**“We answered the call”:
Strategic Narrative in NATO’s Public Diplomacy for Operation Unified Protector**

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Abstract

Over the last twenty years, NATO has shifted from a body of collective regional defense into a globalized security organization, and must now communicate purposefully to manage its public diplomacy in an increasingly distracting and polyphonic media environment. This thesis explores NATO's use of strategic narrative in its public diplomacy during the 2011 mission in Libya, Operation Unified Protector, with two objectives: to understand the role narratives can play in public diplomacy, and to elucidate NATO's role as a social actor beyond its military functions. Through narrative analysis of NATO's website content, this thesis offers a case study on the power of narrative in military conversations. The findings suggest that NATO used story elements in setting, characters, and plot evolution with intention to manage perceptions of the mission and the alliance's relevancy, and that more research is needed to expand upon our understandings of narrative in international military settings.

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INTRODUCTION

“Let me tell you a story.”

These are familiar words to all of us, and indeed, our earliest memories likely involve stories told to us by our families, friends, the media, and authority figures, used to teach us about the world and our place in it. Universally practiced, narratives are “eminently transferable” across generations and media (Altman 1), and a mainstay of culture, learning, faith, and public life. Ranging from gossip, human-interest pieces in the media, and the grand historical accounts taught in classrooms, narratives play a constant, yet largely naturalized and invisible, role in our daily lives and in the human condition.

We also know, however, that stories can have wider social importance and applicability, beyond our personal narratives. We are familiar with the concept of a story in politics: candidates must craft a compelling personal narrative that garners votes, for example, while press secretaries and communication specialists work to “control the story” during crisis or scandal. Narrative’s creative, didactic, and persuasive potential gains especial interest, however, when we consider its role in debates on military force. Military campaigns require sacrifice, casualties, and significant expenditure, often in distant conflicts that may not feel relevant to citizens’ well being. Indeed, the deployment of force is one of the greatest forms of governmental power, and if used without widespread public support, it can spark discontent, anger, and even protest and riot. A strategic narrative can manage this potential crisis throughout a military mission, justifying initial involvement in a conflict, defining expectations and images of success, and even priming citizens to accept casualties for a greater national or moral cause.

Yet, how do narratives appeal to and account for diverse audiences that lack national cohesion? Without a shared store of national stories, myths, and leaders, how can

audiences be drawn together for a common goal? This is a particularly pressing question and concern for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance and collective security organization of European and North American states, established in 1949. Establishing common ground among NATO's varied allies has been a consistent struggle (Risso 58), though made easier by a common, and largely unifying, sense of threat from the Soviets during most of NATO's existence. However, as NATO's missions spread outside its collective security region since the Cold War, we should consider how the alliance's communications have adjusted. This thesis attempts to account for NATO's public diplomacy, or communications with the public, in the alliance's most recent mission, Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya in 2011. The mission lasted seven months and offers a unique opportunity to consider how narrative, when strategically deployed, justified and garnered support for a mission outside of the alliance's member state areas, one that had little chance of spreading into NATO's borders.

This thesis emerged out of a deep personal interest in the social role of narratives in political settings, and in particular the manner in which stories can be told strategically to gain advantage in public debate. Specifically, I seek to understand NATO's use of strategic narrative during OUP, and to place this case study in broader conversation with shifts in public diplomacy and NATO's current struggles. I have two research objectives and contributions. First, I want to understand the particular role narrative can play in public diplomacy, and second, through my case study, I want to elucidate NATO's social and cultural capacities as a communicative actor, beyond the orbit of its traditional military functions. This public communication, which I define as public diplomacy (or government interaction with the public), is impacted by an increasingly interactive media

ecology that challenges actors like NATO to control their message (Dimitriu 198; Hall 392-99; Betz 518; Jones and Baines 73; Eder 5, 8). While NATO's transitions have been accompanied by handwringing about the alliance's relevance (e.g. Danchev; Keller; Wolff), less work has assessed how NATO is communicating its mandate and missions in this distracting informational environment. In light of these trends, scholars, critics, and practitioners benefit from a greater understanding of how strategic narratives can mass information compellingly for a large organization, make the use of force seem not just legitimate but moral and natural, and build a stronger sense of identity for the narrator.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created in 1949 following the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, which outlined a new security organization to encourage military cooperation and collective defense for its twelve member states spanning North America and Europe. Its original mandate involved deterrence against Soviet expansion, repression of militaristic nationalism in post-war Europe, and facilitation of European political integration ("A short history of NATO"). Of particular note in the North Atlantic Treaty is Article 5, which states, "an armed attack against any one or more of [the parties] in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all" (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The North Atlantic Treaty"); NATO's original mandate was thus largely confined to its member state areas. Important to NATO's identity is its consensual decision making process; the organization does not vote on matters but rather discusses an issue until agreement, or agreement to disagree, is reached ("Consensus decision-making at NATO").

In 1955, the Soviet Union and its eastern allies established the Warsaw Treaty Organization, or the Warsaw Pact, a political and collective defense organization aimed as a counterbalance to NATO (“The Warsaw Treaty Organization, 1955”). In the early phases of the Cold War, NATO adopted a strategic doctrine of “Massive Retaliation,” or deterrence through the development of nuclear weapons to retaliate if the Warsaw Pact ever attacked its area. When the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact disintegrated in the early 1990s, NATO remained because, in its words, its “two other original if unspoken mandates still held: to deter the rise of militant nationalism and to provide the foundation of collective security that would encourage democratization and political integration in Europe” (“A short history of NATO”). In the Cold War, NATO was never involved in a military engagement (“NATO operations and missions”).

NATO has taken several steps to grow and mature since the end of the Cold War and to escape, as Patrick Keller calls it, “death by anachronisticity” (208). First, NATO has increased in size, with 28 current member states across Europe and North America, including former Soviet states. Second, while NATO still achieves its most basic source of legitimacy by upholding Article 5, the collective defense section of its 1949 treaty (Holmberg 537), the alliance has increased the scope of its missions since the end of the Cold War to include global security and stability operations outside its original treaty area. The enlarged scope of NATO’s new missions is perhaps best encapsulated in American Senator Richard Lugar’s phrase “out of area or out of business” (qtd. in Keller 208). Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has held military operations in Libya, Afghanistan, and the Balkans, has offered humanitarian relief in the United States and Pakistan, and has provided logistical support and training to forces around the world, a

testament to NATO's global scope. Indeed, Keller notes "NATO today is confined to the North Atlantic in name only" (208). Third, since 1991 NATO has published its once-private strategic concepts, or documents that lay out the alliance's long-term and short-term visions and goals (Edström and Gyllensporre 6). NATO's latest strategic concept was released in November 2010, and the allies set three core tasks for themselves: collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. While the alliance's "greatest responsibility" remains collective defense ("Active Engagement, Modern Defence," para. 16), the document also notes that NATO will continue to monitor situations outside its borders (para. 20-23), marking a further expansion of the alliance's original goals and mandate. These are significant adjustments for the alliance, which have impacted defense investment and buy-in from populations (Keller 212).

NATO is perhaps best known for leading the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan since 2003, a security mission made up of NATO forces and cooperating countries to bring stability to the region. Despite some initial successes, the region's instability has challenged peace building, and NATO has come under criticism for civilian deaths (e.g. "NATO air strike kills 11 Afghan children, officials say") and from Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai, who claims that NATO and the U.S. have created rather than mitigated instability (Abawi). Moreover, ISAF has created rifts in the alliance over burden sharing, as well as the advisability of prolonged engagement and reconstruction in the troubled region (Miles).

NATO'S LATEST MISSION: OPERATION UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP)

In mid-February 2011, following Arab Spring movements that ousted leaders in Egypt and Tunisia, peaceful demonstrations were held in major Libyan cities against the

42-year long rule of Colonel Muammar Qadhafi.¹ In the days that followed, Qadhafi ordered a crackdown on Libyan rebels, with *The New York Times* reporting that he had “lashed out with a level of violence unseen in either of the other uprisings” (Fahim and Kirkpatrick). As Qadhafi supporters performed neighbourhood searches and killed dozens of civilians, international condemnations mounted (Bull and Mohammad). On 26 February, the United Nations (UN) passed Security Council Resolution 1970 which expressed “grave concern” at the regime’s “gross and systematic violation of human rights,” demanded an end to the violence and censorship, and put in place an arms embargo, travel ban, and asset freeze on Qadhafi and his inner circle (United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 1970 [2011]” 1). On 17 March, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1973 and, noting that the regime’s summary executions, forced detentions, and other human rights abuses “may amount to crimes against humanity” (United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 1973 [2011]” 1), demanded a ceasefire to protect civilians. Critically, Resolution 1973 also called on UN member states “to take all necessary measures” to protect civilians, “excluding a foreign occupation force of any form” (3). The UN also created a no-fly zone over the region, and several states took immediate action to enforce the Resolution. Operation Odyssey Dawn, a U.S.-led multilateral effort, took military action on 19 March, though President Barack Obama was clear in his intention to turn command over to a coalition force (Gertler).

On 22 March, NATO agreed to enforce the Resolution’s arms embargo, and on 24 March agreed to take over the UN-mandated no-fly zone. On 31 March, NATO undertook sole command of this international effort through Operation Unified Protector

¹ Colonel Muammar Qadhafi’s name has been transliterated differently in various sources. Since NATO typically spells his name “Qadhafi,” I have chosen this spelling to increase the continuity of this project, though I use different spellings as they appear in direct quotes.

(OUP). Canadian Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard was the Combined Joint Task Force Unified Protector's overall operational commander, working out of NATO Maritime Command Naples ("NATO and Libya"). By the time OUP took over, NATO had established three core tasks: enforcing an arms embargo in the Mediterranean Sea; enforcing a no-fly zone to prevent bombing of civilians; and conducting air and naval airstrikes on any who threatened civilian life ("NATO and Libya"). On 14 April, NATO allies agreed to continue the mission until all threats to civilians had ended and the regime had withdrawn all forces from populated areas ("In Berlin"). No NATO troops were on the ground in Libya during OUP ("NATO and Libya").

On 22 August, Libya's capital Tripoli fell to rebel forces, and on 20 October, Qadhafi was violently killed. While Libyan officials stated that he was killed in crossfire, cell phone footage of his death suggests that he was shot several times in the head at short range and stripped while jeered by rebels (Fahim, Shadid, and Gladstone). A day later, on 21 October, the North Atlantic Council, NATO's senior governing body, decided to end the mission by the month's end, and on 31 October at midnight local time, OUP concluded ("NATO and Libya").

THESIS OVERVIEW

To understand how NATO used narrative to shape public perceptions of OUP, this thesis examines the alliance's public diplomacy during the mission. To make sense of this topic, this work is driven by the following research question: *what were the elements of NATO's strategic narrative for its 2011 Libya mission, and how did its online public diplomacy materials organize both cognitive and value-based information into a compelling storyline?* As well, I also consider the following subset of questions: how did

NATO's narrative work through or incorporate OUP's setbacks, disunity, and criticism?
Did NATO situate OUP in a broader organizational narrative to create a sense of
enduring character to take forward?

I call NATO's public communications "public diplomacy" because NATO has a dedicated Public Diplomacy Division that performs multiple tasks, including engagement, outreach, media relations, and strategic communications, and I believe this term best reflects NATO's own lexicon and the breadth of the activities being studied. For this thesis, I define public diplomacy as *a set of activities and initiatives performed by the organization with aims to engage and inform foreign and domestic audiences, further the organization's interests, and strategically shape public discourse on policy by avoiding inconsistencies*. Importantly, this definition suggests that public diplomacy is purposeful but not necessarily deceptive. I also define strategic narrative as *a compelling storyline that connects deeply held social values to particular circumstances or contexts, with aims to gain and maintain public support, undermine opponents, and harmonize and organize information for strategic ends*. By breaking down NATO's narrative, I hope to make a normally invisible or unconscious communicative process visible.²

Together, these questions help to make two central contributions. First, as discussed in Chapter 1, I note a lack of emphasis on narrative in public diplomacy literature, a gap that my case study and analysis helps to fill. Importantly, these narrative strategies are transferable to a growing host of different international organizations and actors engaging with diverse publics. Given the increasing growth of international organizations and transnational movements, research on these joint communication

² I will use the terms "story" and "narrative" interchangeably to refer to narrative discourse because, as noted by Michael Kearns in *Rhetorical Narratology* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999, print), a convincing differentiation between the two terms remains unseen (32).

efforts is relevant to improve both the use and critique of these strategies. Second, my work helps to advance literature on NATO beyond its realist focus,³ placing NATO's missions within a broader sociocultural context in which meaning and significance are developed through purposeful communication. More work is needed given that there is much at stake in how NATO talks about itself: NATO's narratives have the capacity to make lengthy, expensive, and dangerous conflicts seem common-sense and natural.

Chapter 1 offers a review of the literature surrounding NATO, its missions, and its communications. In particular, I explore current literature on NATO, which tends to be centered in international relations scholarship, as well as the preliminary assessments that have been made of OUP by policy analysts and scholars. I then consider the growing field of public diplomacy and the particular role that strategic narratives might play in organizational, and particularly military, communications. Together, this review reveals limited research on NATO as a social, communicative actor, as well as a lack of emphasis on narrative in public diplomacy.

Chapter 2 outlines my theoretical framework and highlights the concepts that I carry through my analysis. Specifically, I explore narrative theory, assessing its insights on narrative's role in everyday life and learning. I then explore the strategic side of narrative more deeply, turning to rhetorical studies and work on strategic narratives to flesh out narrative's role as purposeful communication, emphasizing how stories can challenge audiences, guide expectations, and shape public discourse.

³ By "realist," I refer to *realism*, the theory of international relations that assumes states are the principal actors of the international system (which is anarchic and defined by competitive self-interest), that the state is a rational and unitary actor, and that national security is the most important international issue. Realists generally consider military and strategic issues "high politics," while economic and social concerns are less important "low politics." For more information, see Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi's *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987, print), 6-7.

To answer my questions about the elements of NATO's strategic narrative, I employ narrative analysis and purposive sampling of the alliance's online public diplomacy materials. These methodological choices are outlined in Chapter 3, in which I describe my choice of case study, my use of theory-based and intensity sampling, and my particular application of narrative analysis. I also discuss the limits to my approach and my attempts to mitigate them.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of my analysis of NATO documents, describing the types of documents employed by NATO and the ways this material contributes to the alliance's strategic narrative. Specifically, I outline my interpretation of the story's main themes, and then work through the setting, characters, plot evolution, and mitigation of criticism, offering a broad look at how NATO presented itself over the course of its seven-month mission.

Finally, the thesis ends with a discussion that places the case study in wider conversation with the themes and tensions discussed in my literature review and theoretical framework. I consider the place of OUP's narrative in NATO's broader organizational identity and story, and offer a discussion of my study's limitations, directions for future research, and the broader implications for our understandings of NATO and of strategic narratives in military public diplomacy.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

NATO, ITS MISSIONS, AND ITS COMMUNICATIONS

The construction of a strategic narrative during a military mission is a complex phenomenon that requires significant knowledge and background information to fully comprehend. Indeed, to understand the many tasks that NATO's narrative and public diplomacy performed during Operation Unified Protector (OUP), we need further information on the alliance itself, its history and identity, and its most recent mission. Moreover, NATO's particular narrative must be placed within a wider scholarly context and understanding of public diplomacy and strategic communications, including the role of narrative. This is an interdisciplinary problem that draws from multiple bodies of literature. To make sense of these fields and their gaps, this chapter reviews several bodies of scholarship that relate to my research objectives.

Broadly speaking, there are four bodies of literature that inform this study: NATO's struggles to adapt since the collapse of bipolarity; the limited work on my case study, OUP; public diplomacy; and strategic narratives. I will evaluate each body's focuses, preoccupations, controversies, and gaps, and my review includes academic articles, working papers, and books that have been written on these topics, with occasional insights from commentators, strategists, and the news media to enhance my understanding of these topics. By looking for conceptual consensus or disagreement, as well as trends in empirical and case study research, each body of literature can be assessed and thus contribute to our understanding of NATO's use of narrative in public diplomacy. Importantly, we see a general paucity of material on the role of narrative in public diplomacy across these bodies of literature. Indeed, a brief review of this research will reveal the trends in these fields and the gaps this study helps to fill.

(1) NATO'S STRUGGLES SINCE THE COLLAPSE OF BIPOLARITY

To best understand the multiple tasks that must be accomplished by NATO's public diplomacy, an exploration of the major debates and academic work on the alliance is pertinent. In particular, we need a better understanding of NATO's broader context as an organization – its anxieties, its history, and its recurring struggles as it evolves. While much military and international affairs scholarship focuses on NATO's structural changes since the collapse of bipolarity, most debates and research boil down to two simple questions for the alliance: is NATO a genuine community of values, and is NATO still relevant? Once we familiarize ourselves with these questions and tensions, we can begin to understand the tasks NATO's public diplomacy must perform, and the particular role narrative might play in creating unity and mitigating these organizational anxieties.

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been considerable scholarship on NATO's ability to survive, or indeed, the advisability of its continuation. This work often delves into the very nature of the alliance to determine if NATO is best seen as a pragmatic, purely military alliance that has served its purpose or as a greater cultural and philosophical union of like-minded states that warrants preservation. Scholars have often conceptualized this debate in terms of the "Atlantic Community," or the shared values, history, and spirit of liberalism that supposedly bind North American and European states, institutionalized with organizations like NATO. Differing views on the community's authenticity animate scholarly debate. Michael Vlahos, writing in 1992, argued that NATO's sense of Atlantic Community was manufactured in the Cold War, creating artificial nostalgia that is no longer appropriate in a post-Cold War era; the false sense of kinship between Europe and North America was born out of necessity, and

“discarding the grand illusion is part of a necessary process of exiting one world and entering another” (“The Atlantic Community” 190). These scholars argue that the Atlantic Community’s tendency to pitch empty rhetoric on shared values, despite its humanitarian failures, gives it an unsustainable “evangelist tendency” (Danchev 429).

Other scholars reject this thesis, arguing that NATO remains relevant precisely because it continues to be a strong community of values (e.g. Hieronymi and Jasson; King; Bunde and Noetzel). This work is both descriptive and normative, with some simply pointing out that the community persists while others argue that it is worth preserving. Otto Hieronymi and Chiara Jasson argue that the Atlantic Community has been and will continue to be a force for good, and they critique scholars who persist in questioning its place: “unfortunately, it seems appropriate to wonder whether the Atlantic Community still exists” (233). According to this view, the community is “as strong as ever” (King 227), reinforced and sustained by continued threats to liberal democracy, and animated by more than self-interest as a security community: the Atlantic Community has developed into a genuine, reflexive political collective (Kitchen, “Argument and Identity Change in the Atlantic Security Community” 97). While these authors argue that NATO members must adapt to new roles and reaffirm their values, the thrust of this body of work is that alliance members continue to be bound by shared values. Members of this camp have also argued that the values at NATO’s institutional core explain not only its survival but also its expansion since the Cold War (Bunde and Noetzel 305; Keller 215).

This debate on the authenticity of NATO’s values underlines a deeper anxiety in both academic circles and member populations: is NATO relevant? While it seldom addresses issues of communication, this fundamental tension sensitizes understandings of

how NATO talks about itself, including the values and rhetoric it draws from to justify its missions, as well as the pressures or allegiances its allies might feel towards each other. It also raises questions about whether the alliance pulls from rhetorical generalizations or from genuine moral capital that animates its members, impacting the content, strength, and cohesiveness of NATO's stories.

Patrick Keller argues that this handwringing about NATO's future is a sign of the alliance's vitality; as an organization that has been "as frequently challenged from within as from without" (207), NATO is used to healthy debate. The greater issue at stake, he argues, is NATO's lack of clearly articulated goals and capabilities, which he attributes to lack of leadership and ignorance about shifts in international security (Keller 207). NATO acknowledged this shift in missions and their scope in its 2010 Strategic Concept, which lays out the alliance's long- and short-term visions and goals. Several scholars have welcomed the document, suggesting that it showed rare clarity and vision from the alliance but that NATO's newfound flexibility as a crisis manager may come at the cost of cohesion among allies (Noetzel and Schreer 20-21). Alessandro Marrone agrees, arguing that the document was the result of twenty years of debate and is a "positive tool" for consensus (110), though little work has actually examined the document itself.

Indeed, a much larger body of work has examined issues of member buy-in for new missions, pointing out that NATO's current peace-building and stability missions in troubled areas outside of NATO's region are more expansive than those envisioned in its original treaty, and that legitimation is a more diffuse, long-term process in such missions (Holmberg 536-539; Woolf 482-486; Cooper 72-73). While classic Article 5 missions achieve legitimacy by keeping member states safe in their territories (Holmberg 537),

new missions redefine the scope and parameters of success. Andrew T. Wolff notes, for example, that “confronting an opposing military force is easier than rebuilding a country from scratch” (484), which is made more difficult because NATO’s legitimacy is often tied to outside groups, like regional or aid organizations (Aoi 4-5). While NATO attempts to work with partner organizations, many remain reluctant to collaborate until it attains a stronger public image of shared norms and credibility (Holmberg 542-543).

The expansive nature of NATO’s new missions requires adjustment from both member states and member populations, another area of focus for scholars and practitioners. Jamie Shea, NATO’s former spokesperson in the Kosovo campaign and current Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges at NATO, has spoken extensively on NATO’s relevancy. He argues that the lack of a clear threat in Europe means that member publics see NATO missions as “wars of choice” rather than “wars of necessity” (“Keeping NATO Relevant” 1), an issue of buy-in from both domestic leaders and populations who are not convinced of NATO’s relevance. Member buy-in is a long-standing issue for NATO; since ratification, NATO has had to be promoted to its members to overcome widespread European ignorance of the alliance’s purpose and mandate (Risso 58), while current disunity often stems from failure to “dissolve the discrepancy between collective defense and global stabilization” (Keller 212). While many politicians see that changes in the international system require stability missions abroad to manage extremism, for example, voting populations have not grasped that security abroad and at home are different “sides of the same coin” (Keller 212).

Observers and analysts have adopted different perspectives in making sense of these shifts. Some have sought to examine empirically how tensions in public opinion

create material problems for readiness and capability. Broadly, NATO is seen to be “suffering from a crippling gap between common wisdom and common practice” (Keller 210); while member states affirm a commitment towards global security, they continue “dragging their feet” in defense spending and interoperability investment (210). Given the recent financial crisis, lowered spending, and reluctance to define the scope of missions to be undertaken, some have further argued that NATO must slim down and reassess (Berdal and Ucko 57; Shea, “Jamie Shea, Head of NATO’s Emerging Security Challenges Unit”; Shea, “Keeping NATO Relevant” 2).

Drawing from a constructivist framework, others have considered how NATO’s identity as an alliance makes accommodating these shifts a challenge in its own right. Classical scholarship on alliances suggests that as a composite actor, NATO faces inherent challenges for cohesion and consistency, especially since its current operating conditions differ from those at ratification in 1949 (Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan x; Kegley and Raymond 58; Wagnsson 495). Constructivist approaches to alliance identity also consider the norms that structure both NATO’s decisions and discourse. While NATO’s missions are often defined by certain norms, like avoidance of civilian harm, for example (Gentry 190-193; Farrell 474-485), the alliance is also governed by internal norms that have not necessarily caught up to the alliance’s modern redefinition. In particular, Veronica A. Kitchen suggests that allies have not worked out what is owed to each other in conflicts outside their traditional geographic scope, resulting in external disagreement and loss of face: does security remain fully and equitably “collective” if the mission is outside the NATO area, for example (“NATO’s out-of-area norm” 106-109; 111-113)? While much scholarship has examined alliance formation, usually through a

realist lens, only a small body of work has focused on alliance maintenance, particularly over periods of flux or extended conflict (Roselle 3). Indeed, Patricia A. Weitsman argues that constructivist and identity-based research on alliances is becoming more popular, driven by the understanding that wars waged by alliances are complicated not only by operability but “also in terms of language, communications, doctrine, and the exchange of information” (“Alliances and War” qtd. in Roselle 3). Laura Roselle adds, “without understanding communication processes we cannot understand alliance maintenance” (5).

This brief overview of the traditional areas of academic focus on NATO – its sense of community and relevance, readiness in new missions, and alliance dynamics – offers grounding on NATO’s shifts from regional defense to global security, and the growing pains associated with the alliance’s development over time. Despite varied approaches and scopes of inquiry, most scholars have contributed to a much broader dialogue about NATO’s relevancy and the strength of its values since the collapse of bipolarity. By exploring these tensions among NATO allies, we can begin to see how issues of buy-in, decreased spending, and cooperation with partner groups complicate every instance of NATO public diplomacy, especially those related to conflicts and risks that seem distant or irrelevant. We also gain a stronger understanding of NATO’s diverse, and often skeptical, foreign and domestic audiences. Despite this academic interest, less is known about the alliance’s latest mission, OUP, which will now be considered.

(2) OPERATION UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP)

There is a limited body of peer-reviewed literature on OUP, NATO’s latest mission, particularly compared to extensive interest in the Afghan mission and NATO’s

transitions over the last two decades. Though little has been done to evaluate OUP, some research has emerged to contextualize the mission.

A small body of literature has performed preliminary evaluations of the mission, with several scholars and analysts interpreting OUP as a success for the alliance and Libyan people (e.g. Chivvis 69; Laity 53, 57). NATO accomplished its tasks “at relatively little cost” in terms of casualties, controversy, or expenditure (Chivvis 79), organized its operational plans with impressive speed (Chivvis 72; Laity 54), and forged important relationships with regional organizations and institutions. In so doing, it received support from Sweden, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Jordan in its air campaign (Michaels 58; “Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR”) and covert support from UAE and Qatar (Nakhoul). Indeed, Mark Laity suggests that Arab participation “added to the perception of legitimacy, helping to create a virtuous circle” (56). A general consensus, however, is that the mission’s particular circumstances should prevent us from viewing OUP’s success with triumphalism or as a guaranteed blueprint for the future (Chivvis 80; Michaels 60). The mission’s parameters were limited: by scaling back its participation in the civil war, avoiding ground intervention, and stepping out of the conflict quickly (Chivvis 78), NATO’s success in Libya was “determined by what the Alliance did not do as much as by what it did” (Michaels 58). Moreover, the mission is seen to have enjoyed a rare level of underlying legitimacy: weak Libyan forces and near universal revulsion towards the regime (Chivvis 81), as well as bizarre communication from Qadhafi himself (Laity 87), provided NATO certain strategic advantages.

Despite these perceived successes, certain mission controversies continue to be examined by scholars and strategists. In particular, some authors have questioned

whether OUP improved NATO's cohesion as an alliance or revealed its weaknesses (e.g. Noetzel and Schreer; Chivvis; Gertler; Nicoll and Johnstone; Laity). Some contend that OUP showed cleavages; NATO failed to muster troops from all 28 allies despite a UN mandate and "Libya being situated on Europe's doorstep" (Noetzel and Schreer 31), and many key players effectively sat out the mission (Chivvis 72). Indeed, a U.S. congressional report notes that there was significant discord among members in the first few weeks of OUP, especially when Germany refused to participate (Gertler 17). It is perhaps unsurprising that Mark Laity, a spokesperson for NATO, argues that NATO "has always been multi-tiered, albeit with a core of 'regulars'" (57). Other authors, however, remain less optimistic (e.g. Chivvis 86), and the U.S.'s decision to play a supporting role has also been analyzed, with some authors commenting that the decision revealed Europe's weaknesses and created equipment shortages (Nicoll and Johnstone; Laity 55).

Beyond internal divisions and issues of command, another central focus among scholars has been NATO's potential involvement in ousting Qadhafi, an illegal expansion of its UN mandate. This literature often approaches OUP from international law or critical human rights, and places NATO's activities within broader trends in humanitarian intervention, a contentious debate among scholars that considers whether war can ever be fought "cleanly" or ethically (Hammond 8-9; Freedman 14). NATO's mandate, as outlined by UN Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973, involved the protection of Libyan civilians but included no instruction to oust the Qadhafi regime. Some authors acknowledge confusion over the mission's strategic ends (Laity 56; Chivvis 75), with Laity in particular noting that regime change was "the strategic elephant in the room right from day one" (54); indeed, the disconnect between the military goal of liberation and the

political aims of NATO members seeking regime change was evident (Jensen 186-187). Others have taken a more critical position, suggesting that the reasoning behind intervention was flawed to begin with — protestors initiated the violence (Kuperman 1-2) — and that OUP is another example of humanitarian intervention's broader vulnerability to mission creep (Çubukçu 53; Ulfstein and Christiansen 162).

Vijay Prashad's 2012 book *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter* offers perhaps the most extensive work on (and critique of) OUP, and is worth discussing in some detail. Prashad situates the Libyan revolution in a broader historical and regional context, arguing that the conflict presented a unique opportunity for Atlantic leaders and Arab emirs, who were shaken by the events in Egypt and Tunisia, to intervene in the Arab Spring (7; 38; 98). While he does acknowledge that "these are all speculations" (165), he believes that the nation's oil reserves played some role in the mission, especially given that Libya alone saw international intervention in the Arab Spring (163; 175-6). Echoing the above criticism of interventions (53; 172; 179), Prashad also suggests that the allies' forceful language in OUP escalated the violence and left no room for a peaceful resolution (170).

Indeed, the mission's discourse and communications has received little comment from most authors and appears incidentally to their main analyses. Laity contends that sustaining public support during OUP's attritional phase was a key focus for NATO, with communications "increasingly buttressed by a theme of resolve" (57) during setbacks. While he believes OUP's media environment was relatively "benign" (57), he also argues that the alliance's communications were sometimes confused by the mixed messages of its many members, a complex feature of any coalition mission (57). Prashad takes a more critical stance, and suggests that discursive choices set constricting parameters for the

mission and its narrative. He notes that the conflict was consistently termed “genocide,” representing NATO’s attempt to “transform the rebellion into a massacre” (96) and give itself space and reason to intervene. In his view, the mission’s narrative weakened the rebels, making the conflict appear intensely asymmetrical even though reports suggested that the tide was with the rebels (Prashad 150-152). Alan J. Kuperman agrees that Western countries misinterpreted the conflict, though he suggests they fell victim to misinformation from rebels (3). Additionally, NATO’s unaccounted civilian deaths may escape investigation because the emphasis lays firmly on Qadhafi’s human rights violations, affecting our retrospective assessment of the mission as well (Prashad 158-9).

Rikke Bjerg Jensen has written on OUP’s strategic communications, focusing primarily on the United Kingdom’s communication strategies and structure in the mission. Noting that the mission occurred in the “shadow of Afghanistan,” she suggests that reputation was at stake and support for OUP was not a given (179). In her view, the mission followed an oversimplified story about liberation and freedom that was “rhetorical in format” and difficult to critique, and that the “campaign was framed through value-laden and humanitarian political objectives” (180). She notes that while this messaging may have appealed to domestic audiences of NATO countries, it failed to resonate with local Libyan populations. Indeed, much of her work focuses on NATO’s struggles to connect with Libyans, and usefully places the mission in debates about strategic communication and our theorizing of it, a topic discussed below. However, her work offers little detail on the specific features of NATO’s narrative, nor does it place the story in conversation with the alliance’s ongoing anxieties or its public diplomacy.

The above work offers some insights on the place of language in steering OUP, defining public perception of the conflict, and creating a discursive environment in which intervention seemed natural, necessary, and noble. Different approaches highlight different elements of the mission; while realist scholars and analysts see OUP as a success, humanitarian, legal, and critical research has emphasized the mission's controversies. Indeed, a review of the literature on OUP offers insights into the mission's perceived successes and the alliance's cleavages or criticisms, sensitizing us to their potential place in the mission narrative. This review, however, suggests that little work has extensively evaluated the mission for its communicative dimensions. Moreover, the scholarship on NATO mentioned above suggests that new operations are often difficult to explain or justify for the alliance, but few have actually examined this process of justification in great detail. While this literature therefore informs us of the challenges NATO faces, it stops short of addressing how these new dynamics impact the alliance's public image, or the ways the alliance appeals to its shared values to tie members together and mobilize their support. Indeed, most international relations scholarship does not examine the implications of these shifts for NATO's communications in detail, nor provide the conceptual framework for analysis offered by public diplomacy literature.

(3) PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

NATO calls its public communication “public diplomacy,” an important term and concept that is being slowly examined in a growing body of work. While the concept of winning “hearts and minds” or the “war of ideas” during war is not new, the collapse of bipolarity and events of 9/11 have spurred more research into public diplomacy, as well as its controversies and practices by governments and organizations around the world. To

make sense of NATO's communications, this section examines some of the trends, controversies, and dilemmas that grip the field of public diplomacy and its lexicon.

The term "public diplomacy" was first used by Dean Edmund Gullion of Tufts University in 1965 (Paul 34; Farwell 49) but has since been widely defined by a variety of scholars in different fields. Broadly, Nancy Snow argues that whereas traditional diplomacy involves government-to-government relations, traditional public diplomacy refers to governments talking to global publics, with "efforts to inform, influence, and engage those publics in support of national objectives and foreign policies" ("Rethinking Public Diplomacy" 6). Public diplomacy is not limited to interstate negotiation or diplomatic activities (L'Etang 607); rather, it often bypasses political actors to directly reach populations at home and abroad through promotional or persuasive activities, along with media relations (L'Etang 610; Plavsak 113). The concept has been intimately tied to prominent political scientist Joseph Nye and his notion of "soft power," a form of influence based on attraction and co-option that stems from a country's culture, political values, and foreign policies (Nye 84; also Snow, "Rethinking Public Diplomacy" 3).

Changes to our political, informational, and technological environment have spurred much research to consider the contextual factors that complicate modern public diplomacy. In particular, democratic and media oversight over foreign policy are broadly seen to influence the role of information in public diplomacy (Roberts 412; Plavsak 113; Zaharna 78; Smith 158). This insight gains its credence when we consider diplomacy as a historical phenomenon. While traditional diplomacy and its scholarship embraced a timeworn ethos of confidentiality, typically grounded on realist assumptions of an irrational and ill-informed public, democratic franchise has made diplomacy increasingly

bound to transparency. Elections institutionalize public opinion in global affairs (Roberts 412; Ringsmose and Børgesen 510; Plavsak 112; Zaharna 81), and as communications technology advances and public diplomacy becomes (at least in theory) more open and interactive, we see cultural shifts as well, notably a greater desire for interconnectivity among citizens and non-governmental organizations (Zaharna 87-88). Indeed, Kristina Plavsak argues that diplomacy's meaning and function have shifted "toward final destinations of a medialised reality and a pure communicative action" (117).⁴

Scholars are also focusing on the ways that greater use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) around the world has impacted public diplomacy. Across several case studies, a common view has emerged of technology creating an increasingly interactive, distracting, and competitive media ecology that both complicates and facilitates public diplomacy efforts. Dora Apel argues that we now live "in a global culture in which everyone is a producer as well as a consumer of public imagery," heightening the power of civilians in war areas (11). While enemy propaganda has featured in most modern conflicts, a new "information economy" makes it easy to circulate competing information online, a trend that began with Slobodan Milosevic in Kosovo (Hall 389) but continues with insurgents and rogue leaders who publish videos and messages online (Dimitriu 198; Jensen 177). The so-called "CNN effect," or the ways in which a fickle media influences foreign policy (Hammond 12), has also been discussed as journalistic practices adapt to this heightened interactivity; with such a glut

⁴ By "medialized reality," Plavsak suggests that conflicts, diplomacy, and other political events are increasingly shaped by the media, submitting to media logics and packaged in ways that suit televised or mediatised news (116). Her mention of "communicative action" refers to some authors' (e.g. Lose, 2001) use of Jürgen Habermas' concepts to describe a *diplomatic communicative interaction*. In this sense, a communicative action would work towards collective understanding through discussion and information gathering, subjected to a variety of norms and principles among different international actors (119).

of sources, pictures, videos, and commentary, it has become difficult for journalists to properly sort through information, rushing images and rumours to press or enlisting pundits to provide premature commentary (Hall 392-3).

Scholars largely agree that journalists and political officials have lost their monopoly on war imagery and information, and must now instead respond to the information, rumors, videos and photographs that emerge everyday from civilians, enemies, and states (Antoniades, Miksimmon, and O'Loughlin 7-8; Plavsak 114; Dimitriu 198; Hall 392-99; Betz 518; Freedman 17; Jones and Baines 73; Eder 5, 8; Jensen 173-174). Jamie Shea argues that the affordances provided by modern media industries and technologies to dramatize events and create global audiences for conflicts mean that leaders must take the communicative dimensions of their campaigns as seriously as the military component ("Jamie Shea: Kosovo – then and now") and find a way "to dominate the media and not be dominated by it" (*The Kosovo Crisis and the Media. Reflections of a NATO Spokesman* 8, qtd. in Plavsak 115). Indeed, many leaders find it difficult to communicate their message in this cluttered and saturated informational environment (Eder 66), and the target audiences of any public diplomacy initiative are now blurred. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate combatants and non-combatants, or civilians and bystanders, because all are now part of a "global listening audience" (Dimitriu 197); there is no "local" media anymore (Heller and Persson 227), a trend compounded by competing global media outlets like al Jazeera that bring regional perspectives. As noted by Jensen: "there is no one audience. There is no one message. There is no one approach" (190). Multiple authors, despite focus on different campaigns, thus point to similar contextual dynamics that challenge cohesion and control.

In light of this evolving context, we can acknowledge the difficulties of defining and binding the concept of public diplomacy. There are some areas of broad agreement: scholars and practitioners tend to agree that public diplomacy involves public informational campaigns that aim for engagement and dialogue, are both short-term or long-term, and seek to promote national values to both domestic and foreign audiences (Farwell 47-53; Paul 34-36). Difficulties emerge, however, when attempts are made to draw boundaries around the concept of public diplomacy itself (Paul 35); for example, are citizen diplomacy or exchange programs forms of public diplomacy, or the interactions between celebrities, private groups and organizations? This complexity is increased by competing terms that occupy similar, though distinct, conceptual spaces.

The concept of strategic communication (stratcom) is also relevant for this study and highlights the definitional problems that plague public diplomacy scholarship. NATO states that its Public Diplomacy Division acts as “lead coordinator for all strategic communications activities” and “harmonizes” its public diplomacy initiatives (“NATO Divisions and Views of Interns”). In general terms, stratcom has been defined as “the organization ... communicating purposefully to advance its mission” (Hallahan et al. 4), and is thus conceptually broad; indeed, stratcom and public diplomacy are both riddled by competing definitions at the levels of practice and theory (Paul 2-4; Farwell xvii). Complicating matters is that stratcom is referred to differently across assorted policy, defense, and industry literature. Swaran Sandhu argues that stratcom literature in industry settings has been influenced by a “functional-managerial outlook” (74) that sees communication as a managerial, professionalized, and strategic function for marketing, advertising, or public relations (Molleda 53), though even industry definitions of the term

are hardly cohesive (Paul 23-24). Scholarship on industry stratcom often focuses, for example, on building corporate relations (e.g. Mahoney), managing institutional change (e.g. Kuchi; Barrett), or the integration of strategic management and communication paradigms (e.g. Hartelius and Browning; Moss and Warnaby).

Despite this corporate focus, stratcom has also been applied to different military case studies, with particular empirical focus on the Global War on Terror. This work is often critical of U.S. practices (e.g. Snow, *Information War*; Snow, *The Arrogance of American Power*) or offers a more descriptive analysis of practices and solutions to improve government efforts (e.g. Betz; Eder). Few have evaluated the concept in NATO, but G. R. Dimitriu's examination of the concept during the Afghan conflict is of particular value. He notes that while the term is conceptually murky, stratcom broadly relates to "the harmonizing of themes, ideas, images, and actions" for an entity (197); stratcom is thus not simply a matter of message, or sender and receiver, but rather an ongoing process to integrate sets of activities into broader themes for NATO (197). Rikke Bjerg Jensen, in her analysis of stratcom in OUP, suggests that NATO struggled to define its target audiences and therefore "failed to attune their messaging to the values of the Libyan people" (184). Critically, she suggests that NATO and other military institutions struggle to react to the 24 hour media cycle that demands instant information, and argues that success in military stratcom should be envisioned differently from its commercial, branding counterparts (185, 188). Indeed, while NATO is paying closer attention than ever to its audience and its communications (188-190), Jensen argues that given the complexities of modern conflict and our media ecology, "it is wrong to assume that strategic communication will always result in what the military term *success*" (187).

Some broad themes and insights on stratcom have emerged through these diverse case studies. First, the principles of stratcom are old; leaders have attempted to harmonize their communications for centuries (Farwell 227).⁵ Second, scholars of stratcom share the basic recognition that perception matters (Farwell 77; Paul 1; Betz 519). Rejecting a hard, purely realist perspective, the concept implies that war is determined not wholly by material conditions but is also fought in the cognitive and emotional capacities of civilians, a struggle that “turns on influence” (Dimitriu 195). Third, most scholars agree that successful military stratcom involves the harmonization of deeds with words (Dimitriu 197, 200; Farwell xviii-xix; Paul 5). Finally, these themes come together to a final insight: stratcom works to avoid “information fratricide,” or damaging inconsistencies, by presenting a coherent message and sense of purpose from all actors in an organization (Paul 5; Farwell xviii). Indeed, the concept involves “massing information” into unequivocal messages, rather than dribbling mixed messages (Eder 30).

Despite these areas of consensus, the relationship between stratcom and public diplomacy remains murky, and a clear consensus on how to distinguish and connect the two terms is lacking. While some authors use the terms interchangeably and see them as equals, others attempt to subordinate one to the other, seeing public diplomacy as a subset of stratcom, for example (Paul 2). Others study these concepts but abandon the terms altogether (e.g. Rappert; Maltby). Christopher Paul (40) and James P. Farwell (47) agree

⁵ Scott M. Cutlip, in *Public Relations History: From the 17th to the 20th Century. The Antecedents* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995, print), offers multiple historic case studies of strategic communication and public relations, noting that ancient civilizations in Egypt, Assyria, and Persia circulated materials to glorify their rulers, while Lords Chancellor in England would act as “Keeper’s [sic] of the King’s Conscience,” a third party to manage communications between ruler and people (xi). These practices extended to early America as well; for example, when the Georgia colony struggled with negative rumors in the early 1700s, one of its founders, Lord Oglethorpe, reportedly coordinated all publications about the region to harmonize its message and avoid bad publicity (5-6). See Ian Sharman’s *Thomas Langley: The First Spin-Doctor (c. 1363-1437)* (Dovecote-Renaissance, 1999, print) for another case study.

that while much public diplomacy embraces the tenets of stratcom, not every act of public diplomacy is an act of stratcom, nor is it fully subordinate to stratcom. Moreover, there is no consensus as to whether public diplomacy is always strategic or advances the nation's interests. Paul believes that some acts of public diplomacy do not serve any broader purpose (40-41), while others argue that public diplomacy is not effective if it shies away from the goals of influence and self-interest (Farwell 51).

In many ways, this controversy over self-interest delves into the fundamental nature of communication in these practices: should we view public diplomacy as a one-way mode of informational transmission, or as a genuine dialogue and attempt at two-way communication, interaction, and engagement? Importantly, this raises questions about the benignity of these practices – does stratcom, for example, aim to influence, inform, or deceive (Paul 14; 28-29)? Juan-Carlos Molleda argues that recent literature on stratcom shows preoccupation with “authenticity” in organizational communication efforts, betraying an anxiety in the field (53). As work in this field grows, scholars are also sensitized to potential comparisons between public diplomacy and propaganda. There seems to be consensus among scholars that whereas propaganda aims for coercion and deception by withholding information (Zaharna 78), soft power turns this on its head; public diplomacy shares information and avoids hints of secrecy, giving political actors a way to shape the terms of debate and increase their influence in public discussions (Smith 158). However, while practitioners claim that they aim to inform, not influence, most will admit that there is no such thing as value-free information (Paul 42-43; Eder 44).

Public diplomacy's lexicon is not limited to stratcom, however. Indeed, the concept shares insights and tensions with another discipline, public relations, and while

the similarities between the two fields have not gone unnoticed by scholars, their relationship is no less murky. While public relations literature often takes a more technocratic or corporate focus, its practices are similar to those of public diplomacy, including image management and institutional communication to broader publics (L'Etang 611). Benno H. Signitzer and Timothy Coombs have evaluated the “conceptual overlap” (140) between the fields and argue that scholars have failed to engage with each other, proposing a research agenda to test areas of transfer (146). Moreover, they suggest that enhanced communication technologies and the needs of modern states place public diplomacy and public relations “in a natural process of convergence” (146). Michèle Schoenberger-Orgad, in her thematic analysis of NATO press briefings from the Kosovo mission, has since argued that NATO enacts a form of international public relations, drawing from cultural values to maintain legitimacy with diverse audiences (376).

Public diplomacy “is one of the most multidisciplinary areas in modern scholarship” (Gilboa 56), and while the field has drawn insights from international relations, communication, public relations, and nation branding, few scholars have attempted to formulate a paradigm (Gilboa 68-69). To make sense of the field, scholars are calling for improved collaboration between academics and practitioners to exchange insights and practical knowledge (Gregory 275), and the growth of handbooks detailing the practices and theories of public diplomacy attest to this increased scholastic and practical interest. Indeed, Mari K. Eder argues that once marginalized, communication practices are being increasingly taught and respected in military settings (24, 40). The difficulties of drawing conceptual boundaries around public diplomacy are certainly evident, but despite differences in terminology, a review of public diplomacy, stratcom,

and public relations suggests that these fields all grapple with a similar issue: the transfer of information into meaningful, socially-relevant knowledge for strategic ends.

Public diplomacy is a young, debated, and evolving field that lacks conceptual consensus. This also makes it an exciting time to perform research in this field and take stock of its gaps. Notably, little work has examined public diplomacy in an alliance setting. While public diplomacy has been conceived as a balance act between different government agencies, especially in the U.S. context (e.g. Paul; Farwell; Zaharna; Eder), and while some authors have evaluated NATO communications (e.g. Dimitriu; Jensen), NATO's need to temper its organizational interests with multiple national interests remains under-conceptualized. More notably, this review also suggests that little direct emphasis has been placed on narrative as a relevant discourse in these communication efforts. This is an important gap to be filled given that narratives are seen by many scholars as essential cognitive tools to make sense of our culture and our surroundings.

(4) STRATEGIC NARRATIVES

Narratives have been extensively researched in multiple bodies of literature, studied by researchers adopting different methods, ontological approaches, and conceptual scopes. At its simplest level, a narrative is a sense-making device that establishes “an initial situation or order, a problem that disrupts that order, and a resolution that re-establishes order” (Antoniades, Miksimmon, and O’Loughlin 4). Robert Fulford notes “stories ostensibly begin in order to explain something, or to make an event clear,” casting light and surrounding it “with a certain mood” (8). Narratives bring this affective quality to textual, spoken, formal, and informal modes, and are often studied in literature and psychology, conceived of as personal stories that people use to make sense

of their reality and everyday lives (Gubrium and Holstein vii). Indeed, Fulford suggests that narratives likely emerged from gossip, “the back-fence way of compressing events and exploring their meaning” (1), while studies in cultural anthropology, literature, and cognition attest to the role stories play in cultures and communities (Roselle 6): narratives communicate a society’s “notions of where they are and where they might be going” (Hurrell 17). Critically, stories organize information and connect phenomena in specific ways, creating a sense of causality to orient groups around particular sets of goals. By resonating with deeply held values and by incorporating cognitive and emotional components, narratives can animate audiences with great success (Ringsmose and Børgesen 512; Antoniadis, Miksimmon and O’Loughlin 5).

In light of these insights, scholars of war are increasingly articulating the view that conflict takes place on multiple domains. War is fought in both a physical battlefield and in other, more abstract contexts that go by many names – the virtual (e.g. Betz), the informational (e.g. Eder; Maltby 3-4), the mediatized (e.g. Jensen 173), or the cognitive (e.g. Freedman). Broadly, this domain is an imagined area that exists only in the mind, where the “war of ideas” is fought (Eder 11; Betz 513). While leaders of war have always fought for the “hearts and minds” of citizens, the information age has deepened scholarly interest in this field; indeed, “it is truer now that the pen is mightier than the sword because we are that much further into the Information Age” (Betz 514). Our growing information economy creates new spaces for debate and contestation, presenting both threat and opportunity to political leaders (Antoniadis, Miksimmon and O’Loughlin 16). Authors point out that the media describes military events or gains in narrative terms, not casualties or territories (Freedman 78; Maltby 4), and Sarah Maltby adds that a

campaign's portrayal usually "submits to the logic of the media" (51). New premiums are placed on compelling language and narratives for this domain, and increasingly we see that gaining ground in the informational realm or improving media coverage "should be equated with seizing a form of key terrain" (Eder 29).

That stories are told in politics and war is not new, but the concept is being elucidated by a number of scholars who appreciate the complexity of modern conflicts, media coverage, and the place of compelling narratives in consolidating information. Lawrence Freedman has spurred new research and furthered these concepts with his 2006 book *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, which advances the notion of "strategic narratives" and is worth discussing at length. Freedman takes a broad, macro view of trends in war and grand strategy, and argues that war has grown diffuse, complicated, and irregular, with greater numbers of enemies who slowly unsettle, harass, and demoralize populations from the shadows (5-6). While Freedman focuses on terrorism committed against the West and the response of those nations, he also notes that humanitarian missions are often "patchy and controversial" (35). The discretionary nature of much modern warfare (24) elevates the importance of cultural values and norms to make sense of any conflict, its purpose, and our choice: why this war? In light of these *ad hoc* contextual factors, Freedman arrives at his main thesis: the challenges of irregular war are "easier to meet when military operations are understood to contribute to the development of a compelling narrative about the likely course and consequence of a conflict" (8).

Freedman's innovative approach suggests that irregular war is best explained (and fought) with culture and narrative, not merely technological and military prowess. Noting that all societies draw upon their core values when fighting wars, Freedman suggests that

the Atlantic powers traditionally draw their political values from liberalism: individualism, liberty, rule of law, and consent in civil society (35). Importantly, however, “war has an inherently illiberal quality” (36): it requires the suppression of individuality and rights for the state. When Western governments deviate from these norms, they attempt to reform the conflict, making it appear rational, controllable, and compatible with liberalism, justifying the breach of international norms of non-interference by emphasizing the deviant region’s disrespect for liberal values (36-37).

Against this strategic background and given the tensions of liberal war, Freedman develops the concept of strategic narratives, or “compelling story lines which can explain events convincingly and from which inferences can be drawn” (22), structuring responses and understandings of events. His work has spurred new research from a small group of scholars who have added to the concept of strategic narratives. Recognizing a shortage of information on narratives in international affairs, several authors have proposed research agendas to evaluate communication in foreign policy (e.g. Antoniadou, Miksimon, and O’Loughlin 2; Miksimon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle 1), arguing that international relations are best understood through the concept of strategic narrative and that scholars of foreign affairs have largely ignored the insights that communication has to offer.

While the following chapter examines theoretical work on narratives in detail, some recurring insights have emerged as research in this field deepens. Strategic narratives are deliberate, more than rhetoric or an accidental representation of events (Freedman 22). Rather, a compelling, well-crafted narrative also provides agency to the leaders who use them (Miksimon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle 3; Antoniadou, Miksimon, and O’Loughlin 7; Freedman 22; Betz 515), meaning that not all political messages are

necessarily strategic, nor should they be seen as part of a crafted story (Antoniades, Miksimmon, and O'Loughlin 16). Narratives are thus not necessarily analytic or factual; they are often grounded in emotion, history, and metaphors (Freedman 23; Betz 515), suggesting that stories “play an extremely important role in communication, including the ways that organisations talk about themselves” (Freedman 23).

Empirically, a small number of studies have evaluated the application and success of strategic narratives in different settings. Dominating the field are studies on portrayals of the U.S.-led Global War on Terror, which include a wide breadth of approaches that range, for example, from the ways translators create dehumanizing narratives of the Arab world (Baker) to the need for a more inclusive and less fear-based narrative in the U.S. (Goodall, Jr.; Eder; Betz 522). Much research has also focused on the compelling nature of Jihadist narratives, which succeed by drawing from stores of cultural and religious values, or by offering both material and spiritual incentives (Betz; Casebeer; Farwell 71).

While most work on strategic narratives has focused on the American context, a small amount of scholarship has considered their application in NATO. Charlotte Wagnsson argues that NATO is currently torn between pressures to reform to a new security environment and its “constitutive story,” or narrative about itself that seems trapped in Cold War discourse (483). In her examination of NATO’s development of the 2010 Strategic Concept, Wagnsson argues that NATO is animated by two main stories – a threat narrative and a history and geography narrative – that create four (often conflicting) metaphorical roles for the alliance. These roles are the watchdog, which focuses on new and unconventional threats like cyberterrorism (486); the firefighter, in which the alliance eagerly monitors the world, ready to act (488); the neighbour, which

posits NATO as a family that turns enemies into friends (489-490); and the seminar leader, which sees NATO as a hub of partnerships and interconnectivity (492-493).

Jens Ringsmose and Berit Kaja Børgesen have applied the concept of strategic narrative to a NATO mission, and studied four member countries' strategic narratives for the Afghan mission. They argue that political leaders play a large role in shaping public opinion through the strength and cohesiveness of their stories (512). G. R. Dimitriu has looked more broadly at the concept of strategic narrative, and argues that while the practices of stratcom certainly progressed during the Afghan conflict, NATO has not fully embraced a common mission story, with different members pursuing different approaches to publicize, legitimize, and humanize the mission (204). Moreover, his work suggests that while NATO has become active on social media (203), strategic narratives and communication must be fully integrated throughout an entire organization (197), including the troops who must internalize the mission's goals and stories on the ground (206). Importantly, this limited literature highlights NATO's composite nature and its ongoing struggles to create cohesiveness in its communications.

REVIEW AND GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

A review of the above literature suggests that while conceptual work on strategic narratives has advanced significantly in recent years, case study research on NATO narratives remains limited. I identify two major gaps in the literature and seek to address them in this thesis. First, little emphasis has been placed on narrative in public diplomacy, a topic that deserves greater insight given the potency of storytelling in shaping perceptions and rendering complex policy decisions understandable. We should examine the particular cognitive and social roles that narratives can play, and consider

how storylines can be strengthened or shaped for strategic purposes. Narrative theory, and the rhetorical and strategic power of this form of organizational storytelling, will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Second, this review reveals a need to consider NATO as a social and cultural actor, beyond its military role. Because OUP took place over a long period of time, NATO had the chance to summarize events on its own terms, a critical source of power given that these missions gain meaning by being repeatedly discussed, described, and placed into a broader organizational context, outside the mission. Conceptions of NATO are often preoccupied with the alliance's political and military functions, without evaluating its routine attempts to balance different cultural values and national interests to maintain domestic support and international legitimacy. Moreover, in emphasizing this social role, we also acknowledge NATO's identity as an alliance. Indeed, the complications of narrative and public diplomacy in an alliance setting is a particularly understudied area of research, and we should consider the complexities of catering to multiple member audiences while stressing cohesion and organizational identity. The case study explored here contributes this perspective to public diplomacy research, and given the increasing growth of international organizations and global movements that involve multiple actors, further research on these joint communication efforts is salient.

In light of this review, we can also begin to envision NATO's audience for its strategic narrative and public diplomacy. Jensen notes that scholars must consider the military understanding of audience, which focuses on targets (both enemies and allies) at the local level of conflict, as well as at the domestic, national, and international level. NATO's strategic narrative had to negate bad press and enemy communications while

simultaneously appealing to diverse audiences across Libya, NATO countries, and the world (Jensen 174). While some analysts have focused on NATO's (often limited) communications with Libyans (e.g. "Accidental Heroes" 1; Gaub 4-6), this study focuses on the domestic audiences of NATO countries, as well as a global public of analysts, journalists, organizations, and governments watching and assessing NATO after its more troubled mission in Afghanistan. Broadly, I envision an audience trying to understand why a mission in Libya was necessary in an era of fiscal austerity. While we can assume that audiences were becoming familiar with the events of the Arab Spring and the region's struggles (Jensen 179), OUP was not of direct importance to NATO members – this was not a war of necessity. As well, given the above insights from public diplomacy scholarship, we can likely assume that NATO audiences also experienced a distracting and polyphonic media ecology that presented many different viewpoints of the mission.

This is among the few studies to examine narrative in the NATO setting, sustaining a communications lens of analysis and making two contributions to public diplomacy literature: a greater understanding of narrative in public diplomacy, and an analysis of communication for an alliance, a complex social actor. This review has revealed themes in existing literature and touches on some of the concepts that are needed to make sense of NATO's struggles as it evolves. Greater theoretical questions about narrative remain, both as a natural cognitive tool for making sense of experience and as a purposeful and strategic mode of discourse. I address these issues in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

NARRATIVES AS RHETORICAL AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

My review of the literature surrounding NATO, OUP, public diplomacy, and strategic narratives revealed several recurring themes: public misunderstandings of war in a new international environment; missions defined not by existential threat but by distanced risk and instability; and a distracting media ecology that floods the public with information and expertise, challenging dominant sources of knowledge and impacting institutional legitimacy. Importantly, this review also highlighted a paucity of emphasis on narrative in public diplomacy and strategic communication efforts.

This chapter explores narrative theory to consider how storytelling, strategically deployed, can be useful for alliance building and explaining the complexities and motivations of modern war to the public. Chapter 1 explored how narrative's strategic function has been examined in different case studies and contexts, but this chapter takes a step back to consider narrative's conceptual identity as a basic cognitive tool and purposeful mode of discourse. In particular, I argue that stories are potent organizing tools in a complex informational environment with multiple and competing sources of information, and are natural identity-builders for NATO and its member populations. Beginning with a broad discussion of narrative theory, this chapter will then focus on two ways of looking at stories – narrative as rhetoric, and strategic narratives – to consider narrative as purposeful communication. Importantly, this framework helps us look at organizational communications with an emphasis on form and discursive techniques, and the ways in which rhetorical devices and strategic storytelling come together to benefit NATO.

NARRATIVE THEORY

Narrative theory begins with the assumption that narrative is a basic strategy for understanding our experience, and it attempts to study narrative's various uses, effects, and structures. As mentioned in the previous chapter, scholars have long established that narratives carry the power to organize information affectively, helping to navigate the experiences of our personal lives, communities, and broader society. In light of these capacities, narrative theory looks at how stories differ from other discourses, and its framework is used in multiple disciplines ("What is Narrative Theory?"). Narrative theorists study different types of stories, ranging from formal literary works to everyday discourse, and approach narrative at different levels, with some authors elevating it to the level of ontology. Indeed, Walter R. Fisher has argued for a narrative meta-paradigm that recognizes humans as natural and instinctive storytellers (347; 353), and Jerome Bruner's 1991 article "The Narrative Construction of Reality" was critical in advancing the narrative mode of knowing as a starting point in narrative theory.

In contrast to the logo-scientific mode of knowing, in which explanation occurs by recognizing a phenomenon as part of a general law, the narrative mode of knowing explains by relating an event to the intentionality of human action (Czarniawska, *Narrating the Organization* 18-19). Bruner argues that "we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative" (4), and articulates the idea of "cultural toolkits," the notion that we understand our reality by referencing the culture in which we live; cultural products, like language, structure our thoughts and mediate our representations. Narrative has the potential to not only represent reality, but constitute it as well (Bruner 3-5). Wallace Chafe adds that "narratives provide evidence

for the nature of the mind” (79), which should be envisioned as an organ that builds models of the world. Importantly, these schemas are created by the mind but are also borrowed from and pre-packaged by one’s surrounding culture, helping individuals to understand and develop expectations about the world (Chafe 80-82). While I stop short of viewing narrative as ontology, I argue that narrative is a mode of discourse of cultural and cognitive import, and that narrative theory offers a particularly helpful lens to view NATO communications in a complex environment.

This narrative mode of understanding, especially in formalized, organizational, and public settings, has been widely researched by scholars from different disciplines, including management and institutional scholars who consider how a narrative approach to knowledge in and about organizations can facilitate organizational unity and legitimacy (Czarniawska, *Narrating the Organization* 5). Barbara Czarniawska highlights the importance of narrative in establishing an organization’s intentionality, noting “we cannot understand human conduct if we ignore its intentions, and we cannot understand human intentions if we ignore the settings in which they make sense,” be they institutional, local, or international (*Narrating the Organization* 12).⁶ Narratives thus hold vast interpretive and explanatory powers that allow audiences to understand an individual or organization’s intentional responses to different, often extraordinary, situations (Czarniawska, *Writing Management* 15; Feldman et. al 3). Importantly, stories offer audiences further understanding into the actor’s identity, organizational personality, and character, important insights in making sense of NATO’s identity construction.

⁶ In text, Czarniawska also cites Alfred Schütz, “On multiple realities,” in *Collected papers I: The problem of social reality* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 207-59.

While the combination of institutional and narrative approaches is not new, their affinity is clear: organizational practices can be seen as genres of narrative in broader social narratives (Czarniawska, *Narrating the Organization* 7, 17). Indeed, David M. Boje has argued that every organization tells stories and narrates itself (*Storytelling Organizations* 5), suggesting that narratives are important for organizational legitimacy. This power could be particularly relevant for organizations with what Erving Goffman calls “spoiled identities”; when facing legitimation crises in the public eye, stories help the organization manage “information about [this] failing” (42), controlling the flow of public knowledge. Indeed, when we consider legitimacy through a narrative lens, the role of language is evident: organizations are intelligible by placing themselves within dominant frames and projecting themselves as archetypal protagonists on a quest, thus cueing audiences to insert the organization’s actions within a broader cultural frame. By working within this frame, “the traces of authorship are erased ... and the agency of the organization becomes taken for granted” (Golant and Silince 1153; also 1151, 1161).

This legitimizing power of narratives has not gone unnoticed by scholars who study politics, who note that language and narratives have particular mobilizing and structuring powers that impact understandings of policy and ideological issues (Hammond 5). Maarten Hajer and Wytse Versteeg have elucidated the place of discourse in policy particularly well, and point out that narrative and discursive research are animated by “an anti-essential ontology” (176): there is no single reality but rather multiple realities that are socially-constructed through language, which shapes our views of reality rather than reflecting it (Hajer 66; Eder 44; Hammond 17). Scholars thus acknowledge that language is engaged in a continual process of giving meaning, with the

capacity to “make politics” and shift power balances (Hajer 67; also 71). In this vein, certain norms, perspectives, and traditions can be enforced through discourse and narrative, narrowing the scope of what is “say-able” or even trapping leaders in certain dominant discourses (Miksimmon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle 9).

In light of these insights on political stories, the place of power in narrative must also be considered, especially given Czarniawska’s assertion that many constructivist approaches, like narrative theory, often “lose sight of the question of power” (*Narrating the Organization* 24). Broadly speaking, two main sources of power emerge from narrative. First, institutions are patterns of action sustained by norms, rules, and justifications that create regulated thought structures and a taken for granted way of doing things. When an organization’s actions are integrated into such narrative and semantic structures, the only basis for justification becomes the structure itself (for example, “this is how one acts in a democratic society”), creating cognitive legitimacy and power (Czarniawska, *Narrating the Organization* 24; Brown, *Society as Text* 122). Second, Czarniawska suggests that while narratives have “a world-creating force,” we must remember that “worlds thus created can allow more freedom to some than to others” (*Narrating the Organization* 24). Narrative’s power thus emerges from the power to define, an inherently political project that involves some form of exclusion (Czarniawska, *Narrating the Organization* 24; Brown, *Social Science as Civic Discourse* 69-70). Indeed, narrative power often lies not in its connection to reality but in its internal consistency; narratives need to provide a convenient and convincing interpretation, and can organize the same information in multiple ways to produce different meanings (Czarniawska, *Writing Management*, 15). These forms of power – the power to be taken

for granted and the power to define – act as strong legitimating forces and contribute to the social reproduction of certain dominant modes of action and thought.

This survey suggests that narrative theory is a broad category, employed by scholars in a range of studies including personal stories, literary forms, and national discourses. It is useful to focus on more specific understandings of narrative and think about narratives as strategic, persuasive, and purposeful, particularly for a political and military setting like NATO's. I therefore turn to two specific ways of thinking about narrative as purposeful communication – narrative as rhetoric and strategic narratives – to better understand NATO's public diplomacy.

NARRATIVE AS A MODE OF RHETORIC: PURPOSEFUL COMMUNICATION

A rhetorical view of NATO's communications helps to consider how different rhetorical devices and strategies facilitate public debate and promote the organization's goals in an evolving global environment. Marja Flory and Oriol Iglesias note that rhetoric is often associated with superficiality and deception, and narratives are seen as unscientific (113), but while few scholars have consolidated the fields of rhetoric and narrative into a single theory, I see considerable, and important, overlap between these two areas of communication. In particular, our analysis of NATO's public diplomacy is enhanced if we consider how rhetoric and information, when arranged in narrative sequences, can increase an institution's social impact and bridge the gap between *informing* and *persuading*.

While Michael McGuire notes that there is “no systematized statement in over 20 centuries of thought on the invention of narrative” (231), several scholars have considered the growth of narrative in a rhetorical context. John Rodden notes that the

main division or canon of rhetoric, largely accepted from Aristotle until scholars of the 17th century, includes *inventio* (discovery), *dispositio* (arrangement), *elocutio* (style), *memoria* (memory), and *pronunciatio* (delivery) (158). *Dispositio* is particularly important to narrative theory, as it places emphasis on adapting information in a way that predisposes audiences to a particular view, with Rodden noting that rhetoric “serves not only to inform but also to convince” (161); rhetoric works towards assent, and not merely proof (151). Moreover, C. Jan Swearingen argues that up through the first century B.C., the term “narrative” developed in a rhetorical context as a technical term related to the oration immediately after the statement of an issue (174). While the term was expanded in Cicero’s time to include inventive storytelling, such stories were still seen as a type of rhetoric (Swearingen 174). While Aristotle apparently believed that *diegesis* (a digest or summary of facts) was simply retelling and thus a weaker mode of discourse (Swearingen 184), its Latin translation, *narratio*, shares an Indo-European root with “gnosis,” connoting a type of knowledge and saying force carried by the teller (Swearingen 188). Indeed, the narratives practiced to gain rhetorical skill were soon seen as “useful and instructive in their own right” (Swearingen 178).

While we want to avoid any overly simplistic backwards look at this development of the genre (Swearingen 186), Swearingen argues that regardless of narrative’s roots in rhetoric, “the integration of poetic and rhetoric narrative paradigms suggests a growing recognition that there were poetic and literary elements in rhetorical speeches, and persuasive capacities in narrative, even in nonrhetorical settings” (190-191). Several authors have pointed out that structuralist studies of narrative tend to ignore the social effects of stories. In particular, Rodden suggests that scholarly work on narrative has

existed and analyzed chiefly “within the grammatical orbit” (149) without addressing semantics and pragmatics (meaning and purpose), which usually belong to rhetoric (150). With ancestors in formalism and structuralism (Kearns, *Rhetorical Narratology* 4), narrative analyses tend to “center on the expressive rather than the impressive possibilities of narration” (McGuire 226), or its capacity to speak *for* authors, but not *to* audiences. If we think of narrative through a rhetorical lens, however, we consider not just the “what” of narrative but also the “how” (Rodden 149). Indeed, a rhetoric of narrative adopts a stronger sense of the story’s audience and thus its purpose, envisioning storytelling as an active phenomenon rather than a structuralist exercise in which passive audiences enter pre-structured fictional worlds (Rodden 153-155).

Most critically, a rhetoric of narrative places context and social structures at the centre of analysis (McGuire 221; Kearns, *Rhetorical Narratology* 2). If we view stories in a more argumentative and rhetorical frame, we imagine audiences asking, “what is the point?” and searching for a flow of concepts, argumentation, and meaning in light of their existing beliefs and social concerns (Rodden 151, 157). Rodden points out that not all stories are necessarily rhetorical or argumentative, but that every story, in some way, seeks to persuade. By drawing from a combination of argumentative, emotional, and ethical appeals, we see how stories can be not just rationally convincing but emotionally persuasive (Rodden 165-166). A rhetoric of narrative, moreover, is sociologically and functionally significant because it considers how narrative form has particular potential to persuade, inform, and teach social groups when compared to other discursive modes (McGuire 221-222). If we examine narratives as “teachers or persuaders” (McGuire 233), we see the many possible forms that stories can take to harness the narrator’s didactic

intentions for a specific audience with its own traits. Indeed, Flory and Iglesias argue that managers and researchers cannot fully discover the potential of narratives if “they do not deeply comprehend the underpinnings of rhetoric” (114).

While no current theory has properly consolidated rhetoric and narrative (Kearns, *Rhetorical Narratology* 2), there are many tools that are easily transferred to narrative and other organizational communications, such as public diplomacy. Indeed, conceptual work on public relations illuminates the ways international institutions and their global communications practitioners act as cultural brokers to engage multiple audiences and shape public debate. These tasks require particular discursive control, cultural awareness, and rhetorical skill. Patricia A. Curtin and T. Kenn Gaither have applied the circuit of culture model to international public relations to draw key and critical links between discourse and culture. They suggest that five steps in a communicative process – regulation, representation, identity, production, and consumption – create “a shared cultural space in which meaning is created, shaped, modified and recreated” (38). Important to public diplomacy (and indeed, any international communications), their work points to the cultural sensitivity needed to engage diverse audiences that carry their own dominant discourses, assumptions, and meanings, both fixed and evolving, that impact the manner in which information is produced and consumed.

Robert L. Heath has written extensively on public relations and argues that a rhetorical approach to public relations offers several conceptual advantages. While public relations and rhetoric are often maligned as empty or manipulative (Heath, “The Wrangle in the Marketplace” 24), both facilitate public dialogue and exchange of information about issues and ideas. Indeed, though Aristotelian definitions of rhetoric focus on the

individual speaker, rhetoric refers to a range of discourses across all media that performs a useful art: society requires informed and responsible citizens capable of analysis through argument and counterargument (Heath, “The Wrangle in the Marketplace” 21). In a chaotic informational environment complicated by instant technology and competing news sources, rhetoric helps to organize information persuasively and cohesively. Rhetoric, and rhetorical public relations or public diplomacy, thus facilitate debate on public problems and the management of society’s public risks. Through rhetorical dialogue, actors form opinions and “negotiate the limits and obligations that are basic to their relationships – their mutual interests” (Toth and Heath xii).

Importantly, Heath points out that a rhetorical paradigm for public relations becomes meaningful if we acknowledge the role of self-interest (“The Wrangle in the Marketplace” 18). This is not a trivial point. As noted by Elizabeth L. Toth and Robert L. Heath, a popular assumption is “that objectivity is inherently superior to persuasion, as if persuasion cannot be objective and information unobjective” (xvi). If we abandon this assumption, however, we then see that successful organizational communication involves interpretation, symbolism, and technique, not just “the facts” (Heath, “The Wrangle in the Marketplace” 18-20). Through stylistic and discursive choices, organizations engage in a form of “courtship” to attract audiences and neutralize critics, often by co-opting their language (Heath, “The Wrangle in the Marketplace” 26). As noted by Donald C. Bryant, rhetoric “is the function of adjusting ideas to people and of people to ideas” (“Rhetoric: Its Function and its Scope” 413, qtd. in Heath, “The Wrangle in the Marketplace” 24). This implies a fluidity of fact, opinion, and policy in the negotiation of relationships (Heath, “The Wrangle in the Marketplace” 24). This conceptual orientation of language

as strategic is critical, suggesting that institutions like NATO manage their relationships and words, using communication to “gain an advantage without distorting the debate” (Heath, “The Wrangle in the Marketplace” 26). With rhetoric, NATO can use language purposefully to create similar interpretive frames to make sense of the international environment, and to encourage support for particular responses to conflict.

A rhetorical approach to organizational communications also highlights different techniques used to create relationships between the entity and its audience, a critical need for an institution like NATO that seeks legitimacy from diverse publics. Heath points out that rhetors and organizations present a particular voice or persona at the source of their communication: a carefully crafted persona builds the organization’s image, accompanied by certain qualities – like candidness, dependability, or creativity, for example – and mantras that can be minimized or maximized for emphasis (“Critical Perspectives on Public Relations” 39-41). Critically, most communications also include a second persona, or the implied way that the audience should think of itself. The organization may be interested in having its audience view itself a certain way – as strong, moral, or compassionate responders to humanitarian crises, for example – and if the audience accepts the persona, then they are more prone to the organization’s statements (Heath, “Critical Perspectives on Public Relations” 42). By appealing to certain values or good reasons, rhetors can play to particular rationales and self-perceptions that motivate their audience (Heath, “Critical Perspectives on Public Relations” 50-52). Indeed, as noted by James P. Farwell, “successful narratives are about target audiences, not the narrator” (163). Importantly, these techniques can also foster the public’s sense of self and

togetherness in a confusing and multi-polar environment, and can encourage citizens to trust and empathize with institutions that feel distant or irrelevant from their daily lives.

Beyond these tangible techniques, several authors have also presented broader understandings of what makes rhetorical discourse successful. In particular, Michael Kearns suggests that audiences need to know that the energy spent processing information is worthwhile (“Relevance, Rhetoric, Narrative” 74-77). In other words, audiences want to ensure that the narrative and rhetoric is relevant. This assertion builds from Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, who have influentially argued that relevance is critical to a listener’s inferential phase of comprehension, in which the speaker’s linguistic form is “contextually enriched and used to construct a hypothesis about the speaker’s informative intention” (1). This emphasis on purpose and relevance relates to my above assertion that narratives can communicate human intentionality, and indeed, Kearns argues that relevance is an “innate and universal function” (“Relevance, Rhetoric, Narrative” 75): humans always seek to maximize cognitive effect while minimizing processing effort, making relevance the most basic shared phenomenon between communicator and audience (“Relevance, Rhetoric, Narrative” 76). Story coherence and reliance on time worn cultural codes are expected, and if the story shifts suddenly, the narrative is “marked”: the audience’s experience is not necessarily disrupted, but auditors and readers will expect this shift to have been purposeful and useful, and above all, relevant (Kearns, “Relevance, Rhetoric, Narrative” 84). Given that narrators fear their audiences asking “so what?” (Chafe 83), a story must be tellable or of interest, representing some sort of problem (Kearns, “Relevance, Rhetoric, Narrative” 80-81).

While we may assume that narratives are most easily repeated when they seem relevant, natural, and conform to existing codes for the audience, William G. Kirkwood finds this assumption “troubling” (30). In his view, rhetoric and good stories become meaningful when they exceed audiences’ expectations and challenge them to expand their horizons; indeed, collective public action is a great human achievement, often made possible by great rhetoric. Rhetoric and narrative rhetoric thus gain their strength by disclosing human possibilities (31), and stories can “expand an audience’s moral responsibility by showing them that they are freer and more capable than previously imagined, and invite them to decide how they will exercise their newly realized freedom” (32). Kirkwood’s work is critical in highlighting rhetoric’s dual role and its possibilities through narrative: rhetoric can affirm the public’s sense of community but also challenge new collective action, making a rhetoric of possibility “central to moral argument” (44) and to mobilizing action.

All together, we therefore see that narrative theory benefits greatly by drawing insights from rhetoric. In particular, we note that despite these fields’ continued distance in scholarship, rhetoric and narrative are rooted in a similar desire to persuade audiences and occasionally move them towards action. Moreover, a rhetoric of narrative places particular emphasis on the context, purpose, and audience of every discourse, looking beyond the particulars of the text and language to consider how texts might appeal to, teach, comfort, and challenge different audiences. Indeed, in international conversations about the need for force, sacrifice, and expenditure in distant conflicts, narrative’s persuasive qualities become especially critical.

STRATEGIC NARRATIVES: NARRATIVE ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIES

In light of these connections between narrative and rhetoric, we can now turn our attention to strategic narratives as a particularly purposeful mode of discourse. Indeed, a rhetorical approach is useful, but much of its scholarship focuses on narrative in literature or industry, with little interest in public discourse in military and political settings. In comparison, and as mentioned earlier, a strategic narrative can be thought of as a compelling storyline that connects deeply held social values to particular circumstances or contexts, with aims to gain and maintain public support, undermine opponents, and harmonize and organize information for strategic ends. This section examines strategic narratives in greater detail and looks at the various elements that can be used to strengthen stories in a setting like NATO's.

As discussed above, narratives are natural, cognitive tools to make sense of experience, and are often implicitly or unintentionally used to navigate our lives. David R. Olson suggests, however, that "there is nothing natural about narrative; it is a linguistic form analogous to rhyme" (101), and indeed, there are a variety of ways to consciously strengthen a story's affective power, form, and cohesion, particularly as a mode of military public diplomacy. Important to NATO, narrative structures can mass, organize, and harmonize information for varying effects. This is a critical asset in a confusing informational environment in which threats are often diffuse, distant, and multi-polar. As a mode of rhetoric and discourse, stories are natural organizing tools; they connect information together to create causality, place ordinary and extraordinary events into context, and link deeds to values to motivate action and provide perspective to an audience (Heath, "Critical Perspectives on Public Relations" 58). Through narratives,

distant conflicts can be represented many ways, distantiated from everyday life or made to seem relevant for local audiences. Importantly, stories easily illuminate patterns: seemingly random events can be rendered intelligible or sequenced, offering a sense of control or regularity to life's haphazardness and contingencies (Fulford 14, 59-60).

If a distant or abstracted conflict is represented as a compelling event, narratives can then appeal to a particular human logic and extend public attention by developing and then remedying a particular dilemma (Porter 281-282). Critical to risk and conflict management, story sequence is "an excellent device" to present continuity (Heath, "Critical Perspectives on Public Relations" 58) and prime audiences for a particular response. Kenneth Burke notes the following: "the plot is unnoticeably ultimate, as the reader need not 'choose between' different phases of its unfolding, but by going through each becomes prepared for the next" (197). Fulford adds that, when presented convincingly, narrative "has the power to mimic the unfolding of reality," producing the sense of events moving through time (15). Members of the public can be presented with a conflict and be given a solution and vision for the future, guided through the process of its mitigation, from disruption to equilibrium, in a way that feels manageable, comfortable, and inevitable (Maltby 55).

Once information is massed in a compelling manner, certain story elements – like its authenticity, timelessness, affective mood, form, and ease of repetition and memory – contribute to its "stickiness" and appeal in a confusing and flooded informational environment (Eder 53-54). Narratives can therefore organize information while also encouraging particular emotional or social responses from its audience through stylistic choices. A complex or morally ambiguous story about regional instability, for example,

may struggle to resonate with an over-stimulated and diverse international audience. Narratives are strong explanatory tools of conflict, moreover, because of their easy incorporation of culture and ethics. In light of other scholars' assertions that modern risks are discretionary and open to social construction (e.g. Giddens 4-5; Freedman 24), Fulford's assertion that value-free stories cannot exist (8) becomes especially relevant. "The juncture where facts and feelings meet" (Fulford 9), narratives can include certain cultural references and ethical perspectives. They are a series of affective choices that create a particular public mood that motivates action or inaction.

Conceptually, scholars continue to visualize the ways in which strategic narratives are connected to deeper cultural and moral workings. Michael Vlahos argues that narrative "is actually the foundation of all strategy, upon which all else – policy, rhetoric and action – is built" ("The Long War"); it contains fundamental truths and logics that are undeniable, culturally difficult or impossible to criticize, and serves "practically as the anointed rhetorical handbook for how the war is to be argued and described" ("The Long War"). Similarly, David Betz argues that strategic narratives work best when they are vertically integrated and coherent (519), and considers how culture influences action by drawing from Ann Swidler's continuum of ideology to tradition to common sense (Swidler 279). Betz argues that Swidler's work helps to conceive of different levels of narrative structure; at the ideological level rests a culturally-based eschatological narrative, while the common sense level involves particular contextual narratives. What connects the major cultural narrative with the particular is the strategic narrative, suggesting that stories, while they often rest on some form of authenticity, depend largely on internal and vertical cohesion (Betz 519-520).

Another strategic narrative technique, whether purposefully employed or not, is the development of particular characters or senses of identity. Rick Altman argues that narrative studies, especially those with a structuralist bias, tend to marginalize the importance of characters, emphasizing them only for the plot or action they help facilitate (6). However, a narrator's character, not unlike a rhetor's persona, can help organizations create trust and empathy from a skeptical audience. Indeed, Sarah Maltby argues that the narrative's ability to create characters "is not a whimsical point" (55); all narratives rely on characters whose actions drive the story along and highlight its themes. While characters must be believable and avoid caricature, NATO may posit itself as an identifiable "hero" based on shared Atlantic values that "plays nice" with well-respected regional and global actors like the UN, the Arab League, and non-profit organizations. To do so, the alliance can discuss its current activities, ascribe motives to its choices to reflect an organizational personality, stress unity, and refer to its previous actions to create a sense of consistency and enduring character over time, boosting trustworthiness. The alliance can also create different antagonists, ranging from individuals and criminals to abstract enemies like extremism, poverty, or apathy. Given, moreover, that rhetoric helps to create and negotiate identities and personas, stories are particularly strong character builders, giving individuals or institutions a sense of history and consistency in values and action.

Strategic narratives can also play a particular role in making sense of modern, irregular conflicts that do not fit traditional win/lose or hero/villain dichotomies, or that have no clear timeline. Critically, stories help to define the scope and set expectations for missions (Farwell 149); if "exacting standards for precision are set," then the "routine

tragedies” of war (Freedman 64) become inflammatory invalidations of the entire conflict. Narratives allow leaders to set the conflict’s stakes on their own terms (Farwell 157) and to dwell on or sum up events as needed, without perfect consonance with real events (Franzosi 530). Indeed, stories can provide chronological control over information to present operations as a series of steps rather than definitive wins and losses, making progress the central gain and message (Maltby 55-56; Farwell 157). Scholars also point out the benefits of long-term strategic narratives that can incorporate setbacks through conflict storytelling, create long-term support and understanding, or weather occasional negative press (Eder 18; Maltby 52, 55-56; Betz 519). Maltby notes, for example, that using “positive, emancipatory terms” to describe invasions, like “Towards Freedom” or “Iraq for Iraqis,” were long-term strategies that affirmed U.S. values during the recent Iraq War (52). Eder also cites the enduring public pride in Pat Tillman, an American football player who left a lucrative career to serve in Afghanistan until he was killed in 2004 (14), as an example of the emotional touchstone that an individual’s sacrifice can play for broad institutional narratives. Successful strategic narratives can even play a role after victory, priming audiences for future successes or potential holdups along the way (Farwell 154). Given the explanatory powers of strategic narratives, it is unsurprising that much of its literature also offers practical advice for practitioners, and steps needed to construct a coherent and strong strategic narrative (e.g. Miksimmon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle 4-5; Ringsmose and Børgesen 513-515; Eder 54-56).

Finally, strategic narratives can be found in multiple media and thus be distributed through diverse channels. At press conferences or other events, spokespersons and mission leaders can provide accounts of their progress, animating NATO, personalizing

its activities, and putting “a face” to the alliance. They may also use visual aids; human-interest stories or pictures of individual soldiers, for example, help to personalize the alliance and remind audiences of the flesh and blood of those individuals who play a role in a big and impersonal institution operating abroad. By employing these communicative techniques in different media, strategic narratives can harmonize information across a vast institution, personalizing and legitimizing abstract actors.

CONCLUSION

By considering NATO’s public diplomacy as purposeful communication that works strategically and draws from the tenets of rhetoric, we gain deeper insight into the tools and techniques used by NATO to create a strong message in a complex international environment. Narrative theory offers broad insights into the personal and social roles played by narratives; natural and potent cognitive tools, narratives can be viewed at different conceptual levels, and are a relevant mode of social discourse to navigate reality. They help make sense of personal and organizational experience, and contain implicit forms of power in their ability to create and define perceptions of reality. If we extend narrative theory, we see that conceptually, a rhetorical approach to narrative shows how purposeful communication helps to organize ideas and facilitate public debate on key issues. If we acknowledge self-interest, interpretation, and symbolism in these efforts, we see how rhetors form personas for themselves and their audience, and create favorable interpretive frames in a debate without necessarily distorting it. Notably, rhetors want their communications to feel relevant, natural, and yet challenging to their audiences. More tangibly, institutions and organizations can use strategic narratives to manage a particular event, campaign, or image in a political and military setting.

Strategic narratives can mass and organize information, pace or chronologically control perceptions of events, make cultural and ethical appeals, and create characters, making stories critical cognitive and affective tools across a variety of media for a large organization.

This conceptual framework oriented around narratives as purposeful, rhetorical, and strategic entities helps to consider NATO's public diplomacy in its mission in Libya. Given the complexities of contemporary public diplomacy and NATO's struggles to define itself to its members – topics that were explored in the previous chapter – stories emerge as a potentially powerful discursive tool for the alliance. Narratives can act as a particularly potent mode of public diplomacy that masses information compellingly for strategic ends while building the organization's sense of identity to a diverse audience, a critical tool for this alliance setting. In light of these insights, the following chapters will consider if and how this theoretical and abstract potential of narratives was applied in NATO's latest mission.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

MY CASE STUDY AND NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Understanding the development and components of a strategic narrative, especially across a wide range of documents, is a large undertaking that requires conscious methodological choices. To make sense of this phenomenon, I drew from narrative theory to consider the ways that storytelling communicates complex information and engages audiences in a highly mediatized environment in which many issues, stories, and perspectives compete for attention. This study seeks to understand the elements of NATO's strategic narrative for the 2011 Libya mission, while also considering how the narrative handled criticism or created a broader organizational story. To answer these questions and to apply my conceptual framework, I conducted narrative analysis of NATO's public diplomacy materials from its Operation Unified Protector (OUP) mission.

A narrative analysis of NATO's different materials helped me to consider the construction of a specific narrative for particular events and see how NATO evaluates its missions and defines success in particular contexts, connecting this mission to its broader mandate and identity. Narrative analysis is methodologically diverse, offering the flexibility necessary to discover and develop narrative categories and events as they emerged from my close reading of the texts. I employed three sampling strategies in the selection of my research materials: purposive sampling, intensity sampling, and theory-based sampling. This chapter will explain and justify these choices, moving across my selection of case study and method of analysis, including the limitations of my approach, to show that these choices made for sound analysis of my research objectives.

CASE STUDY

To answer my research questions and contribute to this field, I conducted a narrative analysis of NATO web materials relating specifically to OUP. I chose OUP as my central case study because of its contemporary and understudied nature. OUP has received little attention compared to other NATO missions, such as Kosovo or Afghanistan, and is thus ripe for analysis given that it followed both the major Afghan mission and the development of NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept, which outlined the alliance's strategic perspective and long-term goals. Critically, OUP was also NATO's first chance after the lengthy Afghan mission to prove itself as a flexible, quick responder, working under a slimmer mandate and cooperating through the financial turmoil of the recent global recession and period of fiscal austerity. Moreover, given the mission's brevity, I could perform a comprehensive analysis of the entire mission within the scope of this project.

I chose to study NATO's website content because it serves as a foundational information source and public image builder for the alliance. Moreover, as a repository for the alliance's documents and press engagements, it acts as a strong universal archive, offering a near complete view of NATO's communications in OUP. The site includes the alliance's mandate and objectives in Libya, operational reports, news releases, transcripts of press conferences, photographs, videos, biographies of key actors, and multimedia documents detailing alliance operations. The website also caters to a diverse audience, which includes informed and engaged citizens, partner organizations, political actors, and international journalists. NATO does not usually interact directly with its member citizens, meaning that most of its communications with the public are filtered and

processed through other actors, namely journalists, political leaders, non-governmental organizations, and partner organizations, such as the European Union, the African Union, and the United Nations (UN).

This study might have examined NATO's strategic narrative by analyzing news media portrayals of OUP. However, I believe that the alliance's website materials are a stronger source to answer my particular questions about NATO's alliance-wide strategic narrative. While most citizens are likely exposed to NATO's narrative through those other actors mentioned above and not the alliance itself *per se*, I maintain that NATO's website materials provide the best opportunity to see how the alliance talks about itself to a diverse audience with mixed and often competing interests and views.

Primary source materials were gathered directly from the OUP section of the NATO website. Since I used only online materials for this study, my research did not require approval from Carleton University's Research Ethics Board. Specifically, I chose to narrow my research to materials in the mission's newsroom, gathering press briefing and press conference transcripts, news stories, and media releases, while also looking at occasional external documents, notably the mission's UN Security Council Resolutions. I chose the newsroom as my central source, because by organizing them into a single repository, NATO classified these documents as the mission's most important features and events, likely hoping that these particular documents would "subsidize" news coverage of OUP.⁷ All the analyzed documents were published between 22 March and 3

⁷ Oscar H. Gandy, Jr., in his article "Information in Health: Subsidised news" (*Media Culture Society* 2 [1980]: 103-115), offers the term "information subsidy" to describe how actors provide information to the press to "subsidize" the news and thus gain an advantage in policy debate. He notes three channels of information gathering by the press – the routine (handouts, press conferences, etc.), the informal, and the enterprise (investigative journalism, etc.) – to suggest that the routine channels "are heavily subsidized by those news sources who want to control the availability and interpretation of information" on issues (104) and take advantage of time- or resource-pressed journalists.

November 2011. The documents therefore spanned the week leading up to the launch of OUP to its completion on 31 October, with one document from after the mission (“Misrata Celebrates”), published 3 November, also analyzed because of its similar tone and theme to the documents released earlier. While a small number of documents have emerged as NATO comments on more contemporary Libyan issues, like its 2012 election or the bombing of the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi, these documents were not explored because they did not contribute to the mission’s narrative as it unfolded.

While NATO has a social media presence on Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, and Twitter, these were not included in my analysis for two reasons. First, the alliance’s website remains the hub of its Internet presence, with more comprehensive, formal, and detailed documents for analysis. Indeed, most tweets and Facebook posts are fragments or snippets that support what is already on NATO’s website, and thus serve as outposts to drive online traffic to the website. Second, given that the alliance’s web publications are less interactive than some forms of social media, NATO’s website materials afforded a better opportunity to see how NATO wants to be portrayed, on a platform in which it maintains full control over message length, content, and format, without engaging in online debates or criticism.

CHOOSING THE DOCUMENTS

NATO’s website for OUP contains hundreds of documents, and its online newsroom for the mission contains 140 entries. To best use this body of material, I performed purposive sampling and made deliberate choices to determine which documents to analyze in greater depth. Purposive sampling is a widely used qualitative research technique (Marshall 523) in which the scholar makes strategic choices about

which data to examine in the course of research. Non-randomness in this case is not meant negatively or to imply a lack of rigor; rather, this sampling is judgmental or purposeful to “stress the conscious and deliberate intentions of those who apply the procedures” (Deacon et al. 50). Indeed, as noted by Martin N. Marshall, random sampling will only be representative if the research characteristics are “normally distributed” across a population (523), which is unlikely for this study. Instead, most qualitative research does not rely on random sampling but rather looks at how meaning and practice are assigned in specific, holistic contexts (Lindlof and Taylor 122). As different mission events occurred, like victories or setbacks, I saw irregular surges or declines in narrative events and portrayals. Random sampling would not have properly captured this irregularity in narrative and event flow.

To make these purposive sampling choices, I developed a framework of variables oriented around themes, characters, and plot devices, and my choices were guided by the document’s manifestation of narrative elements and structure. In this sense, my choices were determined by theory-based sampling and intensity sampling. Theory-based sampling is driven by theoretical interest and the document’s manifestation of key constructs (Lindlof and Taylor 126), and involves the researcher deliberately choosing materials that aid in theoretical development by adding to or challenging the emerging conceptual framework (Deacon et. al 52; Patton 238). This strategy is unique in that “it originates in the researcher’s own theorizing” (Lindlof and Taylor 126) and helps the researcher build a sample to understand the particular communication phenomenon at play – in this case, narrative. As Michael Quinn Patton notes of this method, my choices were “conceptually-oriented” (239) to both uncover and help build the narrative

construct, and the documents I examined were selected “because they are ‘information rich’ and illuminative ... manifestations of the phenomenon of interest” (40).

To determine which samples would help build this theoretical construct, intensity sampling was also employed. This method looks for examples that display relatively strong, but not necessarily extreme, cases of the phenomenon of interest: narrative. Intensity sampling requires some prior information and judgment, and the researcher must “do some exploratory work to determine the nature of the variation in the situation under study” (Patton 234) to determine what constitutes an “intense” manifestation of the criteria. In my case, I read all 128 of the 140 documents in OUP’s newsroom that were published during the mission, as well as one document published three days later, to sensitize myself to different intensities of narrative.

This combination of theory-based and intensity sampling methods was particularly useful to me: to best understand strategic narrative in NATO’s public diplomacy materials, it was logical that my choices be guided by their display of narrative elements. By following this method, my time and my analysis could focus on documents that furthered my understanding of strategic narrative. I read every document published during the mission lead-up, the mission itself, and one afterwards, resulting in 129 documents ranging in length from two sentences to fifteen pages. I fully coded 49 documents, took detailed notes on 59 more documents, and left out 21 documents because they were purely operational documents that added no new information. This left a final sample size and analysis of 108 documents, or approximately 316 pages of materials in single-spaced size 12 font. For a full breakdown of the chosen documents, see Appendix A.

NATO's official languages are English and French, and while all documents are published in English, occasionally in briefings the spokespersons answered questions from French reporters in French. This was rare, occurring occasionally in briefings in the final third of the mission under the tenure of bilingual military spokesperson Col. Roland Lavoie. In these cases, he or NATO's spokesperson would answer a reporter's question in French then usually briefly summarize their reply in English as well. I can read and understand French well enough to comprehend French sections in the briefings and ensure that what was mentioned was repeated in English. In my research, I never came across anything spoken in French that was relevant to my research and was not also translated back into English. Therefore, all of the excerpts I have chosen are in their original English form.

ANALYZING THE DOCUMENTS: NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

After my documents were chosen, I performed narrative analysis on the material to make sense of if or how NATO's public materials created a cohesive strategic narrative and contributed to an organizational story. Narrative analysis takes narratives as its central units of analysis and seeks to understand how people use stories to create meaning and transfer knowledge, making it an appropriate choice for this study. Importantly, the themes of studied narratives can also offer insights outside the particular story, pointing us and speaking to broader social discourses and conversations. This method allowed me to specifically examine the alliance's narrative in its public diplomacy, and all research questions were answered with this method.

Narrative analysis operates as a broad umbrella of methods and involves a variety of different practices employed by researchers of different fields. Indeed, it is difficult to

offer any single definition of narrative analysis as a method or set of methods given its broad use across different disciplines, often in combination with other methods (Phoenix, Smith, and Sparkes 1-2; Boje, *Narrative Methods* 17). Nevertheless, despite differences in method, Roberto Franzosi points out that definitions of narrative share similar roots and are in basic agreement (519), and researchers share some points of convergence. Narrative researchers engage with “the storied nature of our lives” (Phoenix, Smith, and Sparkes 2) and look at the ways that stories “impose order on the flow of experience” (3) to help us make sense of our lives. Most notably, narrative inquiry “commits to and is informed by the philosophical assumptions of interpretivism” (Phoenix, Smith, and Sparkes 2; also Patton 116-118). Indeed, Heather Fraser points out that narrative analysis is often metaphorically envisioned: by “piecing together fragments of the fabric of conversations, researchers may be understood to sew ideas together” (183). This rejection of positivism (Phoenix, Smith, and Sparkes 2) is critical, placing emphasis on samples that require deep engagement and preventing researchers from justifying their project’s objectivity by downplaying the researcher’s role and subjectivity (Fraser 183).

While its methods are varied, I used narrative analysis in particular ways. While some authors analyze particular documents in great depth and focus, for example, on the ways that particular verb properties create narrative or descriptive clauses (e.g. Franzosi), my work took a broader approach by looking for story patterns across a large body of documents. Authors who perform narrative analysis over large bodies of documents in strategic, military settings often choose either (1) evaluative or (2) descriptive and theme-based approaches. With the former, authors structure their analyses around categories they see as necessary for compelling narratives, like consistency or vertical coherence

(e.g. Ringsmose and Børgesen; Betz), creating schemas that are inherently more evaluative or used to understand disparities of success among different narratives. With the latter, authors may break narratives into their component parts and look for recurring elements, even recreating the narrative as they describe it. These include, for example, portrayals of the international system or narrator's identity (e.g. Wagnsson), or focus on transcendental (spiritual) versus transactional (material) benefits for the audience (e.g. Casebeer). My analysis followed the latter approach to provide a description of NATO's narrative components, avoiding any judgment or evaluation of the narrative's success.

Narrative analysis has not escaped scholarly critique. Some have pointed out that narrative inquiry can ignore the very context through which narratives emerge, and Heather Fraser argues that this mode of inquiry becomes "escapist" if it ignores how stories contribute to or reinforce social structures and inequalities (182). Others note that traditional narrative analysis often privileges a "beginning-middle-end" structure and assumes there is single teller, creating a narrative canon and assumptions of what constitutes a "good" story or a story "worth" analyzing. Importantly, this has "dictated a specific analytic vocabulary and an interpretive idiom" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 380) that struggles to accommodate non-linear, polyphonic narratives (Boje, *Narrative Methods* 1). I believe these critiques, however, can be mitigated or at least lessened through certain researcher choices. Most importantly, as a researcher my analysis was intimately informed by the findings of my literature review, which provided a constant reminder of NATO's context and the tasks its public diplomacy must perform in a post-Cold War era marked by, among other things, global fiscal austerity measures. By constantly connecting narrative events to wider social, economic, cultural, and political

processes in the alliance, intimately connected to NATO's ongoing issues of member buy-in and unity, I prevented myself from "getting lost" in the story and found ways to look beyond it. Moreover, my body of materials contained different modes of narrative from different tellers, like the Secretary General, NATO spokespersons, and Libyans, which I acknowledged.

Indeed, I argue that despite these critiques, narrative inquiry offers qualitative flexibility for the researcher to search for different narrative elements as they emerge, through engagement with the text. Narrative analysis sensitized me to different techniques, including character development, anchoring themes, and expressions of unity, that can create a strategic narrative over a body of materials, and this method gains its force by recognizing that narratives do not mirror the past but refract it. In other words, narrators interpret rather than reproduce the past. By "shifting connections they forge among past, present, and future" stories can re-imagine events for their own self-interest (Riessman 6). Therefore, by examining pacing devices and retrospectives, the manner in which different actors initiate action, and explicit evaluative clauses in NATO materials, I could piece together a narrative that "worked" to the extent that it served to justify NATO actions.

Complementing this commitment to narrative theory, I developed sets of characters, themes, and narrative devices as I engaged with texts over the course of my research. Aiming for "systematic, yet flexible" guidelines to collect and analyze my data (Charmaz 2), I began my research with a commitment to narrative analysis but with an open mind to develop sets of categories and more specialized understandings of narrative as it emerged. Supported by theoretical sampling, I sorted my data and began to separate

and synthesize with qualitative coding, or the development of different labels for different portions of data. As coded categories grew and were compared, the analytic shape of my findings developed and I built higher levels of abstraction, moving from data to concept (Charmaz 3-4; Martin and Turner 147).

I started with the general understanding and hypothesis of narrative theory and developed more precise understandings of how strategic narratives are applied in NATO's public diplomacy. My conceptualization of NATO's narrative structure evolved over the course of my engagement with these texts, through inductive work rather than the testing of *a priori* categories (Charmaz 3). After coding the mission's briefings, I found recurring elements that I used to organize my data. My coding scheme evolved to include the following elements or themes: NATO unity; international partnership; responsibility/determination; mandate/legality; portrayal of Libyans; portrayal of Qadhafi; NATO's progress/setting; tactical details; setbacks/civilian harm/criticism; NATO's history/character; and mission success. These themes were coded and organized by me, without qualitative research software, as they emerged in my readings, allowing me to create a sense of a whole telling across the body of documents. By further linking these elements to NATO's ongoing challenges, the narrative's strategic value became clear and my study took broader meaning.

CONCLUSION

To answer my research questions and contribute to scholarly work on NATO's public diplomacy, I employed narrative analysis, which takes stories as its central unit of analysis. This method, supported by purposive sampling, best reflected my research questions and theoretical framework, allowing me to focus on the development of

narrative over a large body of documents. Narrative analysis gave me the flexibility to develop categories as I researched, and my analysis was based more on understanding the story's components than evaluating their success *per se*.

There were limits to my method. First, my case study materials and analysis did not provide a completely comprehensive analysis of all facets of NATO's public diplomacy. In particular, my data set did not allow me to examine how NATO directly presented itself to Libyans, and I did not conduct performative narrative analysis, which focuses on the practice of interactive storytelling, examining language, bodily gesture, and staging, or the "doing" rather than just the "telling" of story (Riessman 5). Given my diverse set of materials, a performative analysis of these different materials would have produced inconsistent comparisons. While a performative analysis or focus on NATO's local communications remained outside the scope of my study, I believe that my thematic analysis, which looked for common themes across many documents, and my structural analysis, which examined the devices that give the story its form (Riessman 2-3), provided a deep and balanced look at NATO's public diplomacy during OUP.

Second, purposive sampling required me to exercise judgment with my own interpretation of relevant documents. Similarly, my sample size was based on thematic repetition and full representation of the mission's timeline, without predetermined reliability or validity tests. In light of the interpretive judgments made in this study, I had to exercise reflexivity as a novice researcher and ensure that my document choices were not dictated by ease or accessibility, and that my results were not influenced by my working argument or desire to conform to any particular theory. I believe that by reading every document from the mission, I was familiar enough with the materials to make

confident, rigorous choices and exclude those that offered little to my analysis. I also kept detailed records throughout my work to document my own choices, and created a mission timeline of operations as a reference for myself throughout the analysis (see Appendix B) to ensure my document choices were evenly spread over the mission to create a representative sample.

Despite particular limits to my method, I consciously exercised reflexivity as a novice researcher, connecting each of my methodological choices back to my research objectives to ensure that my qualitative flexibility was never at the cost of rigor. I also sensitized myself to the particular role that I play in the interpretation of NATO's strategic narrative. "The role of the reader is far from passive" (Franzosi 546), and the biases we bring to any discourse shape the way we present the text. As researchers, we are "telling stories of our own" (Fraser 195), acting as both readers and writers of narrative ourselves. As a researcher, reflexivity and humility are therefore needed to acknowledge that no narrative reading is ever finite or fixed (Fraser 196). My findings from these methodological choices are discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

THE ELEMENTS OF OUP'S STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

Upon analysis of NATO's public diplomacy during Operation Unified Protector (OUP), I argue that the alliance created a strategic narrative across a large body of documents, driven by anchoring themes of *morality* and *responsibility*. While the story's "plot" evolves over the mission, these themes persist and are used to connect both cognitive and value-based information together, justifying the mission, creating buy-in for NATO activities, and strengthening the alliance's identity. NATO's communications contained a clear setting, characters, and plot oriented around moral constructs that suggest that NATO was motivated by the "right thing to do." Importantly, these themes set up conditions for only one response – humanitarian intervention to facilitate Libya's self-determination and transition to liberalism – while positing NATO as a compassionate responder that has evolved since the Cold War. Critically, the narrative also helped to introduce a new role for NATO as a hub or enabler of global cooperation.

The narrative's themes can be condensed into a single basic message, repeated and arranged in different permutations throughout the mission: *NATO answered the call*. Critically, the events in Libya were not connected to NATO members' well being, nor did Libya's instability have much chance of spreading into NATO countries. This removed the standard threat that animates most military narratives and justified NATO's existence for much of the Cold War, creating difficulty in validating the mission: if events have little chance of impacting NATO members, why intervene? Given the distanced nature of this mission, the narrative is oriented almost entirely around the concept of morality, with NATO driven by a sense of duty, responsibility to fellow man, and a desire to spread its shared liberal values and freedoms.

After consideration of OUP's various documents, I have recreated a condensed version of the mission narrative as a guide for this chapter. While OUP's story developed *in situ*, this is written in past tense, the way NATO would like its mission to be seen:

NATO was called to action.

The Qadhafi regime's crackdown on peaceful protest in Libya was troubling and unacceptable. The international community came together to condemn these actions through United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1970 and 1973, and NATO stepped forward to enact these resolutions on behalf of our partners and allies around the globe. NATO came together with unprecedented speed, unity, and a high political tempo, and as we entered talks with international and regional partners, we welcomed contributions made by our allies and partners. Across different theatres of conflict, all members offered support and assets.

The situation on the ground was fluid and chaotic, testing NATO's flexibility and precision as we adapted to Qadhafi's erratic actions. All our actions and targets were mandated, precise, and analytical, aimed at preventing civilian harm, unlike Qadhafi, who acted recklessly and in flagrant disregard of the law. We did not target Qadhafi, and we did not choose sides in the conflict: we sided with the Libyan people, whose legitimate aspirations must be met in peace. We have stated since the beginning that NATO could not provide a political solution; it is for the UN and other partners to take the lead.

Qadhafi is a part of Libya's past. Today is a new chapter for Libyans as they embrace new freedoms. There will be challenges, and while it is up to Libyans create a peaceful and inclusive transition, NATO can be proud that it created conditions for a

democratic Libya. OUP shows that NATO works; in an era of financial cuts, we proved ourselves a smart, flexible, and relevant responder in an evolving security environment.

While this narrative was certainly shaped by the particulars of the mission – indeed, NATO operated under a strict legal mandate – the mission story should also be seen as a series of strategic communicative choices that benefit the alliance during OUP and beyond. Before assessing the value of NATO’s narrative, we must break it down into its component parts. This chapter therefore analyzes the elements of OUP’s narrative – its setting, characters, plot and pacing, and the handling of expectation and criticism – looking at both structural elements and their thematic purpose during the mission. Throughout, I also consider how the anchoring themes of morality and responsibility arranged information to justify the mission and benefit the alliance during OUP.

THE STORY: BREAKING DOWN THE NARRATIVE

While OUP’s narrative contains certain central themes and messages, this is a polyphonic story that emerged over a large body and range of documents. The documents have multiple narrators, including NATO spokespersons, military spokespersons, the Secretary General, news stories written by NATO, and interviewed individuals. Different narrators use their own language, though central themes and phrasing choices remain evident. Various modes of documents were published in OUP, which I have divided into six types, a categorization based on my interpretation of the themes, topics, or formats that repeat over the body of documents, as well as the roles the documents play.

1) Press Briefings (35 documents)

In these documents, NATO spokespersons offer opening remarks on NATO activities then engage with journalists’ questions, likely with the intention of influencing,

or “subsidizing” (Gandy 104-106), OUP’s news coverage. The briefings occur about twice a week, and involve a rotating military spokesperson answering most questions, with support from Spokesperson Oana Lungescu (henceforth “Lungescu”) or Deputy Spokesperson Carmen Romero (henceforth “Romero”). The longest form of document, ranging from four to twelve pages, briefings cover most narrative elements in the greatest depth and are polyphonic and casual, as different speakers use their own phrasing.

2) Secretary General Statements (14 documents)

These are direct publications from NATO’s Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen (henceforth “Rasmussen”), as he comments on mission events and diplomatic developments. These are brief documents, ranging from five sentences to a page long, and use clear language in short sentences to discuss political or diplomatic themes.

3) Diplomatic or Political News Stories (17 documents)

These news releases detail progress made by the alliance in diplomatic or political meetings, oriented around topics like force generation, cooperation, or mission extension. With stress on unity and commitment, these stories do not discuss internal debate.

4) Operational News Stories (50 documents)

These news releases are published almost daily and detail mission activities, offering operational details with little affective language. These documents are often brief at less than a page, and are usually supported by quotes from OUP’s Commander, Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard (henceforth “Bouchard”).

5) “Life in Libya” Documents (8 documents)

These documents emerge only in September 2011 and offer different tone, subject matter, and more affective statements about OUP. Presented as a human-interest news

story one to two pages in length, these documents focus on the mood in the streets in Libya and feature interviews with Libyans, by first name only, as they rebuild their lives. Written more emotively, these stories seldom mention NATO and instead stress that Libyans are embracing the freedoms made possible by their own bravery, with support from the alliance.

6) *“Transparency” Documents (5 documents)*

These documents explain aspects of the mission to the audience, like how an arms embargo or flyover is enforced. This category also includes a document titled “Operation Unified Protector: Faces of the mission,” a series of pictures of NATO service members showing visible pride in their work, suggesting NATO is filled with vibrant individuals united for a broader cause. These documents portray NATO as a transparent, compassionate, and fact-based organization with nothing to hide.

Across this body of documents, certain themes, strategies, and narrative devices emerge, including a setting that defines the actors’ parameters and range of action; archetypal characters that guide audience responses to OUP, create empathy for the alliance, and justify NATO actions; and a plot that evolves as the mission progresses.

THE “SITUATION ON THE GROUND”: THE SETTING

OUP’s narrative is set primarily in Libya, and the setting evolves as the mission progresses, changing from a chaotic, dark environment into a vibrant community that is ready to rebuild. For the majority of the mission, OUP’s setting is troubled, dark, and foreign, with little effort to highlight the region’s vibrancy. Indeed, Libya’s most notable trait is that *it needs NATO’s help*. Qadhafi plays a central role in the region’s instability, and his reckless actions are major drivers of the setting. Violence is usually linked to his

manic behaviour, and NATO often notes that weapons are “indiscriminately being fired on civilian populations,” an “immoral use of indirect weapons” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 26 April 2011). The setting’s desperation is clear in an operational news story from 24 September: “among the reports emerging from Sirte are executions, hostage-taking, and the calculated targeting of individuals, families, and communities ... water, medicine, and food are in short supply or denied to civilians. Mercenaries roam the streets and civilians lack access to outside information” (“NATO strikes protect civilians in Sirte”). This portrayal of Libya is dark, threatening, and makes intervention essential.⁸

In light of this chaos, NATO emerges as the only agent willing and able to restore stability, faster and more effectively than Libyans themselves. The setting is therefore contingent on NATO, with documents – notably operational news stories – linking its actions to tangible improvements in the region. In the first month of the mission, briefings and operational news stories stress that “we know we are having an effect” (“NATO strikes further reduce pro-Gaddafi forces capacity”) and that civilian harm and casualties “would be significantly larger if NATO wasn’t there to help bring an end to the violence. That is a clear fact” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 26 April 2011). By noting that “every day, every strike makes a difference” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 31 May 2011), NATO suggests that its work responsibly and directly mitigates the chaos, never *contributing* to the region’s violence through strikes.

⁸ While largely outside the scope of this project, those seeking a more critical interpretation of NATO’s portrayal of Libya may turn to Edward W. Said’s works on Orientalism. In his seminal article “Islam through Western Eyes” (*The Nation*, 26 April 1980, web), he argues that the West’s “semantic field of Islam” is “fundamentally narrow and constricted,” painting Arabs as backward fanatics. Importantly, Said notes that this Orientalist discourse depicts the Arab world as both a threat and in need of help (including occasional aggressive intervention posed as external aid), exposing it to violence and foreign military and economic control: “what we have ... is a series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to military aggression.” The character and uniformity of NATO’s portrayal of Libya shows some consistency with Said’s work, and future scholars may find analytic value in this critical avenue of inquiry.

Importantly, despite NATO's efforts, the setting remains fluid and unstable, traits that offer some strategic advantage to the alliance. Briefings routinely note that the "situation on the ground" (e.g. "Press briefing on Libya," 19 April 2011) evolves constantly, and NATO adjusts its operations to ensure "that our effort has the maximum effect" ("Press briefing on Libya," 10 May 2011). This emphasis on fluidity offers two strategic benefits to NATO. First, the setting challenges the alliance, but also showcases its flexibility as a modern actor that can adjust ("Press conference by the NATO Secretary General"). Second, by emphasizing a fluid setting, the narrative seldom restricts NATO to any one course of action, giving itself space for error given the setting's dynamism. For example, in an 18 June story detailing an accidental strike on opposition patrol, NATO stresses that the target was assessed in "a particularly complex and fluid battle scenario" ("Incident involving opposition forces on 16 June 2011"), suggesting that fluidity makes the error unfortunate, but ultimately reasonable.

While Libya's fluidity is consistently underlined, the alliance avoids insinuation that the region cannot be redeemed or that it will fail when NATO leaves, a message that struggled to develop in early briefings. Indeed, in the first briefing, on 31 March, Adm. Giampaolo di Paola (henceforth "di Paola") says that he's "not surprised at all" at speculation that al-Qaeda might take advantage of Libya's chaos ("Joint press briefing on Libya," 31 March 2011), but this is the last time NATO admits potential state collapse. In OUP's final briefing, when asked if he sees Libya as another Somalia, Bouchard simply states, "I disagree, it's that simple" ("Press briefing on Libya," 24 October 2011), noting that oil revenues and infrastructure are intact. Interestingly, Bouchard also emphasizes that Libyans *want* peace and prosperity, highlighting the strength of their aspirations to

mitigate concerns of collapse. Managing this tension between uncertainty and control is a difficult task, though the alliance's emphasis on Libyan desire for freedoms helps to strike this balance. Operationally, Libya is fluid, but morally and politically, the alliance never doubts that Libyans aspire for liberal values and institutions, creating different measures of success that serve different purposes. After some early missteps, the story removes doubt that NATO's work will not responsibly contribute to a stable Libya.

Finally, the mission setting is defined, and structured by, its mandate as outlined in UNSCRs 1970 and 1973. In the mission's first briefing, different spokespersons emphasize that NATO is "strictly upholding the Resolution" ("Joint press briefing on Libya," 31 March 2011), and by mid-April, the alliance consistently ends every operational news story with a line stating that NATO is mandated by UNSCR 1973, with almost all diplomatic news stories mentioning the resolutions, either in text or in a quote from Bouchard. We should note that while the mandate placed very real restrictions in NATO activities – prohibiting any troops on the ground, for example ("Press briefing on Libya," 19 April 2011) – NATO communicated these restrictions to its advantage. Beyond providing consistent legal justification for all NATO activities, the mandate's successful implementation also implicitly reflects on NATO's particular character traits: namely, its precision, legality, and sense of responsibility as an actor. Indeed, the mandate acts as a semantic vehicle for NATO to ascribe character traits to itself, with NATO stating that it will implement the UNSCR "in a balanced and impartial way" ("Joint press briefing on Libya," 31 March 2011) or that it is "forthright and proactive, but ... not ... reckless" ("Press briefing on Libya," 17 May 2011). This mandated setting

therefore plays particular strategic roles for NATO's identity construction, impacting the mission's cast of characters.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

During OUP, NATO develops three distinct characters that are archetypal, easy for audiences to grasp, and that interact in ways that draw out the narrative themes of morality and responsibility. These characters are the story's most important narrative element, creating the greatest sense of common, relatable humanity and buy-in for a distant mission. With a reprehensible villain terrorizing helpless and sympathetic Libyans, NATO emerges as the identifiable moral actor in an archetypal story.

Qadhafi:

Colonel Muammar Qadhafi is the major driver in NATO's narrative, with his actions the reason NATO is in Libya and the determinant of how long it will stay. He is portrayed as a stubborn, cruel, and outdated relic of the nation's past who stands in the way of Libyan liberalism and democracy.

At the beginning of OUP, most documents and briefings focus on Qadhafi's actions against his own people, with descriptions of his motivations or personal character muted. By referencing the regime over the leader, NATO linguistically integrates Qadhafi into an abstracted and impersonal regime, removing any personal motivations or justifications for his actions. Qadhafi's recklessness is often directly compared to NATO's professionalism, creating a binary that justifies NATO presence in Libya. News stories often stress that "unlike pro-Qadhafi forces, we continue to go to great lengths to reduce the possibility of any civilian casualties" ("NATO keeps up the pressure"), or that NATO is "unlike Qadhafi's forces, which are causing so much suffering" ("NATO

strikes command and control facility in Tripoli”). Indeed, on 29 April, after describing NATO’s progress since its last briefing, Brig. Rob Weighill says, “but let me tell you a bit about what the pro-Qadhafi forces are doing at the same time” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 29 April 2011), listing their use of banned munitions. In a 12 April briefing, Romero offers particularly strong comparison of NATO and Qadhafi:

But we should be in no doubt about the situation on the ground in Libya. Colonel Gaddafi’s forces are continuing to target the civilian population as we speak.

Gaddafi’s regime is attacking civilians who want their own voice.

Gaddafi’s regime is attacking civilians who want to choose their own future as set out by the UN Security Council resolutions. NATO is protecting those civilians.

And without NATO’s efforts, even more civilians would be suffering. (“Joint press briefing on events concerning Libya,” 12 April 2011)

The above passage is noteworthy, thematically and structurally. First, its repetitive phrasing is a memory aid that helps audiences easily associate Qadhafi with both physical cruelty and political repression. Second, NATO reduces the modifiers in its language, directly connecting negative actions and attributes to Qadhafi in the clearest possible language. Third, by mentioning the UN Security Council, the alliance attaches its legitimacy to a broader international actor, creating urgency by stating that the repression happens “as we speak.” NATO and the international community are compelled to act.

Finally, NATO delegitimizes Qadhafi’s character by emphasizing his isolation from the international community, making his defeat seem both expected and natural. In almost every briefing, NATO spokespeople make statements like “the Gaddafi regime is more and more isolated” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 13 May 2011), referencing the

international community as support. For example, Rasmussen made a special statement on 27 June about the International Criminal Court's decision to indict Qadhafi, stating that the decision "highlights the increasing isolation of the Qadhafi regime" ("NATO Secretary General's statement on International Criminal Court decision on Qadhafi indictment"). Moreover, the alliance's diplomatic news stories place remarkably little emphasis on the leader himself; indeed, Qadhafi is directly mentioned in less than a quarter of these stories ("NATO to maintain high operational tempo as long as necessary in Libya"; "In Berlin, NATO Allies and Partners show unity and resolve on all fronts"; "Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee"), implicitly suggesting that he is no longer an important player – it is time to move on.

Libyans:

As characters in NATO's narrative, Libyans – including citizens, rebels, and the National Transitional Council (NTC), an interim rebel political body formed in February 2011 – are abstracted, disempowered, and de-individualized. They lack agency and need to be saved. They are the passive subjects of a massacre, and NATO often uses passive phrasing to downgrade their agency in the conflict. A 9 April news story says, for example, "NATO continues to observe the use of civilians as human shields by Gaddafi forces" ("NATO strikes Gaddafi forces"), grammatically turning Qadhafi and NATO into active agents: Qadhafi is the repressor and NATO the watchdog, while Libyans wait.

A consistent message through OUP is that Libyans must decide their own fate, present in the mission's first briefing when di Paola notes "NATO is not engaged in Libya to decide the future of the Libyan people. That is up to Libyans themselves" ("Joint press briefing on Libya," 31 March 2011). Despite this acknowledgement, however,

NATO and the international community are nevertheless required to step in and protect Libyans to “[create] an environment for the people of Libya to decide the future of their country” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 26 April 2011). Libyan self-determination is thus predicated on foreign intervention, and in most diplomatic news stories at the start of the mission, narrative stress is placed on cooperation among world leaders, not with Libyans. Upon the creation of the Libya Contact Group, a press release states that “the group will give political guidance to the international community's actions in response to the Libyan crisis” (“London agreement sends strong message, says NATO Secretary General”), with no mention of concert with Libyans or the NTC, for example.⁹

This disengagement is also evident in NATO’s lack of differentiation among Libyan civilians. While local rebels are divided by their pro- or anti-Qadhafi loyalties, Libyan citizens tend to be viewed uniformly. Tellingly, when asked in the first briefing if NATO will protect civilians on both sides of the conflict, di Paola replies “we will do for all civilians. We don't look the ID card of civilian [*sic*]” (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011). NATO’s mandate gave no authority to choose sides in the conflict, but the alliance avoids complicating Libyans or describing their allegiances to the regime.

This concerted lack of differentiation also extends to the NTC. In the mission’s first briefing, di Paola states that NATO is not coordinating with the NTC (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011), and the alliance seldom discusses NTC activities unless probed in briefings. Libyan rebels also emerge as incomplete characters, noted for

⁹ The Libya Contact Group (also known as the Friends of Libya or the International Contact Group for Libya) formed after government representatives from NATO, European, and Arab states met in London in late March 2011. The group was created with intention to support Libyans and their transition to democracy, and met four times during OUP. The Group did not recognize the NTC as Libya’s official governing authority until mid-July (Ian Black, “Libyan rebels win international recognition as country's leaders” [*The Guardian*, 15 July 2011, web]).

their enthusiasm but not NATO's professionalism. In OUP's second briefing, Brig. Gen. Mark Van Uhm notes that NATO planes accidentally hit rebels after the rebels gave celebratory fire in the air, so they "learned their lesson out of that and they have now moved those very enthusiastic young people away from the front line" ("Joint press briefing on Libya," 5 April 2011). Tellingly, in a 29 April briefing, Brig. Rob Weighill is asked if the rebels are winning the battle for Misratah and replies:

No ... To suggest that they are winning would perhaps be over optimistic. They are putting up a very spirited fight. They are being supported on a daily, I'd argue almost hourly, basis by NATO forces ... I would suggest that without NATO's support as it is at the moment, the anti-Qadhafi forces would have struggled to maintain that perimeter and to have taken as much ground as they have. ("Press briefing on Libya," 29 April 2011)

NATO positions itself as an indispensable agent for Libyan self-determination, and rebels appear spirited, if in need of NATO guidance. Altogether, Libyan citizens, rebels, and the NTC are undifferentiated in their suffering and need for NATO, the identifiable hero.

NATO:

In light of the mission's other characters and troubled setting, NATO emerges as a caring and compassionate responder, animated by its traits – and narrative themes – of morality and responsibility. NATO is the most developed character of the mission, receiving the most detail and effort in public diplomacy documents because this character has the biggest long-term payoff, impacting NATO buy-in for future missions. NATO mixes clinical, cognitive evidence of its professionalism with moral evaluations of its selflessness, marshalling multiple types of information to justify its actions in Libya and

beyond. During OUP, NATO characterizes itself with five basic traits: decisiveness; international respect; care and compassion; precision and professionalism; and unity.

First, and especially at the start of the mission, NATO is defined by its decisiveness in the face of international crisis. In OUP's first publication, the Secretary General paints NATO as an active character compelled to respond, stating, "NATO has now decided to launch an operation to enforce the arms embargo against Libya" ("Statement by the NATO Secretary General on Libya arms embargo"). In a 27 March statement, he adds that OUP "is a very significant step, which proves NATO's capability to take decisive action" ("Statement by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Libya"). NATO therefore embraces dual character traits: while decisive and unwilling to wait to protect civilians, NATO is also respectful of international law, taking charge on behalf of the international community but only when mandated. This message is evident in Rasmussen's statement in a 14 April news story:

All of us agree: we have a responsibility to protect Libyan civilians against a brutal dictator. The United Nations gave a clear mandate to do it. The people of Libya desperately need it. And we are determined to do it. Because we will not stand idly by and watch a discredited regime attack its own people with tanks, rockets and snipers. ("NATO to maintain high operational tempo as long as necessary in Libya")

As a character, NATO will not wait to protect.

Second, NATO is characterized by its broad respect and trust from the international community. Lungescu stresses that global actors "welcomed NATO's contribution in agreeing to take command and control" of OUP ("Joint press briefing on

Libya,” 31 March 2011), while Rasmussen’s participation at a Contact Group meeting “reaffirms NATO’s role as a key actor in the broad international effort” (“The Contact Group needs to respond to the legitimate demands of the Libyan people, says NATO Secretary General”). By attaching NATO’s legitimacy to other institutions, a sense of broad international support builds. Contributions are also stressed as a sign of support, with NATO noting that the participation of Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Sweden is “tangible evidence that NATO is part of a broader international effort” (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 5 April 2011). Importantly, these references bolster NATO’s character as a hub or broker of cooperation. NATO’s “tried-and-tested arrangements” for including partners (“London Agreement sends strong message, says NATO Secretary General”), as well as its consultations with the UN, the European Union (EU), and the African Union (“Joint press briefing on events concerning Libya,” 12 April 2011), are stressed. NATO also emphasizes its work with aid groups (e.g. “Joint press briefing on events concerning Libya,” 12 April 2011), and Lungescu notes of a meeting with its non-NATO partners in new initiatives, like the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Mediterranean Dialogue, and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative: “I can tell you it was a big room, and the room was full” (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011). Coordination is a source of pride, and by highlighting relationships, the alliance underlines its ability to “play nice” with others.

Third, NATO defines itself as a caring and compassionate actor, animated by respect for human life rather than calculated, self-interested threat assessments. NATO often emphasizes that civilians are its “foremost concern” (“Press briefing on events concerning Libya”) and makes direct appeals and promises to them (e.g. “NATO advises

civilians to avoid regime forces”). The alliance is also sure to publish news stories that highlight its humanity. On 12 May, for example, NATO detailed its response to a migrant ship distress call, noting that it offered food, water, and mechanical assistance to those on board, including women and children (“NATO responds to migrant distress call”), and reported on 24 April that it delayed strikes after seeing civilians playing football nearby (“NATO delays airstrike, asks civilians to move away from military installations”). NATO also portrays itself as culturally sensitive, stressing its respect for Islam during Ramadan in a 2 August briefing and urging the Qadhafi regime to show restraint: “there’s never a wrong time to protect human life” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 2 August 2011). Individuals sometimes humanize the alliance by offering their own views, like in a 26 April briefing when Bouchard emphasizes his concern:

Not a day goes by where I do not think about the harm coming to the civilian population. Not a day goes by that I don't see pro-Qadhafi forces using violence against men, women and children. Not a day goes by that I don't notice that pro-Qadhafi forces are shielding themselves against men, women... with men, women and children, and our mission is to bring an end to that. (“Press briefing on Libya,” 26 April 2011)

These documents illustrate that as a series of individuals and an organization, “not a day goes by” where NATO is not depicted as caring, selfless, and right for the job.

Fourth, NATO shows precision and professionalism, which highlight its dedication to protecting human life. NATO identifies itself as “clear and consistent” (“Joint press briefing on events concerning Libya,” 12 April 2011), with strikes based on “purely military logic. Not ... semantics or subjectivity” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 2

August 2011) and multiple rounds of procedure to reduce harm or collateral damage (e.g. “NATO tackles threat of attacks in western Libya”). Indeed, certain briefings include slideshows and videos of strikes to show this precision (e.g. “Press briefing on Libya,” 10 May 2011). NATO therefore occupies both a caring persona and a rational persona that answers only to fact. This precision is emphasized in a “Life in Libya” document from 23 September, which details how a hospital, built next to a security bunker, remained standing after NATO blasts, “testament to the skill with which NATO aircraft were able to pinpoint a military target in a sea of civilian buildings” (“Libya: Protecting Tripoli with care and precision”). This precision is often paired with the seeming professionalism of its forces. Pictures of hardworking service members in a “Faces of the Mission” document published 8 August humanize NATO and show its service members’ personal dedication (“Operation Unified Protector: Faces of the mission”). NATO is thus presented as transparent and compassionate, with nothing to hide.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, NATO stresses its unity: all members support OUP, and internal debate is never documented. In OUP’s first briefing, it is twice noted that all 28 allies backed the mission and that NATO decisions are made by full consensus (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011), and the alliance stresses its high political and operational tempo as a sign of unity to get the job done. In a 29 March news story about the “unprecedented transition of command in an extraordinarily short period of time” to NATO, Bouchard praises NATO leadership who “made it clear that the outrageous violence against the people of Libya must stop” (“NATO Transfer of command is on track”). Talk of “strongest unity of purpose and determination” (“In Berlin”) is used as proof of the unifying values that guide all members.

Beyond a set of common values, NATO also references assets as a sign of unity. In the first briefing, di Paola notes that by agreeing to OUP, all allies have given political support (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011), but when pressed about contributions, NATO consistently refuses to comment. As stated by di Paola, “this is something that is not to me as a member of this Alliance to judge or to comment” (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011), with Romero noting that this “has always been a NATO principle and this goes for all NATO-led operations” (“Joint press briefing on events concerning Libya,” 12 April 2011); discussing assets is “not the way we do business within NATO” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 19 April 2011). This principle not only avoids bad press, but also highlights NATO’s morality: the alliance’s consensual decisions and shared values outweigh the specifics of assets.

PLOT EVOLUTION, PACING, AND EXPECTATIONS

As the mission progresses, OUP’s story evolves to adjust to mission events and strategically handle criticism. This section examines the evolution of the narrative plot, beginning with character and setting shifts, as well as mission retrospectives that guide perceptions of pacing *in situ*, and NATO’s strategies to deal with expectations and criticism. Interestingly, this case study shows that narratives do not have to be fully formed or retrospective to be studied; indeed, we learn as much from the changes in NATO’s narrative as we do from its consistencies.

While OUP’s plot evolves in many ways, perhaps the most notable change is a shift of character agency. NATO remains a stable actor, and while Qadhafi’s character is consistently cruel and erratic, his role in the ongoing plot and his options in the story (like his potential for victory or a role in democratic Libya) constrict ninety days into the

mission, enveloping him with a sense of inevitability – he will meet his downfall, negotiation is impossible, and time is on NATO’s side. This shift also controls perceptions of NATO strength, stressing that the alliance has “absolute commitment to see this mission through, and we can sustain the operation for as long as we choose” (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011). No longer “a question of if, but when he’ll have to leave power” (“Press conference by the NATO Secretary General”), NATO begins to confidently predict his downfall (“Press briefing on Libya,” 30 August 2011, 6 September 2011). This statement by Wing Commander Mike Bracken in a 10 June briefing captures how NATO’s narrative strips Qadhafi of agency and options:

Thanks to the effectiveness of NATO military pressure, Qadhafi’s time is up. His troops are demoralized. His generals and his ministers are leaving him. The Libyan people don’t want him. Qadhafi will not win this fight. He must go. NATO has the upper hand and will continue to keep up the pressure until Qadhafi’s ability to terrify and oppress the Libyan people crumbles. Qadhafi’s only future is out of power and out of Libya. (“Press briefing on Libya,” 10 June 2011)

Audiences are walked through Qadhafi’s downfall with certainty, his chance at victory gone, and in the final six weeks of the mission, this inevitability becomes more pronounced: regime forces are no longer just immoral but nonsensical for pursuing their agenda. Stating on 27 September “it’s clear that remaining Qadhafi forces refuse to recognize their defeat,” NATO highlights their “senseless posture” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 27 September 2011). Importantly, however, NATO intermittently admits that Qadhafi still has some potential for violence. A common line in briefings is that Qadhafi

is weak but it would be premature to “jump to conclusions” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 9 August 2011), giving NATO space to continue OUP as long as it needs.

As NATO downgrades Qadhafi’s agency, we see a corresponding increase in Libyan vibrancy and competency about six months into the mission. In a 6 September briefing, Lungescu states that Libya has entered a “transition and civilization phase” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 6 September 2011), phrasing that suggests Libya’s return to civilized, peaceful life. This vocabulary is never used again, but reflects the broader manner in which NATO envisions Libya’s return to a bustling, simple, and almost idyllic life. Indeed, in a 23 August briefing during the battle for Tripoli, Col. Roland Lavoie states, “what we see is the population – doctors, teachers, farmers, citizens – who basically realize that suddenly the control over their cities and villages is not fully controlled any more ... simple citizens who suddenly realize that they could take their destiny in their hands and do something about it” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 23 August 2011).

This depiction of Libyans as “simple citizens” is important, adding to an underdeveloped liberation narrative that suggests Libyans are discovering their agency for the first time. This invigoration of Libyans is heavily subsidized by the “Life in Libya” documents that emerge mid-September. Written more emotively, these documents offer two main messages: Libyans feel gratitude for NATO’s help, and Libyans now have the agency to take the torch when NATO leaves. The article topics vary, ranging from the growth of a free Libyan press (“Taking to the Airwaves”) and school system (“Returning to school”) to the flourish of graffiti after years of artistic repression (“For Qadhafi – the writing is on the wall”), a series of calculated permissions about Libyan resiliency that

are notably suppressed earlier in OUP when NATO is needed. I interpret this shift in character and document type as a strategic decision to justify NATO's exit as its mandate approaches completion. Moreover, this stress on Libyan self-determination connects to NATO's own morality; the alliance has not interfered in Libyan affairs, but merely shaped the conditions for Libyans to decide themselves. Libyan troops are also given more credence at the end of OUP, when Bouchard states, "I believe at the end of the day, 7 months was a very short period of time to watch a force organise themselves from a disorganised group to a group that was able to defeat the regime" ("We answered the call' – the end of Operation Unified Protector"). While NATO was absolutely necessary to Libyan success in earlier briefings, Libyans, the story says, can now lead themselves.

In OUP's final two months, NATO also begins to narratively distance itself from Libya's future challenges now that life is "returning to normal." This shift corresponds with the passage of UNSCR 2009 on 16 September, which established a support mission to the region, lifted portions of the arms embargo and asset freeze, and called on the NTC to protect civilians (United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2009 [2011]"). Accordingly, NATO emphasizes Libya's sovereignty, stating, for example, that arms reduction and control is "a national responsibility for the NTC" ("Press briefing on Libya," 24 October 2011) and that "[the NTC] must make sure that the transition is smooth and inclusive" ("Statement by the Secretary General on the situation in Libya"). James P. Farwell notes that narratives can play roles after a mission, priming audiences for a certain image of victory (154), and indeed, towards the end of OUP the NTC is given new agency and takes on greater discursive responsibility for Libya's future. The job is done, Libyans are in control, and NATO can leave responsibly.

With this evolution of Libyans as characters in an unfolding plot, we see a corresponding shift in setting and the creation of a binary involving old, repressed Libya and new, vibrant, liberated Libya. Two months into OUP, NATO emphasizes that Libya is at a turning point with a right and wrong side of history: “what’s clear to everybody is that Qadhafi is history” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 23 August 2011) and it is time to “open a new chapter in Libya’s history” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 10 June 2011). “Life in Libya” documents use affective quotes from Libyans to stress this shift. In an article about reopened schools, for example, a young girl named Salma explains, “there was a feeling of fear when Qadhafi used to rule us but now it is total freedom” (“Returning to school”). In a story on renewed artistic expression, Abdul, a law student and artist, states, “from the first day I started doing these paintings I felt I had been born again” (“For Qadhafi – the writing is on the wall”), while in another story an onlooker notes, “the condition in Misrata now has changed 180 degrees ... when I returned I saw people who were laughing, not like it used to be” (“Misrata celebrates”). These expressive quotes suggest a clean break into Libya’s future, with little mention of potential growing pains for the young democracy. This major plot shift, and the full transformation into the new Libya, is most evident in a 24 October story about Qadhafi’s death:

Tripoli was adorned in the red, green and black of the Libyan flag as people sang songs about the revolution and danced in the streets. An elderly man spun his robe above his head to drums and singing from the young men who will take Libya into the future ... Young rebel fighters embraced each other and in a moment of respect and appreciation, an elderly man with the new Libyan flag draped over his

shoulders, stopped a young rebel fighter moving slowly along on crutches from a leg wound and kissed his forehead. (“Life after Qadhafi”)

Once dark, foreign, and chaotic, Libya is now full of loving citizens made familiar to foreign audiences by their universal humanity and embrace of the promises of liberalism, all made possible by NATO.

Mission retrospectives as a pacing device

A second major plot shift in the mission is the gradual use of retrospectives, critical narrative aids for audiences to evaluate the mission’s success with a clear sense of timeline. By June, we see a notable shift in language in most documents, focusing less on what NATO *will* do and more on what it *has* done for Libyans, shaping perceptions of the mission long before its conclusion. By 8 June, only ten weeks into OUP, the Secretary General states in a news story that “we have prevented a massacre, we have preserved innocent lives, and we have prepared the ground for a political settlement” (“NATO and partners will stay the course on Libya”). By August, Col. Roland Lavoie asks audiences in a briefing to “rewind and go back in history just a few weeks” to recall the danger of particular regions (“Press briefing on Libya,” 30 August 2011).

These assessments become even more overt and flattering in the mission’s final weeks, with Lungescu, in a particularly self-congratulatory briefing on 11 October, stating “we did the right thing, we saved countless lives, we did it in the right way, fast, with flexibility, involving Partners [*sic*] from the start, and we did it for the right reasons” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 11 October 2011). The most overt narrativization of the mission comes from Bouchard, who leads the audience through a series of maps in a 22 September briefing to “look at the story of the situation over the past six months” (“Press

briefing on Libya,” 22 September 2011) and on 24 October expresses a desire “to put things in perspective and provide you an overview of how we saw these last seven months” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 24 October 2011). In an 8 October speech, di Paola states that while “there is no perfection in human activity,” NATO ended OUP with “de facto zero casualties,” which is “as close as a human being can get to realizing the goal of zero casualties” (“Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola”), a remarkable and questionable assessment given that NATO responded to multiple reports of collateral harm. As plot devices, these retrospectives are a notable expression of power, allowing NATO to shape public memory of NATO error, and with this pacing, OUP becomes a series of linear progressions, lending the mission a sense of cohesion while ignoring extensions from the original ninety-day timeline.

Strategies for expectations and perceptions of progress

As OUP’s narrative matures, the alliance begins to develop clearer strategies for handling expectations and perceptions of progress. I argue that these devices stem from a desire to emphasize *effects over metrics*, with consistent stress on campaign-wide effects over individual statistics, like assessments of Qadhafi’s military capacity or the number of targets hit. There are several reasons to emphasize this measure of success. First, using effects allows NATO to reject the premise of positivist measures of success and avoid reacting to another’s benchmark. Rather than confirm a potentially reversible operational measure of success, NATO prefers open-ended responses that are harder to critique. Second, a metric or operational narrative is less compelling than a story driven by human drama, morality, and obligation. Notably, OUP’s themes of morality and responsibility are natural aides to this tack; an emphasis on effects creates a compassionate measure of

lives saved and improved quality of life rather than focus on costs, sortie numbers, or troop levels. Crucially, this strategy lets NATO use moral appeals as persuasive currency.

NATO's consistent emphasis on effects over metrics is most evident in briefings when NATO refuses to confirm statistics when probed. A month into the mission, Bouchard says, "the issue of numbers has got to be taken in perspective. This is not a numbers game" ("Press briefing on Libya," 26 April 2011), stressing that NATO defines success by tangible effects for Libyans. It would be "very speculative" ("Press briefing on Libya," 9 August 2011) or a "risky business" ("Press briefing on Libya," 23 August 2011) to give percentages, and Wing Commander Mike Bracken even tells reporters on 12 July that effects are the mission's proper measure: "so it wouldn't matter if I said to you 99 percent [of Qadhafi's military capacity] had been taken out. There's still a percentage that could be used. So I don't think metrics are relevant in this debate at all and that is why we've avoided talking to you in that form of attrition ... It's the correct way of reporting" ("Press briefing on Libya," 12 July 2011). For NATO, the mission "is not about winning or losing" ("Press briefing on Libya," 26 July 2011) or the science of attrition ("Press briefing on Libya," 2 August 2011), but saving and improving lives.

Through these abstracted and broad answers, NATO creates space for error, avoiding concrete figures that might work against it. In a 27 May briefing, for example, when asked if the alliance tallies civilian casualties, Bouchard replies "one life is too many lives lost from my perspective, so at the end of the day these statistics here again, the way I look at it, is the suffering that's taking place" ("Press briefing on Libya," 27 May 2011). This reply builds NATO's character as a caring responder while sidestepping any culpability. I should note, however, that NATO often uses its own metrics to prove

its success in OUP in its news stories and to subsidize news coverage in briefings. In most briefings and many operational news stories, the alliance lists the number of sorties flown, target hits, or humanitarian deliveries as milestones (e.g. “Predator drones strike Qadhafi forces”; “NATO keeps up the pressure”; “Press briefing on Libya,” 2 August 2011, 23 August 2011), and Col. Roland Lavoie notes, in a briefing on 30 August, that “these numbers may sound abstract, but they do reflect a very concrete reality for those who are in real need of basic necessities” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 30 August 2011).

Beyond the mission’s progress, the alliance develops clear strategies to deal with expectations about OUP’s end date. In the mission’s first briefing, di Paola says, “so far NATO has said up to 90 days. Up to 90 days” (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011). Unsurprisingly, the alliance stops providing estimates of duration; by 10 May, Brig. Gen. Claudio Gabellini states “well ... I’m not really bothered about that, but we say ... we know perfectly which is our end state [*sic*]” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 10 May 2011). NATO also manages accusations of stalemates. When probed in an 8 April briefing, Rear Adm. Russell Harding states, “I think it’s up for anyone who wants to make a judgement [*sic*] ... If someone wants to define that as a stalemate that’s fine” (“Press briefing on events concerning Libya”). Yet, by 13 May NATO has a clearer message, articulated by Romero: OUP “illustrates a dynamic situation. There is definitely no stalemate” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 13 May 2011).

As the mission drags, the alliance communicates stronger themes of resolve and vigilance, turning critique into a positive character trait: NATO will finish the job. After stressing that Qadhafi cannot win, NATO must continually justify its presence, especially given that it will complete the mandate, “nothing more, nothing less” (“Statement by

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Libya”). Noting that “we’re pretty close to the end, but we’re not there yet” (“Press briefing in Libya,” 11 October 2011) or “it is premature to set a timetable now” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 18 October 2011), NATO sets mission completion in its own, flattering terms: “we cannot drop our guard and we won’t” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 23 August 2011). Indeed, in a 30 August briefing, Col. Roland Lavoie proactively states “now let me say a few words on the NATO mission as several may wonder if there’s still a need for a NATO presence” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 30 August 2011), setting himself up to list Qadhafi’s actions.

Finally, NATO’s narrative also manages expectations about what the alliance can and cannot achieve in OUP, developing a clear distinction between a military solution and a political solution for Libya. In a 6 June briefing, this message crystallizes when Rasmussen describes *parallel political and military tracks*, arguing that Libyans must decide their own future, and that support for this political task must come from the UN, the African Union, the EU, the Arab League, and others (“Press conference by the NATO Secretary General”). While NATO could offer security advice, he notes that “you might see a link between the two tracks, but the NATO track is a military track ... no more, no less” (“Press conference by the NATO Secretary General”). This message is reinforced in diplomatic news stories (e.g. “NATO and partners will stay the course on Libya”) and in briefings, with Lungescu noting on 7 July, “we’re helping to create the conditions for a political solution. But that is not NATO’s job” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 7 July 2011). This communicative strategy serves two purposes. First, the phrase “parallel tracks” is a memorable clarifying device that directly demarcates what NATO can and cannot

control. Second, and perhaps more importantly, NATO narrows its tasks and shifts responsibility to appear effective, unlike in more complex missions like Afghanistan.

MANAGING CRITICISM: ERROR AND DISUNITY

Over the course of the mission, the alliance develops techniques and strategies to handle criticism, which I have broken into two major types: *error* and *disunity* among NATO allies. Importantly, while these strategies were critical during OUP, they also helped to protect NATO's long-term identity as a truthful, relevant, and precise actor.

When faced with civilian casualties or operational mistakes, NATO adopts a familiar pattern of response that strengthened over the mission. In early briefings, NATO was occasionally vague or defiant in the face of criticism. In an 8 April briefing, for example, Rear Adm. Russell Harding twice states, "I'm not apologizing" for possible strikes against NTC members, and when pressed if NATO could improve relations with the rebels, he states, "I have to be frank and say it is not for us, trying to protect civilians, of whatever persuasion, to improve communications with those rebel forces" ("Press briefing on events concerning Libya"). With time, however, the alliance develops clearer patterns of mitigation, with strategies based on *clarifying* and *contextualizing*. Generally, NATO's first step following any rumour of civilian casualties is to promise a report, and the investigation usually confirms a false allegation (e.g. "Press briefing on Libya," 10 May 2011; "NATO strikes ammunition bunkers near Tripoli"). Indeed, Libya's fluidity often prevents the alliance from having to make firm comments or admissions of error.

Error is occasionally confirmed, however, and three incidents in mid-June offer the best example of the alliance's strategies when pushed to offer a stronger response. In a 21 June briefing, NATO deals with three recent events: an accidental strike on

opposition patrol forces; a weapons malfunction causing civilian casualties; and allegations of civilian casualties caused by a NATO strike on a command and control node. Beyond expressions of regret (“Press briefing on Libya,” 21 June 2011), four different narrative strategies emerge to mitigate bad press and manage setbacks.

First, NATO explicitly states that it will *clarify* and *separate* incidents for the press and public, and then describes each incident separately, often with slides. This lets NATO control the flow of information and avoid perceptions of poor judgment. While NATO is hesitant to confirm wrongdoing, when it must admit to error it stresses full disclosure, positing itself as a fact-based, honest actor, using transparency to create trust and legitimacy. Indeed, when asked if these strikes hurt NATO’s credibility, Wing Commander Mike Bracken states that his description of the incidents “proves quite clearly that we are a fact-based organization and when the facts are available to us we openly stand here in front of you, the world media, and tell you those facts” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 21 June 2011). In this attempt to clarify, NATO also uses more clinical language, reiterating that NATO’s actions fulfill different elements of its mandate and stressing the mission’s legality, with no direct mention of Libyans or confirmation of the number of dead civilians. Indeed, towards the end of the briefing, Bracken states “one was a very unfortunate strike ... the next was a situation where a missile or weapon had a weapons system failure. The third was a clear strike” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 21 June 2011), avoiding any discussion of suffering or impacts on civilians. With this depersonalized and clinical language, the alliance distances error from its overall morality narrative, reluctant to acknowledge or incorporate mistakes in the same style as the rest of its values-based storyline. NATO keeps error and success linguistically distinct.

Second, NATO emphasizes the *exceptionalism* of these errors when compared to the rest of the mission, thus offering contextualization. As noted above, while NATO usually shies from using firm statistics, it stresses that the strikes were an exception “if you look at our track record after over 4,000 strike sorties” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 21 June 2011; also “Allegations of civilian casualties in Tripoli on 19 June 2011”; “NATO acknowledges civilian casualties in Tripoli strike”). Third, Lungescu consistently stresses, explicitly, that “it’s important that we put those allegations in context of the NATO mission” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 21 June 2011), comparing NATO to Qadhafi to reinforce its identity as a compassionate and precise responder. Noting that “we take all reports of civilian casualties very seriously,” the alliance reminds its audience that it “is doing all it can to protect the people of Libya from the violence waged by the Qadhafi regime” (“Allegations of civilian casualties in Tripoli on 19 June 2011”), creating a direct comparison between NATO and Qadhafi. Indeed, in the 21 June briefing, Lungescu states, “let’s not lose sight of the fact that it is the Qadhafi regime which started this crisis. Not NATO, not the international community” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 21 June 2011), using the narrative’s antagonist to bolster the alliance’s legitimacy.

NATO’s fourth strategy is perhaps the most interesting. In the 28 June briefing that follows these incidents, Bouchard shows pictures of messages from Libyans, including people writing “Thank you” on a rooftop, and a roadside sign that reads “THX NATO” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 28 June 2011). While Bouchard does not connect these images to the recent events, the timing is important, and he explicitly states that “this is the feedback we’re receiving” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 28 June 2011) to stress that Libyans are grateful for NATO’s intervention. This is an extraordinary step, never

repeated until the “Life in Libya” documents emerge almost three months later in September, and signals the criticism NATO faced in this period. Together, these four strategies clarify NATO error and contextualize it in the broader mission to prevent spoiled identity for the alliance. By building a fluid setting and reminding audiences of OUP’s villain, NATO’s narrative creates space for error.

The second major type of criticism NATO faces stems from disunity, especially about contributions, a particularly visible measure of member buy-in. In OUP’s lead-up, German foreign affairs minister Guido Westerwelle stated that NATO had to ensure that OUP not appear as a “crusade against populations of the Muslim faith” (qtd. in Willsher), while French foreign minister Alain Juppé stated two weeks in that the air campaign’s intensity was “not enough” (qtd. in Cowell and Nordland). As OUP progressed into the summer, NATO began to deal with discord within the alliance as member states withdrew resources or critiqued OUP. The harshest criticism likely came from U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who, in a speech in Brussels on 10 June, criticized OUP for its lack of resources, stating “the mightiest military alliance in history is only 11 weeks into an operation ... yet many allies are beginning to run short of munitions, requiring the U.S., once more, to make up the difference” (qtd. in Shanker). Perhaps more damningly, he stated that NATO faced a “dim if not dismal future” and that to “avoid the very real possibility of collective military irrelevance,” Europeans would have to improve their defense spending (qtd. in Shanker). This discord was underlined when Norway withdrew its F-16 aircraft from OUP in early August (O’Dwyer).

By nature, discord is a defensive issue for the alliance, and NATO only discusses assets when pressed in briefings. Unity and contributions are also critical beyond OUP, a

form of criticism *within* the alliance related to broader issues of buy-in and relevancy. This issue therefore had to be handled well, and NATO's messages about unity and burden-sharing evolved as it passed its initial plans for a ninety-day mission and managed member statements about the feasibility of seeing OUP through. An initial and consistent message is that troops work under one flag; NATO troops are just that – NATO troops – and the alliance does not differentiate or single out contributions. In an early briefing, Bouchard states, “from my perspective, I’m more concerned that our team works under the NATO banner than the national banner” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 27 May 2011).

By June, NATO developed a new lexicon for this disunity, and despite reluctance to address the topic of contributions proactively, reframed this liability into a flattering character trait: discord and debate are normal in *an alliance of democracies*. This phrasing lets NATO downplay expectations on force generation while simultaneously contrasting its own respect for democracy against Qadhafi's disdain. Noting in a 10 June briefing that “this is an Alliance [*sic*] of democracies after all” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 10 June 2011), NATO emphasizes that any debates on contributions – even on assets to be used against the terrible Qadhafi – are natural for democracies. The normative quality of this assertion is evident in a 17 June briefing, when Lungescu notes that taking decisions through parliament “is right and proper and that’s how it should be” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 17 June 2011). Later, when NATO begins to make internal appeals for more assets, Col. Roland Lavoie notes twice in August that he has “never met a commander who does not ask for more resources” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 2 August 2011, 9 August 2011), again stressing that it is natural for NATO to call for more resources and to stay the course. As a narrative of pure consensus became harder to

sustain, we therefore see a shift to neutralize bad press, accommodate discord, and even turn it into a positive, moral attribute for NATO.

CONCLUSION: BREAKING DOWN A STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

This chapter has examined the components of NATO's strategic narrative during OUP, paying particular attention to its setting, characters, and plot evolution, along with the specific strategies that the alliance develops to manage expectations and criticism during the mission. Beyond these structural devices, the narrative also reveals strong use of ethical and thematic persuasion centered on the anchoring themes of morality and responsibility. Through this analysis, we see that NATO's public diplomacy in the mission was a series of conscious strategic choices, a mix of facts and value-based information organized to highlight NATO's traits as a compassionate, effective responder. Critically, audiences are also walked through one possible scenario and outcome, the plot "unnoticeably ultimate" (Burke 197) as it primes audiences to view success a particular way. With a cast of characters easily identifiable to a broad audience and a setting that highlights NATO effectiveness, the alliance's portrayal of the mission easily fits with a narrative-based analysis. Importantly, this analysis has highlighted the alliance's heavy use of moral persuasion to create its own benchmarks for success and carve a new role as a capable responder. With these structural and thematic narrative choices in mind, the next chapter discusses the implications of this story, both for NATO's future and for scholarship on public diplomacy and narrative.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

REVISITING NATO'S CHALLENGES AND THE PROMISE OF NARRATIVE

Building on last chapter's analysis of Operation Unified Protector's (OUP's) narrative and its strategic value during the mission, we can now examine NATO's story in broader context, considering its role outside of the mission and what we can learn from this case study. Over the course of the mission, and particularly towards its end, NATO makes concerted efforts to situate OUP into a broader organizational narrative, referencing its prior missions and future outlook with a new Strategic Concept and evolving international climate. Importantly, these efforts create a sense of longevity and steadfastness in the alliance as it struggles with perceptions of irrelevancy. OUP's narrative also speaks to other scholars' work, confirming that military actors now work in a complex informational environment and need strategies to manage information and perception. Critically, this case study identifies several potential new avenues of inquiry and research. This chapter explores how NATO's story helped to create a sense of enduring character for the organization, and considers this story's place in the literature on NATO, public diplomacy, and narratives in general.

"THESE ARE HISTORIC DAYS": HISTORICIZING OUP AND NATO

While NATO's narrative can be seen most fundamentally as an attempt to control and manage information during OUP, we should also consider NATO's efforts to integrate the mission into the alliance's broader identity and turn it into "another success" in NATO's long history. To do this, NATO often emphasizes that OUP is making history for the alliance. For example, Bouchard stresses the seamlessness of the handoff between U.S.-led coalition forces and NATO, stating, "in fact, I'll go as far as to say that these are historic days. The speed and agility with which NATO has acted is the future of NATO.

We are making history” (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011). This emphasis on the alliance’s future is noteworthy, with NATO positioning itself as a vital, flexible, and thoroughly modern partner for new missions, garnering wide support professionally and cohesively. This sense of history is also emphasized in OUP’s final diplomatic news story, in which Rasmussen states, “a successful chapter in NATO’s history is coming to an end” (“NATO Secretary General makes historic Libya trip”). OUP’s story therefore stresses that NATO’s vitality and community of values are as strong as ever, even as the alliance evolves to meet new demands.

This emphasis on NATO’s history is also supported by stress on lessons learned over its broader existence, placing OUP in context with prior missions. Positioning itself as a steadfast and historic actor, NATO heightens its own credibility and stature to command respect. Specifically, in a 27 May briefing, NATO is asked to comment on the arrest of Ratko Mladić, a former Bosnian Serb military leader accused of war crimes and genocide in the Srebrenica Massacre in 1995. Lungescu links NATO’s prior hesitations with its current success and decisiveness, noting that NATO learned a hard lesson about timely action: “in the 1990s it took NATO months to decide to intervene in the Balkans. This year it took NATO days to set up Operation Unified Protector” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 27 May 2011). Interestingly, Lungescu also connects the arrest with NATO’s current mandate for integration, highlighting NATO’s leadership and broader mission:

[The arrest] puts an end to one of the bloodiest and darkest chapters in the history of the Balkans and in the history of Europe. It allows for justice to be done and it also allows the whole region to move forward towards Euro-Atlantic integration, which is what we all want to see. And of course, NATO as a guarantor of peace

and security in the Balkans for the best part of the last two decades, strongly endorses that goal and supports it. (“Press briefing on Libya,” 27 May 2011)

Later in the same briefing, Bouchard adds that NATO has “indeed, learned many lessons” from its missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and the Mediterranean, further noting that, “we are building on previous successes. We are learning from others” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 27 May 2011). This language of “lessons learned” is important, painting NATO as an intelligent, engaged, and self-reflexive organization, willing to revisit past achievements and failures to strengthen future performance. Moreover, while most briefings focus entirely on OUP, NATO occasionally points out that it has not forgotten its operation in Afghanistan. In a 13 September briefing, a journalist asks if OUP has distracted NATO from Afghanistan, and Lungescu replies that while “NATO is conducting several major operations ... Afghanistan remains the key operation for NATO and we continue to remain committed to that operation” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 13 September 2011). These references to past and present missions help point to NATO’s strength and growth as an organization, capable of focusing on multiple missions *as called for* by the international community. According to this narrative, NATO is fluid and modern, keeping up with new demands while heeding its past.

Beyond this sense of history, NATO also places OUP into a broader discussion of (and mitigation of) lack of engagement among allies, noting that despite any controversy, force generation was an overall success and an obvious measure of alliance unity. NATO consistently states that it had the resources to do the job (e.g. “Press briefing on Libya,” 26 July 2011, 6 September 2011), stating in a 27 September briefing that commitment to OUP “has been absolutely fantastic and we are not short of any assets” (“Press briefing

on Libya,” 27 September 2011). Moreover, when asked in the final briefing if NATO should be considered a two-tier alliance with some members contributing more than others, Bouchard argues, “when we look at NATO we should not look at NATO for seven months, we should look at NATO for the last 20 years and for the next 20 years” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 24 October 2011). By stressing that “it’s a matter of balancing and looking at the whole spectrum of operations of NATO over a long period of time, not just seven months” (“Press briefing on Libya,” 24 October 2011), Bouchard integrates OUP into a broader organizational narrative, urging audiences to contextualize issues of burden sharing against NATO’s greater history, character, and shared Atlantic values.

Perhaps the most detailed and information-rich analysis of OUP and its place in NATO’s history comes from an 8 October speech given by Adm. Giampaolo di Paola to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, in which he outlines the political and operational lessons NATO drew from the mission, even before its completion. Critically, di Paola recognizes some of NATO’s traditional anxieties, like burden sharing or expansion, that are often ignored in other documents, making it a particularly valuable document to assess NATO’s view of OUP and its next steps forward.

In di Paola’s speech, and in many documents from the end of the mission, the greatest message the alliance communicates is that *NATO works*. Di Paola states that OUP’s major operational lesson is that “NATO works! NATO works ... NATO works in a very adaptable, politically agile way, and we have responded to the international call for protecting people” (“Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola”). Acknowledging that many “would like to play the ‘death toll’ for NATO,” he stresses that “only NATO” had strong enough political unity, machinery, and military precision to have responded to this

crisis so quickly and effectively. Politically, all NATO members agreed to the mission quickly, “a remarkable achievement in one week” that reflects shared values that enable quick decisions. Beyond this shared moral commitment, NATO also “works” with its regional partners. Indeed, di Paola notes that partners in the Mediterranean Dialogue and Middle East viewed NATO with “I don’t want to say suspicion, let’s say carefulness” but that OUP deepened trust with these new partners. Di Paola further suggests that NATO and the world should “recognize the merit of the ability of our structure to react to the situation in an agile manner” and incorporate partners into a complex operation (“Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola”). This sense of historic partnership is also reflected in a 6 October news story, in which Rasmussen states that OUP “has taken cooperation between Allies and Partners to a new level, both politically and operationally, thus enhancing the prospects for further deepening our partnerships” (“Ministers determined to pursue operation in Libya as long as threats persist”). OUP is therefore portrayed as a stepping-stone for NATO’s future involvement in the Arab region, beyond the mission itself.

The message that “NATO works” is further developed with regards to the Strategic Concept. NATO keenly points out that OUP was the first mission conducted under the 2010 document, and di Paola notes in the first briefing that its partnerships reflect commitment to regional cooperation in missions, “in line with the principles and core tasks highlighted in NATO’s Strategic Concept” (“Joint press briefing on Libya,” 31 March 2011). NATO’s activities therefore reflect a broader, alliance-wide commitment to a new direction, again confirmed in di Paola’s speech. He asserts that the Concept “is visionary enough to be able to respond to crises that we will never predict,” underlining

NATO's flexibility given the global system's complexities ("Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola"). Moreover, by highlighting that "we need mental and political agility because surprise will always come" ("Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola"), the alliance acknowledges NATO's room for growth in the global environment.

By outlining its flexibility and the success of the Strategic Concept, the alliance tries to carve out a new and important role for itself in this post-Cold War environment. In the mission's final operational news story, Karl-Heinz Kamp of NATO's Defence College states that OUP "is a sign ... that in today's times NATO is the enabler. It enables countries to conduct military operations they probably are not able to do alone anymore or willing to do alone" ("We answered the call' – the end of Operation Unified Protector"). In NATO's eyes, the mission "bodes well" for its future, with Bouchard noting that OUP shows how NATO can "bring people together, give them a common objective, and successfully meet those objectives" ("We answered the call"). In his speech, di Paola also adds that NATO machinery is "not only at the disposal of our collective security but is also at the disposal of the International Community for crisis management, for helping people, for helping resolve a situation" ("Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola"). Di Paola further emphasizes NATO's political cooperation as a special capability: "so, to organize the connection with [different groups], and determine how to bring them in and how to bring them out - that is the Comprehensive Approach, and that has been done" ("Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola"). This language of "enabling" is critical in building the alliance's broader story about itself: NATO is not a self-interested, self-defense organization but a global hub for cooperation.

By referencing lessons learned, past and future missions, and areas for growth, NATO uses OUP's story to build a larger sense of character for itself beyond the mission. Thus, while NATO's strategic narrative helped create support and mitigate criticism during the mission itself, it also played a larger role to solidify NATO as an evolving, self-reflexive actor with a long history and future ahead. Indeed, this case study demonstrates that an issue-specific strategic narrative can contribute to a broader organizational story to carry forward, a powerful tool for different actors. In light of this power of narrative, we can now turn our attention to this case study's contributions to scholarship on NATO, public diplomacy, and narratives.

DISCUSSION: TAKING STOCK OF NARRATIVES

I have argued that strategic narrative is a powerful tool for military public diplomacy because of its special ability to integrate operational details into moral and ethical frameworks that appeal to audiences. The findings of my research seem to be in broad support of this argument, and NATO's story intended to manage both public perceptions of OUP and broader anxieties about the alliance's organizational future. This section details some of the major research findings of this study, as well as their significance, in light of the trends or gaps in the literature and concepts outlined earlier.

NATO's strategic narrative was a clear attempt to control OUP's message in a complex informational environment. Confirming what many scholars have already noted about modern wars (e.g. Antoniadis, Miksimmon, and O'Loughlin 7-8; Dimitriu 198; Hall 392-99; Betz 518; Freedman 17; Eder 5, 8), OUP demonstrated that political and military actors are increasingly facing a chaotic media ecology; NATO could not control everything that was said about OUP, so its public diplomacy had to communicate

information purposefully and strategically to manage this environment. Indeed, these distractions were most evident in the mission briefings, in which spokespersons were often pressed to confirm or comment on reports from Qadhafi, state media, local sources, or, in fact, member nations.

Given these challenges, NATO followed some basic rules of public diplomacy, using transferable strategies for any organization engaged in transnational communications. First, rather than respond to every source, NATO tended to mass its information. The alliance communicated purposefully, only when it could fully confirm or deny reports, instead of dribbling information without a clear goal. This was evident, for example, when dealing with the three errors in June noted in Chapter 4. Second, the alliance made clear efforts to communicate with a single voice across this polyphonic narrative, avoiding “information fratricide” or contradiction (Paul 6). As mentioned above, while earlier briefings sometimes included inconsistent responses to civilian casualties or stalemates, later briefings saw clearer phrasing, massed and repeated across various documents. Here we see elements of purposeful communication, working from the tenets of rhetorical narration to arrange information compellingly and toward strategic ends. Finally, NATO’s strategies of clarification and contextualization are easily transferable to other practitioners of public diplomacy. By clarifying reports and contextualizing them in NATO’s broader mandate and actions, errors and mistakes became less damaging. In these ways, this case study is in line with current literature on our challenging informational environment and the strategies used to work with it.

Beyond these public diplomacy strategies, however, NATO’s communications for OUP specifically confirm the special abilities of narratives, as discussed in Chapter 2. In

particular, I argue that character development was the strongest manner of defining and controlling perceptions of the mission, making it critical to study characters to understand how military public diplomacy works. Scholars have noted that characters drive narrative action (Maltby 55) while a rhetor's persona highlights particular mantras and values (Heath, "Critical Perspectives on Public Relations" 39-41), and indeed, I argue that a character-based reading of the mission is the best lens with which to understand NATO's public diplomacy. As noted in Chapter 2, narratives offer two critical powers: the power to define and to be taken for granted (Czarniawska, *Narrating the Organization* 24; Golant and Silince 1153). Not only did NATO define the cast of characters in this mission – turning Qadhafi into a villain and Libyans into helpless victims – but the alliance also communicated its own intentionality as an organization, setting itself up as the decisive responder. Indeed, by setting up the mission with these archetypal characters, NATO became the taken-for-granted moral actor, a powerful agent of international affairs that acts for others, quickly and effectively. The story's characters gave NATO the best venue to persuasively and naturally define a new role for itself, as an enabler and hub of the international community. Importantly, we should note that OUP's circumstances were suited for heroes and villains, so I suggest that analyses of other missions, like in Afghanistan and other collapsed states, are needed to examine the difficulty or usefulness of creating characters in longer, drawn out campaigns.

This case study also confirms that, beyond the ease with which characters can build organizational identities, stories are an easy mode of discourse in which to insert morals. More than just a manner of understanding personal experience, narratives also hold broad social powers that unite communities through deep-seated cultural and ethical

appeals. Indeed, Ann Swidler notes that during periods of upheaval or change, like an international crisis, “doctrine, symbol, and ritual directly shape action” (278) to make unfamiliar habits seem normal. Given Libya’s distance from most NATO members, appeals to deep-seated traditional ethos helped to familiarize a distant conflict. OUP’s story, oriented around messages of morality and responsibility, further illuminated the cultural, ethical, and moral currency that narratives hold, more easily communicated through character interactions, plot shifts, and repetitive phrasing than through many other forms of organizational communication. For example, NATO’s identity as an effective enabler was implicitly strengthened through comparisons to Qadhafi, while a dark, chaotic setting created conditions that most audiences would agree required moral action.

Importantly, NATO also used these moral arguments to answer questions on its own terms. Indeed, NATO consistently refused to confirm or answer questions on metrics, refusing to accept even the premise of the questions and drawing instead from moral arguments on the importance of “effects” and tangible improvements in the quality of life for Libyans. Importantly, this builds the alliance’s character while also affirming its second persona (e.g. Heath, “Critical Perspectives on Public Relations” 42), or the audience’s desire to see itself as driven by moral issues rather than cost. In this sense, we see that NATO’s narrative is vertically integrated, a concept noted in Chapter 2 about connecting a mission’s particulars with deeper social and cultural tropes about doing the right thing. By tapping into this deeper moral economy and by vertically integrating the mission particulars with a basic cultural narrative about right and wrong (Betz 519), NATO’s narrative attempted to avoid bad press and be more persuasive.

NATO's emphasis on morality also acts as an important reply to the alliance's broader anxieties about buy-in, longevity, and relevancy. Fundamentally, the entire OUP narrative can be seen as a reply to any doubts, among members, journalists, or academics, about the authenticity of NATO's transatlantic bond and shared values among members, as discussed in Chapter 1. Animated by a shared sense of responsibility and repulsion at Qadhafi's disrespect for human life and liberalism, NATO members were compelled to act in Libya. By emphasizing these shared values and common dismay towards Qadhafi, the alliance managed to largely sidestep any disputes as to whether OUP was a war of necessity or a war of choice, a common debate among academics and policy leaders that has tainted other operations, such as Afghanistan, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (e.g. Shea, "Keeping NATO Relevant" 1; Keller 212). Instead of framing the conflict as a direct threat or as a completely remote incident, NATO tried to make OUP a necessary moral action, suggesting that NATO was called to action not only by its own moral code but, critically, by the international community. Arita Holmberg notes that NATO has traditionally struggled with inter-organizational cooperation and that alliance officials are conscious that it may not be an attractive partner (538-539). In response, and throughout the mission, NATO posits itself as the only actor with the military capability and political clout to coordinate an important mission with so many different actors, like the UN, the European Union, the African Union, the Arab League, and aid groups. Avoiding debate on the necessity of the conflict, NATO instead highlighted the international community's *desire* for NATO involvement, and based its story on moral, not instrumental, frameworks. By emphasizing NATO's experience and shared ethics over metrics or facts

alone, OUP's narrative could become a more persuasive reply to any anxieties about disunity and relevancy.

We therefore see that NATO's narrative cannot be separated from its identity as an alliance, and this case study confirms that research into strategic narratives should not treat alliance stories the same as those created by single organizations or countries. NATO's reliance on moral argument, while common in many military narratives, emerges as a binding centerpiece for the alliance and its community of shared values. Furthermore, NATO's consistent emphasis on its sense of history taps into particular nostalgia for the alliance; as a historic actor with Cold War origins, NATO consistently reminds its audience of its prior successes, lessons, and evolution, using its sense of shared history as an asset to bind its diverse audiences together.

Narrativizing, like framing, is an inclusive activity that bundles information, values, and judgments together, but it is also exclusive, neglecting or even forcefully rejecting material that does not fit the narrator's need. This exclusionary power was evident in NATO's narrative, which had the power to define, to strip agency, to narrow options, and to advance its own judgments and evaluations. These are strategies that engaged audiences are right to question, and while this analysis has been primarily descriptive, questions about the topics NATO excluded or sanitized, as well as criticism from the press and other actors, should also be considered. In particular, despite critique from member states as mentioned in Chapter 4, NATO largely excluded substantive conversations about defense spending and burden sharing, emphasizing instead an ongoing message of unity that ignored real questions of cost and buy-in in a financially austere era. As NATO works through disunity and navigates a new and expanded

mandate, I expect the alliance's communications to preserve a particular sense of identity and unity. However, concerns about contributions and frustrations over a two-tier alliance will also need to be addressed. NATO may have attempted to control disunity in OUP, but a broader, necessary public discussion for member citizens remains unachieved.

We should also pay strong attention to NATO's portrayal of Libyans to analyze not just OUP but the alliance's broader treatment of populations in distant conflicts. Despite NATO's assurances that OUP was a Libyan victory, critics are right to consider the control Libyans truly had over the conflict. As mentioned earlier, Libyans were stripped of their agency in this narrative and were empowered only through NATO's calculated permissions later in the mission, emphasizing the return to school or reopening of the press, for example. Thus, despite their sacrifice in the conflict, Libyans themselves held remarkably little agency in NATO's story, largely disempowered until that trait was no longer useful to the alliance. Moreover, while NATO emphasized its precision and di Paola stated that OUP had "de facto zero casualties" ("Speech by Admiral Giampaolo di Paola"), Human Rights Watch published a report detailing at least 72 civilian deaths, along with many more injuries and the destruction of infrastructure resulting from NATO error or unlawful strikes (4-10). NATO is reluctant to discuss error, but when it is confirmed, its story resorts to clinical language to distance us from Libyan suffering. NATO's narrative thus offers a sanitized account of the mission, emphasizing precision, occasional but exceptional error, and Libyan self-determination. By nature, strategic narratives always privilege some information over others, but we should look into the broader implications of this selectivity, particularly for vulnerable actors outside NATO countries. As we look to NATO's future missions in distant conflicts, we should continue

to examine the ways in which the alliance portrays local populations, and whether rebels or civilians are empowered to communicate their stories too, on their own terms.

In light of these questions and in line with themes in public diplomacy literature, we may be left with questions about the altruism of NATO's communications in OUP. In other words, was NATO attempting to simply inform its audiences, or was there work to deceive? This case study can only confirm the fluidity of organizational communications, and, indeed, of language in general. As noted in Chapter 2, if we abandon the assumption that information is always objective (Toth and Heath xvi), we see that self-interest can enter into any instance of communication. NATO certainly managed its language and the flow of information during OUP, choosing to delay the release of information, minimize internal debates, and portray its cast with fewer nuances than in reality. Further research on narratives can offer more support to each side of this debate in public diplomacy, though we may never reach a firm conclusion on whether managing information to gain an advantage is unethical. We should, however, continue to question the communicative power that NATO holds as a dominant international player with large operational capacity and a sense of moral history, including the platform and power to publish its own version of events. Beyond NATO, the interpretive and symbolic nature of communication, language, and its discursive modes is always evident, and we are left to consider if or how information can be conveyed neutrally, or whether "value-free" is necessarily better or more ethical than persuasion. Indeed, a greater understanding of the management of value and fact can only improve the quality of our political and military dialogues, in which resources and lives are at stake.

PROJECT LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This case study illustrates the analytical value of narrative analysis and narrative theory for examining military public diplomacy. While OUP's communications could have been interpreted with many different lenses, a narrative-centered approach offers particular benefits. As argued in Chapter 3, narrative analysis can be employed at different levels, but my analysis allowed me to examine a large body of documents and place the alliance's thematic and linguistic choices into context. By focusing on the use of characters, setting, and plot, we can acknowledge that the mission likely meant little to NATO audiences until it was placed into cultural and historical context, a familiar story for distanced audiences. This case study also shows that NATO's narrative is inextricably connected to its identity as an alliance; the story's strategies for managing critique and expectation, as well as its relatable, universal characters, are tailored for wide consumption and the management of multiple stakeholder interests and views.

For these reasons, I argue that narrative study deserves a greater presence in public diplomacy, political communication, and military research. While traditional international relations scholarship is slowly empowering public opinion as an important determinant of mission success (Ringsmose and Børgesen 507-513; Gentry 190-196), a narrative tradition offers new frames of analysis and lexicons to make sense of how these actors communicate. Beyond NATO, future work on narrative in transnational settings is also salient, mainly to consider the ways that large organizations – from supranational agencies to transnational corporations and international non-governmental organizations – must balance multiple stakeholder perspectives and to examine how stories and archetypal tropes can appeal to wide audiences. Moreover, this particular case study

shows that narratives do not have to be fully retrospective to be studied. Narratives can evolve as their political and military landscape changes, helping to arrange information and events as they unfold. Narrative analysis can thus be used more widely than we might think, and scholars should consider this in future work on public diplomacy.

This thesis's limitations also invite areas of future research. In particular, this work is limited in that it does not assess how NATO talks about Libya's current upheaval. Future research should track if or how NATO narratively accommodates the region's instability and struggles after intervention – is Libya still a success story for the alliance?¹⁰ Moreover, OUP's particularities offered clear characters, with an identifiable villain, for NATO to build its new role as a responder. It will be important to assess NATO's evolution as a character in missions that may not fit this traditional hero/villain dichotomy, like in collapsed states where the main villains are poverty or extremism.

As well, more research on different modes and types of narratives is needed. This study looked only at online materials, without pursuing a performative analysis or considering how NATO communications were decoded by other international actors. Libyans' lack of power over NATO's narrative, as noted above, also raises theoretical and practical questions about the potential for counter-narratives to work against "official" portrayals of events (Porter and Kelso xiii-xiv). Hilde Lindemann Nelson has examined "counterstories" as a mode of "narrative repair" that can empower groups that have been misrepresented, lack moral agency, or are deprived of the opportunity to self-

¹⁰ Journalists and international organizations have painted a grim picture of Libya's troubled transition to democracy and liberalism since NATO's intervention. Most notably, Libya has been plagued by ongoing political polarization (in October 2013, Prime Minister Ali Zeidan was briefly kidnapped) and a fragile security system that permitted the shutdown of several oil export terminals by rebels demanding better pay and regional autonomy, resulting in a devastating loss of revenue for the country. For a detailed report on post-NATO Libya, see "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya" (UN Security Council, 5 September 2013, web).

represent (12). Nelson's focus on stories' simultaneously exclusionary power and reparative potential for protest, revision, and resistance is readily applicable to international affairs, and invites further research about the shaping and emergence of not just a Libyan retelling of OUP, but of counter-narratives of conflicts around the world.

With an increasingly interconnected and globalized international system, future research on new avenues for narrative communication is thus salient. Indeed, this study shows that as public discourses grow complex from advances in technology, and as the potential audience of any communication is expanded, the "simple" art of storytelling, crafted over millennia, will remain as important as ever.

CONCLUSION

New media technologies have made it easier than ever for governments to engage and communicate with their citizens through public diplomacy, quickly and directly. These advances, however, have also resulted in a chaotic and difficult informational environment. During international crisis and conflict, it is rare for citizens to retrieve news from just one source of information; rather, competing news sources, social media platforms, citizens, governments, rebels or protestors, and global organizations all add to a loud and distracting international discourse on the issues of the day. In light of this evolving informational dynamic, governments and public actors may increasingly turn to the timeless art of storytelling, which has been mastered over millennia and practiced around the world. While narratives exist throughout literature and our personal lives, they can also play an intensely social role, becoming “strategic” when they harmonize information towards a specific end or manage perceptions of an event or series of events.

This thesis explored NATO’s use of strategic narrative in a recent mission, Operation Unified Protector (OUP). Critically, OUP’s comparatively short duration allowed me to gain a relatively whole reading of its narrative, across seven months of public diplomacy and a large body of documents. While I could not perform a fully comprehensive analysis of NATO’s public diplomacy in OUP nor of its public reception, the broad contours and shape of a narrative were evident in its online materials. Notably, OUP’s narrative was driven by anchoring themes of morality and responsibility, suggesting that NATO was compelled to act by the “right thing to do.” This allowed the alliance to sidestep larger debates about whether this intervention was a “war of choice” or a “war of necessity,” emphasizing instead the international community’s desire for NATO’s capable involvement. With a setting that highlighted chaos and fluidity, NATO

made Libyan liberation contingent on foreign aid and supervision, emphasizing the alliance's professionalism as testament to its respect for human life. Moreover, the story's cast of characters – including a reprehensible villain in Qadhafi and victimized Libyans – enabled NATO to position itself as the morally virtuous protagonist in an archetypal, relatable story. By relying on a timeworn cultural storyline, NATO attempted to make a distant event familiar and recognizable to audiences with little to no personal stake in the conflict, but whose support was nevertheless central to its ethical and political legitimacy.

As the mission progressed and the narrative evolved, certain strategies and patterns crystallized to help the alliance mitigate criticism. Notably, NATO consistently emphasized progress in terms of campaign-wide effects, not specific statistics, keeping itself from concrete measures of success that might change. Mission retrospectives, introduced early in the mission, served to shape public memory and summarize OUP in favourable terms long before the mission's end, and by clarifying and contextualizing, NATO could manage occasional error. Moreover, NATO's clinical language following civilian harm kept error and success linguistically distinct. Altogether, NATO's narrative attempted multiple tasks in the mission, mitigating criticism, priming audiences for a specific view of post-NATO Libya, and highlighting international partnerships.

OUP's story serves an important purpose outside the mission, however, and offers theoretical insight about the power of strategic narrative. In many ways, the alliance's entire narrative can be seen as a reply to broader international anxieties about NATO's relevance in an evolving global security environment. As mentioned throughout this thesis, NATO continues to face criticism from scholars and member states about member buy-in, decreased defense spending, and diplomatic chaffing over burden sharing.

Importantly, OUP's story worked to indirectly mitigate these issues by operating at the level of morality and ethics. Emphasizing a shared repulsion over Qadhafi's disregard for human rights also implicitly stresses the common values of NATO members, recalling a sense of nostalgia for members' transatlantic bond, history, and community of values. Importantly, an emphasis on morality shifts attention away from often unflattering discussions about contributions, while also persuading through the human drama of morals, ethics, and international obligation. Through this process, NATO attempted to carve a new international role for itself as a quick, flexible, and caring responder, a hub of global cooperation. We therefore see that a narrative can be relevant not just during a mission but also afterwards, contributing to a broader organizational story and identity that outlives any particular mission. More research will be needed to build off this case study and see how NATO continues its organizational storytelling in newer missions.

NATO's story also speaks to broader understandings of narrative as a purposeful mode of communication and public diplomacy, one that can marshal cognitive and emotive modes of information. Indeed, this thesis suggests that narrative's significant potential in public diplomacy should be recognized. Narrative theory highlights the special role that stories play in our everyday lives, structuring and giving meaning to our experiences, personally and in groups. NATO's story can also be seen as a mode of organizational rhetoric that structured information purposefully and selectively with domestic and international audiences in mind. Indeed, by focusing on the purpose and context of NATO's communications, we gain a richer understanding of the role stories play in the alliance's broader social, cultural, and political ecology. By employing narrative strategically as a means towards unity, NATO could perform its other functions

as a sociocultural actor. This case study further points out that our studies of NATO communications must always be cognizant of its identity as an alliance, managing the aspirations, idiosyncrasies, and practical interests of 28 different member states.

This research offers two significant contributions: it sees narrative as a potent mode of public diplomacy, and through its case study highlights NATO's social role. These objectives were based on my understanding of the greatest gaps in the scholarship on NATO and public diplomacy, and of my appreciation for the story that NATO's public diplomacy had to tell. Of course, as a scholar of narrative I must also acknowledge my own role in weaving a story and choosing this mode of analysis. Accordingly, I hope that NATO's public diplomacy in OUP and in future missions will receive more scholarly attention, adding multiple interpretations of NATO's communications.

As political and organizational actors grow interconnected and communicate to global audiences, a better understanding of narrative's role in joint communication efforts is useful and relevant. It is also clear that more research is needed to understand how storytelling figures into the complex process of building legitimacy and justifying the use of force. Given its basic social role and easy incorporation of strategic and ethical bents, narrative merits a stronger place in international relations, military, and communications scholarship. Political and military actors wield great political power, but they are also ultimately social actors through the stories they tell, justifying the use of force, lessening debate, and quieting the opinions of local citizens and global publics. In light of the dramatic expenditures and potential sacrifices or casualties, the high stakes of international conflict, we cannot afford to exclude narrative from the conversation.

Appendices

Appendix A: Breakdown of Analyzed Documents

Total documents in OUP newsroom: 140

Total documents read: 129

- 128 published before or during the mission
- Also read “Misrata Celebrates” (Life in Libya document) published 3 November
- Total of 129 documents read

Total documents analyzed: 108/129

Total pages analyzed: 316 pages

Breakdown of documents by type and in chronological order:

[a] = analyzed

[na] = not analyzed

Press Briefings:

35/35 analyzed

Total of 262 pages of documents analyzed

[a] “Joint press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 31 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Joint press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 5 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Joint press briefing on events concerning Libya.” NATO, 8 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Joint press briefing on events concerning Libya.” NATO, 12 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 19 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 26 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 29 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 10 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 13 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 17 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Press briefing on Libya.” NATO, 20 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 27 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 31 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press conference by the NATO Secretary General." NATO, 6 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 10 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 14 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 17 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 21 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 28 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 7 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 12 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 19 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 26 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 2 August 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 9 August 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 16 August 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 23 August 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 30 August 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 6 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 13 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 22 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 27 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 11 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.
- [a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 18 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Press briefing on Libya." NATO, 24 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

Secretary General Statements:

14/14 analyzed

Total of 6 pages of documents analyzed

[a] "Statement by the Secretary General on the Libya arms embargo." NATO, 22 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Secretary General's statement on no-fly zone over Libya." NATO, 23 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Secretary General's statement on Libya no-fly zone." NATO, 24 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Statement by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Libya." NATO, 27 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Comments by NATO Secretary General on incident in Brega to NATO TV." NATO, 8 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Statement by the Secretary General on Qadhafi threat toward Italy." NATO, 30 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Statement by the NATO Secretary General on the extension of the mission in Libya." NATO, 1 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Secretary General's statement on International Criminal Court decision on Qadhafi indictment." NATO, 27 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Statement by NATO Secretary General after meeting with delegation of the Libyan Transitional National Council." NATO, 13 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Statement by the NATO Secretary General on the situation in Libya." NATO, 22 August 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Secretary General statement on NAC decision to extend Libya mission." NATO, 21 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Statement by the NATO Secretary General on Libya." NATO, 20 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Statement by the NATO Secretary General on the liberation of Libya." NATO, 23 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Secretary General statement on end of Libya mission." NATO, 28 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

Diplomatic or Political News Stories:

17/17 analyzed

Total of 15 pages of documents analyzed

[a] "London agreement sends strong message, says NATO Secretary General." NATO, 29 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO and the African Union discuss solutions to Libya crisis." NATO, 5 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "The Contact Group needs to respond to the legitimate demands of the Libyan people, says NATO Secretary General." NATO, 13 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO to maintain high operational tempo as long as necessary in Libya." NATO, 14 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "In Berlin, NATO allies and Partners show unity and resolve on all fronts." NATO, 14-15 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Rasmussen: 'NATO will keep up military pressure while political efforts are stepped up.'" NATO, 5 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO and EU consult on Libyan crisis." NATO, 6 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO and the African Union pursue dialogue on Libya." NATO, 31 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO and partners will stay the course on Libya." NATO, 8 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Secretary General praises NATO military on the conduct of the operation Unified Protector." NATO, 8 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Secretary General at the International Contact Group for Libya in Istanbul: NATO remains committed to protect the Libyan people." NATO, 15 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "We will complete our mission, NATO Secretary General says." NATO, 1 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Progress in Libya irreversible, NATO Secretary General says in New York." NATO, 20 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Ministers determined to pursue operation in Libya as long as threats persist.” NATO, 6 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Speech by Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee.” NATO, 8 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “North Atlantic Council Statement on Libya.” NATO, 21 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO Secretary General makes historic Libya trip.” NATO, 31 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

Operational News Stories

29/50 analyzed

Total of 18 pages of documents analyzed

[na] “NATO ships move to enforce UN arms embargo.” NATO, 23 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO Transfer of command is on track.” JFC NAPLES – Allied Joint Force Command Naples. NATO, 29 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] “NATO takes command in Libya air operations.” NATO, 31 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO determined to protect the people of Libya.” JFC NAPLES – Allied Joint Force Command Naples. NATO, 6 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] “NATO looking into strike allegations in Brega.” NATO, 7 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] “Sarir Oil Fields fires a ‘direct result’ of Regime’s attacks.” JFC NAPLES – Allied Joint Force Command Naples. NATO, 7 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO strikes Gaddafi forces.” NATO, 9 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO strikes hit Gaddafi forces around Adjabiya and Misratah.” NATO, 10 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO strikes further reduce pro-Gaddafi forces capacity.” NATO, 11 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO aircraft destroys tanks in the area of Zintan.” NATO, 12 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO aircraft destroys tanks near Misrata." NATO, 12 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO strikes ammunition bunkers near Tripoli." NATO, 14 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO pounds Qadhafi regime Command and Control centres." NATO, 19 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO advises civilians to avoid regime forces." NATO, 20 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO searches oil tanker Anwaar Libya." NATO, 21 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Predator drones strike Qadhafi forces." NATO, 23 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO delays airstrike, asks civilians to move away from military installments." NATO, 24 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO keeps up the pressure." NATO, 25 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "F-16 aircraft incident upon landing at Sigonella." NATO, 27 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "Mines discovered in the approaches to Misrata." NATO, 29 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO strikes command and control facility in Tripoli." NATO, 1 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO mine-hunters sweep approaches to Misrata harbor." NATO, 2 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO strikes destroy mobile rocket launchers and missiles." NATO, 7 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO hits command and control bunkers in Tripoli." NATO, 12 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO ships thwart attack on Misrata harbour." NATO, 12 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO responds to migrant distress call." NATO, 12 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "Brega Airstrike." NATO, 13 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO Maritime assets thwart another attack by pro-Qadhafi forces." NATO, 16 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO targets Libyan Navy in Tripoli, Al Khums and Sirte." NATO, 20 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO strikes Pro-Qadhafi vehicle storage facility in Tripoli." NATO, 24 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO strikes pro-Qadhafi ammunition storage facility in Waddan." NATO, 29 May 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO attack helicopters increase pressure on Qadhafi regime." NATO, 4 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO strike pro-Qadhafi intelligence headquarters in Tripoli." NATO, 6 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO continues to increase pressure on Qadhafi Regime in Tripoli." NATO, 6 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO engages pro-Qadhafi forces on north-west coast of Libya." NATO, 12 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] "NATO attack helicopters destroy pro-Qadhafi military equipment." NATO, 14 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Incident involving opposition forces on 16 June 2011." NATO, 18 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Allegations of civilian casualties in Tripoli on 19 June 2011." NATO, 19 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO acknowledges civilian casualties in Tripoli strike." NATO, 19 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Strikes Military Command and Control Node." NATO, 20 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO Strikes Key Command & Control Nodes in Brega." NATO, 24 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "NATO tackles threat of attacks in western Libya." NATO, 1 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] “NATO cuts off pro-Qadhafi access to fuel in Brega.” NATO, 6 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO targets Qadhafi regime missile launchers near Tawurgha.” NATO, 9 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] “NATO forces continue to remove threats against civilians.” NATO, 17 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[na] “NATO conducts coordinated strikes in Tripoli.” NATO, 18 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO strikes Libyan state TV satellite facility.” NATO, 30 July 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “NATO strikes protect civilians in Sirte.” NATO, 24 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Last Air Mission of Unified Protector concluded.” NATO, 31 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “‘We answered the call’ – the end of Operation Unified Protector.” NATO, 31 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

Life in Libya Documents:

8/8 analyzed

Total of 10 pages of documents analyzed

[a] “Libya: The mood on the streets.” NATO, 15 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Libya: Protecting Tripoli with care and precision.” NATO, 23 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Taking to the Airwaves.” NATO, 30 September 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “For Qadhafi – the writing is on the wall.” NATO, 13 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Securing Libya’s weapons.” NATO, 19 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Life after Qadhafi.” NATO, 24 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Returning to school.” NATO, 27 October 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] “Misrata celebrates.” NATO, 3 November 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

Transparency Documents:

5/5 analyzed

Total of 5 pages of documents analyzed

[a] "NATO Arms Embargo against Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR." Fact sheet, NATO, 25 March 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "No-fly zones explained." NATO, 1 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "The arms embargo explained." NATO, 11 April 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Minimising the impact of the Libyan operation on merchant shipping." NATO, 23 June 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

[a] "Operation Unified Protector: Faces of the mission." NATO, 8 August 2011. Web. 8 March 2014.

Appendix B: Timeline of Operation Unified Protector

Mid-February 2011: Anti-regime protests begin in Libya; Qadhafi regime begins crackdowns

26 February: United Nations (UN) Security Council passes Resolution 1970; demands an end to violence and censorship, and puts in place arms embargo, travel ban, and asset freeze on regime

5 March: The National Transitional Council (NTC) holds its first meeting in Benghazi

17 March: UN Security Council passes Resolution 1973; demands ceasefire to protect civilians, excluding foreign occupation, and mandates no-fly zone over the region

19 March: US-led coalition mission Odyssey Dawn begins

27 March: NATO agrees to take over all UN-mandated military operations in Libya

29 March: The International Contact Group for Libya created in London to support the overthrow of the Qadhafi regime

31 March: NATO undertakes sole command of UN mandate through Operation Unified Protector (OUP)

14 April: NATO foreign ministers and six operational partners meet in Berlin to affirm commitment to the mission

29 April: Mines intended to disrupt humanitarian efforts discovered by NATO in Misrata port

1 June: NATO partners agree to extend OUP for another 90 days at the end of June

4 June: Attack helicopters used by NATO forces for the first time

17 June: NATO strike hits opposition patrol forces mistaken for regime forces

19 June: NATO weapons failure on military missile strike results in civilian casualties

20 June: NATO strike on command and control node results in unconfirmed civilian casualties

27 June: Colonel Muammar Qadhafi indicted by International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity

30 June: NATO strikes Libyan TV satellite facility to prevent incitements of acts of violence

15 July: The International Contact Group for Libya recognizes the NTC as the legitimate representative of Libyans

20-22 August: Libyan rebels gain control of Tripoli

16 September: UN Security Council passes Resolution 2009; establishes a support mission to the region, lifts portions of the arms embargo and asset freeze, and calls on the NTC to protect civilians

21 September: North Atlantic Council decides to extend the mission

20 October: Qadhafi killed during Battle of Sirte

21 October: North Atlantic Council takes preliminary decision to end OUP by 31 October

31 October: Conclusion of OUP

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