prerogative.

Section 6 examines how the American and Canadian FPEs took advantage of their structural autonomy levels to overcome public and legislative opposition. Based on such levels of autonomy, both American and Canadian FPEs attempted to control how the public regarded the Afghanistan intervention and, especially, the COIN strategy. The American FPE sought to hide several apparent failures of the intervention through a message of coherence and strategic breakthrough so as to legitimate American engagement.<sup>661</sup> Despite waging a war, the Canadian

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<sup>661</sup> Craig Whitlock, "The Afghanistan Papers. A Secret History of the War," *The Washington Post*, December 9, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-confidential-documents/>; Clayton Thomas, "The Washington Post's 'Afghanistan Papers' and U.S. Policy: Main Points and Possible Questions for Congress," *Congressional Research Service*, R46197, January 28, 2020.

FPE used the terms ‘mission’ and ‘engagement,’ preventing the public from being aware that Canada was at war, especially between 2005 and 2011.<sup>662</sup> Some differences were encountered regarding American and Canadian strategies to overcome domestic hurdles. American FPE made high-profile public speeches rather than lobbying the individual members of Congress.<sup>663</sup> In contrast, the Canadian FPE attempted to silence the opposition by consulting Parliament about the intervention’s extension and then stopped talking about the intervention.<sup>664</sup> This section uses the terms *going public* and *going silent* to characterize both of those strategies.<sup>665</sup>

Despite using different strategies to deal with the legislative branch and the public, the final section argues that both American and Canadian FPEs managed to obtain relatively similar levels of financial resources to undertake their COIN strategy. Even though the United States and Canada’s fiscal resources were certainly different in absolute terms, a percentage analysis of fiscal resource distribution shows the similarity of American and Canadian resources-extraction capabilities to undertake the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ components of the COIN strategy. Above all, it shows that these countries’ similar levels of engagements in Afghanistan were apparent not only in rhetorical but also in material terms.

### **1. The elite consensus during the Afghanistan intervention’s early years**

In the aftermath of 9/11, the American and Canadian FPEs enjoyed a high room for manoeuvre to formulate and implement foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. This came in the form

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<sup>662</sup> Jean-Christophe Boucher and Kim Richard Nossal, *The Politics of War: Canada’s Afghanistan Mission, 2001-14* (Toronto, UBC Press, 2017), 6-7, 44.

<sup>663</sup> Kelly McHugh, “A Tale of Two Surges: Comparing the Politics of the 2007 Iraq Surge and the 2009 Afghanistan Surge,” *Sage Open* (2015): 4.

<sup>664</sup> Stephen M. Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust. Lessons Learned from Canada’s War in Afghanistan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 49-50.

<sup>665</sup> On the term ‘going public,’ see Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1986).

of elite consensus, as depicted by American and Canadian political parties' stances on the Afghanistan intervention during the legislative debates and their ideological platforms. In the United States, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents approved in Congress a joint resolution allowing

the President [...] to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.<sup>666</sup>

Such a resolution, which passed on September 18 with a vote of 420 to 1 in the House — with ten Representatives who did not vote —<sup>667</sup> and 98 to 0 in the Senate — with two Senators who did not vote,<sup>668</sup> granted to the American FPE “one of the largest blank checks in the country’s history.”<sup>669</sup> The only dissenting vote came from Democratic Representative Barbara Lee during the debate of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress’s first session on September 14, 2001. Representative Lee warned about the risks of an unrestrained response aimed at relying exclusively on military action. Not only could it be incapable of avoiding more terrorist acts against the United States, but it could also endanger more civilians amid the crossfire. Lee also highlighted how an immoderate response could entail inflaming race, religion, and ethnicity-based prejudice and bring about an open-ended commitment in Afghanistan similar to the Vietnam War.<sup>670</sup>

In Canada, elite consensus came in the form of multi-partisan support through the endorsement of the Canadian Alliance, the Progressive Conservatives, and the Bloc Québécois to

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<sup>666</sup> US Congress. Public Law 107-40, section 2 (a), September 18, 2001.

<sup>667</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, Proceedings and Debates of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session 147, no. 120 (September 14, 2001), H5683.

<sup>668</sup> U.S. Senate, Roll Call Vote 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, September 14, 2001.

<sup>669</sup> New York Times - Editorial Board, “End the War in Afghanistan. It is Time to Bring American Soldiers Back Home,” *The New York Times*, February 3, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/03/opinion/afghanistan-war.html>.

<sup>670</sup> Barbara Lee (D-California, Democrat), U.S. House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, Proceedings and Debates of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session 147, no. 120 (September 14, 2001), H5672.

the Liberal Chrétien administration's decision to cooperate with the United States. These parties also supported the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that defines the principle of collective defense. Like the United States, there was only one dissenting voice against the decision.<sup>671</sup> As the NDP leader between 1995 and 2003, MP Alexa McDonough encouraged, during the 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament's first session on September 17, 2001, a restrained and reflexive response that would honour the traditional Canadian peaceful position regarding conflict resolution. What is more, McDonough argued that Canadians' role as Americans' close friends should be to advise them to avoid acting based on blind revenge. A revenge-based military response would not prevent terrorist acts from happening again as it would end up victimizing innocent people around the world. In this regard, McDonough's position shared several points with those advanced by the U.S. Representative Lee.<sup>672</sup>

With only two dissenting voices in the United States and Canada, there was broad consensus in both countries regarding foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. However, this consensus started to break apart between 2004 and 2006. The next sections address these developments in the United States and Canada.

## **2. The breakdown of the elite consensus in the United States**

Republican and Democrats in the United States started to deem the Afghanistan intervention differently in 2004. Specifically, their differences become irreconcilable in considering the Democratic and Republican parties' platforms in 2004 and 2008. Republicans thought that the Bush administration had successfully paved the way for Afghanistan's liberation and managed to

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<sup>671</sup> Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 106.

<sup>672</sup> Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> session 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001).

build a successful partnership with Pakistan within the War on Terror. The 2004 Republican party platform expressed its stance on Afghanistan in the following terms:

Today, Afghanistan is a world away from the nightmare of the Taliban. Twenty-eight million people are free. That country has a good and just president. Boys and girls are being educated. Women are respected. Many refugees have returned home to rebuild their country, and a presidential election is scheduled for this fall. The terror camps are closed and the Afghan government is helping us to hunt the Taliban and terrorists in remote regions. Today, because we acted to liberate Afghanistan, a threat has been removed, and the American people are safer [...] Three years ago, Pakistan was one of the few countries in the world that recognized the Taliban regime. Al Qaeda was active and recruiting in Pakistan. Pakistan served as a transit point for al Qaeda terrorists leaving Afghanistan on missions of murder [...] Today, the governments of the United States and Pakistan are working closely in the fight against terror. Pakistan has helped capture Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the operational planner behind the September 11 attacks, and other terrorists. Pakistani forces are rounding up terrorists along their nation's western border. Today, because we are working with Pakistani leaders, Pakistan is an ally in the War on Terror, and the American people are safer.<sup>673</sup>

In contrast, the 2004 Democratic platform regarded the American intervention as a substantially mishandled foreign and security policy. Democrats argued that the Bush administration had not seriously taken the long-term component of this policy. Thus, the Afghanistan policy should focus on objectives other than overthrowing the Taliban to guarantee a safer and more stable country. Specifically, the United States should draw attention to reconstruction efforts, the expansion of NATO forces, the Afghan army's training, the reintegration of warlords, and the fight against the opium trade. The Democrat platform expressed this matter in the following terms:

Nowhere is the need for collective endeavor greater than in Afghanistan. The Bush Administration has badly mishandled the war's aftermath. Two years ago, President Bush promised a Marshall Plan to rebuild that country. Instead, he has all but turned away from Afghanistan, allowing it to become again a potential haven for terrorists. We must expand NATO forces outside Kabul. We must accelerate training for the Afghan army and police. The program to disarm and reintegrate warlord militias into society must be expedited and expanded into a mainstream strategy. We will attack the exploding opium trade ignored by the Bush Administration by doubling our counter-narcotics assistance to the Karzai Government and reinvigorating the regional drug control program.<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>673</sup> Republican Party, *The 2004 Republican Party Platform: A Safer World and a More Hopeful America*, Agosto 30, 2004. Available from The American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2004-republican-party-platform>.

<sup>674</sup> Democratic Party, *2004 Democratic Party Platform*, July 27, 2004. Available from The American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2004-democratic-party-platform>.

Besides, the Democratic platform did not regard Pakistan as an ally in the war on terror. Instead, it considered Pakistan regarding its tensions with India and, accordingly, the increasing regional instability. Above all, the platform was concerned about how terrorists operating in Afghanistan could access nuclear weapons through Pakistan.<sup>675</sup>

By 2008, the disagreements between Republicans and Democrats about the Afghanistan policy became more profound. Not only did they disagree about the progress of the existing Afghanistan policy, but they also became even more divided from each other's positions regarding the burden that the invasion of Iraq was having on the Afghanistan intervention. The 2008 Republican party platform insisted on the United States' ability to advance its objectives in Afghanistan, even if the intervention required a more robust strategy to succeed and depended on Pakistan's vital role as an actual strategic partner in the War on Terror. It also argued that the American government should not conduct a more robust strategy in Afghanistan in the form of COIN at the expense of the Iraq War. After all, Republicans regarded Iraq as equally strategically important to American national interests as Afghanistan, which would echo President Bush's principled beliefs, as explained in chapter 5. The Republicans addressed this topic in the following terms:

In the seven years since U.S. troops helped topple the Taliban, there has been great progress — but much remains to be done. We must prevail in Afghanistan to prevent the reemergence of the Taliban or an al Qaeda sanctuary in that country. A nationwide counterinsurgency strategy led by a unified commander is an essential prerequisite to success. Additional forces are also necessary, both from NATO countries and through a doubling in size of the Afghan army. The international community must work with the Afghan government to better address the problems of illegal drugs, governance, and corruption. We flatly reject the Democratic Party's idea that America can succeed in Afghanistan only by failure in Iraq [...] We must expand our ties with the government and the people of Pakistan. We support their efforts to improve democratic governance and strengthen civil society, and we appreciate the difficult but essential role Pakistan plays in the fight against terror.<sup>676</sup>

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<sup>675</sup> Ibid.

<sup>676</sup> Republican Party, *2008 Republican Party Platform*, September 1, 2008. Available from the American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2008-republican-party-platform>.

In contrast, the 2008 Democratic party platform deemed the Afghanistan policy as one that had squandered a critical opportunity to build a new American century. As a result of not having concentrated sufficient resources on Afghanistan due to the Iraq war's distraction, the United States undermined its prestige and leadership globally. According to this platform, this policy was also unable to make the Afghanistan-Pakistan nexus, that is, to deem Pakistan, especially the tribal regions, as a haven for al-Qaeda. Thus, this policy should build a partnership with Pakistan to include it as a part of the American and NATO strategies. In this regard, the Democrats' stance on Pakistan changed compared to that held in 2004. That year, Pakistan was not associated yet with Afghanistan within the coalition's perception of threats to be faced. As mentioned, Democrats had solely linked Pakistan as a threat to nuclear proliferation and the tensions with India. The Democratic Party held the stance above in the following terms:

After September 11, we could have built the foundation for a new American century, but instead we instigated an unnecessary war in Iraq before finishing a necessary war in Afghanistan [...] The greatest threat to the security of the Afghan people—and the American people—lies in the tribal regions of Pakistan, where terrorists train, plot attacks, and strike into Afghanistan and move back across the border. We cannot tolerate a sanctuary for Al Qaeda. We need a stronger and sustained partnership between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and NATO [...] We will ask more of the Pakistani government, rather than offer a blank check to an undemocratic President [...] The central front in the war on terror is not Iraq, and it never was. We will defeat Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where those who actually attacked us on 9-11 reside and are resurgent.<sup>677</sup>

The coming to power of the Obama administration brought about a renewed attention to the Afghanistan War insofar as focusing on this war had been one of Obama's campaign promises. Along with the pressures that the Bush administration had faced during its last two years in power from both Republicans and Democrats to scale down the Iraq war, this promise gave rise to a bipartisan agreement in 2009. This agreement would involve the importance of the Afghanistan War *vis-à-vis* the Iraq invasion. However, it did not mean another consensus like that observed in

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<sup>677</sup> Democratic Party, *2008 Democratic Party Platform. Renewing America's Promise*. August 25, 2008. Available from the American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2008-democratic-party-platform>.

the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Republicans and Democrats remained at loggerheads about Afghanistan and especially about military engagement levels in that country.<sup>678</sup>

Republicans in Congress pressured the Obama administration to “make an unqualified commitment to securing victory,”<sup>679</sup> by arguing three critical points within the public debate. Firstly, Republicans argued that there was no option other than winning in Afghanistan. According to Senator McCain, a different outcome would drive Afghanistan to “[descend] into a cauldron of violence, hatred and human rights atrocities [once again].”<sup>680</sup> It would also give new opportunities to terrorist attacks, and “destabilize the entire strategically vital region, including nuclear-armed Pakistan”.<sup>681</sup> Secondly, Republicans drew attention to the subsequent need to support “a properly resourced counterinsurgency policy, adapted to the unique culture and geography of Afghanistan [...] to success there.”<sup>682</sup> Senator Lindsey Graham, as a critical member of Senate Armed Services Committee, reaffirmed this point in arguing that “The best way to deny al Qaeda a training camp in Afghanistan is to support an Afghan army and police force that can deny them that opportunity, have the Afghan people stand up for themselves with our help.”<sup>683</sup> As a result, Republicans argued that CT, as compared to COIN, would fail to achieve American interests in Afghanistan.<sup>684</sup> Finally, Republicans considered it necessary to respond to General McChrystal’s request for more combat troops, even if the United States and its allies do not find the Afghan government a solid and credible ally.<sup>685</sup>

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<sup>678</sup> McHugh, “A Tale of Two Surges,”10.

<sup>679</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>680</sup> John McCain, “Why We can —and Must— Win the War in Afghanistan,” *CNN*, October 28, 2009. Available from CNN Political Op-Eds. <https://www.cnn.com/2009/OPINION/10/28/mccain.afghan.war/index.html>

<sup>681</sup> Ibid.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid.

<sup>683</sup> Lindsey Graham, “Senator Lindsey Graham on Afghanistan. Interview Given to The Situation Room,” *Real Clear Politics*, September 30, 2009. Available from Real Clear Politics, [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/09/30/senator\\_lindsey\\_graham\\_on\\_afghanistan\\_98541.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/09/30/senator_lindsey_graham_on_afghanistan_98541.html).

<sup>684</sup> Ibid.

<sup>685</sup> McCain, “Why We Can —and Must— Win the War in Afghanistan.”

In contrast, Democrats responded to all three points by setting conditions for an increased American engagement in Afghanistan. The first point, which the Democratic Congress embraced, was the need to set a timetable for Afghanistan after avoiding putting one for Iraq year after year.<sup>686</sup> The second point, held primarily by the House, was about the opportunity cost of spending money in war instead of using it domestically to bridge the growing fiscal gap. In particular, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi argued that there was “serious unrest” among Democrats over President Obama’s possible surge in troops due to the fiscal implications for the American economy.<sup>687</sup> The third point, which several congressional Democrats defended, was that the American government should limit its intervention due to the Karzai government’s excessive dependence on American and allied forces to provide security to its country. For them, the Afghan government’s inability to provide essential public services to its people was apparent.<sup>688</sup> With this diagnosis of the Afghanistan situation in mind, some key Representatives, such as David Obey, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and John Murtha, who was known for his vehement criticism against the Iraq war, threatened to reject additional resource appropriation for funding additional surge troops in Afghanistan.<sup>689</sup>

### **3. The breakdown of the elite consensus in Canada**

In Canada, the elite consensus breakdown was apparent from 2006 through 2008 insofar as Liberals, the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Bloc Québécois adopted contending attitudes toward the Conservative strategy in Southern Afghanistan. Those attitudes resulted from

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<sup>686</sup> Bob Woodward, *Obama’s Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2010), 232.

<sup>687</sup> Paul Kane, “Pelosi: Democrats Facing Voter ‘Unrest’ Over War Spending, Troop Increase,” *The Washington Post*, November 24, 2009. [http://voices.washingtonpost.com/capitol-briefing/2009/11/pelosi\\_democrats\\_facing\\_voter.html](http://voices.washingtonpost.com/capitol-briefing/2009/11/pelosi_democrats_facing_voter.html).

<sup>688</sup> McHugh, “A Tale of Two Surges,” 11

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid*, 10-11.

party disagreement regarding the Canadian transition from the non-combat peacekeeping mission to the combat COIN strategy.<sup>690</sup> The NDP denounced this transition vehemently, whereas Bloc Québécois and Liberals proposed a balancing act between combat, reconstruction and diplomacy goals.<sup>691</sup>

The NDP's position was consistent with its non-combat stance as expressed in its 2006 party platform. In that platform, the NDP advocated for Canada's return to peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention principles. Such principles would have implied recovering the original mission in Kabul and, accordingly, promoting an immediate withdrawal of troops from Kandahar and ceasing to be "an interchangeable part with the U.S. military" within the COIN strategy.<sup>692</sup> In particular, Jack Layton, the NDP leader between 2003 and 2011, argued that "the current counter-insurgency mission is not the right mission for Canada."<sup>693</sup> Not only was it heavily focused on combat, brushing aside diplomacy, development, and reconstruction, but the Harper Conservatives also had "neither defined what 'victory' would be, nor developed an exit strategy from this counter-insurgency mission."<sup>694</sup> During the opposition motion of April 2007, the NDP

condemns [the Harper] government and calls for it to immediately notify NATO of our intention to begin withdrawing Canadian Forces now in a safe and secure manner from the counter-insurgency mission in Afghanistan; and calls for Canada to focus its efforts to assist the people of Afghanistan on a diplomatic solution, and re-double its commitment to reconstruction and development.<sup>695</sup>

Furthermore, the NDP made two proposals that implicitly challenged the COIN strategy. Firstly, the NDP considered it necessary for MPs to vote on troops' deployment to enhance legislative oversight over the intervention, which had been promised by the Harper Conservatives

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<sup>690</sup> Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 108-110.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>692</sup> New Democratic Party, *Platform 2006: Jack Layton, Getting Results for People* (Ottawa, ON: 2005), 44.

<sup>693</sup> Jack Layton (Toronto-Danforth), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007).

<sup>694</sup> Ibid.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

during the campaign.<sup>696</sup> Secondly, it promoted a comprehensive peace process with the Taliban fighters, which would have entailed brushing aside the COIN strategy's 'clear' component.<sup>697</sup>

The Bloc Québécois and the Liberal Party argued that balancing the combat mission with development, reconstruction and diplomatic initiatives was required to set conditions for success in Afghanistan. Firstly, the Bloc Québécois' 2008 election platform held that "Canada will always have a role to play in Afghanistan in the International Security Assistance Force [however] Canada should be available to accept another, less aggressive, type of mission. Canada should serve in the more stable provinces of the country."<sup>698</sup> Similarly, rather than questioning the continuity of the Afghanistan mission, Bill Graham, the Liberal Party's interim leader, held that Parliament should address the conditions to keep the intervention framed in terms of the 3D approach this mission was based upon initially. This would imply addressing the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' components of the COIN strategy simultaneously. During the House's first debate to extend the Afghanistan mission in 2006, Graham argued that

There is no point in sending our military for an additional two years [until 2009] if this House does not hear from the government that it will be committing the amount of aid necessary to rebuild Afghanistan and recreate Afghanistan. I hope I will hear from the foreign affairs minister or the defence minister about how we are rebuilding governance structures, how we are dealing with corruption and how we are dealing with other issues.<sup>699</sup>

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<sup>696</sup> Jack Layton (Toronto-Danforth), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 006 (April 10, 2006).

<sup>697</sup> Alexa McDonough (Halifax), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 25 (May 17, 2006); Denise Savoie (Victoria), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007); Dawn Black (New Westminster-Conquitlam), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session, no. 141 (April 26, 2007); Bill Curry, "Layton Suggests Talks with Taliban," *The Globe and Mail*, September 1, 2006. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/layton-suggests-talks-with-taliban/article968111/>.

<sup>698</sup> Bloc Québécois, *Plateforme Électorale 2008: Présent!*, <http://www.blocquebecois.org/dossiers/parti/plateforme.aspx>, 212, quoted by Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 110.

<sup>699</sup> Bill Graham (Leader of Opposition), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 25 (May 17, 2006). See also Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 006 (April 10, 2006).

However, unlike the Bloc Québécois, the Liberals were in a difficult position to assume a unified stance against the Conservative COIN strategy. Besides the fact that the transition from peacekeeping to COIN had occurred during the Liberal Martin administration, Liberals were selecting a leader to replace Paul Martin after losing the 2006 federal election. During the debate mentioned above, Bill Graham was unable to force his caucus to support the intervention's extension, even though he considered it necessary. Indeed, the two MPs running for the liberal leadership, Michael Ignatieff and Stéphane Dion, adopted different positions as to the extension. As a result, Liberals were deeply divided, with 73 out of 103 choosing to vote against the extension.<sup>700</sup> Liberals supporting the mission conjured up the them-justification, as explained in chapter 4, to legitimize the Canadian presence in Afghanistan.<sup>701</sup> Liberals opposing the extension complained more about the nature of the extension debate than about the Canadian presence in Afghanistan — which was a stance shared with the Bloc Québécois.<sup>702</sup> For those Liberals, the debate had placed parliamentarians in an untenable position because they had to decide about this important topic without having access to secret information, which would have been critical to making an informed decision. This Liberal faction also complained that the debate on the decision had lasted only six hours, compared to the ten-week debate that their Dutch counterparts had held in discussing the same matter. Most of them considered this debate disrespectful as the government

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<sup>700</sup> Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 86.

<sup>701</sup> An example of this justification was Rodger Cuzner's (Cape Breton-Canso) stance: "When things get tough, that is not the time to flinch, and that is why tonight I will stand to support the motion. We all wrestle with the same questions. People come to me all the time and ask what in the name of God our young men and women are doing in Afghanistan. Why are we in Afghanistan? I think that over time we have come to learn what troubles face that nation. People are able to connect the dots when they watch the evening news and when they think back to 9/11. They know that Afghanistan was just a breeding ground for terrorism. They know that terrorist cells were rampant within that country. When they look at the pictures on TV, they see the squalor, the poverty and the hunger. They see women being abused and terrorized. As for education in Afghanistan, there was virtually no public education system five years ago. People here understand that and they know that at the root of the squalor is the lack of education." Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton-Canso), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 25 (May 17, 2006).

<sup>702</sup> See Gilles Duceppe (Leader of Bloc Québécois), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 25 (May 17, 2006).

had held that the extension would take place regardless of the voting results. Finally, Liberals argued that the Conservative stance had brought about a “culture of secrecy” regarding the Afghanistan intervention.<sup>703</sup>

Finally, all opposition parties criticized the Canadian government’s handling of detainees. It is worth noting that the handling of detainees became an extremely challenging issue for several intervening countries. Except for the United States, these countries did not build long-term prisons and, accordingly, had to decide at a certain point to hand over the detainees either to the Afghan government or the United States. This decision constituted a moral dilemma because torture and humiliation in Afghan and American facilities — especially Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay — had become common practices. Handing over detainees also constituted a legal dilemma. On the one hand, the intervening countries could not deal with detainees under custody in the long run. On the other hand, handing over detainees knowing that they would be tortured could be a war crime according to the Geneva Convention. Specifically, for Canada, shifting its strategy as of 2005/2006, this decision was particularly problematic. After all, COIN ended up being synonymous with a more aggressive strategy driving Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to detain more individuals.<sup>704</sup> Without exception, the opposition parties took advantage of this situation to embarrass deeply the Canadian FPE’s foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan.

The parliamentary debate on this issue had two crucial moments, namely, 2006-2007 and 2009-2011. Between 2006 and 2007, the detainee issue went hand in hand with the opposition parties’ criticism of the mission’s purpose. Nevertheless, between 2009 and 2011, this issue became the only deep disagreement between the opposition parties and the Harper Conservatives.

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<sup>703</sup> See the stances of Larry Bagnell (Yukon), Paul Szabo (Mississauga South), Robert Thibault (West Nova), Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra), Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles), John McCallum (Markham—Unionville), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 25 (May 17, 2006).

<sup>704</sup> Stephen M. Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 58-61; Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 118-119.

As this chapter will mention, the Harper administration managed to curb the critique of the Afghanistan intervention as of 2008.<sup>705</sup>

In the period between 2006 and 2007, the opposition parties presented three arguments to criticize the Conservative government's handling of detainees, which could have undermined the intervention's whole integrity.<sup>706</sup> Firstly, according to those parties, the Canadian government had set no provision for Canadian officials to monitor the human rights situation of detainees handed to the Afghan Intelligence Service and National Directorate of Security. Without such a provision, the Canadian government would have violated the Geneva convention and, consequently, would not have protected their soldiers from prosecution at the international level. Such provision was vital after Amir Attaran, a professor at the University of Ottawa law school, alleged that "Afghanistan tortures detainees."<sup>707</sup> It also became necessary after knowing that the Red Cross and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, which should have monitored detainees, could not conduct in practice a comprehensive and quick assessment of Canadian detainees' human rights situation. Several MPs argued that these organizations did not have the resources and capacity to conduct such a task.<sup>708</sup>

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<sup>705</sup> Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 121-133.

<sup>706</sup> See the stances of Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 006 (April 10, 2006); Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007).

<sup>707</sup> Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 006 (April 10, 2006). See also the stances Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP), Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP), and Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 006 (April 10, 2006); Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 25 (May 17, 2006); Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 140 (April 25, 2007); Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.), Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.) and Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007).

<sup>708</sup> See the stances of Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ) and Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 139 (April 24, 2007); Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.) *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 140 (April 25, 2007).

Secondly, the opposition parties criticized the Conservative government, especially the Minister of National Defence Gordon O'Connor, for having misled Parliament on this matter. O'Connor would have supported two untruths, namely, that the organizations mentioned above had been doing their job and that there have not be allegations of torture and extrajudicial executions.<sup>709</sup> Opposition parties also insisted that the Conservative government had conveyed a misleading message about who would monitor the detainees after being handed over. First, Conservatives assured that the Red Cross and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission would accomplish this purpose. Next, Conservatives speculated that the government could monitor this situation through Correctional Services. Finally, the Harper administration ended up asseverating that it had signed an agreement with the Afghan government to deal with this issue directly. In the end, it was hard to know who was monitoring the detainees' human rights situation.<sup>710</sup>

Thirdly, the opposition parties accused the Conservative government of having covered up the illegal practices as mentioned above.<sup>711</sup> Based on this argument, some of them alleged a *breach of privilege*, which occurs when an outside person or body or a Member of the House obstructs or

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<sup>709</sup> See the stances of Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ), Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP), Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.), Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.), Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 139 (April 24, 2007); Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.), Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 140 (April 25, 2007); Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007). See also Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ), Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.), Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ), Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007); Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.), Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.), Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 143 (April 30, 2007).

<sup>710</sup> Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.) and Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007). See also Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 143 (April 30, 2007) and Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> Session 141, no. 172 (June 15, 2007).

<sup>711</sup> See the stances of Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.), Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.), Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.), Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 140 (April 25, 2007).

impedes the performance of the House's functions. The Conservative government would have committed such an affront by not responding to the MPs' questions about the detainee issue directly, misleading the House or covering up the real human rights situation of Canadian prisoners turned over to Afghan authorities.<sup>712</sup> In addition, some MPs held that the Conservative government had prevented some witnesses from attending the committees to respond to questions related to the detainee issue and give evidence about torture in Southern Afghanistan.<sup>713</sup>

It is worth noting that there was a heated debate between the NDP and Liberals on the detainee issue. Like the other opposition parties, the NDP accused the Harper Conservatives of handing over the detainees despite their knowledge of common forms of torture in Afghan imprisonment facilities. However, the NDP went further in arguing that Liberals had created the problem. After all, through General Rick Hillier, the Martin administration had signed the memorandum of understanding on detainees between Canada and Afghanistan, which had contained no provision to oversee what happened with detainees after being handed over. For the NDP, the Harper Conservatives should renegotiate the memorandum to transfer detainees to third parties right away to meet Canadian obligations under international humanitarian law. This memorandum should look like the treaty that the Netherlands had signed with the Afghan government.<sup>714</sup>

In the period between 2009 and 2011, the detainee issue revolved around Richard Colvin's testimony before the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in

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<sup>712</sup> Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.), Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ), Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007).

<sup>713</sup> See, for instance, Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 156 (May 17, 2007).

<sup>714</sup> See the stances of Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP), Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 006 (April 10, 2006). See also Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ) and Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 143 (April 30, 2007).

Afghanistan. Offered on November 18, 2009, this testimony helped the opposition parties reactive their criticism against the Harper Conservatives.<sup>715</sup> As a senior Canadian foreign service officer serving in Afghanistan between 2006 and 2007, Colvin supported the opposition's arguments and helped them scale up the controversy to another level. Firstly, Colvin named in his testimony all the senior officials who had prevented themselves from acting despite knowing that the Afghan Intelligence Service and National Directorate of Security were torturing Canadian detainees. On the civilian side, Colvin referred to David Mulroney, the Deputy Minister responsible for the Afghanistan Task Force; Margaret Bloodworth, National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister; Colleen Swords, Assistant Deputy Minister for international security, and Arif Lalani, Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan. On the military side, Colvin mentioned General Rick Hillier, the chief of the defence staff and Lieutenant-General Michael Gauthier, commander of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.<sup>716</sup>

Secondly, Colvin compared Canada's behaviour with that of its NATO allies in southern Afghanistan, including the British and the Dutch, to show the extent to which Canadians had failed on the detainee issue. Colvin argued that Canada had handed detainees to Afghan authorities six and twenty times as many as the Dutch and the British, respectively. Unlike them, Canada had not monitored detainees' human rights situation after their handing over and had not implemented a speedy process to inform the Red Cross about their situation. According to Colvin, the lack of follow-up to detainees' situation and parliamentary accountability aggravated such a situation. On the one hand, without accurate record-keeping, Canada did not even know the detainee's fate once

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<sup>715</sup> See the stances of Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ), Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Liberal), Paul Dewar (Ottawa Center, NDP), *House of Common Debates* (Hansard), 40<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, no. 015 (Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan) (November 18, 2009).

<sup>716</sup> Richard Colvin (First Secretary, Embassy of Canada to the United States of America), *House of Common Debates* (Hansard), 40<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, no. 015 (Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan) (November 18, 2009).

the military transferred them to Afghan authorities. Once Canada informed the Red Cross about the transfer of detainees, which usually was too late, this organization was incapable of locating them. On the other hand, the Canadian government did not inform Parliament appropriately about the detainee situation, which brought about a culture of secrecy, unlike the British and Dutch political process.<sup>717</sup>

The opposition against American and Canadian COIN strategy in Afghanistan came not only from the legislative branch but also from the American and Canadian publics. The next section addresses the increasing opposition from the public. As this section will show, such opposition emerged after a period of broad support in both countries, following similar patterns to those observed in the legislature. It is worth recalling that in examining legislative and public opposition, this chapter aims to meet the first aspect to be analyzed according to neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. This aspect refers to the need to consider domestic hurdles before analyzing how the American and Canadian FPE overcame such hurdles to conduct their preferred foreign and security policies in Afghanistan.

#### **4. Public opposition to American and Canadian COIN strategy**

In the United States, the public had backed the Afghanistan intervention in the early years. In October 2001, a CBS poll reported that 87% of Americans supported the intervention.<sup>718</sup> However, the public started to react negatively to the war in 2006, and by mid-2009 it was deeply

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<sup>717</sup> Ibid.

<sup>718</sup> Chris Good, “When and why Did Americans Turn Against the War in Afghanistan? *The Atlantic*, June 22, 2011. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/06/when-and-why-did-americans-turn-against-the-war-in-afghanistan/240880/>.

split on the matter.<sup>719</sup> According to a 2009 Gallup poll, 50% of the Americans opposed the United States FPE's decision to send more troops to Afghanistan, 41% were in favour, and 9 % had no opinion. That is to say, the public found itself deeply divided about one of the most critical decisions aimed at deepening the COIN strategy. More importantly, within the 50% opposing the troop surge, 82% of Americans, against 14%, favoured the U.S troop's complete withdrawal. It means that an essential number of Americans considered it necessary not only to stop sending more troops but also to withdraw them.<sup>720</sup> It is worth noting that three other prestigious pollsters, such as Post/ABC, CNN/ORC, and AP-Gfk, shared these war opposition figures.<sup>721</sup>

The Gallup poll also showed that the intervention had created “an unusual set of political cross-currents,” especially highlighting Republican and Democrat respondents' contrasting views.<sup>722</sup> In the early years, Republicans had favoured a Republican President's decision to increase the troops' levels steadily and, in 2009, found themselves supporting a Democratic President's decision to reach the highest levels of troops in Afghanistan. Specifically, 63% of the Republicans favored sending more troops, whereas 30% opposed it. Only 7% of Republicans had no opinion. In contrast, Democrats, who had rejected military escalation, ended up opposing a Democrat President's decision to increase the military engagement. In particular, 62% of the Democrats opposed sending more troops, whereas 30% favoured it. Only 8% of Democrats had no opinion. In considering Independents, the opposition to the troop surge was similarly apparent. 54% of the Independents opposed the troop surge, whereas 38% favoured it. Only 8% had no

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<sup>719</sup> Chris Good, “When and Why Did Americans Turn Against the War in Afghanistan?; McHugh, “A Tale of Two Surges,” 10; Gary Jacobson, “A Tale of Two Wars: Public Opinion on The U.S. Military Interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2010): 591-592.

<sup>720</sup> Frank Newport, “Americans Tilt Against Sending More Troops to Afghanistan,” *Gallup News Service*, September 25, 2009. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/123188/americans-tilt-against-sending-troops-afghanistan.aspx>.

<sup>721</sup> Chris Good, “When and why Did Americans Turn Against the War in Afghanistan?”

<sup>722</sup> Newport, “Americans Tilt Against Sending More Troops to Afghanistan.”

opinion.<sup>723</sup> The Obama administration found itself in an odd position in being pressured by Republicans to scale up and Democrats and Independents to scale down the troops' levels. However, the 2009 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES) showed a favouring shift of public attitude towards the war after President Obama's high-profile announcement of the second troop surge in December 2009.<sup>724</sup> As discussed below, this public announcement was the primary strategy that the Obama administration adopted to get support directly from the public and indirectly from Congress and, accordingly, to overcome domestic hurdles to deepening the COIN strategy.

In Canada, the initial public support dropped significantly when the intervention transitioned from complex peacekeeping to COIN in 2006 and "remained lukewarm at best and hostile at worst" until 2011 when the intervention turned into a training mission.<sup>725</sup> During the early years of the intervention, public opposition stayed below 40%. However, it increased seven points at the beginning of the Kandahar mission and rose five points again during the 2008-2009 extension debate.<sup>726</sup> In 2010, an Angus Reid poll showed that 53% of Canadians opposed the Afghanistan intervention, whereas 39% supported it. The poll also displayed that 43% of Canadians regarded the fight against the Taliban within the COIN strategy as a mistake and 44% claimed to have no idea of what the intervention was all about. Interestingly, 59% of Canadians were not optimistic about President Obama's full-resourced COIN strategy.<sup>727</sup>

Like the United States, public opinion in Canada was not homogeneous. Yet, the public did not split along partisan lines. Instead, Canadian public opinion was divided by "cultural,

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<sup>723</sup> Ibid.

<sup>724</sup> Jacobson, "A Tale of Two Wars," 603.

<sup>725</sup> Boucher & Nossal, "The Politics of War," 157.

<sup>726</sup> Ibid, 157-158.

<sup>727</sup> Angus Reid Institute, "Majority of Canadians Still Oppose Military Mission in Afghanistan," August 10, 2010. <http://angusreid.org/majority-of-canadians-still-oppose-military-mission-in-afghanistan/>.

linguistic, and sociological differences [Specifically] English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians had fundamentally different views of war and the human cost of war”.<sup>728</sup> In 2010, British Columbia, Ontario, Atlantic Canada and Alberta supported the intervention with 49%, 47% and 45% respectively, whereas Québec’s opposition levels was the highest with 71%.<sup>729</sup> Historical precedents of Québec’s opposition to Canadian participation at war would underpin this stance. Specifically, French-Canadians opposed their country’s participation in the U.K-led military interventions in 1899, 1917 and 1944, which has also nourished the myth of Québec’s pacificism or anti-militarism. However, “classifying Quebecois as pacifists is somewhat of an oversimplification.”<sup>730</sup> A broader historical assessment would show that Quebecois supported Canadian military engagement during several post-Cold War missions, including the Kabul mission after 9/11.<sup>731</sup> As mentioned, Québec’s vehement opposition against the Afghanistan intervention began during the COIN period. As Jean-Christophe Boucher and Stéphane Roussel pointed out, explaining Québec’s historical stance on military interventions should not necessarily be related to alleged pacificism but instead to Quebecois’ reactions derived from their perceptions of Canada being hijack by foreign interests. This factor would explain Quebecois opposition to the aforementioned British interventions and the Canadian transition from S&R to COIN, implying a rapprochement to American interests.<sup>732</sup>

In considering the legislative and public reactions regarding the implementation of American and Canadian COIN strategies, the FPE in both countries did not have an easy pathway. Domestic politics was a battleground for both of them. However, the United States and Canadian

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<sup>728</sup> Boucher & Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 176.

<sup>729</sup> Angus Reid Institute, “Majority of Canadians Still Oppose Military Mission in Afghanistan.”

<sup>730</sup> Jean-Christophe Boucher and Stéphane Roussel, “From Afghanistan to ‘Quebecistan:’ Quebec as the Pharmakon of Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy,” in “Canada Among Nations 2007: What Room for Manoeuvre?” eds. Jean Daudelin and Daniel Schwanen (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 137.

<sup>731</sup> Ibid.

<sup>732</sup> See *ibid*, 137-139.

FPEs had an extraordinary advantage in reaching their preferred foreign and security policy options: executives in both political systems enjoyed a high structural autonomy, which helped them elaborate a strategy to overcome domestic hurdles. The following section argues that structural autonomy was similar in both countries regardless of the differences between the American presidential system and the Canadian Westminster parliamentary system. This section assesses structural autonomy in terms of the executive-legislative relationship as it is a privileged constitutional and institutional indication of such a level of autonomy. It is worth recalling that, according to neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, analyzing the American and Canadian FPEs' structural autonomy is critical to understand subsequently their agential ability to mobilize domestic resources to meet their strategic objectives in Afghanistan.

### **5. Understanding the scope of American and Canadian FPEs' structural autonomy**

Conventional wisdom argues that presidential and parliamentary systems involve distinct forms of executive-legislative relationship,<sup>733</sup> resulting in the executive enjoying varying degrees of structural autonomy in conducting foreign and security policies.<sup>734</sup> In the United States, following the paradigmatic scheme of a presidential system, the separation of power would often mean a rough balance between the president and the Congress, a dual democratic legitimacy and, accordingly, the sharing of constitutional war powers.<sup>735</sup> The U.S. Founding Fathers strongly supported this norm as they never expected that the president would declare and conduct war

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<sup>733</sup> Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 3-22; Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Twenty-Six Countries* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), 115-116.

<sup>734</sup> Miriam Fendius Elman, "Unpacking Democracy: Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Theories of Democratic Peace" *Security Studies* 9, no. 4 (2000): 97.

<sup>735</sup> Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 5-7 and 115-116.

without Congress' consent.<sup>736</sup> Not surprisingly, the U.S. Constitution's Article I, Section 8, established that the president does not have the power to declare war, instead Congress is granted this power. Also, several subsequent declarations reaffirmed Congress' war powers, such as the U.S Senate's declaration of war in 1812 against the United Kingdom and the U.S. Congress' war declaration of 1898 against Spain.<sup>737</sup>

After the American FPE entered into a war with Vietnam without any declaration of war, Congress attempted to get its powers back again through the War Powers Resolution of 1973. This Resolution, which two-thirds of the Congress passed, overcoming President Richard Nixon's veto, defined its scope in section 2 in the following terms: "It is the purpose of this joint resolution to fulfill the intent of the framers of the Constitution of the United States and insure that the collective judgement of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities." Section 3 also established that "The President in every possible instance shall consult with Congress before introducing United States Armed Forces into hostilities." According to section 5 (a), this consultation will apply to every military engagement that lasts more than sixty days with the possibility of a thirty-day extension.<sup>738</sup> All in all, the 1973 Resolution sought to reaffirm the sharing of war powers norm, as established by the Constitutional Convention, which the Vietnam War's decision-making process had jeopardized. Above all, this resolution seemed to indicate a "special wartime procedure to 'check and balance' future presidents 'prone' to war."<sup>739</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> Ryan Hendrickson, *Obama at War: Congress and the Imperial Presidency* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 2.

<sup>737</sup> For a deep analysis of these declarations and resolutions, see Brien Hallet, *Declaring War: Congress, the President, and What the Constitution Does Not Say* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), chapters 2-4.

<sup>738</sup> Joint Resolution Concerning the War Powers of Congress and the President, Public Law 93-148, November 7, 1973, 555.

<sup>739</sup> Hallet, *Declaring War*, 78.

In the Canadian parliamentary system, the concentration of power prevented the logic of a balance of power between the executive and legislative branches from emerging. Parliament is in theory the only source of democratic legitimacy, and the government's authority relies heavily upon the confidence of it, which could come in the form of "parliamentary majority or tolerance of minority governments."<sup>740</sup> Canada has also embraced the Westminster tradition, meaning that the Prime Minister and Cabinet enjoy a royal prerogative to deploy armed forces. In this regard, "Cabinet is not legally required to consult Parliament when exercising this power, which grants Westminster executives near complete control over military deployments."<sup>741</sup> This prerogative power, which can be traced to the English kings' feudal responsibilities to preserve the peace, has been in Canada "enshrined in the common law, codified in [the] *Constitution Act*, and only partially constrained by statute law,"<sup>742</sup> such as the *National Defence Act* and the *Emergencies Act*.<sup>743</sup>

In highlighting the differences between presidential and Westminster parliamentary systems, conventional wisdom's expectation would subsequently be that the American and Canadian FPEs would have enjoyed different structural autonomy levels *vis-à-vis* the legislature in conducting foreign and security policy. The former would have dealt with a delicate balance of power, resulting in a moderate structural autonomy. The latter would have enjoyed the concentration of power's institutional consequences, bringing about a high structural autonomy. Specifically, during the Afghanistan intervention, this difference would have been apparent because Canadian parliamentary committees, unlike their American counterparts, did not have any

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<sup>740</sup> Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 5.

<sup>741</sup> Philippe Lagassé, "Parliament and the War Prerogative in the United Kingdom and Canada: Explaining Variations in Institutional Change and Legislative Control," *Parliamentary Affairs* 70, no. 2 (2017): 280.

<sup>742</sup> Philippe Lagassé, "Accountability for National Defence. Ministerial Responsibility, Military Command and Parliamentary Oversight," *IRPP Study* 4 (2010): 6.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid, 7-8. See also Phillippe Laggasé, "How Should Canada's Parliament Decide Military Deployments? Lessons from the United Kingdom," *Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute* (2013): 1-4

budgetary authority that could have been used to control the scope of the intervention. Opposition parties were also unable to discuss sensitive issues in-depth as they did not have security clearance. While Canadian MPs just complained about the intervention based on what the media revealed, American counterparts conducted oversight of FPE based on direct access to security and defense sensitive information.<sup>744</sup> What is more, the U.S Congress members would have achieved a more profound oversight through different strategies, including “appointing a special inspector general, public and closed hearings, Member and staff delegations to Afghanistan, letters to executive branch officials, and public statements.”<sup>745</sup>

Conventional wisdom would also argue that in more majoritarian systems, such as the Canadian Westminster parliamentary system, the FPE would enjoy a high room for manoeuvre to transition from a moderate to robust military engagement, as occurred with the 2006 Canadian shift from S&R to COIN in Afghanistan. After all, the legislature would not have been able to constrain such ambitions. By contrast, in less majoritarian systems, such as the American presidential system, the FPE would not easily increase military engagement without the support of Congress.<sup>746</sup> To sum up, in focusing on constitutional differences between the American Presidential system and the Canadian Westminster parliamentary system, conventional wisdom would highlight different degrees of the FPE’s structural autonomy.

However, a deeper understanding of American foreign and security decision-making processes would show that the American FPE has enjoyed a similarly high structural autonomy compared to the Canadian FPE. American FPE’s structural autonomy has indeed increased

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<sup>744</sup> Stephen M. Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 62-63.

<sup>745</sup> Thomas, “The Washington Post’s ‘Afghanistan Papers’ and U.S. Policy,” 5.

<sup>746</sup> Elman, “Unpacking Democracy,” 97. See also William Howell, *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2011); William G. Howell and Jon C. Pevehouse, “When Congress Stops Wars: Partisan Politics and Presidential Power,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 5 (2007): 95-107.

significantly since the Cold War.<sup>747</sup> With the omnipresent threat posed by the Soviet Union, the political system ended up giving presidents a more expansive role in questions of war and peace. For much of the Cold War period, Congress practiced the norm of constitutional war power abdication. Although Congress attempted to get some of their power back in the form of the 1973 War Power Resolution, which set out a requirement that the President must “consult” with Congress before and during every military operation that lasts more than sixty days, this rarely constrained the ability of the President to commit troops into hostile situations. During the 1980s and 1990s, for example, American Presidents conjured up expansive definitions of the term “consult” to avoid consequential discussions with the Congress. Historical evidence shows that American presidents’ daring stances on their unilateral power as commanders in chief ended up being accepted unreservedly by the Congress.<sup>748</sup> As a result, before 9/11, it was already apparent that a culture of Congress’ deference *vis-à-vis* president as a commander in chief had become more dominant than the constitutionally established sharing of war powers between the president and Congress.<sup>749</sup>

The 9/11 attacks encouraged the U.S president to make bold assertions on unilateral power and the Congress to keep the culture of deference in security and defence matters. Both of these factors reaffirmed the high structural autonomy that American FPE had enjoyed in the previous decades. During the early years of the Afghanistan intervention, the evolution of the American political system allowed the Bush administration to develop a theory of presidential power. It established that “any law that restricts the commander in chief’s authority is presumptively

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<sup>747</sup> Hallet, *Declaring War*; Hendrickson, *Obama at War*; Peter Irons, *War power: How the Imperial Presidency Hijacked the Constitution* (New York, Metropolitan Books, 2005); Andrew Rudalevige, *The New Imperial Presidency: Renewing Presidential Power after Watergate* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Imperial Presidency* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004).

<sup>748</sup> Hendrickson, *Congress and the Imperial Presidency*, 9-11.

<sup>749</sup> Stephen Weissman, *A Culture of Deference: Congress’s Failure of Leadership in Foreign Policy* (New York, Basic Books, 1995).

unconstitutional [meaning that] the president may exercise an ‘override’ authority in the unlikely event that Congress would by statute seek to restrain the president.”<sup>750</sup> Such a theory, which contradicts the modest authority granted initially to the commander in chief by the Constitutional convention, went hand in hand with the U.S. Congress’s lack of appetite to oversee substantial issues in depth.<sup>751</sup> According to Norman J. Ornstein and Thomas E. Mann, Congress did not assess how the intervention was precisely performed and how taxpayers supported it. Neither did Congress appraise to what extent the laws on this matter have been rightly executed and how the government had monitored public agencies and private contractors’ performance. Above all, it did not address to what extent the American president had respected constitutional bounds.<sup>752</sup> Congressional oversight of the FPE’s foreign and security policy collapsed in practice in focusing solely on undertaking “‘fire alarms’ hearings” and adopting merely “routine budget review” rather than a budgetary plan aimed at constraining or guiding strategic objectives in Afghanistan.<sup>753</sup>

The FPE’s bold assertions of unilateral power and the culture of Congress’ deference remained in place during the Obama administration. This administration adopted a renewed form of preventive military force, similar to that advanced by the Bush administration, in using drone technology in Afghanistan – although this practice was much more dominant in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia – to kill members of al-Qaeda with no trial at all. It became known as President Obama’s “kill list.”<sup>754</sup> The American political system also gave President Obama and his aides the option to spend little time persuading Congress about his troop surge plans’ significance.<sup>755</sup>

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<sup>750</sup> David Gray Adler, “The Law: George Bush as Commander in Chief: Toward the Nether World of Constitutionalism,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (2006): 526.

<sup>751</sup> Norman J. Ornstein and Thomas E. Mann, “When Congress Checks Out,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 6 (2006): 75.

<sup>752</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>753</sup> *Ibid.*, 68 and 71-72.

<sup>754</sup> Hendrickson, *Congress and the Imperial Presidency*, 29-37; Joe Becker and Scott Shane, “Secret ‘Kill List’ Proves a Test of Obama’s Principles and Will,” *The New York Times*, May 29, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html>.

<sup>755</sup> Hendrickson, *Congress and the Imperial Presidency*, 2-3 and 37.

Journalistic investigations of the 2009 troop surge decision-making process showed that Congress members were not key actors able and willing to lead such a process.<sup>756</sup> As mentioned above, some Congress members criticized the Iraq invasion's burden on the Afghanistan intervention, the lack of long-term sense in Afghanistan, Pakistan's contradictory role, and the Afghanistan government's dependence on the NATO intervening countries to succeed. Yet, such criticisms were nothing more than yearnings regarding what the United States should have done.

Having explained how the American FPE's increased high structural autonomy brought about similar autonomy levels in both American and Canadian political system, it is necessary to consider a likely counterargument against this similarity: the variations of the Canadian FPE's structural autonomy during a minority-government period, which was the case between 2004 and 2011. On the surface, a minority government would mean a lower room for manoeuvre for the FPEs in Westminster parliamentary systems to conduct their foreign and security policies.

However, as this chapter will show in analyzing the Harper Conservatives' strategies to deal with Parliamentary and public opposition to their COIN strategy, "minority power may mean more power, not less."<sup>757</sup> It is apparent under certain circumstances: if the executive plays its cards right and the opposition parties are incapable or disinterested in cooperating to hold the executive accountable. Still, it should not be seen as one of the Canadian political system's structural properties but as a factor related to political parties' agential skills. To begin with, the Harper Conservatives carried out two effective strategies that allow them to overcome the minority government's institutional restraints. Firstly, they consulted the Parliament to extend the military deployment in Afghanistan. Even though this decision could have meant the implications of a

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<sup>756</sup> See Woodward, *Obama's Wars*; Peter Baker, "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan, *The New York Times*, December 5, 2009. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/06/world/asia/06reconstruct.html>.

<sup>757</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 54.

minority government's constraints, it brings about a false sense of parliamentary support, which ended up strengthening the Conservatives. Once they obtained the approval of the extension in 2006 and 2008, they also used this card to silence the opposition parties when they attempted to criticize the intervention. That is to say, every time that opposition parties criticized the intervention, Conservatives recalled that they had approved its extension.<sup>758</sup> Secondly, Harper appointed the Manley Panel to obtain multipartisan support to his COIN strategy, which proved more successful than expected. This panel gave Conservatives and opposition parties everything they most wanted: a commitment proposal without a fixed deadline, meeting Conservatives' expectations, and a balancing act between the military engagement and development and reconstruction programs, corresponding to opposition parties' primary concerns. As a result, this panel helped to vanish the Afghanistan intervention's political debate as of 2008.<sup>759</sup>

The lack of cooperation between opposition parties and their disinterest in conducting a meaningful opposition, through, for instance, a vote of no confidence, buttressed the effects of Conservatives' strategies. Based on their postures, as explained earlier, opposition parties could have formed a coalition against the Harper Conservatives' COIN strategy, even if coalition governments are not typical in Canada. A revolution in Canadian foreign and security policy could have implied a revolution in Canadian political tradition, especially in partisanship cooperation to hold the government accountable. However, opposition parties did not want to force another election because the polls indicated that they would have lost parliamentary seats.<sup>760</sup>

All in all, during the time the Afghanistan intervention was performed, the American and Canadian FPE enjoyed similar levels of structural autonomy. In both cases, the FPEs' structural

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<sup>758</sup> Lagassé, "Parliament and the War Prerogative in the United Kingdom and Canada," 292-293.

<sup>759</sup> Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 110-111; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 46-47 and 51.

<sup>760</sup> See Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 52 and 54.

autonomy was historically institutionalized, and executives endeavoured to keep this autonomy. As a result, the U.S. President, like the Canadian Prime Minister, became the ultimate foreign and security policy decider and the legislature the follower.<sup>761</sup> The following section addresses how American and Canadian FPEs seized their structural autonomy to deal with the opposing voices in the legislatures and publics' lack of enthusiasm regarding the intervention. As mentioned, both structural autonomy and agential abilities to overcome domestic hurdles are essential for neoclassical realism to explain state power in the form of the FPEs' ability to extract resources required to meet its strategic objectives.

## **6. The American FPE went public, the Canadian FPE went silent**

As mentioned in chapter 4, Canadian and American FPEs shared similar causal beliefs between 2005/2006 and 2011. Such a similarity encouraged American and Canadian FPEs to adopt specific strategies to overcome opposing legislative voices and public dissatisfaction against their preferred COIN foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan during this period. With similar beliefs in mind about the strategy to be undertaken in Afghanistan, American and Canadian FPEs decided to seize their structural autonomy to overcome domestic opposition.

American FPE made public statements rather than starting a complex bargaining process with Congress, whereas the Canadian FPE aimed to divide the opposition by paradoxically consulting Parliament and then stopped talking about the intervention. In this regard, the former "went public" unhesitatingly, whereas the latter "went silent" progressively at the domestic level to manage to conduct their preferred COIN strategies in Afghanistan. To be sure, both of these strategies would have been hard to conduct without the structural autonomy that both the United States and

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<sup>761</sup> Hendrickson, *Congress and the Imperial Presidency*, 37.

Canadian FPE exhibited. It is worth noting that in analyzing the President's public leadership, several American presidential scholars have used the term *going public* to refer to the President's preference to make "high-profile policy speeches" rather than lobbying individual Congress members directly. According to such scholars, the President's goal is to get support from the public directly and the legislature indirectly to undertake his public agenda.<sup>762</sup> By inference, "going silent" would mean not talking about a controversial topic to prevent an opposition from emerging. In Canada, this practice was also synonymous with what Philippe Lagassé termed the "laundering" of the Afghanistan intervention.<sup>763</sup> This meant consulting Parliament about the extension of intervention to create the general sense that there was an elite consensus on this matter and to divide the opposition when required. It also entailed referring to the intervention as a "mission" rather than as a "war."<sup>764</sup>

### *6.1. American FPE's 'going public' sub-strategies*

In the United States, during the period that the COIN strategy was performed, the American FPE implemented its "going public" strategy through two sub-strategies: a) controlling the public message about what was happening in Afghanistan; and b) presenting a public balancing act between the contrasting Republican and Democratic stances.<sup>765</sup> Both the Bush and Obama administrations undertook the first sub-strategy, yet the Bush administration pursued it more strongly than Obama. For the Obama administration, the second sub-strategy was more relevant,

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<sup>762</sup> McHugh, "A Tale of Two Surges," 4. Even though there is an extensive literature on this topic, the predominant work about it is: Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1986). See also Tom Rice, "Review Work: Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership by Samuel Kernell," *The American Political Science Review* 81, no. 4 (1987): 1368-1369.

<sup>763</sup> Lagassé, "Parliament and the War Prerogative in the United Kingdom and Canada," 291-292.

<sup>764</sup> Boucher & Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 6-7, 82.

<sup>765</sup> McHugh, "A Tale of Two Surges," 12.

especially when it had to get support to reach the highest level of the troop surge by the end of December 2009.

After interviewing more than 600 U.S and NATO policymakers in Afghanistan and senior Afghan officials, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) helped reveal the first sub-strategy aimed at controlling the public message. Specifically, the *Washington Post* utilized the Freedom of Information Act to access those confidentially conducted interviews. The public knew the transcripts of these confidential interviews under the name of “the Afghanistan Papers.” By examining those interviews, the Post showed how the Bush and Obama administrations made “explicit and sustained efforts [...] to deliberately mislead the public.” Both of those presidents, their teams and military commanders “assured Americans year after years that they were making progress in Afghanistan and the war was worth fighting.”<sup>766</sup> Yet, the situation was different on the ground. Taken together, those interviews displayed several structural failures of the intervention. Among those failures, the *Washington Post*’s investigation highlighted the lack of clarity of the U.S goals, competing priorities between agencies and lack of expertise, the U.S. funding’s negative effects particularly in the form of increased corruption, and poor coordination with the multinational coalition.<sup>767</sup> All in all, the interviewers’ sense of substantial incoherence contradicted widely the American FPE’s message of coherence delivered to the public. The way the American FPE controlled the message was particularly problematic when the United States increased its engagement levels by transitioning from CT to COIN.

The second sub-strategy, aimed at making a public balancing act to conciliate different views on the Afghanistan intervention, was particularly apparent by the end of 2009. Specifically, this strategy was discernible in President Obama’s public speech of December 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. In

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<sup>766</sup> Whitlock, “The Afghanistan Papers.”

<sup>767</sup> Thomas, “The Washington Post’s ‘Afghanistan Papers’ and U.S. Policy.”

this high-profile public speech, President Obama sought precisely to address the Republicans and Democrats' different views on the troop surge to guarantee the COIN strategy's progress.<sup>768</sup> On the one hand, after an intense debate with the senior military and Joe Biden's team, President Obama supported a plan to send additional troops to focus on the 'clean' and 'hold' components of the COIN strategy. It certainly met the primary Republican concern. President Obama announced: "as Commander-in-Chief, I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan [...] These are the resources that we need to seize the initiative."<sup>769</sup>

On the other hand, President Obama's speech addressed Democrats and Independents' fears regarding American troops' scaling up. Firstly, President Obama argued that the Afghanistan intervention was not only an American war and, accordingly, the U.S. troop increase would be added to the U.S. allies' military contribution. It would also allow the United States and its allies to hand over the responsibility to the Afghan forces to guarantee the security in the country. Above all, the speech set out an ending date of the COIN strategy: July of 2011, which indeed echoed the Democratic legislative and public request to withdraw the troops in the short run. President Obama referred to this point in the following terms:

Because this is an international effort, I've asked that our commitment be joined by contributions from our allies. Some have already provided additional troops, and we're confident that there will be further contributions in the days and weeks ahead. Our friends have fought and bled and died alongside us in Afghanistan. And now, we must come together to end this war successfully. For what's at stake is not simply a test of NATO's credibility —what's at stake is the security of our allies, and the common security of the world. But taken together, these additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011.<sup>770</sup>

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<sup>768</sup> McHugh, "A Tale of Two Surges," 12.

<sup>769</sup> Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington D.C.: The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, December 1, 2009).

<sup>770</sup> Ibid.

Secondly, President Obama argued that the troop surge would be part of a more comprehensive strategy that would include a “civilian surge” and “effective partnership with Pakistan.” The scaling up of troops would create the conditions to hand over responsibility, and the civilian surge would reinforce the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components of the strategy. The partnership with Pakistan would help attack the new safe-haven of the insurgent groups in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. This comprehensive strategy would also depend on holding the Afghan government accountable, which undoubtedly became one of the most dominant requests from the opposition voices. The speech addressed the last point in the following terms:

The days of providing a blank check are over. President Karzai’s inauguration speech sent the right message about moving in a new direction. And going forward, we will be clear about what we expect from those who receive our assistance. We’ll support Afghan ministries, governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver for the people. We expect those who are ineffective or corrupt to be held accountable. And we will also focus our assistance in areas —such as agriculture — that can make an immediate impact in the lives of the Afghan people.<sup>771</sup>

As documented by Gary Jacobson, the 2009 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey conducted a poll to examine the public mood regarding the troop surge on November 10th and December 8th, 2009, by asking respondents whether they wanted to increase, decrease, or maintain the existing number of troops. Conveniently, this question, which was asked before and after Obama’s high-profile public speech of December 1<sup>st</sup>, showed the success of going public during the most challenging moment of the COIN strategy’s implementation. Certainly, there was an insignificant change among Republicans, whose approval of the troop increase fluctuated between 68% and 72%, being consequently high before and after President Obama’s public announcement. The Independents’ approval levels were equally insignificant with a slight increase from 53% to 55%. However, Democrats’ approval of the troop surge increased

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<sup>771</sup> Ibid.

dramatically from 26% to 40%.<sup>772</sup> This indicates that the public announcement helped persuade the most critical opponents of the COIN strategy. As the final section will show, the strategy of going public equally succeeded in Congress. Even though the FPE did not expend significant time attempting to persuade Congress, the latter ended up providing everything the former requested to conduct their strategy between 2006 and 2011.

### 6.2. *Canadian FPE's 'going silent' sub-strategies*

In Canada, the FPE implemented their 'going silent' strategy through two sub-strategies, namely: a) controlling the public perception of the Afghanistan intervention, and b) undermining the legislative opposition to the COIN strategy by calling for the "mission" extension debates. In going silent rather than going public, the Canadian FPE's control-message sub-strategy was different from that undertaken by the American FPE. The latter attempted to publicly uphold the coherence of its strategy, whereas the former tried to hide the fact that Canada was conducting a bloody war between 2006 and 2011. Another aspect to highlight in addressing the Canadian 'going silent' strategy is that the Harper administration was the only one during the period of this study undertaking the second sub-strategy. After all, during the Harper years, it was the first time that the FPE consulted Parliament about military deployment extensions.

The first sub-strategy, aimed at controlling the public message, entailed shaping how the intervention itself was depicted. According to Jean-Christophe Boucher and Kim Richard Nossal, rather than using the term "war," Canadian FPE used terms like "mission" or "engagement" to refer to what Canada was doing in Afghanistan.<sup>773</sup> This meant that Canadian

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<sup>772</sup> Jacobson, "A Tale of Two Wars," 603-604.

<sup>773</sup> Boucher & Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 6-7.

FPE “carefully and consciously avoid telling Canadians that their country was at war in Afghanistan, or that Canadian troops and other government officials were being sent to a war zone.”<sup>774</sup> Justifying a Canadian involvement in a war would have certainly implied going against deep-rooted Canadian public beliefs. Those beliefs have historically been closer to liberal internationalism, in general, and peacekeeping, in particular, and during the Harper era, the Canadian public embraced those beliefs strongly.<sup>775</sup> To guarantee that the “mission” or “engagement” narrative was rightfully conveyed, the Harper administration started to control not only what the Conservative caucus could say about the intervention but also the “talking points” of DFAIT, CIDA and the DND.<sup>776</sup> Also, unlike the Chrétien and Martin years when the cabinet, especially the ministers of foreign affairs, were more active in justifying the Canadian efforts in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Harper became the predominant communicator.<sup>777</sup>

As of 2008, the message control strategy sought to silence not only wayward voices inside the government and agencies playing a central role in Afghanistan but, above all, every mention of the intervention. As Stephen Saideman pointed out, Prime Minister Harper was interested in making public speeches about Afghanistan until 2007. After that year, the Prime Minister stopped talking about the intervention and decided not to react to dramatic events between 2008 and 2011, such as the continued killing of Canadian soldiers in Kandahar and the prison break in 2011. Unlike the period between 2006 and 2007, during the period between 2008 and 2011, Prime Minister Harper lost interest in publicly supporting the Canadian COIN strategy in Afghanistan.<sup>778</sup>

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<sup>774</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>775</sup> Roland Paris, “Are Canadians Still Liberal Internationalists? Foreign Policy and Public Opinion in the Harper era,” *International Journal* 69, no. 3 (2014): 274-307.

<sup>776</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 49.

<sup>777</sup> Jean-Christophe Boucher, “Selling Afghanistan: A Discourse Analysis of Canada’s Military Intervention,” *International Journal* 64, no.3 (2009): 722.

<sup>778</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 49-50.

This strategy went hand in hand with the appointment of the Manley Panel. In providing a common ground to the Harper administration and the opposition parties, the panel paved the way for stopping all talk about COIN's overall goals. Indeed, the Manley Report constituted a balancing act, like that advanced by President Obama's speech of December 1<sup>st</sup>, aimed at giving the Harper Conservatives and the opposition parties what they asked. The Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois, and the NDP were able to claim the achievement of making development and reconstruction programs once again important aspects of the government's policy agenda. For its part, the Harper Conservatives managed to gain broader support for staying in Afghanistan. Thus, the Manley Report created a political environment that made an in-depth discussion about the intervention unnecessary during the 2008 federal election.<sup>779</sup>

The second sub-strategy consisted of consulting Parliament to create a sense of elite consensus and undermine the opposing voices against the COIN strategy. As Philippe Lagassé has recalled, the Canadian FPE is not legally obligated to get approval from Parliament to deploy and extend military deployments. After all, this is a distinguishing feature of the Westminster parliamentary system.<sup>780</sup> However, some voices from opposition parties called for war prerogative reform since the Chrétien years, and the Conservative Party echoed such voices during the 2005-2006 federal election. When the Harper Conservatives came to office, one of the first decisions was precisely to consult Parliament about the extension of the COIN strategy in Kandahar.<sup>781</sup> With a vote of 149 to 145, Parliament approved the extension until 2009, despite the Bloc Québécois, the New Democratic Party, and a large majority of Liberals voted against it.<sup>782</sup> After the Manley

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<sup>779</sup> Ibid, 46-7 and 51; Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 110-111.

<sup>780</sup> Lagassé, "Parliament and the War Prerogative in the United Kingdom and Canada," 280.

<sup>781</sup> Ibid, 290-293.

<sup>782</sup> Ibid, 292; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 44-45. *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 156 (May 17, 2007).

Report considered Canadian troops' withdrawal on a specific date inconvenient as the intervention's success depended on a long-term approach, the Conservatives brought the extension motion again before Parliament. With a vote of 198 to 177, with a lesser majority of liberals, compared to the previous voting, voting against it, Parliament approved the extension of the COIN strategy until 2011.<sup>783</sup>

On the surface, the Harper Conservatives' decision to consult Parliament could have precisely indicated an increased commitment to the war prerogative reform and, accordingly, the executive's deference to Parliament. However, a closer examination of how exactly the events evolved during this period would show that their real strategy was to create a false sense of elite consensus, undermine opposition parties' criticism and dodge responsibility. Each of these objectives would reinforce the "going silent" strategy. Firstly, Conservatives used the voting about the extension as synonymous with Parliament's approval of the Afghanistan intervention as a whole. Even though the NDP, Bloc Québécois, and part of the Liberals never approved the COIN strategy's goals, Conservatives managed to create the narrative that the intervention had been a parliamentary decision.<sup>784</sup> Secondly, the consultation of Parliament and, consequently, the extension's approval was instrumental in avoiding vexing questions about the mission. Every time that opposition parties criticized the mission, Conservatives reminded the public that the former had approved its extension.<sup>785</sup> Thirdly, the parliamentary debates allowed the Harper Conservatives to "abdicate responsibility for the most costly Canadian military effort since Korea" as it prevented the opposition parties from holding them accountable.<sup>786</sup> In addition, the

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<sup>783</sup> Lagassé, "Parliament and the War Prerogative in the United Kingdom and Canada," 292. *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 2<sup>nd</sup> session 142, no. 66 (March 13, 2008).

<sup>784</sup> Lagassé, "Parliament and the War Prerogative in the United Kingdom and Canada," 292-293.

<sup>785</sup> Ibid.

<sup>786</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 55.

disagreements between the opposition parties and inside the Liberal party prevented them from cooperating to restrain the Conservatives' strategies in Afghanistan.<sup>787</sup> It means that the Harper Conservatives avoided honouring the principle of responsible government inextricably linked to the executive's royal prerogative power. In Westminster Parliamentary systems, it makes no sense that the executive enjoyed a royal war prerogative without honouring the principle of responsible government.<sup>788</sup>

After having explained the strategies for circumventing legislative and public opposition, the next section will examine the practical outcome of these strategies. Specifically, it will address how American and Canadian FPEs showed similar resource-extraction capabilities to undertake the 'clear', 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components. Taken together, the FPEs' structural autonomy, ability to overcome domestic resources, and resource-extraction capabilities meet the third and final analytical step of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy.

## **7. American and Canadian FPEs' resource-extraction capability**

This study views the American and Canadian FPEs' resource-extraction capability to conduct COIN foreign and security policies in Afghanistan as synonymous with the appropriation of resources for conducting the 'clear', 'hold', and 'build' components of such a policy. This means that this study considers the fiscal impact of the American and Canadian COIN in Afghanistan rather than its economic impact to examine the FPE's resource-extraction capability. Such an analytical decision is justified because the fiscal cost is directly associated with the FPE's resource-extraction capability, whereas the economic costs, including the fiscal and private cost incurred by

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<sup>787</sup> Ibid.

<sup>788</sup> See Lagassé, "Accountability for National Defense," 6-13.

“[American and Canadian forces’] members, their families and the larger community,”<sup>789</sup> would have to do with the intended and unintended consequences of the FPEs’ decisions. From a broader perspective, the economic costs would also divert attention from the FPE’s resource extraction capability. After all, it may include the macroeconomic impact of the intervention on the American and Canadian economies or the opportunity costs of using resources to conduct COIN in Afghanistan, affecting the inversion in other strategies, theatres of operations and non-war options.<sup>790</sup>

In contrast, the fiscal costs provide a more accurate understanding of the FPE’s resource-extraction capability in focusing directly on the FPE’s ability to get funds to deploy, support and transport troops overseas, to undertake and support military operations, to reset obsolete, damaged or destroyed equipment during the military operation, to conduct intelligence activities and to provide coalition support. This would meet the ‘clear’ component of COIN. The fiscal costs also allow for examining the FPE’s capacity to obtain resources to train Afghan security forces. Since this was vital to prepare the Afghanistan government to provide security to the country on its own, it would meet the ‘hold’ component of COIN. Finally, those costs account for diplomatic operations — including paying staff and providing security to diplomatic personal and building embassies —, and foreign assistance aid in the form of development and reconstruction programs. This means that examining those costs helps explain the FPE’s ability to mobilize resources to meet the ‘build’ component of COIN.<sup>791</sup>

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<sup>789</sup> David Macdonald and Steven Staples, “The Cost of the War and the End of Peacekeeping. The Impact of Extending the Afghanistan mission,” *Rideau Institute*, October 2008, 9.

<sup>790</sup> Brown University – Watson Institute International & Public Affairs, *Costs of War Project, Economic Costs*. <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/economic>.

<sup>791</sup> Amy Belasco, “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11” *Congressional Research Service*, 7-5700 (2014): 8-9, 16-17; Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (OPB) [Report prepared by Rammarayan Mathilakath, Ashutosh Rajekar and Sahir Khan], *The Fiscal Impact of the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan* (Ottawa, ON: 2008): 6 and 12.

All of those fiscal costs came in the form of operating expenditures supporting the intervention as incurred mostly by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of State (DoS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Canadian Department of National defence (DND), the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Those organizations were in charge of conducting the American and Canadian intervention in Afghanistan and, especially, implementing the COIN strategy between 2005/2006 and 2011. Given that the purpose of this section is to examine those fiscal costs directly associated with the COIN strategy in Afghanistan as a way to assess the FPE's resource-extraction capability, this study excludes the cost of taking care of the American and Canadian veterans.<sup>792</sup>

Due to the lack of transparency in Canada's fiscal reporting, it is difficult to identify the fiscal resources for supporting the Afghanistan intervention compared to the United States. In the United States, it is clear that the intervention was "not funded with new taxes or war bonds, but by deficit spending and borrowing," which will add interests to war funding at least until the 2050s.<sup>793</sup> In Canada, this is not clear. As explained in chapter 1, calculating the costs of civilian and military operations in Afghanistan is difficult because there are no specific legislative appropriations for Afghanistan operations. Also, Departments did not accurately inform the intervention's incremental costs, and the costs of the intervention sometimes do not match with legislative appropriations.<sup>794</sup> These factors make identifying where monies come from rugged as well.

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<sup>792</sup> Belasco, "The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11," 8-9 and 16-17; OPB, *The Fiscal Impact of the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan*, 6 and 12.

<sup>793</sup> Neta C. Crawford, "United States Budgetary Cost of the Post-9/11 Wars Through FY 2019: \$5.9 Trillion Spend and Obligated," *Costs of War – Watson Institute International & Public Affairs – Brown University*, Nov. 14, 2018. [https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2018/Crawford\\_Costs%20of%20War%20Estimates%20Through%20FY2019.pdf](https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2018/Crawford_Costs%20of%20War%20Estimates%20Through%20FY2019.pdf).

<sup>794</sup> OPB, *The Fiscal Impact of the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan*, 9 and 32; David Perry, "Canada's Seven Billion Dollar War. The Cost of Canadian Forces Operations in Afghanistan," *International Journal* 63, no. 3 (2008), 707.

On the surface, a simplistic correlation between the costs of Canadian operations in Afghanistan and the total defence spending would suggest that the monies supporting such operations come from deficit spending, especially during the COIN period. After all, operations in Kandahar's increased costs went hand in hand with a defence budget's steady increase. It rose from US\$15,141 in 2005 to US\$19,467 million in 2009, when it decreased until arriving at US\$15,977 and US\$16,238 million in 2013 and 2014.<sup>795</sup> However, a deeper analysis of defence budget planning, as conducted by David Perry, would suggest that the intervention's costs, including the COIN period, were planned within the Defence budget's reference levels of that period. It would indicate that the incremental costs of operations in Afghanistan came from reprioritization: the operations would have been funded through redirecting monies from other defence priorities.<sup>796</sup>

### *7.1.Funding for the US COIN*

The United States undertook its intervention in Afghanistan by mobilizing defence personnel and capital assets through Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), under the DoD's guidance. The military effort went hand in hand with the deployment and support of diplomat and development officers, who implemented development and reconstruction programs led by the State Department (DoS) and USAID. Specifically, between 2006 and 2011, DoD, DoS, and USAIF were in charge of implementing the 'clear,' 'hold', and 'build' COIN components.

The American FPE managed to fund the 'clear' and 'hold' components of COIN by obtaining increased budget authority granted to the DoD to conduct war operations in Afghanistan.

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<sup>795</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Military Expenditure for country in constant (2018) US\$, 2019.*

<sup>796</sup> Perry, "Canada's Seven Billion Dollar War," 713-714.

Table 5.1 allows for contrasting the war funding for DoD allocated to counterterrorism (CT) between 2001 and 2005 and counterinsurgency (COIN) between 2006 and 2011. The annual average war funding to conduct CT was US\$15,9 billion, which could be slightly lower if the analysis splits the war funding of US\$20 billion for 2001 and 2002. For its part, the annual average war funding for the DOD became US\$58,9 billion over the COIN period, which would consequently represent almost four times higher the average yearly war funding over the CT period. This was the result of a significant, steady increase from US\$17,9 billion in 2006 to US\$113,3 billion in 2011, the year the funding reached its peak.

For the American FPE, this funding was especially important to guarantee the significant increase of troop levels in Afghanistan, coinciding with the transition from CT to COIN. After overthrowing the Taliban regime, the number of troops increased from 10,000 in 2002 to 20,000 in 2005 as the troops started to cover the country. Due to the deteriorating security situation reported by the U.S. top officers since 2006, the FPE doubled the level of troops again, reaching 40,000 in 2008. This progressive increase would continue with the troop surges of 2009, bringing about 100,000 soldiers in May 2011.<sup>797</sup>

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<sup>797</sup> Belasco, “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11,” 10-11.

**Table 5.1: War funding for DoD and DoS/USAID FY 2001- FY2011**

<b>Fiscal Years (figures in \$ US billion)</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
DoD (CT, 2001-2005; ‘clear’ and hold components of COIN)*	20	14	12.4	17.2	17.9	37.2	40.6	56.1	87.7	113.3
ASFF (the ‘hold’ component)**	0	0	0.3	1.3	1.9	7.4	2.8	5.6	9.2	11.6
DoS/USAID (the ‘build’ component)*	0.8	0.7	2.2	2.8	1.1	1.9	2.7	3.1	5.7	4.1

**Sources:**

\* DoD and DoS/USAID figures were collected by Ian S. Livingston and Michael O’Hanlon from estimates of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, U.S. Departments of Defense and State and U.S. Congressional Research Service (Ian S. Livingston and Michael O’Hanlon, “Afghanistan Index.” *Brooking Institute*, May 14, 2014, 15. [https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/21csi\\_20170525\\_afghanistan\\_index.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/21csi_20170525_afghanistan_index.pdf).

\*\*Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) figures were gathered by Amy Belasco from “Public laws, congressional appropriations reports, DoD budget justification materials, and DoD Cost of War Update Reports.” Amy Belasco, “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11” *Congressional Research Service*, 7-5700 (2014), 62. See also Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 30, 2014, 74.

With the war funding, the American FPE specifically managed to fund the ‘hold’ component of COIN by obtaining legislative appropriated resources for the Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). Congress created this fund “to provide the ANSF with equipment, supplies, services, training, and funding, as well as facility and infrastructure repair, renovation, and construction.”<sup>798</sup> Thus, this funding aimed to “provide [...] time and space for ANSF [Afghanistan National Security Forces] and the GIROA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] to build the capacity to secure their own country [and accordingly to hold] the gains made by International Security Assistant Force,” as a requirement to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a haven for international terrorism.<sup>799</sup> Even though this funding was appropriated to the State Department in FY2004, it was transferred to the DoD to be implemented in the following years.<sup>800</sup> Subsequently, the DoD allocated three budget activities, namely, Defense Forces (Afghan National

<sup>798</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 30, 2014, 74.

<sup>799</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense Budget, *Justification for FY 2015 Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) Afghanistan Security Forces (ASFF)*, June 2014, 4.

<sup>800</sup> Belasco, “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11,” 61.

Army, ANA), Interior Forces (Afghan National Police, ANP), and Related Activities (mainly Detainee Operations) to disburse the money.<sup>801</sup>

Congress and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan (SIGAR) cast doubts about the Train-and-Equip program being financed by ASFF. Both were concerned about contractors' performance, the lack of trainers, and DoD's capability to coordinate its activities with the State Department and other NATO members. Congress and SIGAR also worried about logistics failures, insufficient infrastructure to support the basic needs of ANSF, the high levels of attrition of Afghan forces, illiteracy, absenteeism, and drug abuse. The most salient concern was probably related to the widespread corruption among the military and police officers. Corruption often came in the form of selling and pilfering of supplies, including weapons and fuel, illegal checkpoints, diversion of personnel and payroll abuse, among other practices.<sup>802</sup> In a nutshell, regardless of the United States and its allies' efforts, some Congress members and SIGAR argued that several systemic factors were preventing "independent army and police forces for Afghanistan" from developing.<sup>803</sup>

Even though the doubts about this program's viability were increasingly apparent during the intervention, the FPE managed to convince Congress to increase the ASFF year by year progressively. Table 5.1 shows that before 2004, there were no monies allocated to the 'hold' component because it was not essential for CT. However, as of 2004, Congress not only created the funding for the 'hold' component but also increased it steadily from US\$0.3 billion in FY2004 to US\$1.9 billion in FY2006. As compared to the funding appropriated in FY 2006, which is the turning point of this study, the funding was quadrupled, reaching US\$7.4 billion in 2007. Although

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<sup>801</sup> Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, 75.

<sup>802</sup> Belasco, "The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11," 62; Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), *Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments*, June 2010, 17-20. <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/2010-06-29audit-10-11.pdf>.

<sup>803</sup> SIGAR, *Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments*, 17.

this funding decreased significantly to US\$2.8 billion in FY2008, it never returned to the lower levels before 2006. Indeed, it increased dramatically again until reaching US\$11.6 billion in FY2011. All in all, the period 2004-2006 could be seen as one of transition linking CT and COIN strategies with some monies allocated to the ‘hold’ component, whereas the period 2006-2011 would be one aimed at reaffirming the need to hold the gains obtained by the ‘clear’ strategy.

The American FPE acquired funding for the ‘build’ component by appropriating resources to guarantee the DoS and USAID’s operations in Afghanistan. It is worth noting that during the CT period, the war funding for the State Department and USAID increased from US\$0,8 billion in 2001/2002 to US\$2,8 billion in 2005 and drooped to US\$1,1 billion in 2006. Once COIN started to be conducted, the war funding for the State and USAID increased steadily until reaching US\$5,1 billion in 2010 and decreased slightly to US\$4,1 billion in 2011.

### *7.2.Funding for Canadian COIN*

Canada conducted its intervention in Afghanistan through several military operations, governance, development and reconstruction programs, which implied mobilizing defence personnel, diplomat, development officers and capital assets. Under the DND’s guidance, CAF mostly conducted operations Apollo, Accius, Archer, Argus, Altair and the two phases of operation Athena. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) conducted governance, development and reconstruction programs.

Specifically, between 2006 and 2011, DND, DFAIT, and CIDA were in charge of implementing the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ COIN components. Canadian COIN strategy was coordinated by Task Force Kandahar (TCK) headquarters located at Kandahar, whose primary purpose was to lead the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT). The military

commander led the ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ components, being accountable to the DND through Canadian Expeditionary Force Command in Ottawa. As of 2008, the ‘build’ component was coordinated by the Representative of Canada in Kandahar (RoCK), who oversaw all Canadian civilian agencies and reported to DFAIT and CIDA.<sup>804</sup> Resource mobilization for COIN mainly occurred through the budget authority granted to DND, DFAIT and CIDA to fund the military operations, and governance, development, and reconstruction efforts over this period.

Like the American FPE, the Canadian FPE managed to fund the ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ components of COIN by obtaining increased budget authority granted to the DND to conduct military operations in Afghanistan. Table 5.2 allows for contrasting DND funding to conduct complex peacekeeping between 2001 and 2005 and COIN between 2006 and 2011. The average annual war funding to conduct complex peacekeeping was US\$342,8 million. For its part, the average yearly budget for the DND activities in Afghanistan became US\$957,3 million over the COIN period. It would account for almost three times higher the average yearly funding over the time CAF conducted complex peacekeeping. Complex peacekeeping funding increased from US\$206,3 million in FY 2001-2002 to US\$573,9 million in FY 2003-2004 and decreased until reaching US\$307,4 million in FY 2004-2005. In the following years, DND funding started to rise as CAF turned its activities into COIN. It reached US\$403,1 million in FY 2005-2006 and then increased dramatically until peaked US\$1036,6 million in FY 2008-2009. It decreased very slightly, reaching US\$966,3 million in FY2010-2011.

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<sup>804</sup> Caroline Leprince, “The Canadian-led Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team: A Success Story?” *International Journal* 68, no. 2 (2013): 361.

**Table 5.2: Peacekeeping and COIN Funding for DND and CIDA**

<b>Fiscal Years (figures in \$ US million)*</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>
DND (Complex peacekeeping 2001-2005, 'clear' and hold components of COIN, 2006-2011)**	206.3	223.1	573.9	307.4	403.1	779.55	1037.7	1036.6	966.3	966.3
Operation Athena (complex peacekeeping, 2003-2005, 'clear' component of COIN, 2006-2011)**	0	0	410.7	283.7	83.57	511.55	1028.6	962.74	962.7	962.7
Archer and Argus ('hold' component of COIN)**	0	0	0	0	300.1	257.21	1.4326	2.1012	2.101	2.101
CIDA (the 'build' component)***	44.89	117.5	98.38	110.8	101.2	174.78	280.8	213.94	214.9	219.7

\*Original figures are in Canadian dollars. The historical exchange rate used is 1: 1.0470107843 (July 31, 2011)

**Sources:**

\*\* DND figures and the costs of operations Athena, Archer, and Argus were collected by David Perry from DND departmental performance reports (FY2002-03 – FY2006-07) and from DND's plans and priorities (FY 2001-02, 2007-08, and 2008-09). Figures of FY2009-10 and 2010-2011 are Perry's estimates. Similar figures were collected by the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (OPB) from DND, Finance and Corporate Services for FY 2001-2008 – FY 2008-2009. David Perry, "Canada's Seven Billion Dollar War. The Cost of Canadian Forces Operations in Afghanistan," *International Journal* 63, no. 3 (2008): 724. Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (OPB), [Report prepared by Rammarayan Mathilakath, Ashutosh Rajekar and Sahir Khan], *The Fiscal Impact of the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan* (Ottawa, Canada, October 9, 2008), 13.

\*\*\* CIDA figures were collected by the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer from CIDA. OPB, *The Fiscal Impact of the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan*, 29. See also Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD), *Synthesis Report – Summative Evaluation of Canada's Afghanistan Development Program. Fiscal year 2004-2005 to 2012-2013* (Gatineau, QC: March 2015). <http://www.oecd.org/derec/canada/summative-evaluation-canada-afghanistan.pdf>

Specifically, the Canadian FPE managed to fund the 'clear' COIN component by obtaining and mobilizing resources for the second phase of operation Athena (2006-2011). During this phase, CAF conducted combat operations in the Dand, Arghandab, Panjwayi and Zhari districts in the Kandahar Province.<sup>805</sup> The total resources allocated to this operation were US\$4636.6. The Canadian FPE also obtained resources to conduct the 'hold' component through operations Archer and Argus. Operation Archer (2005-2006) allowed senior CAF members to partake in the US-led Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CST-A) to mentor the Afghan Defence and Interior ministries and help them to reorganize, train, and equip the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. Operation Argus (2005-2008) deployed the Strategic Advisory

<sup>805</sup> Government of Canada, "The Canadian Armed Forces Legacy in Afghanistan." Date modified September 21, 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/recently-completed/canadian-armed-forces-legacy-afghanistan.html>.

Team Afghanistan (SAT-A) to advise the Afghan government to implement a cohesive strategy against the Taliban insurgency.<sup>806</sup> The resources allocated to operations Archer and Argus together were US\$591.6. Indeed, these missions increased the Canadian commitment significantly as compared to the previous operations conducting complex peacekeeping. Those operations were Apollo (2001-2003), Accius (2002-2005), Altair (2004-2008) and the first phase of Athena (2002-2005).<sup>807</sup>

The Canadian FPE obtained resources for the ‘build’ COIN component by appropriating resources for CIDA’s activities in Afghanistan. During the period Canada conducted complex peacekeeping, the funding for CIDA increased from US\$44,89 million in FY 2001-02 to US\$117.5 in FY 2002-03, which would be its peak during this period. From FY 2003-04 to FY 2005-2006, funding remained relatively steady and ranged between US\$98.38 and US\$101.2 million. This funding increased substantially within the CIDA budget, reaching its peak in FY 2007-08 with US\$280.8 million. During the following years, it decreased slightly, ranging between US\$213.94 and US\$219.7 million.

Figure 5.1 compares the budget levels granted to the ‘clear’, ‘hold’, and ‘build’ components of American and Canadian COIN at the percentage level between 2005/2006 and 2011. The ‘clear’ component was by far the most important within the American and Canadian COIN funding. In

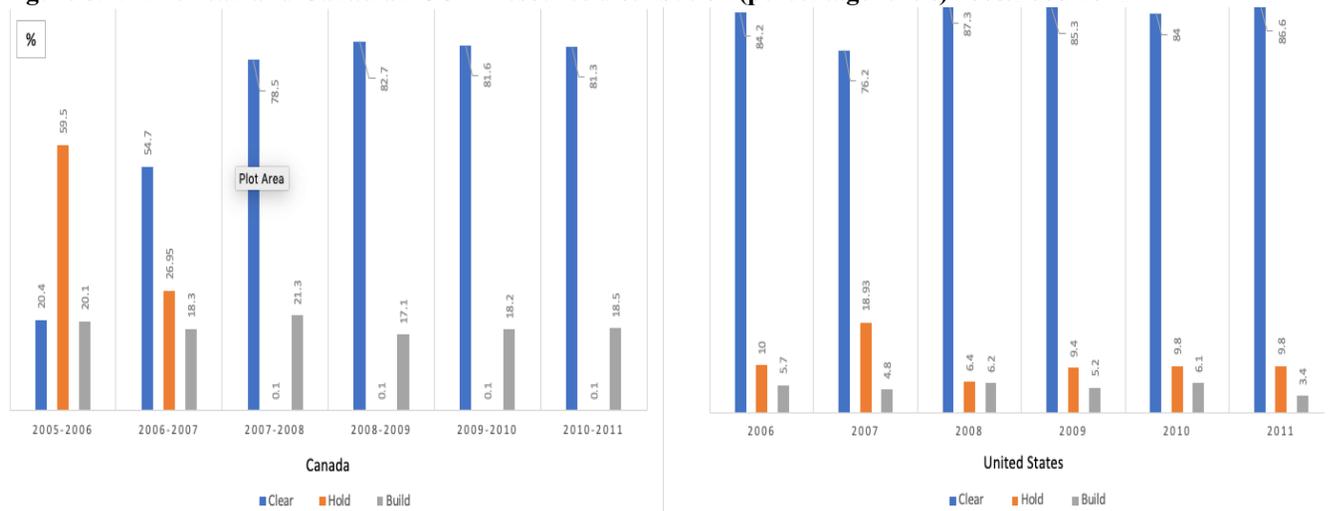
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<sup>806</sup> Jim Cox, “Afghanistan: The Canadian Military Mission,” *INFOSERIES* (Ottawa: Parliamentary Information and Research Service, November 6, 2007), 1-5; Kimberly Marten, “From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 223; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 75.

<sup>807</sup> Operation Apollo (2001-2003) contributed to “the international campaign against terrorism.” Not only did it imply transporting and maintain troops to support American CT efforts, but it also entailed providing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) to the coalition effort. Operation Accius (2002-2005) aimed to support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, especially regarding security capacity building. Operation Altair (2004-2008) sought to support OEF through naval interoperability with its American counterparts in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. The first phase of operation Athena (2003-2006) sought to provide security in Kabul and surrounding areas. Government of Canada, “The Canadian Armed Forces Legacy in Afghanistan,” Date modified September 21, 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/recently-completed/canadian-armed-forces-legacy-afghanistan.html>

the case of the United States, the percentage of the total funding ranged between 76.2% in FY 2007 and 87.3% in FY 2008, when Congress appropriated the lowest and highest amounts. In the case of Canada, these budgetary levels were similar to those of the United States, ranging between 78% in FY 2007-2008 and 82.7% in FY 2010-2011. Yet, these levels experienced an apparent exception during FY 2005-2006, when there were more appropriated resources to the ‘hold’ component, accounting for 59.5% of the total funding. Actually, during those years, the ‘hold’ component doubled the amount of the ‘clear’ and ‘build’ components, representing 20.4% and 20.1%, respectively. However, as of 2006-2007, the Canadian COIN budget’s resource distribution started to look more similar to the general trend, with the ‘clear’ component attracting the highest amount with 54.7% of the total appropriated resources. This component ended up doubling and tripling the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components, representing 26.95% and 18.3% of total resources, respectively.

**Figure 5.1: American and Canadian COIN resource distribution (percentage levels) 2005/2006-2011**



In comparing the resource distribution between the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components, the United States attracted more resources to the former than the latter. During FY 2007 and FY 2011, the ‘hold’ component quadrupled and tripled the ‘build’ component budget, accounting for 18.93%

and 9.8% as compared to 4.8% and 6.1%. During FY 2006, FY2009 and FY2010, the 'hold' component doubled the 'build' component, representing 10%, 9.4%, 9.8%, as compared to 5.7%, 5.2%, and 6.1%. Finally, during FY 2008, the 'hold' component's budgetary levels were slightly higher than those of the 'build' component, representing 6.4% compared to 6.2%.

For its part, Canada concentrated more resources on the 'build' component except for the FY 2005-2006 and FY 2006-2007. As mentioned, during this year, the 'hold' component was higher than the 'build' component, with 59.1% and 26.95% compared to 20.1% and 18.3%. This atypical distribution of resources resulted from the appropriation of Operation Archer's resources only between 2005 and 2006. Between FY2007-2008 and FY2010-2011, the 'build' component was, by far, higher with 21.3%, 17.1%, 18.2% and 18.5% compared to 0,1% allocated to the 'hold' component.

### **Conclusion**

Structural realism cannot assess why and how, despite their different positions in the international system, the United States and Canada behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention. In contrast, the version of neoclassical realism adopted by the present study is well equipped to achieve such a goal. This dissertation has shown that this theoretical framework allows us to unravel this puzzle in drawing significant attention to the intervening variables shaping the 9/11 strategic environment's impact on the United States' and Canada's engagement levels in Afghanistan. In this study, the intervening variables were the level of similarity of the American and Canadian FPE's security beliefs and their comparable ability to mobilize domestic resources. In analyzing the evolution of these variables, Chapter 4 and the present chapter explained

respectively why and how the United States and Canada found themselves precisely conducting comparable COIN strategies from 2005/2006 to 2011.

Drawing on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, the present chapter's primary argument was that the American and Canadian FPEs took advantage of their structural autonomy to overcome increasing legislative and public opposition to the intervention between 2006 and 2011. Above all, during this period, American and Canadian FPE showed their ability to extract fiscal resources to undertake their COIN foreign and security policies, which were by far more profound than during the Afghanistan intervention's early years.

This chapter started by examining the domestic hurdles that the American and Canadian FPEs had to overcome. After enjoying legislative and public support to undertake their foreign and security policies during the early years, American and Canadian FPE had to deal with the breakdown of the elite consensus and negative reactions from the public during the years that both of them performed COIN. Opposition voices in the U.S. Congress criticized the extent to which the Iraq invasion had diverted attention from the Afghanistan intervention, the lack of a long-term approach, the contradictory role of Pakistan and the Afghan government's increased level of corruption and inability to provide essential public services, including security, without the support of the NATO intervening countries. For their part, opposition parties in the Canadian Parliament criticized the way the FPE had emphasized the military engagement over the reconstruction and development programs, especially the extent to which the Harper Conservatives had abandoned Canada's traditional peacekeeping mission. All opposition parties used the detainee issue to embarrass the Harper Conservatives' COIN strategy in Afghanistan.

American and Canadian FPEs also faced opposition from the public. According to polls, 87% of the Americans supported the Afghanistan intervention in 2001. However, in 2006 the

public started to react negatively, and by 2009 only 41% favoured the most critical component of the COIN strategy; namely, increasing the number of American troops. In particular, the President Obama found himself in an odd position. Republicans, who had been traditional supporters of the troop escalation, kept supporting him, whereas Democrats reacted negatively to the troop surge. Similarly, the public support among Canadians dropped when Canada entered Kandahar. In the early years of the intervention, the opposition was below 40%. Yet, during the years CAF fought in Kandahar, 53% of the public opposed the campaign, and 59% of Canadians were not optimistic about the American FPE's troop surge. It is worth noting that, unlike the American public, which was organized along partisan lines, the Canadian public was divided between the English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians.

Despite such increased legislative and public opposition, American and Canadian FPEs' similar principled and causal beliefs encouraged them to increase their level of commitment in Afghanistan. American and Canadian FPEs also enjoyed comparable structural autonomy levels in their political systems that constituted an undisputable leverage point for increasing their commitment and, above all, for conducting similar foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. This chapter challenged the conventional wisdom suggesting that the FPE enjoyed different structural autonomy levels *vis-à-vis* the legislative branch in presidential and Westminster parliamentary systems. Specifically, this is apparent in comparing the functioning of the American and Canadian political systems during the period of the present study. The American FPE's bold assertions of unilateral power and the U.S. Congress' deference to the President as a commander in chief since the Cold War have transformed the foreign and security policy decision-making process in the United States. Rather than following the principle of sharing constitutional war power between the President and Congress, as advanced by the U.S. Founding Fathers and the

Constitution, the American political system has evolved to make the President the ultimate decider and the Congress the follower. During the Afghanistan intervention, especially between 2006 and 2011, it is hard to see substantial, practical differences between the American President's authority to wage wars and the Canadian Prime Minister's royal war prerogative.

Those comparable high levels of structural autonomy, along with similar beliefs of what should be done in Afghanistan between 2006 and 2011, led American and Canadian FPEs to look for strategies to deal with legislative and public opposition. Both of them attempted to control the public message about the intervention. The American FPE conveyed a message of coherence and strategic breakthrough year after year to justify the intervention. However, it was far from reality. The increased incoherence of the intervention's objectives, the lack of coordination between agencies and between the United States and the multinational coalition, the adverse effects of American funding, and the Afghan and Pakistani governments' inability to become reliable partners were more and more apparent during the COIN period. For its part, the Canadian FPE made sustained efforts to mislead the public by not referring to what Canadians were doing during this period as a war. The Canadian FPE were aware that terms 'mission' and 'engagement' matched better with the Canadian public's deep-rooted peacekeeping beliefs.

American and Canadian FPEs attempted additional strategies to deal with the legislative and public opposition. The former went public, whereas the latter went silent. The American FPE made high-profile public speeches to conciliate contrasting views on the COIN strategy. In contrast, the Canadian FPE attempted to silence opposition voices by paradoxically consulting Parliament about the extension of the 'mission.' The former managed to get positive reactions from the public and, by extension, from the legislature, whereas the latter succeeded in creating the sense that the Afghanistan intervention had received parliamentary support, which allowed the

Harper Conservatives to abdicate their responsibility. Despite those different strategies, both of them were able to extract similar amounts of financial resources at the percentage level that enabled them to implement the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ component of the COIN strategy. Even though Canada and the United States had different resource distribution regarding the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components, with the United States highlighting the former and Canada the latter, both allocated similar levels of resources to the ‘clear’ component. Canada and the United States used 76.2-87.3% and 78%-82.7% of their COIN funding, respectively, to conduct the ‘clear’ component. As a result, both American and Canadian FPEs considered the direct fight against the insurgency the most critical Afghanistan strategy.

In the final analysis, both countries managed to obtain financial resources to conduct their ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ COIN strategies, exhibiting similar abilities to mobilize domestic resources and comparable resource-extraction capabilities. By analyzing these abilities and capabilities, the present chapter constituted the third and final piece of this study’s puzzle. Taken together, chapters 3 to 5 argued that to understand this puzzle, it is necessary to assess three dimensions: namely, the strategic environment in the form of polarity and the degree of threats’ clarity, the FPEs’ beliefs and domestic politics. This dissertation now proceeds to analyze the theoretical and empirical implications derived from the in-depth analysis of these dimensions and, above all, from the previous chapters’ findings. This will be the purpose of the concluding chapter.

## Conclusion: Unravelling the Research Puzzle

On May 1, 2021, the Biden administration began the U.S. troops' final withdrawal from Afghanistan to honour the agreement between the Trump administration and the Taliban, concluding "America's longest war."<sup>808</sup> Over twenty years passed since American and Canadian forces arrived in Afghanistan to start the War on Terrorism (WoT) and, during this period, there has been an enormous controversy about the nature and the scope of the intervention. Amidst this controversy, this dissertation aimed to unravel a strategic puzzle: why and how the United States and Canada's engagement levels during the intervention became similar between 2005/2006 and 2011. Theoretically, this dissertation sought to explain why and how states differently placed in the international system end up behaving similarly. Based on neoclassical realism, the central argument was that these similar engagements resulted from similar systemic stimuli from the strategic environment, foreign policy executives' (FPE) strategic beliefs and abilities to mobilize domestic resources.

The main aim of this concluding chapter is to clarify the implications of this argument. It begins by summarizing the previous chapters' central theoretical and empirical findings. Section 1 explains the extent to which neoclassical realism constitutes a suitable approach to address the puzzle *vis-à-vis* other theories of foreign policy. Then, sections 2, 3 and 4 highlight the three central empirical findings derived from assessing the evolution of the Afghanistan intervention's strategic environment, American and Canadian FPEs' perceptions, and the dynamics of domestic politics shaping the FPEs' room for maneuver. Section 5 addresses the interaction of all factors analyzed in the empirical chapters by using a process-tracing methodology, which is to say that it examines

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<sup>808</sup> Joe Biden, "Remarks by President Biden on the Way Forward in Afghanistan" (Washington D.C., April 14, 2021).

the simultaneous occurrence of these factors within a causal and sequence analysis. Sections 6 and 7 examine the theoretical and empirical implications derived from addressing this study's puzzle.

Theoretically, this chapter argues that this puzzle, seen as a logical inference of Waltz's original puzzle, paves the way for addressing other foreign policy puzzles. Waltz asks why and how states *similarly* placed in the international system behave *similarly*, whereas this study asks why and how states *differently* placed can behave *similarly*. As logical inference of both puzzles, we could also ask why and how states *differently* placed in the international system behave *differently* and why and how states *similarly* placed behave *differently*. This chapter shows that together these puzzles help advance the implications of realist theorizing for foreign policy analyses. Empirically, this dissertation challenges conventional explanations about why the United States and Canada behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention. By using process-tracing, it defies the ideas that American influence, the Canadian military's pressure, and the Canadian need to compensate the decision to not participate in the Iraq War were necessary causes of this similar behavior. These explanations would correspond to the bandwagon-effect, military ascendancy, and compensation theses, as explained in chapter 1.

### **1. Theoretical finding: neoclassical realism as a suitable approach**

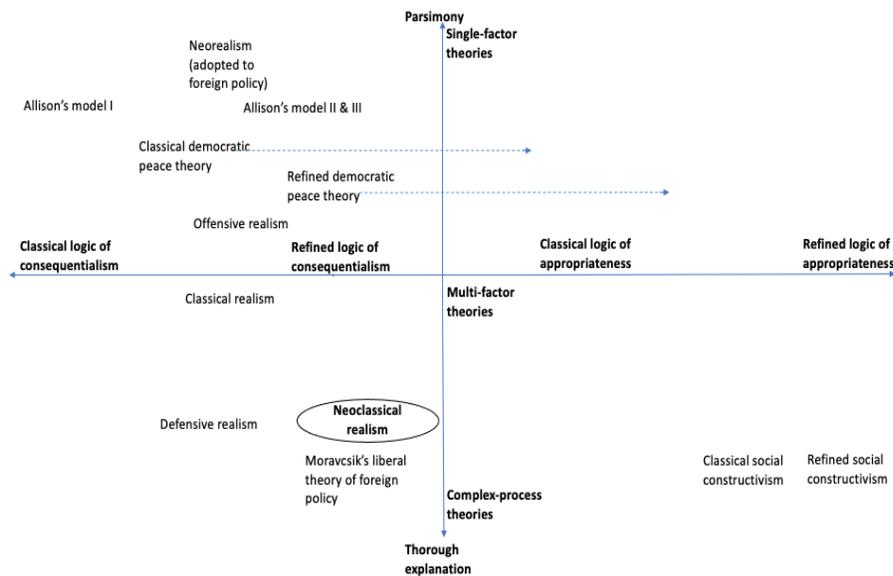
The primary theoretical finding of this dissertation was that the puzzle under analysis is complex and, accordingly, it must be addressed through a thorough explanation that neoclassical realism provides. Firstly, it is a complex puzzle in the sense that it cannot be examined by focusing on a single factor or level of analysis. To begin with, it cannot be unpacked by drawing attention solely to the analyzed countries' relative capabilities. All things being equal, differences in power would entail different rather than similar foreign and security policies. Neither could we focus solely on

decision-makers' perceptions insofar as we would be brushing aside the massive resource mobilization required for a weaker state to keep up with stronger states' international engagement levels. Specifically, the occurrence of factors other than leaders' perceptions would be necessary to explain the decision to send troops and government officials to a war zone. For example, an analysis of decision-makers' ability to overcome expected public and legislative opposition would be required to understand states with different capabilities following similar risk-escalation strategies. Similarly, focusing on domestic politics alone would lead one to leave out the different relative standings in the international system of the states under consideration, which is precisely the point of departure of the puzzle at hand. Finally, this puzzle is complex because it requires clarifying each factor's relative weight within the analysis. Otherwise, it would be impossible to shed light on the complex causal mechanism that brought about the analyzed outcome: states with different capabilities embracing similar engagement levels.

As a result, a thorough explanation is needed to address this puzzle. Specifically, in comparing neoclassical realism with other theories of foreign policy, this dissertation clarified their levels of parsimony and thorough explanation to show the extent to which neoclassical realism is the most suitable approach to unravel the puzzle under consideration. Graph 6.1 places the theories that this study considered according to two dimensions: first, the degree to which their analyses focus on several factors and the complex process linking foreign policy formulation and implementation, and second, whether their examinations focus on the logics of consequentialism or appropriateness in terms of their classical or refined versions. The first dimension divides the theories into three types: single-factor theories, multi-factor theories and complex-process theories. The second dimension breaks down the theories into four types: theories embracing classical consequentialism, refined consequentialism, classical appropriateness, and refined

appropriateness. The first dimension corresponds to the levels of parsimony/thorough explanation, whereas the second refers to the levels of rationality refinement. The analytical advantage of neoclassical realism to untangle the puzzle rests on its place in graph 6.1. This theory addresses several factors affecting foreign and security policy, including strategic environment, leaders' perceptions, and domestic politics. Such multi-factor assessment helps grasp the complex transmission belt from foreign policy formulation to implementation that neoclassical realism supplements with a refined logic of consequentialism.

**Graph 6.1: Theories of foreign policy's levels of parsimony/thorough explanation and rationality refinement**



Furthermore, neoclassical realism is the most suitable approach *vis-à-vis* the other thorough accounts of foreign policy, including the liberal theory of foreign policy and constructivist approaches. Neoclassical realism aims to weigh the relative importance of power, ideational, and institutional factors to understand foreign policy formulation and implementation, whereas the liberal theory of foreign policy, while addressing different levels of analysis, is unable to achieve this purpose. Indeed, the several factors that this theory considers are treated without qualification, which is to say that it gives importance to all of them, preventing it from clarifying

what matters most in the sequence and causal analysis aimed at explaining states with different capabilities behaving similarly. Neoclassical realism also considers material constraints at the international and domestic levels critical to analyze countries with varying resources of power. In contrast, constructivist approaches are not interested in analyzing those constraints due to their ontological approach to (international) politics as an intersubjectively, socially constructed realm.

Unlike the liberal theory of foreign policy and constructivist approaches, neoclassical realism offers an analytical explanation of the puzzle that focuses on foreign *policy* rather than on the foreign policy decision-making *process*.<sup>809</sup> Neoclassical realism draws attention to the necessary factors to comprehend foreign *policy*: namely, *relative power*, shaping states' strategic options; *state power*, corresponding to the ability to mobilize power, and *perceptions of power*, conditioning state reactions to systemic stimuli. This factor selection prevented us from addressing a broad set of institutional constraints and considering several domestic and transnational actors and social meaning formations, such as the liberal theory of foreign policy and constructivist approaches would suggest. In a nutshell, neoclassical realism would be the most cautious, among the various thorough explanations, in avoiding allowing the pendulum to swing too far, leading us to lose ourselves in an extensive selection of factors.

Finally, this dissertation showed that neoclassical realism must be treated as a theory of *foreign policy decisions* rather than a theory of *foreign policy mistakes* to untangle the puzzle appropriately. Analyzing American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan based on the second version is particularly problematic as we could not meet such version's primary requirement: selecting an optimal foreign policy as a yardstick against which to

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<sup>809</sup> On the differences between foreign policy as policy and process, see Walter Carlsnaes, "Foreign Policy," *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (London: Sage, 2013), 204.

examine the actual American and Canadian foreign policies simultaneously. There is not a theoretical baseline that allows us to capture both countries' particular and historical circumstances. Also, it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify structural theories as baselines that allow us to compare both countries by highlighting their differences in power. With a more flexible understanding, neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy decisions proved the most suitable approach to conduct the research. This approach seeks to ask *why* a foreign policy is selected according to the FPE's perceptions of the strategic environment and *how* preferred foreign policies are conducted according to these executives' ability to mobilize resources. By taking advantage of three decades of neoclassical realist research, this dissertation provided a three-step research design to provide three empirical findings.

## **2. First empirical finding: the strategic environment's effects**

The first empirical finding was that the United States and Canada enjoyed similar levels of freedom to conduct their preferred foreign and security policy options in Afghanistan derived from the international system's unipolar structure during the intervention. However, the evolution of the security situation on the ground forced them to operationalize their options as irregular-warfare strategies. That is to say, even though both countries enjoyed a high room for manoeuvre at the systemic level, it was reduced on the ground.

Regarding the unipolar structure, this dissertation addressed its differences with bipolarity and multipolarity. Theoretically, unlike these types of polarity, unipolarity is the only one that would simultaneously offer high levels of freedom to both the United States and Canada. Although multipolarity could entail high levels of manoeuvre for Canada, it could bring about increasing restraints for the United States due to the emergence of other great powers and the subsequent

American relative decline. Bipolarity could imply a restrictive strategic environment for both countries because of the zero-sum great power competition.

Empirically, however, this dissertation showed that two conditions for the United States and Canada to enjoy actual high levels of manoeuvre within the unipolar structure must be met: the actual lack of balancing against the United States as the only great power and a permissive alliance politics allowing Canada to make meaningful contributions to the burden-sharing of international security. Both conditions were present during the Afghanistan intervention. Both China and Russia, which could have been potential balancers of the United States' campaign in Central Asia, were incapable or uninterested in conducting balancing strategies. Also, after the Iraq invasion, the United States started to depend more on its NATO allies to complete the intervention. Indeed, with a distracted unipole, the division of labour became the basis of the intervention, giving opportunities to all intervening actors interested in making meaningful contributions.<sup>810</sup>

Since the conditions mentioned above — the lack of balancing and the alliance politics' increasing significance — were present during the intervention, the United States and Canada enjoyed a high room for manoeuvre to select their preferred strategies among a set of options. The United States could choose offensive dominance rather than defensive dominance or disengagement,<sup>811</sup> and Canada managed to transition from merely flocking around the unipole to adopt an opportunistic foreign policy.<sup>812</sup> Amidst the Afghan irregular warfare, the United States

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<sup>810</sup> Stephen M. Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust. Lessons Learned from Canada's War in Afghanistan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 21, 23; Stephen Saideman and David Auerswald, *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 2-3 and 33-44.

<sup>811</sup> Nuno Monteiro, "Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity is not peaceful," *International Security* 36, no. 3 (2011-2012), footnote 36.

<sup>812</sup> Birthe Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics: A Theory and Its Implications* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2011), 33-35; Christopher Kirkey and Nicholas Ostroy, "Why is Canada in Afghanistan? Explaining Canada's Military Engagement," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 200-2013; Justin Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan: A Realist Paradox," *International Journal* 68, no. 2 (2013): 8.

operationalized offensive dominance as Counterterrorism (CT) and Counterinsurgency (COIN) during the periods 2001-2006 and 2006-2011, respectively. Meanwhile, Canada implemented the flocking option as S&R and the opportunist option as COIN during these periods. In assessing the conditions for the Afghan irregular warfare to emerge before and after the intervention, the choice of these options was justifiable: S&R, CT, and COIN can be seen as options inextricably related to insurgency's complex emergence.

This dissertation shed light on four conditions bringing about the emergence and endurance of the Afghan insurgence. The first condition was the extent to which al Qaeda's radical beliefs became a benchmark for insurgent groups, including the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, the Haqqani network, and Foreign Fighters. All these insurgent groups embraced al Qaeda's belief that the Western infidels and their allies in Afghanistan were attacking Islam seriously, making jihad necessary.<sup>813</sup> The second condition was the support from Pakistan, especially Inter-services Intelligence (ISI) and Frontier Corps and the Pashtun population.<sup>814</sup> The third condition was the Afghan government's inability to provide basic services, especially in rural areas, making marginalized population susceptible to radicalization and indoctrination. Also, the Afghan security forces were inappropriately trained and equipped and, accordingly, were unable to guarantee minimal levels of civil order in several regions. Perhaps the aspect that impacted most on the Afghan government and security forces' performance was the emerging poppy economy that corrupted them at several levels.<sup>815</sup> The poppy economy also provided insurgent groups with

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<sup>813</sup> Jerry Mark Long and Alex S. Wilner, "Delegitimizing al-Qaida: Defeating an 'Army Whose Men Love Death'," *International Security* 39, no. 1 (2014): 131-133, 135-138 and 143-149; Brian Michael Jenkins, "The al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Threat: An Appreciation of the Current Situation," *Testimony Before the Special Committee on Anti-terrorism Senate of Canada*, December 6, 2010, 4-5; Seth Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 38, 43 and 62; Seth Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency. State Failure and Jihad," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 28.

<sup>814</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, 54-60.

<sup>815</sup> Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," 8, 16-17, 20-25 and 34-35.

income to fund their activities.<sup>816</sup> The final condition that fueled the Afghan insurgency was the historical tradition of warlords' leadership. Based on their charisma and patronage ties, warlords managed to impose political-economic control at the local level, undermining the central government and tribal leaders' authority.<sup>817</sup>

### 3. The second empirical finding: the effects of the FPEs' beliefs

The second empirical finding was that the American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs were largely unchanged during the entire intervention, whereas their causal beliefs varied significantly. In overall terms, addressing their similar principled beliefs helps understand why the United States and Canada intervened in Afghanistan as like-minded countries, whereas their changing causal beliefs explain why specifically both countries increased their engagement levels, founding themselves adopting comparable COIN strategies between 2005/2006 and 2011.

During the entire intervention, both American and Canadian FPEs justified the intervention based on three principled beliefs: protecting the American and Canadian people, increasing Afghans' security and quality of life, and maintaining global stability.<sup>818</sup> Also, these FPEs treated Afghanistan as a top foreign policy among other operations simultaneously between 2006 and 2011.<sup>819</sup> Similarly, their perceptions of the Afghanistan intervention in the long term encouraged

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<sup>816</sup> James Piazza, "The Opium Trade and Patterns of Terrorism in the Provinces of Afghanistan: An Empirical Analysis," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2 (2012): 213-234.

<sup>817</sup> Kimberly Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," *International Security* 31, no. 3 (2006-2007): 48, 54-55; Conrad Schetter and Rainer Glasser, "Local Configurations of Violence: Warlords, Tribal Leaders and Insurgents in Afghanistan," *Sicherheit und Frieden (S+F)/ Security and Peace* 29, no. 4 (2011): 232.

<sup>818</sup> See, for instance, Barack Obama, "President Obama's Remarks on New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington, D.C.: March 27, 2009) and Stephen Harper, "Address by the Prime Minister to The Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan (Ottawa, ON, March 13, 2006); Jean-Christophe Boucher, "Selling Afghanistan: A Discourse Analysis of Canada's Military Intervention, 2001-08," *International Journal* 64, no. 3 (2009): 720-722.

<sup>819</sup> See Robert M. Gates, *Duty. Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York, Alfred A. Knoff, 2014), 198 and 568-9; Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs), *House of Commons (Hansard)*, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, no. 3 (*Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development*) (May 14, 2014).

their increased engagements. The American FPE considered that the war in Afghanistan should end rapidly, entailing an increased military and civilian engagement to get results promptly.<sup>820</sup> For its part, the Canadian FPE considered it a “war for prestige” in the long run, which meant to use Canada’s military capabilities to become a reliable U.S. and transatlantic ally and to increase its international prestige.<sup>821</sup>

Despite their importance to explaining why the United States and Canada intervened in Afghanistan, these principled beliefs are not enough to explain shifts in American and Canadian foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan. Instead, causal beliefs were the primary ideational driving forces of Canadian and American changing engagement levels, which is to say that S&R, CT, and COIN were inextricably consistent with these beliefs. Drawing upon their causal beliefs, the American FPE debated the utility of narrow and broad approaches to CT between 2001 and 2005. The former focuses solely on kinetic and offensive operations to disrupt and destroy terrorist groups, whereas the latter draws attention to the need for combining these operations with nation-building.<sup>822</sup> In Afghanistan, Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld’s narrow CT beliefs<sup>823</sup> displaced President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s broad CT beliefs.<sup>824</sup>

During the same period, the Canadian FPE debated two approaches to S&R, implying different risk levels: a narrow (or low-risk) and broad (or moderate-risk) approach to S&R. The former embraces the original goals of stabilization and reconstruction related to guarantee fighters’ demobilization, the training of military and police forces, constitutional reform, democratic

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<sup>820</sup> Robert Gates, *Duty. Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York, Alfred A. Knoff, 2014), 344, 375, 364 and 571.

<sup>821</sup> Massie, “Canada’s War for Prestige in Afghanistan,” 280.

<sup>822</sup> Prasad Rane, “NATO’s Counter-Terrorism Strategies in Afghanistan,” *Strategic Analysis* 31, no. 1 (2007): 74-80; United Nations (UN), *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305 S/2000/809)* (2000).

<sup>823</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown. A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 682-3

<sup>824</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), 194 and 205; Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor. A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2011), 84, 91 and 148.

elections, and economic reconstruction.<sup>825</sup> The latter combines these objectives with moderate warfighting campaigns. The Canadian FPE started to see Canada's contribution to the intervention in terms of the narrow approach to S&R.<sup>826</sup> However, Canadian leaders adopted a broad approach to their participation in the warfighting mission in Kandahar within Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) between October 2001 and November 2002. After an operational pause, Canada returned in 2003 within the NATO mission to adopt a low-risk approach to S&R in Kabul. In 2005, the Canadian FPE decided to enter Kandahar again, meaning adopting a moderate-risk approach to S&R.<sup>827</sup>

Although the American and Canadian FPEs adopted different causal beliefs between 2001 and 2005 that led them to adopt different engagement levels, this dissertation showed that both started to see the need to conduct the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components to deal with the Afghan insurgency as of 2005/2006. The American transition from CT and COIN occurred with the replacement of Donald Rumsfeld with Robert Gates as Secretary of Defence. Unlike Rumsfeld, Gates considered that military operations alone would not be sufficient to achieve the goals in Afghanistan. For him, the United States should combine these operations with the training of Afghan forces and reconstruction efforts.<sup>828</sup> Even though Canadian leaders officially recognized these objectives only after the Manley Report and the U.S. General McCrystal's threats assessment, the FPE embraced COIN's three goals in practice since the moment Canadian leaders combined the 3D approach with the war mission in Kandahar in 2006. The convergence of causal beliefs allowed American and Canadian departments of defence and doctrine centers — the Land

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<sup>825</sup> See Elinor Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 106.

<sup>826</sup> Bill Graham, *The Call of the World: A Political Memoir* (Vancouver: On Point Press, 2016), 225.

<sup>827</sup> Ibid, 379; Paul Martin, *Hell or High Water. My Life In and Out of Politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2008), 392. See also Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, 104.

<sup>828</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 211.

Force Doctrine and Training System in Kingston, Ontario, and the U.S. Counterinsurgency Center in Kansas — to develop similar COIN doctrines.<sup>829</sup>

The American FPE considered three strategic options to operationalize their COIN strategy: *selective COIN* (option 1),<sup>830</sup> *fully resourced COIN* (option 2)<sup>831</sup> and *CT plus* (option 3).<sup>832</sup> Meanwhile, after entering Kandahar, the Canadian FPE appraised four options: keeping the COIN strategy in Kandahar (option 1), training the Afghan forces solely (option 2), conducting reconstruction efforts in Kandahar (option 3), carrying out COIN, but in another region (option 4), or withdrawing the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) after February 2009 (option 5).<sup>833</sup> In assessing these options' utility, the American and Canadian FPEs ended up embracing selective COIN.

#### **4. The third empirical finding: American and Canadian FPEs' resource mobilization strategies**

The third empirical finding was that the American and Canadian FPEs took advantage of their structural autonomy to carry out communication strategies aimed at dealing with public and legislative opposition. These strategies enabled them to obtain the required fiscal resources to advance their COIN foreign and security policies. If the previous finding explains the why, this

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<sup>829</sup> See Canada, Department of National Defence, *Counterinsurgency Operations (B-GL-323-004/FP-003)* (Ottawa: ON: Department of National Defence, 2008), Chapter 1, Section 1, 103. The United States, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5)* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army 2006), 1-121 – 1-136; Caroline Leprince, "Living Among the Population in Southern Afghanistan. A Canadian Approach to Counter-insurgency," in *Elusive Pursuits: Lessons From Canada's Interventions Abroad*, eds. Fen Osler Hampson and Stephen Saideman (Ottawa: Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, 2015), 105.

<sup>830</sup> Gates, *Duty*, 344, 375, 364 and 571.

<sup>831</sup> Ibid, 364, 379, 381. Barack Obama, "President Obama's Remarks on New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington, DC: March 27, 2009).

<sup>832</sup> Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuter, 2011), 234.

<sup>833</sup> Stephen Harper, "Prime Minister Harper Announces Independent Advisory Panel on Afghan Mission" (Ottawa, ON: October 12, 2007); Graham, *The Call of the World*, 380; Matthew Willis, "An Unexpected War, A Not-Expected Mission: The Origins of Kandahar 2005," *International Journal* 67, no. 4 (2012), 990-1; Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 394.

finding addresses how the American and Canadian governments reached similar engagement levels.

The increased American and Canadian engagement levels, compromising military and civilian assets, brought about legislative and public opposition in both countries. This opposition contrasted with the broad elite consensus and public support during the early years of the intervention. In the United States, the Democratic Party insisted on how the Republican FPE had significantly focused on the Iraq invasion diverting attention from the Afghanistan intervention and how the Bush administration's Afghanistan policy had been incapable of considering the tribal regions in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border as al Qaeda's new haven.<sup>834</sup> Even though the coming of power of the Obama Administration gave rise to a renewed attention to the U.S. Afghanistan policy, Republicans and Democrats remained at loggerheads about the commitment levels in the Afghanistan War. Republicans considered it necessary to make an unqualified commitment to the COIN strategy, especially to respond to General McChrystal's request for more combat troops.<sup>835</sup> In contrast, Democrats set conditions for increasing American engagement levels, such as establishing a withdrawal timetable, reviewing the relationship with the Karzai government due to its lack of credibility, and considering the increasing economic cost of the intervention.<sup>836</sup>

In Canada, opposition parties criticized the way the FPE had emphasized the military engagement over the reconstruction and development programs, especially the extent to which the

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<sup>834</sup> Democratic Party, *2008 Democratic Party Platform. Renewing America's Promise*, August 25, 2008. Available from the American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2008-democratic-party-platfo>.

<sup>835</sup> John McCain, "Why we can —and must— win the war in Afghanistan," *CNN*, October 28, 2009. Available from CNN Political Op-Eds. <https://www.cnn.com/2009/OPINION/10/28/mccain.afghan.war/index.html>; Senator Lindsey, "Senator Lindsey Graham on Afghanistan. Interview given to The Situation Room," *Real Clear Politics*, September 30, 2009. Available from Real Clear Politics, [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/09/30/senator\\_lindsey\\_graham\\_on\\_afghanistan\\_98541.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/09/30/senator_lindsey_graham_on_afghanistan_98541.html).

<sup>836</sup> Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, 232; Paul Kane, "Pelosi: Democrats Facing Voter 'Unrest' Over War Spending, Troop Increase," *The Washington Post*, November 24, 2009. [http://voices.washingtonpost.com/capitol-briefing/2009/11/pelosi\\_democrats\\_facing\\_voter.html](http://voices.washingtonpost.com/capitol-briefing/2009/11/pelosi_democrats_facing_voter.html); Kelly McHugh, "A Tale of Two Surges: Comparing the Politics of the 2007 Iraq Surge and the 2009 Afghanistan Surge," *Sage Open* (2015): 10- 11.

Harper Conservatives had abandoned Canada's traditional peacekeeping mission. The NDP went as far as arguing that the COIN strategy was not the proper mission for Canada as it had brushed aside traditional Canadian peacekeeping and humanitarian principles and not had defined a clear exit strategy.<sup>837</sup> The Bloc Québécois and the Liberal Party adopted a more nuanced position by proposing a balancing act between combat, reconstruction, and diplomacy goals.<sup>838</sup> Finally, all opposition parties criticized how the Canadian government had dealt with the detainee issue during the intervention.<sup>839</sup>

Public opposition in both countries followed similar patterns as those advanced by the political parties. After having largely supported the intervention, the American public started to react negatively in 2006, and by 2009 was deeply divided.<sup>840</sup> Similarly, the Canadian public support dropped significantly when the intervention transitioned from a non-combat S&R mission to the combat COIN campaign.<sup>841</sup>

Even though the American and Canadian FPEs had to deal with increasing legislative and public opposition to their COIN strategies, they enjoyed a high structural autonomy within their political systems that helped them overcome such resistance.<sup>842</sup> Based on this room for maneuver,

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<sup>837</sup>Jack Layton (Toronto-Danforth), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007); New Democratic Party, *Platform 2006: Jack Layton, Getting Results for People* (Ottawa, 2005), 44.

<sup>838</sup>Jean-Christophe Boucher and Kim Richard Nossal, *The Politics of War: Canada's Afghanistan Mission, 2001-14* (Toronto, UBC Press, 2017), 86.

<sup>839</sup> See for instance, the stances of Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP) and Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 006 (April 10, 2006); Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ), *House of Common Debates (Hansard)*, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary, 1<sup>st</sup> session 141, no. 141 (April 26, 2007).

<sup>840</sup> Frank Newport, "Americans Tilt Against Sending More Troops to Afghanistan," *Gallup News Service*, September 25, 2009. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/123188/americans-tilt-against-sending-troops-afghanistan.aspx>; Chris Good, "When and Why Did Americans Turn Against the War in Afghanistan?" *The Atlantic*, June 22, 2011. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/06/when-and-why-did-americans-turn-against-the-war-in-afghanistan/240880/>.

<sup>841</sup> Boucher & Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 157-8; Angus Reid Institute, "Majority of Canadians Still Oppose Military Mission in Afghanistan," August 10, 2011. <http://angusreid.org/majority-of-canadians-still-oppose-military-mission-in-afghanistan/>.

<sup>842</sup> See Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 110-111; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 46-47 and 51.

the American and Canadian FPEs implemented strategies to control how the public regarded the Afghanistan campaign. The United States FPE covered up the deteriorating security situation on the ground and the intervention's failures.<sup>843</sup> The Canadian FPE, especially during the COIN strategy was performed, sought to frame the intervention in the "mission" and "engagement" narratives, brushing aside the fact that Canada was at war during this period.<sup>844</sup> Furthermore, the American FPE went public, whereas the Canadian FPE went silent to deal with the legislative and public opposition. The former made high-profile public speeches to conciliate Republican and Democrat stances, bringing about a balancing act between scaling up the engagement and setting limits to it.<sup>845</sup> The latter sought to silence opposition voices in the government and Parliament, and every mention of the intervention as of 2008.<sup>846</sup>

With these strategies taking place, the American and Canadian FPEs managed to reaffirm their selective COIN strategies. Specifically, both FPEs obtained the required resources to achieve the 'clear', 'hold' and 'build' COIN components. Although the United States and Canada mobilized different amounts of resources in absolute terms, their FPEs shaped their budgets similarly in percentage terms. Specifically, between 2005/2006 and 2011, the United States and Canada allocated 76.2-87.3% and 78-82.7% of their COIN funding to the 'clear' COIN component. The remaining percentage was assigned to the 'hold' and 'build' components, with

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<sup>843</sup> Craig Whitlock, "The Afghanistan Papers. A Secret History of the War," *The Washington Post*, December 9, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-confidential-documents/>; Clayton Thomas, "The Washington Post's "Afghanistan Papers" and U.S. Policy: Main Points and Possible Questions for Congress, *Congressional Research Service*, R46197, January 28, 2020.

<sup>844</sup> Boucher & Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 6-7, 44.

<sup>845</sup> McHugh, "A Tale of Two Surges," 12; Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington D.C.: The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, December 1, 2009).

<sup>846</sup> Boucher and Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 110-111; Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 46-47 and 51. See Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, chapter 4, Philippe Lagassé, "Parliament and the War Prerogative in the United Kingdom and Canada: Explaining Variations in Institutional Change and Legislative Control," *Parliamentary Affairs* 70, no. 2 (2017): 290-293.

minor differences between them: the United States emphasizing the ‘hold’ and Canada the ‘build’ component.

## **5. Process-tracing: making sense of American and Canadian similar engagement levels**

After addressing all pieces of the puzzle individually, we can now fit them together to make sense of American and Canadian similar engagement levels in Afghanistan. This section achieves this purpose by using a process-tracing methodology. Because neoclassical realism is the theory that explains this study’s puzzle, this section seeks to turn a sequence-of-events narrative into a neoclassical realist *analytical* causal explanation.<sup>847</sup> This explanation aims to highlight the path dependence processes that allowed the FPEs’ perceptions and ability to mobilize domestic resources to reaffirm the effects of unipolarity and the Afghan irregular warfare on American and Canadian engagement levels. To be sure, tracing this process helps identify the causal mechanism that led both countries to adopt similar COIN strategies between 2005/2006 and 2011.<sup>848</sup>

To address this process, this section distinguishes between sufficient, necessary, contributing and INUS conditions within the causal and sequence analysis. A sufficient condition is the factor that alone causes the occurrence of an event. A necessary condition is an indispensable factor to bring about an event. Even though it could be reaffirmed by or accompanied by other factors, this factor is essential because without it an event will not occur. A contributing condition is a factor that “increase[s] the probability of an outcome” and, consequently, tends to reaffirm

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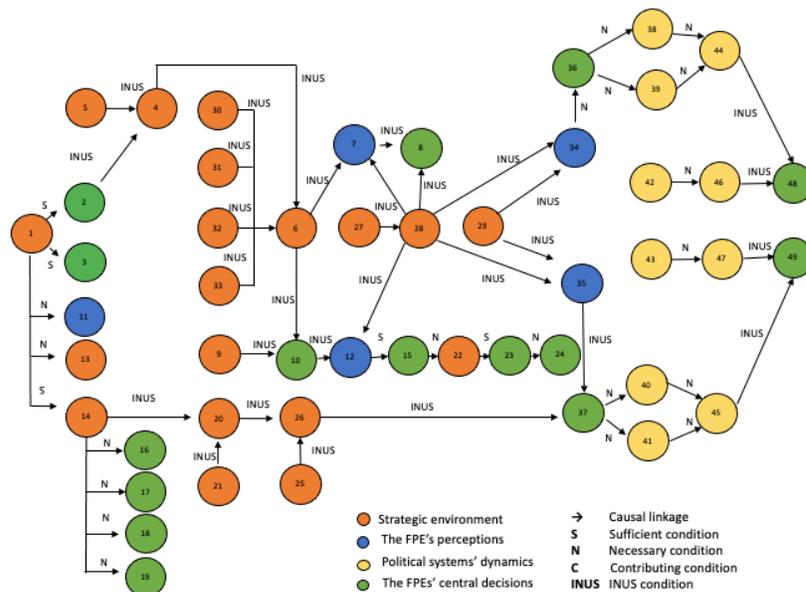
<sup>847</sup> See Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennet, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press), 211.

<sup>848</sup> See James Mahoney, “Process Tracing and Historical Explanation,” *Security Studies* 24, no. 2 (2015): 206.

necessary conditions. An INUS condition corresponds to an “essential component of a combination of factors that are *jointly sufficient* for an outcome.”<sup>849</sup>

Graph 6.2 shows the causal and sequence mechanism that led the United States and Canada to adopt similar commitment levels during the Afghanistan intervention. Orange dots correspond to factors occurring at the strategic environment level. Blue and yellow dots refer to the FPEs’ changing perceptions and factors related to domestic politics’ dynamics, respectively. Green dots refer to the FPEs’ critical decisions regarding the changing engagement levels. In this regard, orange, blue and yellow dots represent causes and green dots correspond to outcomes within this causal and sequence analysis. In understanding this process in a complex manner, this section considers the FPEs’ critical decisions as both outcomes and causes within a path-dependence process.

**Graph 6.2: Process-tracing resulting in COIN strategies**



<sup>849</sup> Ibid, 203.

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|--|---|---|--|
| 1. The 9/11 attacks  | 12. Canada adopts broad S&R   | 30. Pakistan's transnational support  | 40. Canadian parliament's opposition                       |
| 2. American deployment of 350 Special Forces and 100 CIA officers          | 13. ISAF mission is established   | 31. Collapse of the Afghan government   | 41. Canadian public's opposition                           |
| 3. Canadian deployment of 40 Joint Task Force Assaulters                   | 14. NATO's art. 5 is invoked.   | 32. Poppy economy   | 42. American FPE's structural autonomy                     |
| 4. Overthrown of Taliban regime  | 15. Anaconda, Harpoon and Torii.  | 33. Warlords' leadership  | 43. Canadian FE's structural autonomy                      |
| 5. The U.S. forges the alliance with the Northern Alliance                 | 16. Apollo (2001-2003)  | 34. American FPE adopts COIN beliefs  | 44. American FPE's communication strategy                  |
| 6. Insurgency's emergence  | 17. Accius (2002-2003)  | 35. Canadian FPE adopts COIN beliefs  | 45. Canadian FPE's communication strategy                  |
| 7. The American FPE adopts CT beliefs                                      | 18. Altair (2004-2008)  | 36. American COIN strategy, renewed OEF.  | 46. American FPE's domestic resource mobilization strategy |
| 8. The American FPE undertakes Operation Enduring Freedom as a CT strategy | 19. Athena, First phase (2002-2005).  | 37. Canadian COIN Strategy, Operation Athena, second phase (2006-2011), Operation Archer (2005-2006), Operation Argus (2005-2008) | 47. Canadian FPE's domestic resource mobilization strategy |
| 9. European powers rejects Canadian participation in the ISAF mission      | 20. NATO mission expands to cover the entire country (2003-)                              | 38. American Congress' opposition   | 48. American FPE reaffirmed COIN                           |
| 10. Canadian participation in the U.S.-led OEF                             | 21. Iraq invasion starts (March 2003)   | 39. American public's opposition  | 49. Canadian FPE reaffirmed COIN                           |
| 11. Canada adopts narrow S&R beliefs                                       | 22. Tarnak Farm Incident  |   |  |
|  | 23. Canadian operational pause  |   |  |
|  | 24. Low-risk S&R in Kabul   |   |  |
|  | 25. The Balkan experience (UNPROFOR, SFOR).   |   |  |
|  | 26. Negotiations between U.K., the Netherlands and Canada to conduct the Southern mission |   |  |
|  | 27. Unipolarity dynamics  |   |  |
|  | 28. Freedom of action   |   |  |
|  | 29. Deteriorating security situation  |   |  |

The process-tracing is as follows: after the 9/11 attacks, the United States initiated a retribution campaign to disrupt and destroy al Qaeda's operations in Afghanistan and overthrow the Taliban regime.<sup>850</sup> The Taliban regime was considered as much a threat as al Qaeda because it refused to turn over al Qaeda members, especially Bin Laden, and shut down their camps.<sup>851</sup> In sharing the same threat assessment, the United States and Canada started to mobilize special forces, beginning the WoT at the international level.<sup>852</sup> The Afghanistan campaign was initiated with the support of the United Nations and NATO through establishing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the invocation of NATO's Article 5. This article constituted the primary umbrella for Canadian operations Apollo (2001-2003), Accius (2002-2003), Altair (2004-2008) and Athena's first phase (2002-2005). In this first phase of the process-tracing, 9/11 was the sufficient factor conducive to the early American and Canadian deployments in Afghanistan and the UN and NATO's support for the intervention.

Amidst this international support, the U.S. special forces managed to ally with the Northern Alliance to overthrow the Taliban regime.<sup>853</sup> The immediate result was turning the Taliban into

<sup>850</sup> Bush, *Decision Points*, 197. The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington: White House, 2002), 6.

<sup>851</sup> The White House, *Declaratory Policy on Afghanistan*, Memorandum from Condoleezza Rice, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs to the Deputies, September 27, 2001.

<sup>852</sup> Seth Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency. State Failure and Jihad," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 7. Veterans Affairs Canada, "Canada joins Efforts." <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/battles-and-stages/afghanistan-stage-1>.

<sup>853</sup> Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," 7; Richard B. Andres, Craig Willis, and Thomas E. Griffith, "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005-2006): 127.

an insurgent group and the emergence of other insurgent groups. Apart from the overthrowing of the Afghan regime and al Qaeda's radical ideology, other factors, such as Pakistan's transnational support, the collapse of the Afghan government, the renascent poppy economy and warlords' leadership conditioned the insurgency's emergence and endurance.<sup>854</sup> In this second phase of the process-tracing, all these factors became the INUS conditions of the Afghan insurgency.

The Afghan irregular warfare occurred when the structure of the international system was unipolar, meaning that both countries could choose freely among the available strategic options. The United States and Canada chose offensive dominance and flocking around the sole great power, respectively, and operationalized these options as CT and S&R operations within the WoT. Specifically, OEF, which had initiated as an operation depending on special forces and the alliance with the Taliban's fiercest enemies, turned into a CT campaign.<sup>855</sup> Meanwhile, Canada, which had adopted narrow S&R in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, embraced a risk escalation engagement by deciding to participate in the US-led CT operation and, accordingly, carrying out a broad S&R mission. This decision entailed entering eastern and southern Afghanistan, especially in Kandahar for the first time, within the Operations Anaconda, Harpoon and Torii.<sup>856</sup> In this third phase of the process-tracing, the Afghan insurgency's emergence and unipolarity dynamics were INUS conditions for the United States and Canada to adopt narrow CT and broad S&R beliefs.

Rather than being derived from the desire to support the U.S. CT operation, the Canadian decision resulted from a limited set of available strategic options. Expressly, European powers had rejected Canadian participation in the ISAF mission and, accordingly, Canada had to choose to

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<sup>854</sup> Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, chapter 4; Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," 7-40; Schetter and Glasser, "Local Configurations of Violence," 232-3; Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," 54-58 and 69-71.

<sup>855</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 682-3

<sup>856</sup> Boucher & Nossal, *The Politics of War*, 17

participate in the U.S. OEF.<sup>857</sup> In fighting along with the United States, Canada assumed more risks that came in the form of the Tarnak Farm incident, forcing Canadian leaders to adopt an operational pause. Canada would return in 2003 by adopting a low-risk mission in Kabul within the NATO mission. In this fourth phase of the process-tracing, the European rejection was an INUS condition of the Canadian participation in the U.S-led OEF and this participation was the necessary factor of the Tarnak Farm incident. This incident was subsequently sufficient for Canada to decide to adopt an operational pause, and the time that Canada was out of the mission allowed it to rethink its contribution to the Afghanistan mission, becoming a necessary factor to return to Kabul.

On March 20, 2003, the United States started the Iraq invasion, making it more dependent on their NATO allies to conduct the Afghanistan intervention. Specifically, the alliance politics gained importance and, accordingly, the intervention became performed as a division-of-labour operation.<sup>858</sup> As a result, NATO assumed the leadership of the ISAF mission on August 14, 2003. In this fifth phase of the process-tracing, the Iraq invasion and the invocation of NATO's Article 5 were the INUS conditions of the increasing expansion of NATO mission.

With the NATO-led ISAF mission gaining increasing importance, Canada initiated negotiations with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands to define their contribution to Afghanistan. All three decided to increase their engagement levels by choosing the most dangerous areas as their new theatres of operations: Helmand, Uruzgan and Kandahar. The Canadian FPE decided to enter Southern Afghanistan based chiefly on the Canadian lessons in the Balkans in the 1990s.<sup>859</sup>

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<sup>857</sup> Graham, *The Call of the World*, 225 and 252.

<sup>858</sup> Galia Press-Barnathan, "Managing the Hegemon: NATO Under Unipolarity," *Security Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 279, 297-299; Massie, "Canada's War for Prestige in Afghanistan," 279.

<sup>859</sup> Willis, "An Unexpected War, A Not-Unexpected Mission," 979-1000.

In 2005/2006, both the United States and Canada also decided to increase their levels of engagement as the deteriorating security situation became more apparent.<sup>860</sup> To deal with this situation, the United States and Canada enjoyed greater freedom of action derived again from unipolarity dynamics. The American and Canadian FPEs replaced their CT and S&R beliefs with COIN beliefs. The former broadened OEF's scope by including the 'clear', 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components, whereas the latter implemented Operation Athena's second phase (2006-2011) and operations Archer (2005-2006), and Argus (2005-2008). In this sixth phase of the process-tracing, the deteriorating security situation and the unipolarity dynamics were INUS conditions for the United States and Canada to adopt COIN beliefs and, accordingly, their COIN strategy. In the case of Canada, another critical INUS condition was the negotiation with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in defining the Southern strategy.

The increased American and Canadian engagement levels gave rise to public and legislative opposition in both countries. However, based on their high structural autonomy within their political systems, American and Canadian FPEs carried out strategies to reaffirm their COIN campaign, enabling the FPEs to obtain the required resources to carry out the 'clear', 'hold' and 'build' COIN components. In this final phase of the process-tracing, the American and Canadian FPEs' communication strategies could be seen as a response to legislative and public opposition. Along with their structural autonomy, these strategies became the INUS conditions explaining these FPEs' abilities to reaffirm their COIN strategies.

Unravelling why and how countries placed differently in the international system can behave similarly has important theoretical and empirical implications. Specifically, it impacts

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<sup>860</sup> See Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," 7-8.

realist theorizing and our understanding of American and Canadian foreign and security policies. The last two sections address these implications.

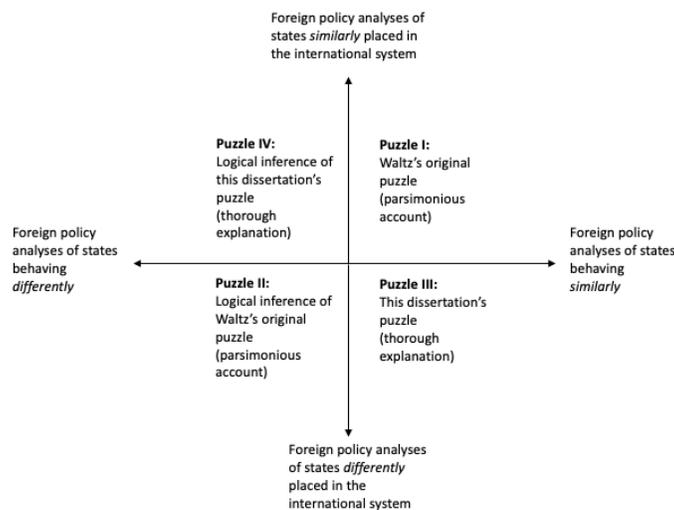
## **6. Theoretical implications derived from unravelling the puzzle**

Theoretically, addressing the puzzle at hand paves the way for advancing the realist deductive framework, especially regarding comparative foreign policy analysis. Indeed, this study's puzzle would encourage us to think of other meaningful puzzles. The first puzzle would result from Waltz's theory when it is used to conduct comparative foreign policy analyses. Waltz asked why and how states *similarly* placed in the international system behave *similarly* despite their domestic differences. Waltz's response to this puzzle gave rise to neorealism, the structural version of realism. The second puzzle would be why and how states *differently* placed in the international system behave *differently*. This puzzle would constitute a logical inference of Waltz's puzzle. If states behave according to their place in the international system, the expectation would be that great powers, major powers, middle powers, and minor powers will behave differently. The third puzzle would be the one this dissertation sought to untangle. The way this dissertation responded to this puzzle shed light on the analytical advantage of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. The fourth puzzle would be why and how states *similarly* placed in the international system behave *differently*. This puzzle would constitute a logical inference of the puzzle addressed here, and realist foreign-policy explanations, as advanced by neoclassical realism, would be its theoretical underpinning.

Graph 6.3 proposes four types of comparative foreign policy analyses within realist theorizing depending on two dimensions: first, on the degree to which foreign policy analyses focus on states similarly or differently placed in the international system; and second, whether the

analyses center on similar or different foreign policies. The first and second puzzles placed in the right-upper and left-lower quadrants would encourage parsimonious comparative foreign policy analyses. These analyses would aim to explain similar or different foreign policies resulting from countries' similar and different places in the international system. That is to say, these analyses would privilege the systemic pressures as the independent variable and brush aside intervening variables between the strategic environment and foreign policy formulation and implementation. The third and fourth puzzles placed in the right-lower and left-upper quadrants would motivate us to advance thorough explanations. Explaining why and how states similarly placed in the international system behave differently and why and how states differently placed in the international system behave similarly would entail including variables other than systemic pressures. To untangle these puzzles, we must combine systemic pressures as the independent variable and leaders' perceptions and domestic politics as the intervening variables. In a nutshell, structural realism would explain the first and second puzzles, and neoclassical realism would unravel the third and fourth puzzles.

**Graph 6.3: Puzzles for comparative foreign policy analyses within realist theorizing**



Advancing realist theorizing by using structural realism and neoclassical realism in this way depends on two conditions. Firstly, all four puzzles must respect the causal arrow of realism, which means that all must begin to clarify states' relative position in the international distribution of power and treat this position as the independent variable. In including perceptions and domestic politics as endogenous factors, they cannot be treated as independent or constitutive variables in terms advanced by liberalism and constructivism. Instead, these factors must be seen as intervening variables that help explain the problems of bounded rationality within a realist ontology.<sup>861</sup>

Secondly, all four puzzles make sense within realism if realist assumptions are defined broadly. For instance, the state rationality assumption should solely not lead to see states as completely informed, self-interested, strategically autonomous, maximizing actors. States or decision-makers could be also regarded as incompletely informed, self-interested, strategically embedded, satisfying actors to capture the third and fourth puzzles. For its part, the assumption of state's functional sameness could be invoked to explain the first and second puzzles because it is not necessary to peer inside the state structure when countries similarly and differently placed in the international system behave similarly and differently. However, to explain countries similarly placed in the international system that behave differently and countries similarly placed that behave differently, this assumption must be reviewed. It does not mean to undermine realist theorizing but rather refining it: if power is the critical concept for realism within an anarchical positional inter-state competition, how it is mobilized according to different state structures is a theoretical breakthrough.<sup>862</sup>

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<sup>861</sup> Brian Rathbun, "A Rose by Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 311-315; Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 22-26.

<sup>862</sup> Randall Schweller, "Progressiveness of Neoclassical realism," in *Progress in International Relations Theory. Appraising the Field*, eds. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 302 and 311.

Although less problematic for the puzzles above, the realist assumptions of calculation according to states' relative standing within the international system and anarchy as an ordering principle, deserve clarification.<sup>863</sup> Accepting that states calculate their interests according to their relative standing within the international system provides a conceptual framework to consider and compare states with different relative standing. It means to broaden our analysis to assess not only great powers but also major powers, middle powers, and minor powers. Likewise, accepting that anarchy is the ordering principle of the international system does not mean that it is a determinative factor of foreign policy but one constraining or incentivizing state behaviour. It would give rise to clarify complex causal mechanisms intervening between anarchy and foreign policy.<sup>864</sup> This understanding of anarchy, along with the review of state rationality and functional sameness, provides entry points to intervening variables, particularly critical for addressing the third and fourth puzzles.

Using structural realism and neoclassical realism in the way mentioned above provides another way both approaches supplement each other to strengthen realism's explicative capacity.<sup>865</sup> While this dissertation focused on the comparative foreign policy level, there are other ways to think of the necessary link between both theories, considering empirical and analytical levels. At the empirical level, we can use structural realism and neoclassical realism simultaneously after acknowledging that international politics and foreign policy domains are highly interdependent and, accordingly, cannot be unlinked. The arrangement of the states in the international system, which could come in the form of uni-, bi-, and multipolarity, shapes foreign

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<sup>863</sup> See Patrick James, *International Relations and Scientific Progress* (Columbus, Ohio: State University Press, 2002), 121, quoted by Kevin Narizny, "On Systemic Paradigms and Domestic Politics: A Critique of the Newest Realism," *International Security* 42, no. 2 (2017): 160.

<sup>864</sup> Brian Rathbun, "A Rose by Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 304-306.

<sup>865</sup> *Ibid.*, 294-321.

policy options. At the same time, the interaction between foreign policies affects international outcomes in the medium and long terms.<sup>866</sup> These outcomes can come in the form of cooperation, collaboration, competition, aggression, war, and even systemic change.<sup>867</sup> At the analytical level, both approaches become two interdependent parts of a whole because the progress of explanation of one depends on another.<sup>868</sup> If structural realism attempts to move beyond simply correlational observations, it must link systemic causes with expecting unit-level responses to external stimuli. Otherwise, we will be unable to test structural realism's expectations.<sup>869</sup> Similarly, if neoclassical realism attempts to understand the relative role of domestic factors, it will require a systemic explanation of expecting state responses as a yardstick against to examine the actual foreign policy.<sup>870</sup>

All in all, the primary theoretical implication of unravelling the puzzle of why and how the United States and Canada, despite their different relative standings, behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention was to pave the way to unleash realism's capacity. Specifically, this dissertation unravelled a puzzle that could encourage future research to address in-depth other puzzles within the realm of comparative foreign policy analysis with a realist lens. Based on the fruitful dialogue between structural realism and neoclassical realism, future research should highlight more case studies that allow us to untangle the puzzles, as mentioned above. In any case, the theoretical argument that this dissertation developed helps to acknowledge that realism has not been developed as far as it can go and, contrarily, its deductive framework can be broadened to

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<sup>866</sup> Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 81-85.

<sup>867</sup> Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (1978): 167-214.

<sup>868</sup> Rathbun, "A Rose by any other name," 311. See also James Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (1998): 289-313.

<sup>869</sup> Schweller, "Progressiveness of Neoclassical realism," 321.

<sup>870</sup> Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations," 305. See also Thomas Juneau, *Squandered opportunity: Neoclassical Realism and Iranian Foreign Policy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 19.

compare foreign policies in an enticing way.

### **7. Empirical implications derived from unravelling the puzzle**

Empirically, by responding to why and how the United States and Canada behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention, this dissertation questioned three dominant hypotheses in the literature. Specifically, by using a neoclassical realist *analytical* causal explanation, as informed by process-tracing methodology, it defied the bandwagon-effect, military-ascendancy, and compensation theses. The bandwagon-effect thesis means that Canada adapted itself to the United States in the hope of getting future benefits, which would, by definition, entail subordinating Canadian interests to the United States. The military ascendancy thesis means acknowledging the remarkable roles of the Canadian Department of National Defence and General Rick Hillier that would have exerted pressure on the Canadian FPE to reposition Canada within the NATO intervention. The compensation thesis suggests that Canada sought to amend its decision not to participate in the Iraq War by increasing its engagement in Afghanistan.

In tracing the process bringing about American and Canadian similar engagement levels, this research rejected these hypotheses in the sense that the American influence, the Canadian military pressure, and the Canadian need to compensate the United States were not sufficient or necessary factors of this outcome. According to the importance that the conventional wisdom assigned to these hypotheses, proving these theses correct would imply demonstrating the importance of these factors in that way and, above all, show that there were no necessary or sufficient factors other than these.

Neither of these conditions can be found. Not only did these factors have less importance than attributed by these theses' proponents, but other factors also were necessary to explain why

and how the United States and Canada ended up behaving similarly. According to the process-tracing, these factors were the unipolarity dynamics, Canadian alliance with European powers and NATO, the deteriorating security situation on the ground, the FPEs' perceptions, structural autonomy, and abilities to control the public message. The remainder of the section assesses the actual relative weight that we could attribute to the American influence, Canadian military pressure and the Iraq invasion as factors affecting the similarity of American and Canadian engagements in Afghanistan.

Firstly, the longstanding alliance with the United States was a central referent for Canadian FPE: they were willing and able to support the initial intervention aimed at overthrowing the Taliban regime and to participate within the U.S.-led OEF in several moments. Indeed, Canada justified the different phases of the intervention in the same way as the United States, which entailed supporting the U.S.-led WoT. However, the Canadian FPE had in mind the alliance with European powers and NATO during the entire intervention. What is more, both factors became the primary referent in the two critical moments in which Canadian leaders decided to increase their country's military and civilian engagement. The first moment corresponded to the transition from a low-risk S&R mission to a moderate-risk S&R campaign in 2002. As explained, rather than being the result of Canadian leaders' need to bandwagon to OEF, it was the by-product of European powers' rejection of Canadian participation in the ISAF mission. The second moment referred to the Canadian transition from a low S&R mission to a COIN combat campaign in 2005/2006. Again, it depended on the Canadian FPE's negotiation with their European counterparts after the Afghanistan intervention became a division-of-labour mission.

Secondly, in tracing the process bringing about American and Canadian COIN strategies between 2005/2006 and 2011, the military influence is a factor that must be considered. General

Rick Hillier planned the articulation of the Provincial Reconstruction Team and the combat mission in Kandahar within the 3D approach,<sup>871</sup> the Strategic Advisory Team (Sat-A) allowed CAF staff to advise the Afghan government to conduct the COIN ‘hold’ component,<sup>872</sup> and Generals Jonathan Vance and Dean Milner managed to upgrade the COIN strategy, which General McCrystal acknowledged.<sup>873</sup> However, this research showed that the Canadian FPE were the actors in charge of making the most critical decisions. The Chrétien administration decided to promote NATO’s article 5 actively in the immediate aftermath of 9/11,<sup>874</sup> enter in Kandahar in late 2001, make an operational pause in 2002, return to Afghanistan in 2003. The Martin administration chose Rick Hillier as Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) to operationalize its 3D strategy<sup>875</sup> and decided to enter in Kandahar in 2005 to reaffirm its view on Canada’s global position. The Harper administration decided to refine the COIN strategy by appointing the Manley committee and controlling the public message, which entailed picking up lesser vocal CDS. Indeed, Harper became the primary communicator of the strategy. This administration also decided to consult the parliament to extend the COIN strategy twice and did not consider anyone, including the military, to transition to a training mission between 2011 and 2014.<sup>876</sup> In this regard, the Canadian FPE’s beliefs and abilities to mobilize domestic resources were necessary factors of the increased engagement, whereas the military influence should be treated as a contributing, secondary factor.

Thirdly, the Iraq invasion was a relevant factor shaping the Afghanistan intervention.

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<sup>871</sup> Martin, *Hell or High Water*, 395.

<sup>872</sup> Auerswald and Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan*, 131; Kimberly Marten, “From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 221 and 223.

<sup>873</sup> The Globe and Mail, “In Accord with Canadian thinking,” *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON: August 8, 2009): A 16.<https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/docview/382624698/fulltext/9F3C15B25BD54810PQ/1?accountid=9894>.

<sup>874</sup> Willis, “An Unexpected War, A Not-Unexpected Mission,” 982.

<sup>875</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 37. See also Government of Canada, *Canada’s International Policy Statement. A Role of Pride and Influence* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2005).

<sup>876</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 98-99.

Specifically, the American decision to carry out two wars simultaneously made the NATO alliance more relevant to conduct the Afghanistan campaign, paving the way for the U.S. allies to undertake meaningful contributions as of 2005/2006. However, we cannot link the Iraq invasion with the increased Canadian engagement levels like conventional wisdom suggests. Even though Canadian officials might have needed to compensate the United States, there was nothing to compensate. The American FPE was not interested in a Canadian military commitment in the Iraq War, and Canada was already contributing to this war by providing naval vessels and aircraft.<sup>877</sup> The process-tracing of the intervention also reveals that Canada considered a vital role in the ISAF mission because it was simply an appropriate mission according to the FPE's S&R beliefs long before the Iraq invasion began to attract attention. Even though the Canadian FPE always considered Iraq as part of their calculations, the important aspect is that it was not a necessary or contributing factor. Neither can it be considered as an INUS condition affecting the Canadian engagement levels. Between 2005/2006 and 2011, several factors at the systemic, individual, and national levels brushed aside thoroughly the connexion between the Canadian decision not to contribute militarily to the Iraq War and its engagement levels in Afghanistan.

The primary empirical contribution derived from unravelling the puzzle was not only to challenge three dominant theses in the literature but, above all, to provide a more compelling thesis about why and how the United States and Canada behaved similarly in Afghanistan. The argument was that several factors were critical to explaining this outcome, such as unipolarity, the complex emergence of Afghan insurgency, American and Canadian FPEs' perceptions, and ability to mobilize domestic resources. By utilizing neoclassical realism, this dissertation placed these

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<sup>877</sup> Janice Gross and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War. Canada in Kandahar* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2007), 50; Paul Celluti, Speech at the Economic Club of Toronto (March 23, 2003), [www.ourrant.ca](http://www.ourrant.ca), quoted by Matthew Willis, "An Unexpected War, A Not-Unexpected Mission," 984.

factors in different levels of analysis and assigned them relative significance in distinguishing independent and intervening variables affecting these countries' level of engagements as the dependent variable. Based on a process-tracing methodology, it linked these factors within a complex causal mechanism.

By showing the occurrence of factors on both American and Canadian sides bringing about the outcome above, this dissertation managed to undermine the ideas of the “Americanization” of Canadian foreign and security policy and the syndrome of “parochialism” of the United States regarding its Northern neighbour. On the surface, the Afghanistan intervention might be used to illustrate the “Americanization” of Canadian foreign and security policy because Canada could have adapted itself to the U.S-led campaign. However, a deeper analysis, as presented by this dissertation, provided a more nuanced argument. Although the bilateral trade and defence ties with the United States are factors that Canadian leaders must consider permanently in formulating their foreign and security policy, it does not mean that they could not define their preferences and mobilize extensive resources when required on their own. To be sure, the variation of Canadian engagement levels in Afghanistan allows us to make a case against Americanization because these engagement levels had to do less with the American influence than with systemic opportunities, perceptions, and domestic politics.

Furthermore, the way this dissertation unravelled the puzzle helps avoid the unipole's parochialism regarding its allies in general and Canada in particular. Under certain circumstances, the United States could depend on its allies to achieve its security goals. In overextending its capabilities, especially in starting costly military campaigns simultaneously, the unipole must indeed share the burden of international security with its allies. This was precisely what happened when the United States carried out the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars simultaneously: the United

States gave Canada a critical opportunity to become a significant actor in implementing the coalition forces' strategy in Southern Afghanistan.

A final question is needed to conclude this dissertation: what can we learn from American and Canadian experiences in Afghanistan?<sup>878</sup> This dissertation could shed light on several aspects of the Afghanistan intervention, such as the overall functioning of foreign and security policy decision-making in both countries; the level of (in)effectiveness of different irregular-warfare strategies, including S&R, CT, and COIN; the quality of collective efforts between American and Canadian government agencies and the multinational coalition, or the extent to which these countries had real chance of success in the so-called 'graveyard of emperies.' However, a central aspect must be analyzed due to its dominance within the assessment of factors bringing about these countries' similar engagement levels: the freedom of action that both enjoyed at the systemic and domestic levels. Specifically, this dissertation concluded that the United States and Canada's experiences in Afghanistan teach that freedom of action does not necessarily result in entirely adequate foreign and security policies.

At the systemic level, it showed that the international system's unipolar structure provided the sole great power and its allies a high room for maneuver. Yet it did not give rise to adequate foreign and security policies. It was particularly true for the United States insofar as unipolarity allowed it to conduct simultaneously two costly campaigns. Without attempting to deepen into the debate about how unjustified and unnecessary the Iraq War was and the apparent adverse consequences for the Middle East and American leadership, we can argue that the American goals of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency could have been pursued much better if the American

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<sup>878</sup> Stephen Saideman asked a similar question in the case of Canada. However, this study provides a different response based on its different approach. See Stephen Saideman, "What the Afghanistan Mission Teaches Canada," *International Journal* 72, no. 1 (2017): 131-141.

FPE had focused solely on Afghanistan. However, based on the high freedom of action provided by the international system, the United States did not carry out a focused intervention for most of the time it was performed.

Canada's experience in Afghanistan teaches equally that the international system's unipolar structure provided this country with the freedom to conduct a broad set of objectives in complex theatres of operations, including classical peacekeeping, low-risk S&R, moderate-risk S&R and, above all, COIN combat campaigns. It means that unipolarity offered Canada the opportunity to behave as a major power and even a great power. However, this type of freedom can give rise to a costly overextension of military and civilian capabilities, such as occurred between 2005 and 2011 in Afghanistan. This overextension might be justified in the short term as it can result in some strategic benefits, such as becoming a reliable and credible ally of Western powers, including the United States and European NATO members. What is more, it also might allow Canada to become a strategic global player. However, overextension tends to be unjustifiable in the long term as Canada cannot keep up the pace of this type of intervention. The human and economic costs are too high as compared to the limited strategic benefits.

On the ground, the freedom of action provided by the international system allowed the United States and Canada to transition from humble strategic goals adequate to deal with highly complex theatres of operations to more ambitious goals. Overthrowing the Taliban regime and disrupting al Qaeda's operational capabilities in Afghanistan constituted a justifiable objective that also gave apparent results. As this study explained, based on intelligence reports, al Qaeda leaders were captured or killed, this terrorist group lost its haven in Afghanistan, and the last jihadist attack attributed to it was the bombing in London in 2005.<sup>879</sup> However, the fighting against insurgency

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<sup>879</sup> Alex Wilner, "Canada's Role in Combating Al Qaeda: International, Regional and homegrown dimensions," *Strategic Datalink* (Canadian International Council), no. 11 (2009): 2; Brian Michael Jenkins, "The Al Qaeda-Inspired

trying to address all factors conducive to it through the COIN ‘clear’, ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components in the long term seemed to constitute an unfruitful, ambitious purpose. All the factors bringing about the Afghan insurgency remained present during the period that this dissertation considered (2001-2014). Insurgents kept embracing a radical ideology making the Westerners in Afghanistan their primary enemies, Pakistan continued providing transnational support to insurgents, the Western constitutional reform did not result in the consolidation of the Afghan government willing and able to provide basic public services, the training of Afghan forces proved unsuccessful, the poppy economy emerged even stronger than before the Taliban prohibition, and the historical leadership of warlords become one of the primary features of the post-9/11 Afghan politics. The complexity of this theatre of operations did question the effectiveness of ambitious irregular warfare strategies, especially COIN. Could the United States and Canada have won Afghans’ hearts and minds through ‘clear,’ ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components? Could it have been even possible by using a selective COIN strategy?

At the domestic level, the United States and Canada’s experiences in Afghanistan teach that the American president and Canadian prime minister and its teams enjoy a high room for maneuver to conduct their preferred foreign and security policies. Their political systems provide them sufficient freedom to mobilize domestic resources to implement their policies. According to neoclassical realism, it is not wrong itself. Since they are dealing with sensitive security and defence issues, it is expectable that the FPEs get access to privileged information to identify systemic constraints, security threats and opportunities and become the ultimate deciders. However, apart from considering information from states’ politico-military and intelligence apparatus, the FPEs must consider the public’s expectations and hold a constructive dialogue with

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Terrorist Threat. An Appreciation of the Current Situation.” *Testimony before the Special Committee on Anti-Terrorism Senate of Canada* (Ottawa, ON: December 6, 2010), 2-3.

the legislative branch in conducting their foreign and security policies.

The increased freedom of action allowed American and Canadian FPEs to dodge their publics completely. The American and Canadian FPEs worried more about controlling the public message than satisfying legitimate public demands. Excepting some segments, the public in both countries expressed their opposition to the increased American and Canadian engagement levels overtly. The American public worried about an open-ended engagement, whereas the Canadian public opposed COIN in being contrary to the principles of peacekeeping and humanitarianism. To be sure, in not considering these demands seriously, the public in both countries ended up on the sidelines.

This freedom of action also enabled the FPEs to avoid a constructive dialogue with the legislative branch. It was particularly true in the case of Canada. Rather than holding a fruitful debate, the Harper Conservatives were interested in creating a false sense of parliamentary support and avoiding their responsibility through the extension debates. As a result, the content of the COIN strategy never was subject to discussion between Conservatives and opposition. The latter also failed to conduct a genuine assessment of the intervention in not having direct access to security and defence sensitive information, which constitutes another reason for the Canadian FPE's high structural autonomy.<sup>880</sup> The U.S. legislative branch gave everything the executive requested because of its deference to the executive's power. Despite having more accountability powers *vis-à-vis* Canadian parliament, the U.S. Congress also did not conduct a budgetary debate aimed at constraining or guiding strategic objectives in Afghanistan. Congress did not appraise how the Afghanistan intervention was precisely performed and how taxpayers supported it. Above all, it did not assess the extent to which the American president had respected constitutional

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<sup>880</sup> Saideman, *Adapting in the Dust*, 55 and 62-63.

limits.<sup>881</sup>

These evaluative comments are barely addressed here because the primary aim of this dissertation was to provide a theoretical and empirical argument. Consequently, the value of this dissertation must be assessed in these terms. This dissertation explained how far realism in general, and neoclassical realism in particular, can go in attempting to conduct comparative foreign policy analysis. Even though this dissertation addressed in depth the puzzle of why and how countries differently placed in the international system can behave similarly, it argues that this analysis opens the possibilities to assess more comparative foreign policy puzzles. It entails accepting structural realism and neoclassical realism as two essential parts of a broader project aimed at developing realist theory.

Furthermore, this dissertation helped review critically conventional wisdom about American and Canadian foreign and security policy. Specifically, it encouraged questions about the actual degree to which Canadian foreign and security policy has allegedly been Americanized. It also raised questions about the extent to which the United States can afford itself to minimize or be parochial with its allies in conducting interventions in highly complex theatres of operations. However, despite being based on an extensive number of theoretical and empirical sources, this dissertation is still essentially an individual researcher's work, whose findings must continue being developed to deepen its theoretical and empirical implications.

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<sup>881</sup> Ibid Norman J. Ornstein and Thomas E. Mann, "When Congress Checks out," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 6 (2006): 68, 71-72.

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