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# American and Canadian Counterinsurgency Strategies in Afghanistan

Federmán Rodríguez

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*I would like to dedicate this book to my wife María Alejandra and my son Jerónimo, who have always been my genuine sources of inspiration.*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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

|          |                                                          |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| IPS      | Canada's International Policy Statement                  |
| IR       | International Relations                                  |
| ISAF     | International Security Assistance Force                  |
| ISI      | Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate                  |
| ISR      | Surveillance and Reconnaissance                          |
| JTF-AFG  | Joint Task Force Afghanistan                             |
| KFOR     | Kosovo Force                                             |
| KPRT     | Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team                  |
| MP(s)    | Member(s) of Parliament                                  |
| NDP      | New Democratic Party                                     |
| OECD     | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development   |
| OEF      | Operation Enduring Freedom                               |
| OMLT     | Operational Mentor Liaison Team                          |
| OPB      | Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer               |
| PRT      | Provincial Reconstruction Team                           |
| PRTs     | Provincial Reconstruction Teams                          |
| RCMP     | Royal Canadian Mounted Police                            |
| RMA      | Revolution in Military Affairs                           |
| RoCK     | Representative of Canada in Kandahar                     |
| S&R      | Stabilization & Reconstruction                           |
| Sat-A    | Strategic Advisory Team                                  |
| SCO      | Shanghai Cooperation Organization                        |
| SFOR     | NATO-led Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina   |
| SIGAR    | Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction |
| SIPRI    | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute         |
| TFK      | Task Force Kandahar                                      |
| U.S.     | United States                                            |
| UAVs     | Unmanned Aerial Vehicles                                 |
| UN       | United Nations                                           |
| UNPROFOR | United Nations Protection Force                          |
| USAID    | United States Agency for International Development       |
| USCETCOM | Commander of the United States Central Command           |
| WMD      | Weapons of Mass Destruction                              |
| WoT      | War on Terrorism                                         |

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction

On August 30, 2021, the Biden administration completed the U.S. troops' final withdrawal from Afghanistan to honour the agreement between the Trump administration and the Taliban, concluding "America's longest war" (Biden, 2021). Over twenty years passed since American and Canadian forces arrived in Afghanistan to start the War on Terrorism (WoT) and, during this period, there has been an enormous controversy about the nature and the scope of the intervention. Amidst this controversy, this book aims to unravel a strategic puzzle: why and how the United States and Canada adopted similar engagement levels, especially similar counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns, between 2006 and 2011. During this time, the United States and Canada adopted similar engagement levels by fighting against insurgent groups, seeking the maintenance of stabilized areas by mentoring Afghan forces, and investing in infrastructure and governance. These goals, which corresponded to the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components, entailed sending troops and civilian officials to a war zone and committing financial resources (see Canada, Department of National Defence, 2008: Chapter 1, Section 1, 103; Clinton, 2014: 136; United States, Department of the Army, 2006: 1-121-1-136).

The similarity of American and Canadian engagements constitutes a puzzle according to the expectation that countries with different relative standings in the international system are meant to adopt different foreign and security policies. Indeed, this expectation was met historically. Although both countries were like-minded allies conceiving communism as an existential threat during the Cold War, they assumed different levels of engagement to deal with it, which was the result in part of their ostensibly dissimilar power positions. Specifically, the United States, as a great power, carried out containment, deterrence, and counterinsurgency, which entailed long-term efforts and massive mobilization of resources (see Gaddis, 1982; Kennan, 1951; Rich, 2014). For its part, Canada, as a middle power, undertook mainly peacekeeping operations, which often implied short-term efforts and logistical restrictions on already limited military capabilities (see Keating, 1993; Murray & McCoy, 2010: 171–188).

What is more, since the United States managed to hold a top-rank position within the international system by excelling in all state capability components, it was willing and able to project its power globally and shape the international order (Ikenberry et al., 2009: 4; Waltz, 1979: 131). For its part, Canada placed in a middle rank between the top-tier powers, particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, but also the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan and probably China, and the small states (Dewitt & Kirton, 1983: 22–23). Based on this structural condition, Canada developed a relatively independent foreign policy, unlike those countries placed at the bottom of the ranking. Yet, its foreign and security policy solely aimed to maintain the international order as promoted by the United States (Kirkey & Hawes, 2015: 150).

However, comparing American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the post-Cold War period implies modifying the comparative analysis of these policies. Despite their different power resources, the United States and Canada have shared strategic objectives in some theatres of operations, such as the Gulf War (1991), Somalia (1992–1993), Bosnia (1992–1995), and the military intervention in Kosovo (1999). Among these theatres of operations, the Afghanistan intervention—specifically the period between 2001 and 2014 when these countries fought together, is probably the best fit in this tendency. During this intervention, the Bush administration, on the American side, and the Martin and Harper administrations, on the Canadian side, adopted

comparable strategies, especially at the moment when the United States and Canada replaced Counterterrorism (CT) and Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R), undertaken between 2001 and 2005, respectively, by Counterinsurgency (COIN), carried out between 2006 and 2011. In this regard, both countries, following different foreign and security policies during the early years of the intervention, found themselves embracing increased similar levels of engagement during the late years. To be sure, during these years, the United States and Canada mobilized military and civilian resources based on a whole-of-government approach to conduct similar COIN campaigns, which contrasted with their more modest foreign and security policies during the early years of the intervention.<sup>1</sup>

By foreign and security policy, this study means a particular public policy that consists of those strategies, actions, and decisions that are made by governments to conduct their nation's interactions with external entities to address mainly foreign threats faced by their nation or to contribute to peace and international security. Unlike defence policy, it entails mobilizing both military and civilian resources.<sup>2</sup> By engagement levels during the intervention, this book considers the changing scope of American and Canadian intervention in terms of resource deployment, the incorporation of a long-term approach and risk escalation to civilian officers and troops.

With these definitions in mind, this book's primary argument is that the United States and Canada adopted relatively similar foreign and security policies, especially similar engagement levels, during the Afghanistan intervention from 2006 to 2011 due to three factors; namely: (a) a permissive strategic environment; (b) comparable justifications to intervene and beliefs about the strategies required to achieve American and Canadian goals in Afghanistan; and (c) similar abilities to mobilize domestic resources. This study is relevant because it refers to a specific theatre of operations where American and Canadian foreign and security policies converged significantly. Such a convergence was not necessarily unexpected, taking into account the historical record of these policies during the 1990s. However, such military intervention contrasted with their sharp disagreements on other contemporary security issues, such as the 2003 Iraq War, the North American common security perimeter, and the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense (Sands, 2008: 103–117; Sokolsky & Lagassé, 2005–2006: 15–29).

Furthermore, this study is needed because it constitutes an alternative view to three dominant theses in the literature, which are incomplete.

The first thesis argues that the degree of similarity since 2006 resulted from Canadian subordination to American interests—the bandwagon-effect thesis.<sup>3</sup> The second thesis holds that it resulted from the Canadian need for compensating its decision not to intervene in Iraq—the compensation thesis. Finally, the third thesis affirms that the significant role played by the Canadian military interested in making the strategy more aggressive, as well as honouring the NATO alliance, conducted Canada to embrace the same strategic goals as advanced by the United States—the military ascendancy thesis. Such explanations are incomplete because they focus more on the overall Canadian decision to intervene in Afghanistan than on the international and domestic strategic environment informing Canadian foreign and security policy. These explanations also prevent the analysis from finding answers from the perspective on both the American and Canadian sides by conducting a comparative analysis.

Beginning with Chapter 2, this study explains how American and Canadian foreign and security policies become similar between 2006 and 2011. As mentioned, this similarity was the result of several factors. Apart from defying the above-mentioned theses, this argument challenges the tendency in the literature to address systemic, ideational, and institutional factors separately in explaining these countries' engagement in Afghanistan. Also, it questions the propensity of security studies to skip countries with different capabilities, even if they behave similarly. With this consideration in mind, this chapter provides a three-step research design based on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy to address the effects of the factors above on American and Canadian foreign and security policies.

Chapter 3 explains the strategic environment in which the United States and Canada's decisions took place. This chapter argues that unipolarity, which constituted the international system's predominant systemic condition during the time the coalition forces performed the Afghanistan intervention, offered a high room for manoeuvre for both the United States as the sole great power and Canada as a U.S. ally. Specifically, critical conditions to enjoy the freedom of action to conduct their preferred foreign and security policies were met during the intervention. Firstly, no rival, such as China and Russia, attempted to balance the U.S.-led NATO campaign. Secondly, alliance politics became increasingly significant as the start of the Iraq War forced the United States to depend more on the division of labour with its allies to conduct the Afghanistan intervention. These conditions allowed the United States and Canada

to adopt offensive dominance and transition from flocking around the sole great power to adopting an opportunistic foreign policy, respectively. However, the Afghan irregular warfare constituted a restrictive strategic environment that paved the way for both countries to operationalize their foreign and security policies as irregular warfare strategies. These strategies looked like consequential responses to al Qaeda's transformation, the emergence of the Afghan insurgency and the historical, institutional, and socio-economic factors conducive to this insurgency.

Chapter 4 examines the American and Canadian FPEs' belief systems and how they brought about similar foreign and security policies as of 2006. Specifically, this chapter argues that the United States and Canada, based on their executive's belief system, operationalized offensive dominance as CT and COIN, flocking as S&R, and opportunism as COIN. That is to say, amid the Afghan irregular war, the United States and Canada found themselves adopting comparable COIN strategies in operationalizing their offensive dominance and opportunistic foreign and security policies, respectively, between 2006 and 2011. This chapter also holds that this transition cannot be solely explained through their executives' principled beliefs, which refer to what they define as right and just in formulating foreign policy ends. After all, these beliefs were relatively constant during the intervention as both countries kept the same rationales during the intervention: protecting the American and Canadian people from attacks like 9/11, guaranteeing Afghan's security and quality of life and maintaining the international order. To examine the changing levels of American and Canadian engagements, this chapter devotes significant attention to explaining the evolution of American and Canadian causal beliefs, seen as the perceptions about the ideal means to achieve foreign policy ends. In doing so, this chapter shows that the American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs were critical to broadening their approaches to irregular warfare to respond to the Afghan insurgency's unexpected emergence in the south of the country as of 2005. The United States merged a narrow approach to CT, aimed at destructing and disrupting the Taliban and other insurgent groups, with a population-centred approach. Canada linked a moderate-risk approach to S&R, aimed at focusing on the factors conducive to terrorism, with an increased military engagement. For both of them, this transition came in the form of a selective—or limited—COIN strategy compared to a fully resourced COIN.

Chapter 5 examines the FPE's ability to mobilize resources and to pursue their specific strategic options within the American and Canadian political systems. In particular, this chapter argues that both the American and Canadian FPEs took advantage of their structural autonomy to implement their preferred security policies. Such autonomy allowed them to control the public message about the intervention. American FPE went public, whereas the Canadian FPE went silent when both decided to increase their commitment levels. The former made high-profile public speeches to obtain support from the public and the legislature, whereas the latter stopped talking about the intervention to avoid a meaningful debate. Even if these executives adopted different communication strategies, both managed comparable fiscal resources to undertake their COIN strategy. The United States and Canada's fiscal resources were undoubtedly different in absolute terms. However, a percentage analysis of fiscal resource distribution shows the similarity of American and Canadian resources-extraction capabilities to carry out the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' components of the COIN strategy.

The concluding chapter uses a process-tracing methodology to consider the interaction of all factors explained in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. In considering these pieces together, this chapter offers compelling empirical evidence to challenge the three alternative theses in the literature explaining the similarity of American and Canadian engagement levels in Afghanistan: the bandwagon-effect, compensation, and military ascendancy theses. What is more, a process-tracing methodology allows us to consider factors occurring simultaneously in American and Canadian sides to explain the similarity mentioned above.

## NOTES

1. American and Canadian high levels of engagement in Afghanistan since 2006 was widely documented. On the American side, see Gaddis (2002: 50–57), Cornish (2009), Russell (2014), Ryan (2014), and Rich (2014). On the Canadian side, see Moens (2008: 569–586), Murray and McCoy (2010: 171–188), Chapin (2010: 189–199), and Marten (2010: 214–236). On a comparative perspective, see Auerswald and Saideman (2012: 86–103 and 127–137).
2. This definition seeks to combine conceptual elements offered by several works (Bosold & Hynek, 2010: xiii–xv; Dueck, 2006: 12; Hudson, 2016: 14; Velásquez, 2009: 156).

3. Bandwagoning means that weaker states throw in their lot with stronger states in the hope of getting future benefits, which would entail subordinating the interests of the former to the latter. This term has been traditionally opposed to balancing, seen as a strategy aimed at preventing anyone power from achieving dominance (Hansen, 2011: 24; Mearsheimer, 2014: 139; Waltz, 1979: 126).

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## Countries with Different Material Capabilities Behaving Similarly

In *Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth Waltz, one of the most influential theorists within the field of International Relations (IR), sought to explain “why states similarly placed [in the international system] behave similarly despite their internal differences” (Waltz, 1979: 72).<sup>1</sup> Waltz addressed this puzzle by focusing solely on great powers, since he argued that the analysis of their relative power allows the analyst to explain the international system’s core structure. This process yielded a theory of the international system focused on the arrangement and relative power of its central units. Still, Waltz’s theoretical puzzle, which brought about the core assumptions of structural realism, would suggest three others, namely, (a) why states *differently* placed in the international system behave *differently*; (b) why states *similarly* placed behave *differently*; and (c) why states *differently* placed behave *similarly*.

The first puzzle could be addressed as a logical inference of Waltz’s theory. Great powers, major powers, middle powers, and minor powers behave and define their strategic objectives differently due to their different relative capabilities. The second puzzle has given rise to extensive theorizing among realists aimed at providing foreign policy explanations. While Waltz developed a theory of international politics to explain the international constraints that apply to all states, neoclassical realists have

provided explanations that apply to particular states by addressing their internal characteristics (see Waltz, 1996: 54–55). The third puzzle has not been explored at all, even though existing foreign policy explanations, mainly those provided by neoclassical realism, constitute a solid ground to address it. The present study seeks to address the third theoretical puzzle as it attempts to explain the similarity of Canadian and American foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention after the 9/11 attacks. That is to say, it aims to explain why two states *differently* placed in the international system behaved *similarly*.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section “[Canadian and American Interventions in Afghanistan: The Strategic Context \(2001–2014\)](#)” summarizes the strategic context in which Canadian and American intervention in Afghanistan took place. Section “[Countries with Similar Foreign and Security Policies but with Dissimilar Power Positions: The Point of Departure for the Research](#)” examines how such policies became similar during the intervention, establishing the year 2006 as the tipping point, which is the point of departure for the research. Section “[Intellectual Justification and Literature Review](#)” addresses the two primary gaps in the literature that this study seeks to fill. The first gap derives from the tendency of the literature on Canadian and American foreign policy to address the position in the international distribution of power, foreign policy executive perceptions, and domestic institutions of both countries separately in explaining each country’s engagement in Afghanistan. The second gap is linked to the tendency of security studies literature to skip countries with different capabilities, even if they behave similarly. The final section explains this book’s three-step research design, which is informed by a neoclassical realist foreign and security policy analysis.

## CANADIAN AND AMERICAN INTERVENTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN: THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT (2001–2014)

One of the most critical milestones in the recent history of American and Canadian foreign and security policies has been the War on Terrorism (WoT) and its subsequent implementation during the Afghanistan intervention between 2001 and 2014. Regarding the WoT, both the United States and Canada adopted similar security strategies to take action at the domestic, regional, and international levels. At the domestic and regional levels, both countries adopted comparable anti-terrorist legislation and institutional efforts to transform homeland security, emergency

preparedness, intelligence, law enforcement, and border security policies (Clarkson & Banda, 2003: 5; Raj, 2007: 158–157; Sands, 2008: 110). At the international level, both countries considered not only terrorism as a direct threat to their national security, but also that failed states should be reconstructed to prevent them from being safe havens for terrorist groups. About the Afghanistan intervention, it can be seen as the international component of the WoT, which both countries aimed to advance, particularly considering that after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Afghan Taliban regime and al Qaeda became one of the most significant threats for both countries (On the American side, see The White House, 2002, 2010. On the Canadian side, see DND, 2008: 6; Government of Canada, 2005b: 4–5, 8; 2013: 6).

During the intervention, the United States assumed most of the operations waiting for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan, to advance throughout the country. Once the alliance named a different lead nation for a regional command, the United States took over the Regional Command East's responsibility (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 32). For its part, Canada not only was one of the first nations—after the United Kingdom—to support the U.S.-led intervention but also to uphold the idea that such a response could be more efficient if NATO replaced the UN mandate. Among the roles it took over within the ISAF, Canada changed its mission in scope and intensity, from its participation in the warfighting mission from October 2001 to summer 2002, to the Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R) mission in Kabul between 2003 and 2005, and the military operation in Kandahar between 2005 and 2011, and the NATO Training Mission between 2011 and 2014. One of the most notable roles played by Canada was certainly to lead the Regional Command South (Boucher & Roussel, 2008: 273; Moens, 2008: 571).<sup>2</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that the Afghanistan intervention and the country's intended reconstruction were undertaken with the collaboration of several actors, conducted in different stages, and justified under distinct mandates. On the one hand, the actors that performed the intervention were the NATO and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council members, as well as the United Nations (UN), the European Union, and some non-governmental organizations which undertook “complementary missions in support of reconstruction” (Yost, 2014: 138). On the other hand, the intervention evolved through four critical transitions depending on its mandate's nature. First, in late 2001, under Operation Enduring Freedom

(OEF), the United States led a coalition to overthrow the Taliban regime and dismantle al Qaeda operatives. Secondly, at the end of 2001, under the UN auspices, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was constituted with a narrow mandate to provide security in Kabul and help the Afghan people develop government capacities. Thirdly, once ISAF became a NATO mission in 2003, the operation began to spread its coverage and mission by addressing the entire country and including security, reconstruction, development, and governance objectives (Yost, 2014: 135–136). Such an operation implied progressively deploy five regional commands between 2004 and 2011, starting with Kabul in the north and advancing in “a series of counterclockwise steps around the country” (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 32; see also Yost, 2014: 135–154). Finally, ISAF ceased combat operations in 2014, leaving some troops to advise and train the reconstructed Afghanistan government’s forces exclusively. Discussed since 2009, when President Obama announced the U.S. withdrawal during NATO’s 2010 Lisbon Summit, this mission was assumed under the mandate of Operation Resolute Support (Kilcullen, 2015: 18–19).

### COUNTRIES WITH SIMILAR FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICIES BUT WITH DISSIMILAR POWER POSITIONS: THE POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR THE RESEARCH

Much has been written about the United States and Canada’s roles as a great power and a middle power and how these roles have impacted their foreign and security policies. Arguably, this substantial literature makes a detailed discussion about such roles unnecessary (On the Canadian side, see Chapnik, 2005; Gelber, 1946; Mackay, 1992. On the American side, see Layne, 2006: Chapters 3–5; Dueck, 2006: Chapter 4; Waltz, 1993: 45–50). Suffice it to say that after the Second World War and during the Cold War, the United States became a great power and thus felt responsible for international peace and security globally for the first time in its history (Aron, 1960: 1). In particular, it undertook containment, deterrence, and counterinsurgency to achieve such a goal. For its part, since the Lester B. Pearson years, Canada began to act as a middle power between large and minor powers. Even though Canadian leaders felt that their country had to take on significant responsibility in building a liberal-based international order, Canada could not commit militarily and economically to accomplish that goal as much as the United States and other

Western great powers (Holloway, 2006: 86–112). For this reason, Canada defined itself as a peacekeeper aimed at simply building confidence and monitoring agreements between parties in distinct international conflicts (Murray & McCoy, 2010: 172–177). To sum up, the United States and Canada followed different paths during the Cold War. Both were obsessed with stopping the spread of communism, yet the former followed the path of containment, deterrence, and counterinsurgency, whereas the latter followed that of peacekeeping.

During the post-Cold War period, however, the United States and Canada started to adopt similar strategic objectives. Both of these countries were in the 1991 Gulf War to support the UN Security Council resolutions aimed at liberating Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation (National Defence & Canadian Forces, 1997; Nye, 1991: 56–64). They were in Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) to ensure the Dayton Peace Accords' compliance between December 15, 1995, to December 20, 1996, and, then, continued participating in the Stabilization Force in this country (SFOR) from 1997 to 2014 (Bowman et al., 1998; Government of Canada, 2018).<sup>3</sup> The United States and Canada also contributed militarily and diplomatically to a large extent to resolving the Kosovo crisis during 1998 and 1999 (See Manulak, 2009: 565–581; Nardulli et al., 2002).

Among the post-Cold War military interventions, the Afghanistan intervention (2001–2014) is the one that best demonstrates how Canadian and American strategic objectives can converge. Both countries found themselves following the same path in deploying COIN strategies. This similarity occurred as a result of the progressive shift of their foreign and security policies. On the one hand, the Bush administration started its mandate by criticizing the Clinton administration's engagement with nation-building. However, after the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration started a CT operation in Afghanistan and, then in 2006, performed a COIN campaign. On the other hand, the Chrétien administration supported the US-led military intervention in Afghanistan, yet the NATO-led S&R mission framed its commitment in Kabul. However, once the Martin administration decided to focus its foreign and security policy on Kandahar, Canada began to adopt the same strategic objectives of COIN as advanced by the United States. This convergence undoubtedly deepened during the Harper administration. The following sections showcase the shift of American and Canadian foreign and security policies and their high degree of similarity during the Afghanistan intervention.

*The Early Years of the Afghanistan Intervention (2001–2005): Allies with Different Strategic Objectives*

Except for the Canadian participation in the warfighting mission under the U.S.-led OEF between October 2001 to November 2002, during the first years of the intervention, Canadian and American foreign and security policies were dissimilar (Government of Canada, 2014). The Bush and Chrétien administrations undertook CT and S&R operations, respectively, as opposed to COIN. On the one hand, although a rapid intervention of U.S. Special Forces, and CIA's Special Activities Division, collaborating with local forces led by warlords, resulted in the collapse of the Taliban regime, such a victory was incomplete: al Qaeda leaders managed to escape into Pakistan. At that moment, the United States started its CT campaign to defeat and dismantle al Qaeda and prevent Afghanistan from being a terrorist safe-haven (Kilcullen, 2015: 13). Specifically, during the Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld's years, the United States focused on undertaking kinetic counterterrorism operations and supporting the newly formed Afghan National Army (ANA). Not only did it mean that the focus of operations would be the enemy force rather than the population—the classical distinction between CT and COIN—but also it led to avoid deployment of a large number of troops, as well as commitments with nation-building initiatives—inevitably associated with a fully resourced COIN. After all, Rumsfeld aimed to get the United States out of Afghanistan as soon as possible and make the ANA responsible for the country's security, not to mention his intention to focus military forces on Iraq, while the ISAF was deployed across the country since 2003 (Kilcullen, 2015: 13–14; see also Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 88–90).

Above all, during the early years of the intervention, the American foreign policy executive (FPE) debated the utility of narrow and broad CT approaches. The former is synonymous with engagement in direct, lethal combat against terrorist groups, whereas the latter seeks to merge this combat with nation-building (Rane, 2007: 74–80; UN, 2000). President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice embraced the broad approach, whereas Secretary Rumsfeld promoted the narrow approach to CT (Bush, 2010: 205; Rice, 2011: 84, 91 and 148; Rumsfeld, 2011: 682–683). As this study will show, the narrow approach was dominant during this period.

On the other hand, after the 9/11 attacks, Canada became a security partner of the United States during the OEF. However, as a probable

result of the Tarnak Farm incident in which four Canadian soldiers died during a friendly fire with a U.S. fighter aircraft, the Chrétien administration narrowed its participation in Afghanistan to S&R operations in Kabul, one of the less dangerous places in the country. This decision entailed merely guaranteeing the city's surrounding security and monitoring the 2004 elections (Chapin, 2010: 194; Murray & McCoy, 2010: 177–178; see also Friscolanti, 2005). During this period, the Canadian FPE assessed the strategic benefits of low-risk and moderate-risk approaches to S&R. The former includes supporting demobilization, new armed forces, constitutional reforms, electoral elections, and economic reconstruction, whereas the latter entails combining these civilian operations with moderate warfighting missions (Sloan, 2016: 106).

The low-risk approach to S&R informed the Canadian FPE's interest in participating in the ISAF mission led by European Forces between 2001 and 2003 to support the Afghan Interim Authority (Graham, 2016: 225; UN Security Council, 2001). However, the United Kingdom did not consider the Canadian contribution necessary for the mission. In this regard, the Canadian FPE selected another option available: to join the U.S.-led OEF, which entailed adopting a moderate-risk approach to S&R by entering in Kandahar between October 2001 and November 2002 (Graham, 2016: 252; see also Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 16–17). After staying in Kabul between 2002 and 2005, Canada reaffirmed this approach again with the Martin Liberals' decision to go to Kandahar in 2005. That year, NATO kept broadening its mission to cover the country after the Afghan government proved incapable of keeping its authority beyond Kabul (See Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 32; Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 18–19; Yost, 2014: 135–154). However, the Kandahar decision paved the way for involving a high-risk approach that would come in the form of COIN. It is worth noting that both Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin complained about their successors' risk escalation. The former criticized the Martin Liberals' transition from the low- to the moderate-risk approach to S&R (Chrétien, 2007: 305) and the latter rejected the Harper Conservatives' decision to adopt a high-risk mission between 2006 and 2011 (Martin, 2008: 395).

*The Late Years of the Afghanistan Intervention (2006–2011):  
American and Canadian COIN Strategies*

During the late years of the Afghanistan intervention, the differences between the United States and Canada gradually lessened. Indeed, the Bush administration, and the Martin and Harper administrations adopted comparable strategies regarding COIN. Once Robert Gates became the U.S. Secretary of Defence on December 18, 2006, the Bush administration aimed to review its foreign policy towards Afghanistan. This review would inevitably keep the need for fighting against the Taliban and other insurgent groups, helping President Hamid Karzai to increase “the size and capabilities of the Afghan security forces [and] to work with [American] allies to strengthen the NATO force in Afghanistan.” These goals were critical components of the initial CT strategy. Nevertheless, three new objectives, all of them associated with COIN strategies, were introduced, namely, to “[a] to] improve provincial governance and develop Afghanistan’s—and to help develop Afghanistan’s rural economy [(b) to] reverse the increase in poppy cultivation that is aiding the Taliban [and (c)] to help President Karzai fight corruption” (The White House, 2007).

During the Obama administration, the FPE kept COIN’s primary goals. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pointed out, the American COIN strategy focused on fighting against the Afghan insurgency, maintaining stabilized areas and reconstructing and developing the country. These objectives corresponded to the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ COIN components. Together, these components would help disconnect insurgents from the population and win the latter’s hearts and minds (Clinton, 2014: 136; United States, 2006: 1–121 to 1–136). However, the American FPE discussed the utility of setting limits over the COIN strategy. Indeed, President Obama’s message started to turn to the assumption that the nation to be reconstructed by the United States should be his own (Obama, 2009a). After all, the 2008 fiscal crisis, along with the enormous economic cost of the Iraq War, calculated at about 2–3 trillion dollars, posed significant fiscal constraints (Bilmes, 2013; Stiglitz & Bilmes, 2008). Obsessed with limiting the military engagement, the Obama administration’s strategy in Afghanistan ended up looking more like a selective COIN strategy and, after 2011, as a narrow approach to CT than as a fully resourced COIN with a broad geographical scope. This administration’s selective COIN strategy referred to narrowing the theatre of operations, whereas its narrow approach to CT implied using firepower

and drone attacks to kill insurgents rather than conducting population security measures (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 100; Kilcullen, 2015: 17–18).

During the same period, the Martin Liberals and, above all, the Harper Conservatives led Canada to transition from a strategy heavily burdened with caveats to a more aggressive strategy, giving rise to a vast room for manoeuvre to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in conducting the operations in the field (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 127). Indeed, Canada ended up abandoning the strategic ends and means of a peaceful S&R mission by adopting those of a selective COIN strategy.

Under Prime Minister Martin, Canada framed its COIN strategy within the 3D approach to failed states. It established that “an integrated ‘3D’ approach, combining diplomacy, defence, and development, is the best strategy for supporting states that suffer from a broad range of interconnected problems” (Government of Canada, 2005b: 20). Such an approach, which was intended to project an international image of an autonomous agent with sufficient room for manoeuvre as to defining its strategic interests, resulted in justifying the decision to take command of the Kandahar PRT in August 2005. It was a significant decision not only for Canadians but also for the ISAF intervention as Kandahar had been one of the most dangerous and strategic provinces in Afghanistan. Not only had it been seized by the Taliban with an army of some 12,000 but its control, along with Panjawavi, had been considered the very heart of the ISAF’s strategy. In fact, without the control of Kandahar, the British and Dutch operations in Helmand and Uruzgan, contiguous to Kandahar, would not have mattered at the strategic and operative levels, and the new Afghan government would have fallen rapidly (Chapin, 2010: 195). Along with the engagement with intensive military operations, during the Martin years, Canada started to support the “Afghan government’s ability to protect and deliver services to the people of the province,” which would be continued during the Harper years (Manley et al., 2008: 23). Not only did Canada help to improve the size of ANA in Kandahar and the training of correction and police officers, but it also attempted to enhance the provincial economy through Dahla Dam Project aimed at improving irrigation and providing jobs in the short term (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 60–61). That is to say, the Canadian FPE adopted the same ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ COIN components as the United States.

Under the Harper Conservatives, Canadian COIN in Afghanistan was supported both financially and operationally. In the financial realm, the Harper administration allocated the highest percentage of the global defence spending to Afghanistan for a military operation in CAF operations history. The 5.2, 6.04, and 5.76% devoted to military operations in FY 2006–2007, 2007–2008, and 2008–2009 can be compared to the 4.61% allocated in FY 2003–2004. This percentage can also be compared to the 3.11% of 1999, when Canada participated in the Serbia bombing, and the 0.72% allocated to Balkan operations in 1996 (Perry, 2008: 703–725). In the strategic and tactical realms, the operation in Afghanistan demanded a total transformation of the *modus operandi* of the CAF, which had embraced traditional peacekeeping during the Cold War and active peacekeeping (or S&R objectives) during the Balkan Wars during the 1990s and the early years of Afghanistan intervention. Among these transformations, the Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) and the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT-A) were the most critical. On the one hand, the CEFCOM, imitating the U.S. systems of combatant commanders, was designed to allow the commanders in the field to act with greater flexibility, especially when reallocating the forces according to strategic and tactical demands on the ground was needed. On the other hand, SAT-A allowed CAF staff to advise and work with the Afghan government to make better decisions regarding the allocation of resources, which was essential to support COIN objectives (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 131; Marten, 2010: 221–223).

Nevertheless, as of 2011, the Harper administration decided to replace the high-risk COIN campaign with a training mission that lasted until 2014, when Canada withdrew its troops. In focusing solely on supporting the Afghanistan government and Afghan forces to assume full responsibility in their territory and undertaking development programs, this mission adopted a low-risk approach to S&R again. Besides focusing on the military training mission, Canada devoted attention to programs related to “Afghan children and youth; advancing security, the rule of law, and human rights; promoting regional diplomacy; and delivering humanitarian assistance” (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 41).

Drawing on the previous reasoning, this study can point out three aspects. Firstly, the United States replaced CT with a selective COIN strategy in conducting its intervention in Afghanistan. Canada did the same by replacing its S&R mission. In this regard, both countries found themselves carrying out similar COIN strategies and, therefore, similar

levels of engagement between 2006 and 2011. S&R, CT, and COIN entailed different degrees of engagement involving different ways of resource mobilization and time frames. S&R, the preferred strategy chosen by most countries that intervened in Afghanistan, was hand in hand with strict rules of engagement, implied logistical constraints on military deployments, and was often conducted with a time limit. CT was conducted with a high leeway in terms of engagement and military deployment rules but implied short-term measurements. COIN implied a mobilization of military and civilian resources based on a whole-of-government approach and entailed a long-term engagement. Figure 2.1 illustrates the variations of American and Canadian levels of engagement during the Afghanistan intervention between 2001 and 2014.

Secondly, despite their different places in the international system, both countries adopted relatively similar aggressive foreign and security policies, especially between 2006 and 2011, which constituted a turning point in attempting to compare such policies. From the Canadian perspective, above all, the intervention entailed a dramatic change, even a revolution, *vis-à-vis* its traditional image of a middle power, as

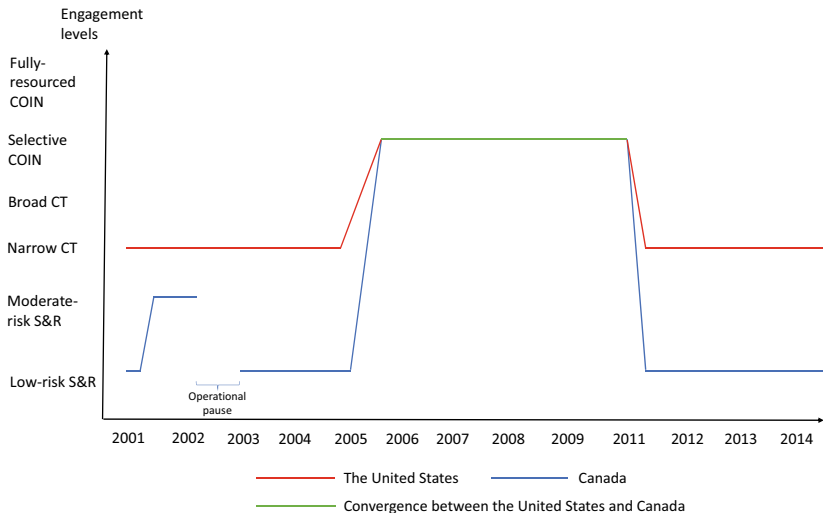


**Fig. 2.1** Convergence between the United States and Canada during the Afghanistan intervention (2001–2014)

well as the middle-power theory related to it. This middle-power theory suggests that despite its middle-rank position between great powers, major powers, and minor powers, Canada could work multilaterally to guarantee consensus-building and promote innovative solutions to global security problems, such as peacekeeping during the Cold War and the human security agenda in the 1990s. Despite its rank in the international system as measured in terms of the size of its population, army, the levels of its defence spending, and per capita income, among other items related to material capabilities, Canada could maintain the international order. The former—its rank—was known as *middlepowerhood*, whereas the latter—its ability to maintain the international order—was conceptualized as *middlepowermanship* (Nossal, 2010: 20–34). In Afghanistan, however, Canada showed to the world that middlepowerhood does not necessarily restrain Canadian foreign policy. In given circumstances, such as those conducive to the deployment to Kandahar, Canada can conduct strategies other than middlepowermanship and, accordingly, embrace strategies in the international security realm similar to those usually monopolized by great and major powers.

Thirdly, COIN strategies being conducted by the United States and Canada looked like a new generation of COIN, as compared to older COIN strategies, such as the doctrines of the *revolutionary war* and *national security state*. These doctrines, informing political counter-revolution strategies, aim to consolidate a militarized state to pursue political goals and suppress political contestation through an extensive intelligence network within psychological warfare. Other methods suggested by these doctrines included the declaration of emergencies, abrogation of constitutions, the employment of preventive detection, and the assassination of political opponents. In Afghanistan, in contrast, coalition forces' COIN strategies were much closer to the new approach to COIN, as being informed by broader projects of state-building and nation-building. This approach aims to dismantle insurgent groups and its social and political support by framing nationwide political and economic systems where the rooted contradictions between national governments and insurgencies are eliminated (Rich, 2014: 18–20).<sup>4</sup>

Above all, the COIN strategy being conducted in Afghanistan become a version of the population-centric as compared to the enemy-centric approach, as traditionally explained in the literature. With suggestive metaphors in mind, the former advocates for 'controlling the sea,' whereas the latter promotes 'draining the sea' in which insurgency

‘swims.’ It means that the enemy-centric approach considers that “brutality against civilian populations can be successfully pursued in counterinsurgency warfare and protracted wars of attrition to weaken the enemy quickly and end the conflict as soon as possible” (Paul et al., 2016: 1023). Meanwhile, the population-centric approach argues that “if the population and its environment are sufficiently controlled, the insurgents will be deprived of the support they need [...] bringing insurgency to an end” (Paul et al., 2016: 1022).<sup>5</sup> In Afghanistan, the population-centric approach was the primary benchmark for COIN operations as coalition forces sought not only to fight against the enemy, but they also attempted to maintain the stabilized areas and reconstruct and develop Afghanistan. As mentioned, these objectives constituted the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ components of COIN, seeking to “separate the population from the insurgents” and to “win hearts and minds” from the former (See Canada, 2008: Chapter 1, Sections 2.1, 2.103; Clinton, 2014: 136; United States, 2006: 1–121 to 1–136). However, as this book will argue later, COIN was conducted in some areas with a more modest scope, as originally raised by the above-mentioned approach.

## INTELLECTUAL JUSTIFICATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This book’s primary argument is that American and Canadian engagements in Afghanistan became similar due to systemic, ideational, and institutional factors. By offering evidence substantiating this argument, this book aims to fill gaps in the literature on Canadian and American intervention in Afghanistan and security studies. With some remarkable exceptions—for instance, Justin Massie’s (2013) neoclassical realist foreign policy analysis of the Canadian intervention in Afghanistan—the first body of literature addresses the relative power, leader perceptions, and domestic institutions of both countries separately in explaining the causes of such interventions, preventing it from achieving a better understanding of the intersection between such factors. The second body of literature tends to skip the comparison of countries with different positions in the international distribution of power, even if they behave similarly.

*Understanding the Intersection Between International Constraints,  
Domestic Institutions, and Perceptions*

Canadian and American foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention have been analysed from different perspectives. Some have evaluated how the United States and Canada's place in the global distribution of power or renewed international leadership have impacted their foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan (Ayres & MacDonald, 2012; Harvey, 2003; Kirkey & Ostroy 2010; McDonough, 2009; Moens, 2008; Murray & McCoy, 2010; Neack, 2003; Posen 2003; Quinn, 2008). Others have addressed how both countries' decision-makers assessed the terrorist threat posed by the Taliban regime and al Qaeda, as well as the underlying beliefs, values, challenges, means, and costs of the strategy implementation (Andres et al., 2005–2006; Biddle, 2005–2006; Boucher, 2009; Chapin, 2010; Dorn & Varey, 2008; Gammer, 2013; Hurst, 2005; Marten, 2010; McDonough, 2007; Monten, 2005; Mueller & Stewart, 2012; Nossal 2011; Perry, 2008; Swenson, 2017; Trager & Zagorcheva, 2005–2006). Some thinkers have sought to explain the role of domestic actors and political institutions concerning American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: Chapters 3–5; Boucher & Roussel, 2008; Eichenberg, 2005; Gammer, 2013; Marten, 2010).

Above all, the literature highlights some reasons aimed at explaining why Canada adopted an aggressive foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan as advanced by the United States. A significant number of studies suggest that Canadian strategic interests, in general, and in Afghanistan in particular, were highly conditioned by the Canada–U.S. interdependence in the form of defence agreements and bilateral trade. According to those studies, another factor conditioning Canadian foreign policy would be the unipolar distribution of power, favouring the United States and allegedly reducing Canadian room for manoeuvre. This is the bandwagon-effect thesis (Bercuson, 2003; Campbell, 2003; Clarkson & Banda, 2003; Holland, 2012: 51–64; Jockel & Sokolsky, 2005; Mason, 2003; Raj, 2007: 157–158; Rioux, 2002; see also Boucher, 2012; Bow & Lennox, 2008; Croci & Verdum, 2007; Sands, 2007; Tolazzi, 2012).

Others have highlighted the decline of Canadian liberal internationalism and peacekeeping operations and, consequently, the Canadian need for promoting NATO operations. In particular, some have stressed the remarkable roles played by the Canadian Department of National Defence

and General Rick Hillier, the former Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) of the CAF, obsessed with the strategic repositioning within the NATO intervention in Afghanistan. This is the military ascendancy thesis, which has been presented chiefly by Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang (2007: 188–196; see also Marten, 2010). Finally, the demonstration of solidarity with the United States in having rejected the Iraq invasion is another reason evoked to explain the Canadian rapprochement to the U.S. foreign and security policy. This is the compensation thesis (Chapin, 2010: 194; Jockel, 2014: 7; Saideman, 2016: 31).

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

Furthermore, the bandwagon-effect, military ascendancy, and compensation theses have some loopholes that make them inaccurate explanations of the high degree of similarity of American and Canadian intervention in Afghanistan. Firstly, the predominance of American influence on Canadian foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan was exaggerated (See Jockel, 2014: 6–7). The longstanding alliance with the United States and the U.S. agenda in Afghanistan indeed constituted central references for Canada in formulating its foreign and security policy towards that country. Yet, it does not mean that the United States would have been interested in exercising a high level of influence or that Canada would not have had concerns other than American interests. Both of those conditions would have been critical to underpin the bandwagon-effect thesis. On the one hand, the United States was focused on Iraq since 2003, which allowed the NATO members, including Canada, to enjoy more room for manoeuvre to conduct their preferred foreign objectives in Afghanistan, as well as to discuss with each other the best strategic

path for them at the margin of a distracted United States (Willis, 2012: 998). This is true even after the United States paid a renewed attention to Afghanistan in 2006 once Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was replaced by Robert Gates.

On the other hand, despite its alliance with the United States, Canada had in mind its alliance with European powers and the Atlantic Alliance during the entire intervention. As mentioned earlier, before deciding to join the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the Chrétien administration sought to be part of the European-led ISAF mission. Such an operation was less dangerous than OEF and fit better into Canadian goals at that moment as it was focused solely on S&R. However, the United Kingdom declined a Canadian contribution to the ISAF mission, which forced Canada ultimately to join the warfighting mission within OEF in 2002 (Massie, 2013: 279). Also, the decision to get into Kandahar in 2005/2006 *vis-à-vis* other provinces was based on the Canadian need to count on strategic partners in the South and NATO dynamics. Canada counted on the United States' support in the South but, above all, on the United Kingdom and the Netherlands as NATO members. With the latter two, Canada had built common strategic thinking since their deployments in the Balkans. Such a common understanding of threats and ways to deal with them, rather than American pressure, were critical to guarantee their joint deployment towards the south (Willis, 2012: 979–1000; see also Saideman, 2016: 35). Still, the most important reason, challenging the bandwagon-effect thesis, is that Canada considered Afghanistan as a “War for Prestige”<sup>6</sup> since 2005/2006 rather than a mere contribution to the U.S.-led War on Terror in Afghanistan (Chapter 4 will devote significant attention to address it in analysing Canadian perceptions of the Afghan irregular warfare).

Secondly, the military ascendancy thesis misses the point that Canadian policymakers were interested from the outset in increasing action in Central Asia, including a robust military engagement, in promoting NATO's Article 5 actively (Willis, 2012: 982). This article defines the principle of collective defense, meaning that an attack against one Ally may be regarded as an attack against all Allies. Such a thesis also brushes aside the point that civilians controlled the military by being responsible for the Afghanistan deployment's most critical strategic decisions. The Chrétien administration decided to go to Kandahar after the 9/11 attacks and then to move into Kabul. The Martin administration picked up Rick Hillier as Chief of the Defence Staff because his views on the CAF's

role were compatible with its understanding of the new “role of pride and influence” for Canada (Saideman, 2016: 37; see also Government of Canada, 2005a). The Harper administration decided to extend the mission twice and did not consider anyone’s feedback, including the military, to conduct a training mission between 2011 and 2014. To control the military, Harper also chose lesser vocal CDSs, as compared to Hillier, such as Walt Natyncsyk, Tom Lawson, and Jonathan Vance (Saideman, 2016: 98–99).

Finally, the compensation thesis leaves out two central points. On the one hand, Canada considered a potential, robust role in the ISAF mission simply because it was an appropriate mission for Canada, long before the United States started the Iraq War. On the other hand, as documented by Janice G. Gross and Eugene Lang, John McCallum, the Canadian Defence Minister (2000–2003) and Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. Secretary of National Defense (2001–2006) met together in June 2003 to address different aspects of the U.S.–Canada defence relationship, including their positions regarding the Afghanistan intervention and the Iraq invasion. Gross and Lang’s summary of the meeting clarifies that the United States considered the Canadian mission in Kabul good enough and deployment in Kandahar not completely necessary. That is to say, the compensation thesis misses the point that Canada’s decision to go into Kandahar was beyond American expectations (Gross & Lang, 2007: 50 and 182). Also, the United States “was not at all interested in a Canadian military contribution to the Iraq War” (Gross & Lang, 2007: 50) because Canada was already contributing indirectly to this war by providing naval vessels and aircraft (Willis, 2012: 984). In a nutshell, this thesis fails because there was nothing to compensate.

To fill the gaps in the literature and provide an alternative view to the mentioned-above theses, this research attempts to explain the intersection between international constraints, domestic mobilization of resources, and perceptions to understand the American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. What is more, by undertaking a comparison without overemphasizing the bandwagon-effect and military ascendancy theses and brushing aside the compensation thesis, this study attempts to go beyond the ideas of the “Americanization” of Canadian foreign policy and the syndrome of “parochialism” of the U.S. foreign policy regarding its Northern neighbour (see Sands, 2008: 103–117).

*Comparing Countries with Different Positions in the World Power Configuration*

Comparisons of state behaviour, especially in the terrain of international security in general and military interventions in particular, have tended to select countries with the same position in the configuration of power to evaluate their similar or different strategies (See, for instance, Brawley, 2009: 74–98; Mearsheimer, 2014; Posen, 1984; Schweller, 1998, 2004: 159–201, 2006; Waltz, 1993: 44–79; Wohlforth, 1993). Not surprisingly, within the existing literature, there have been scant attempts to compare Canadian and American foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan (See Auerswald & Saideman, 2012; Saideman, 2016: Chapter 2; Sloan, 2010). In terms of comparative political analysis, it can be consequently argued that such literature has privileged the “method of difference” rather than the “method of agreement”—in the familiar terms advanced by John Stuart Mill’s logic of comparison. That is to say, investigators on military interventions have explicitly or implicitly chosen “cases with similar general characteristics and different values on the study variable [foreign policy, strategy, military intervention or engagement levels]”—method of difference, and have brushed aside the selection of “cases with different general characteristics and similar values on the study variable”—method of agreement (Evera, 1997: 57). To fill the gap, this research seeks to compare a great power and a middle power with similar foreign and security policies during a specific time.

After considering the gaps in the literature, this chapter proceeds to address how neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, informing a three-step research design, makes sense to Chapters 3, 4, and 5’s research findings. Thus, the following section allows us to conceive neoclassical realism as a theoretical and methodological framework that helps explain the effects of systemic stimuli from the post-9/11 strategic environment, the FPE’s strategic beliefs and abilities to mobilize domestic resources on American and Canadian foreign and security policies. Above all, the following section helps us to understand how suitable neoclassical realism is to unravel this book’s puzzle.

## NEOCLASSICAL REALISM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This study selects neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy to unravel the puzzle of why and how the United States and Canada behaved similarly in Afghanistan. As mentioned, unravelling such a puzzle depends on addressing power, ideational, and institutional factors simultaneously and neoclassical realism constitutes a theory aimed at highlighting and intersecting these factors in a sophisticated manner (Rose, 1998: 146). Like a realist theory in the International Relations (IR) field, neoclassical realism explains state behaviour in terms of power capabilities, which is critical to deal with interstate competition operating under conditions of scarcity and anarchy (Schweller, 2003: 326). Scarcity means that the interstate competition looks like a zero-sum game, whereas anarchy entails the absence of a central authority willing and able to constrain state behaviour. Under these conditions, survival and self-help become the only possible state responses to international competition (Schmidt & Dunne, 2017: 104–106). Still, neoclassical realism explains state behaviour not only in terms of power resources but also in terms of leaders' perceptions and domestic politics (Schweller, 2003: 302 and 311), which help clarify why and how states with different power resources, like the United States and Canada, can conduct comparable foreign and security policies.

More precisely, neoclassical realism helps look into the causal mechanism that drove similar American and Canadian foreign and security policies by distinguishing between independent, intervening, and dependent variables. In this study, the independent variable corresponds to the level of permissiveness/restrictiveness offered by the strategic environment to the United States and Canada. The two intervening variables that, by definition, would limit, modify, leverage, or magnify the impact of the strategic environment's levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness on the United States and Canada's engagement levels are: (a) American and Canadian executives' belief systems and (b) these executives' ability to mobilize domestic resources (See Ripsman et al., 2016: Chapters 2–3).

The dependent variable refers to the changing levels of American and Canadian engagements during the Afghanistan intervention. As mentioned, the United States and Canada increased their engagement levels, with the former adopting CT and the latter embracing S&R between 2001 and 2005/2006 and both undertaking similar COIN strategies between 2006 and 2011. S&R, CT, and COIN entailed different degrees of engagement in involving distinct ways of resource

mobilization and time frames. This study also measures these engagement levels in terms of the military contingent deployed in Afghanistan as a percentage of their armies' total sizes, the number of fatalities during the intervention, and their involvement in Afghanistan's most dangerous areas. The remainder of this section addresses the three steps of analysis to understand the effects of the independent and intervening variables on the dependent variable.

### *Assessing the Effects of the Strategic Environment on Foreign Policy*

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

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

Regarding states' place in the international system, a neoclassical realist foreign policy analysis would suggest that great powers, major powers, middle powers, and minor powers found different levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness due to their distinct relative material capabilities. *Great powers* would enjoy the highest levels of permissiveness in the international system due to their ability to excel in all the items of material capabilities, including "size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence" (Waltz, 1979: 131). Among these dimensions should also be included the item of nuclear capability (Waltz, 2002: 351). *Major powers* would enjoy higher levels of permissiveness compared to other

states, excepting great powers, due to their ability to excel globally in at least one item of material capabilities. Major powers would also enjoy greater freedom of action to conduct their foreign and security policies due to their “sufficient capabilities to deter any state in the system [excepting great powers, plus] a plausible chance of avoiding defeat in an all-out defensive war against a potential aggressor” (Monteiro, 2011–2012: 14–15). *Middle powers* would enjoy relative levels of permissiveness resulting in “considerable capability and political independence” (Dewitt & Kirton, 1983: 22) due to their middle-rank position (especially in terms of defence spending and the size of their armies) between great powers and major powers, on the one hand, and minor countries, on the other hand. As mentioned, it would correspond to *middlepowerhood*, which could be combined with their *middlepowermanship*.

This study considers the United States and Canada’s place in the international system by comparing American and Canadian military capabilities among the coalition forces intervening in Afghanistan. Specifically, this study considers three items: their annual average defence spending, their defence spending rank, and their armies’ size. The figures used to analyse such material capabilities come from Stephen Saideman’s (2016: 16 and 22) data gathering and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)’s Military Expenditure Database for 2018 (SIPRI, 2019). Based on such capabilities, this research divided the coalition forces other than the United States as a great power into three categories: *major coalition forces* (United Kingdom, France, and Germany), *midrange coalition forces* (Australia and Canada), and minor coalition forces (the remaining coalition forces).

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

compare those foreign and security policies implemented by the United States as a great power and Canada as the U.S. ally.

In a multipolar structure—a system with at least three great powers—great powers would have to conduct moderate foreign policies to survive in an uncertain strategic environment made of several rivals and defined by multiple threats.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, great power's allies would gain relative capability and have more options to be policymakers than policy takers. That is to say, great powers and their allies' freedom of action would embrace distinct levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness, with great powers fearing their potential decline and facing impediments from other great powers and great powers' allies becoming more independent powers rather than agents for great powers.<sup>8</sup>

In a bipolar structure—a system in which there are solely two great powers—great powers should inevitably calculate their foreign policies in terms of great power rivalry resulting in delicate, reactive balancing strategies (Kirkey & Hawes, 2015: 147–148; Kirkey & Ostroy, 2010: 206–207; Waltz, 2000: 13, 18–19, 28). Great powers' allies would find themselves carrying out limited foreign policies aimed at maintaining rather than shaping the “political, economic, and social order in the international political system” (Kirkey & Hawes, 2015: 150). Also, great power's allies would not usually contradict great powers' foreign policy core direction and would tend to be highly dependent on great powers in becoming consumers rather than providers of security within great power global competition (Kirkey & Hawes, 2015: 149). That is to say, both great powers and their allies would face a restrictive strategic environment due to the zero-sum great power global competition.

In a unipolar structure—a system in which there is only a great power—the lonely great power can mobilize its power resources to achieve its interests without having to deal with other great powers willing and able to check its supremacy. The only great power does not worry about “arms race, economic warfare [...] or an inadvertent escalation of war,” which are likely in multi- and bipolar structures (Taliaferro & Wishart, 2013: 52). For its part, unipolarity would offer the sole great power's allies the freedom to define by themselves their contribution to the burden-sharing of collective security (See Massie, 2013: 276–277). This freedom is derived from unipolarity's generalized stability expressed in the lack of great power wars and tensions and the lonely great power's involvement in international security building. Both conditions, which

free up the great power's allies to make significant contributions to international security, would explain their different levels of commitments (Hansen, 2011: 3–4, 19 and 32–33). That is to say, unipolarity provided similar levels of permissiveness to both the sole great power and their allies. Indeed, unipolarity's high levels of systemic permissiveness make executives' perceptions and domestic politics more essential to understand the evolution of the lonely great power and their allies' foreign and security policies, as compared to other systems.

Based on conventional measures of power, seen as capabilities, this study addresses the international distribution of state capabilities according to the evolution of the global distribution of defence spending in absolute and percentage terms, among other national power dimensions, such as science & technology, economic and nuclear capabilities. This study analyses the evolution of defence spending, individually and comparatively year by year between 2001 and 2014, of the United States and Canada, along with China, Russia, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, and India. Specifically, these countries' defence spending is analysed as percentage of global defence spending to consider the evolution of the international distribution of state capabilities. The primary source of this analysis is the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. The analysis of the other dimensions of material capabilities comes from Stephen Brookes and William Wohlforth's (2008) data gathering. The nuclear dimension of the international distribution of material capabilities comes from Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press (2006). The analysis of several items of relative material capabilities allows us to argue that one of the prevailing systemic conditions shaping the Afghanistan intervention was the international system's unipolar structure.

Finally, the strategic environment's levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness are defined by the threats that the United States and Canada had to face. Addressing these threats entails assessing their scope and, accordingly, distinguishing threats to the United States and Canada's homeland and their military and civilian operations on the ground within the irregular Afghan warfare. As a result, this assessment suggests addressing the extent to which al Qaeda continued being a direct threat to the United States and Canada during the intervention. It also entails examining the extent to which the Afghan insurgent groups, which emerged as the intervention was performed, constituted a direct threat to the United States and Canada or merely a threat to American and Canadian campaigns on the ground. Since American and Canadian

intervention entailed not only fighting directly against insurgent groups but also maintaining the stabilized areas and reconstructing and developing certain regions, it is necessary to examine the extent to which Afghan insurgents threatened equally these objectives. This assessment must also examine the historical, institutional, and socio-economic factors that allowed insurgency to emerge in Afghanistan.

This study conducts the aforementioned assessment based on scholarly literature, mainly journal articles from *International Security*, *Security Studies*, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, and *International Journal of Drug Policy*. This assessment also considers the U.S. 9/11 Commission Report (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004), reports to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Canadian Senate Special Committee on Anti-terrorism and studies conducted and disseminated by think tanks in the United States and Europe, such as RAND Corporation, Center for Security Studies, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism, and Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

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

### *Examining the FPEs' Perceptions*

The second step of the analysis seeks to assess the extent to which the FPEs' beliefs limited, modified, leveraged, or magnified the strategic environment's effects on the American and Canadian levels of engagement during the Afghanistan intervention. To be sure, neoclassical realism would expect that with similar strategic permissiveness levels, the variation of the levels of engagement would depend highly on the FPE's

beliefs about the strategic environment. Indeed, once the options available for the intervening countries are pinpointed according to a permissive strategic environment, neoclassical realism argues that states select them primarily according to their executives' perceptions.

Before explaining how those perceptions are studied, it is necessary to explain why neoclassical realism focuses on the executive. Neoclassical realism is based on a "top-down" conception of the state since it considers that the FPEs as the head of the state, instead of the state as a whole, are the primary actors in international affairs (Christensen, 1996: 14–16; Schweller, 2003: 336–337; Zakaria, 1998: 42). This conception is justified since the FPE, "sitting at the juncture of the state and the international system, has access to privileged information from the state's politico-military and intelligence apparatus" (Taliaferro & Wishart, 2013: 48). This privilege makes them best equipped as compared to the other tiers of government, the legislative branch and societal groups, to assess systemic constraints and security threats, to devise opportunities and, in the final analysis, to deduce the "national interest" (Ripsman et al., 2016: 25–27; Taliaferro & Wishart, 2013: 48 and 63).

In this regard, this study distinguishes the FPE from the whole foreign policy team, which includes "the foreign, defence, and intelligence bureaucracy," to focus on the last-say decision-makers rather than on those actors or organizations charged with the strategic environment assessment, policy options formulation, and policy implementation (See Minddlemis & Stairs, 2007: 84–86; Ripsman et al., 2016: 124). At the same time, this study focuses exclusively on foreign and security policies designed by the FPE compared to its implementation at the tactical level by the military. According to a top-down conception of the state, the military represents the agent undertaking policies formulated by the FPE as the principal. In focusing on the American and Canadian FPEs, the analysis considers the President and the Prime Minister as the last-say decision-makers, and the senior levels of the U.S. departments of State (DoS) and Defence (DoD), and the executive levels of the Canadian Departments of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and National Defence (DND) (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 134; Ripsman et al., 2016: 124). After identifying the FPEs, this study proceeds to examine how the perceptions of those executives shaped Canadian and American foreign and security policies. Drawing on Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane's (1993: 3–30) work, this study explains the FPE's belief system through a discourse analysis based on two categories:

1. Principled beliefs, and
2. Causal beliefs regarding security and defence issues.

As mentioned, the FPEs' principled beliefs and causal beliefs are understood, respectively, as "normative ideas [aimed at] distinguishing right from wrong and just from unjust" and as "beliefs about cause-effect relationship," which, by definition, highlight the ideal operational path to achieve an end (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993: 9–10). This study analyses American and Canadian executives' principled beliefs in terms of their tendency to justify the intervention as a result of either the need for (i) protecting Americans and Canadians at home and abroad, (ii) guaranteeing Afghan's safety and well-being, (iii) and/or preserving international security and maintaining the international order. Each rationale would correspond, according to Jean-Christophe Boucher, to the "us-," "them-," and "we-" justifications to intervene in Afghanistan (Boucher, 2009: 720–722). This study analyses American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs also in terms of the extent to which these executives made the Afghanistan intervention a strategic priority, among other military campaigns and missions, and the way they regarded the intervention in the long run.

The analysis of American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs helps examine how these FPEs chose between a set of strategic options, as offered by the post-9/11 strategic environment, to meet their principled beliefs. As this study will show, this strategic environment offered the United States the freedom of choosing between offensive dominance, defensive dominance, and disengagement (Monteiro, 2011–2012: 14). It provided Canada with the room for manoeuvre to choose between free riding, flocking around the sole great power and adopting an opportunistic foreign policy (Hansen, 2011: 33–35; Kirkey & Ostroy, 2010: 200–213). This study will also show that American and Canadian FPEs' beliefs drove them to choose offensive dominance during the entire intervention in the case of the former and transition from flocking to opportunism in the case of the latter. American and Canadian perceptions of the irregular Afghan warfare led them to operationalize offensive dominance as CT and COIN in the case of the United States and flocking as S&R and opportunism as COIN in the case of Canada.

The way American and Canadian FPE chose these foreign and security policy options is analysed according to a logic of consequentialism. It means examining how the FPEs chose them according to these options'

expected consequences in terms of utility for their campaigns' goals.<sup>9</sup> During the early years of the intervention, the American FPE assessed the adequacy of narrow and broad approaches to CT, whereas the Canadian FPE mulled over the need for replacing a low-risk by a moderate-risk approach to S&R. Between 2006 and 2011, both American and Canadian FPEs considered COIN as the best option to meet the principled beliefs in Afghanistan. Still, these executives examined different options to implement this strategy. The United States FPE assessed fully resourced COIN in the form of the massive troop surge and civilian assets' mobilization at the domestic, regional, and international levels (See Clinton, 2014: 132–133; Gates, 2014: 364, 379 and 381; Obama, 2009b). The American executive also considered the likelihood of undertaking CT plus, which entailed deploying a massive number of troops to directly attack the insurgent groups in Afghanistan and training Afghan forces but brushing aside a civilian surge (Gates, 2014: 379; Woodward, 2011: 234). Finally, the American executive appraised selective COIN as another option to narrow the expectations of fully resourced COIN by focusing on the south and east regions and taking a timeline in mind to prevent the United States from embracing an open-ended commitment. This option entailed keeping a population-centred approach implicitly embraced by every contemporary COIN strategy (Gates, 2014: 344, 364, 375 and 571).

For its part, the Canadian FPE initially considered the options of conducting selective COIN in the Southern provinces of Kandahar, Herat or Chaghcharan or keeping S&R where it was still possible (Graham, 2016: 380–383). After the Manley Report was published, the executive weighed the options of keeping COIN in Kandahar, focusing solely on training Afghan forces, returning to S&R in Kandahar, keeping COIN in regions other than Kandahar, or withdrawing the CAF after February 2009 (Harper, 2007).

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

*Examining the FPEs' Ability to Mobilize Resources*

As the third step of the analysis, neoclassical realism seeks to evaluate the FPE's ability to mobilize required resources to conduct their preferred foreign and security policies. It assumes that the FPEs, based on their assessment of the strategic environment, define the "national interest" that informs their foreign and security policies. However, they are always subject to domestic political constraints. Even though executives are relatively autonomous, they must often bargain with different domestic actors and the legislative branch to extract human and economic resources to conduct its preferred policies (Ripsman et al., 2009: 25–26; Taliaferro & Wishart, 2013: 49).

In particular, in considering military interventions like Afghanistan, executives can find legislative and public opposition that limits the intervention's scope. Arguably, the American and Canadian FPE enjoy a higher room for manoeuvre over foreign and security policy issues than over domestic issues areas, which allow them to define the broad strategic objectives of military interventions (On American Presidents, see Dueck, 2009; on Canadian Prime Ministers, see Lagassé, 2010). Yet, as Colin Dueck points out, in referring to American Presidents' decisions to go to war, which is equally valid for Canadian Prime Ministers, the legislature and the public provide incentives and set political constraints to the FPEs' decisions. They could have an impact on "the specific forms of intervention, including their timing, implementation, and public representation" (Dueck, 2009: 148). In the final analysis, the FPEs' capability to mobilize domestic resources can be regarded as their ability to obtain support from, or skip hurdles from, the legislative branch and the public. This constitutes an analysis of state power, seen as the FPEs' ability to build elite consensus and encourage social cohesion around their foreign and security policies (See Christensen, 1996; Schweller, 2006: Chapters 2–3; Zakaria, 1998). To be sure, conducting this analysis implies:

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

### 3. Examining American and Canadian FPEs' resource-extraction capabilities.

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

This study addresses the evolution of public support levels concerning the Afghanistan intervention by considering major polls in the United States and Canada. Specifically, in the United States, it considers the polls conducted by CBS, Gallup, Post/ABC, CNN/ORC, AP-Gfk, and Cooperative Election Survey. In Canada, this study examines the polls carried out by Angus Reid Institute, along with Jean-Christophe Boucher and Kim Richard Nossal's aggregate analysis of several pollsters' data. Apart from Angus Reid, it includes "Gallup, Ipsos Reid, Strategic Counsel, Harris/Decima Research, Innovative Research Group Inc., Léger Marketing, and Ekos" (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 154). Finally, it considers scholarly literature and media accounts of public opinion and legislative debates on the Afghanistan intervention.

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

Finally, this study examines American and Canadian FPEs' ability to mobilize domestic resources by taking into account these executives'

communication strategies and resource-extraction capabilities. Firstly, this study examines their communication strategies aimed at obtaining support from the public and legislative branch by addressing if these executives went “public” or “silent” during the intervention. Going public refers to the executives’ purpose to get support from the public and legislature through “high-profile policy speeches,” whereas going silent strategy means not talking about a controversial topic.<sup>10</sup> This analysis also entails examining how American and Canadian executives attempted to control the public message about the Afghanistan intervention.

Secondly, this study analyses resource-extraction capabilities in terms of the American and Canadian interventions’ fiscal cost by comparing the legislative appropriation of resources during the periods 2001–2005 and 2006–2011. The appropriation of resources during the second period, corresponding to the moment when the United States and Canada carried out COIN, is divided into the resources allocated to the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ components of such policy. The first component accounts for the cost of deploying, supporting, and transporting troops, dealing with damaged and destroyed equipment, conducting intelligence activities, and supporting allies. The second component corresponds to resources allocated to train Afghan forces, whereas the third component is used to support diplomatic operations, development, and reconstruction programs. These costs appear in American and Canadian defence budgets as operating expenditures aimed at supporting the activities in Afghanistan of the DoD and DoS, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the DND and DFAIT, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (Belasco, 2014: 8–9, 16–17; OPB, 2008: 6 and 12).

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

It is worth noting that the analysis of the costs of American and Canadian military and civilian operations in Afghanistan could not be

undertaken on a similar basis. Unlike the sources of data used to address the effects of the strategic environment, perceptions, and communication strategies on the American and Canadian engagement levels during the intervention, the sources aimed at establishing the intervention cost do not keep the same reliability criteria. Thanks to the available sources, this study managed to establish the total and disaggregated cost of the U.S. Operation Enduring Freedom (Belasco, 2014: 6). In contrast, Canadian operations were more difficult to establish because there were no “mission-specific Parliamentary appropriations” (OPB, 2008: 9). Also, Canadian Departmental Performance Reports and Departments’ Reports on Plans & Priorities do not accurately assess incremental costs. These costs account for the additional cost of maintaining military and civilian operations in Afghanistan compared to the maintenance of the same forces and civilian personnel in Canada (Perry, 2008: 707). As the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (OPB) pointed out, “The Parliamentary appropriations (which provide departments with effective spending authority) and the costs are not one and the same. The cost can be higher or lower than the appropriations. Hence, a cursory review of the total Parliamentary appropriations or departmental spending will not reflect the actual fiscal impact” (OPB, 2008: 32). Finally, financial reporting is sometimes inaccurate. This is the case of the DND reporting different figures to the OPB than those outlined by the DND’s Corporate Finance Services (OPB, 2008: 9). It means that this study’s analysis of costs of Canadian operations in Afghanistan was conducted to a large extent based on the second and third sources of data, as mentioned above.

## CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this chapter was to explain the extent to which American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan became similar. After explaining that these policies were dissimilar between 2001 and 2005, with the United States and Canada carrying out CT and S&R, this chapter showed how these policies addressed all three COIN components between 2006 and 2011. The United States, which had focused their efforts on “clear” and “hold” strategies, and Canada, which had centred its attention on a “build” mission, found themselves following the same strategic pathway by adopting “clear,” “hold,” and “build” campaigns simultaneously. To be sure, this shift of strategy entailed an increased engagement in the Afghan irregular war.

The United States and Canadian foreign and security policies became different again between 2011 and 2014. The United States returned to a similar CT strategy as undertaken during the early years and Canada carried out a training mission, which could fit well into their previous S&R strategies.

By considering the evolution of the United States and Canada's engagements, we can argue that the strategies conducted between 2001 and 2005 and 2011 and 2014 meet the expectation that countries with different capabilities are meant to behave differently. However, the strategies being carried out between 2006 and 2011 are puzzling because they indicate that countries with differences in power can under certain circumstances behave similarly. They can take on similar engagements in irregular warfare, bringing about high costs in blood and treasure.

The existing literature on American and Canadian engagements in Afghanistan does not help respond to this puzzle because it addresses systemic, ideational, and institutional factors separately, preventing us from understanding these policies thoroughly. As the following chapters will show, considering these factors together is critical to unravelling the puzzle. Within this literature, the bandwagon-effect, compensation, and military ascendancy theses constitute common responses to this puzzle, yet they are incomplete. Either they do not focus on factors occurring on the American and Canadian sides or exaggerate the Canadian subordination to the U.S. interests. Neither is security studies literature ready for addressing this puzzle since it tends to compare countries with similar standing in the international system.

To unravel this puzzle adequately, this chapter provided a three-step research design based on neoclassical realism's assumptions. Specifically, this research design helped operationalize systemic, ideational, and institutional factors affecting American and Canadian engagement in Afghanistan. Figure 2.2 summarizes the operationalization of the variables, with special regard to the primary concepts and indicators for each of them. The strategic environment's permissiveness/restrictiveness and engagement levels correspond to the independent and dependent variables, and the FPE's perceptions and ability to mobilize domestic resources constitute the intervening variables. The remainder of this book develops step by step the research design above.

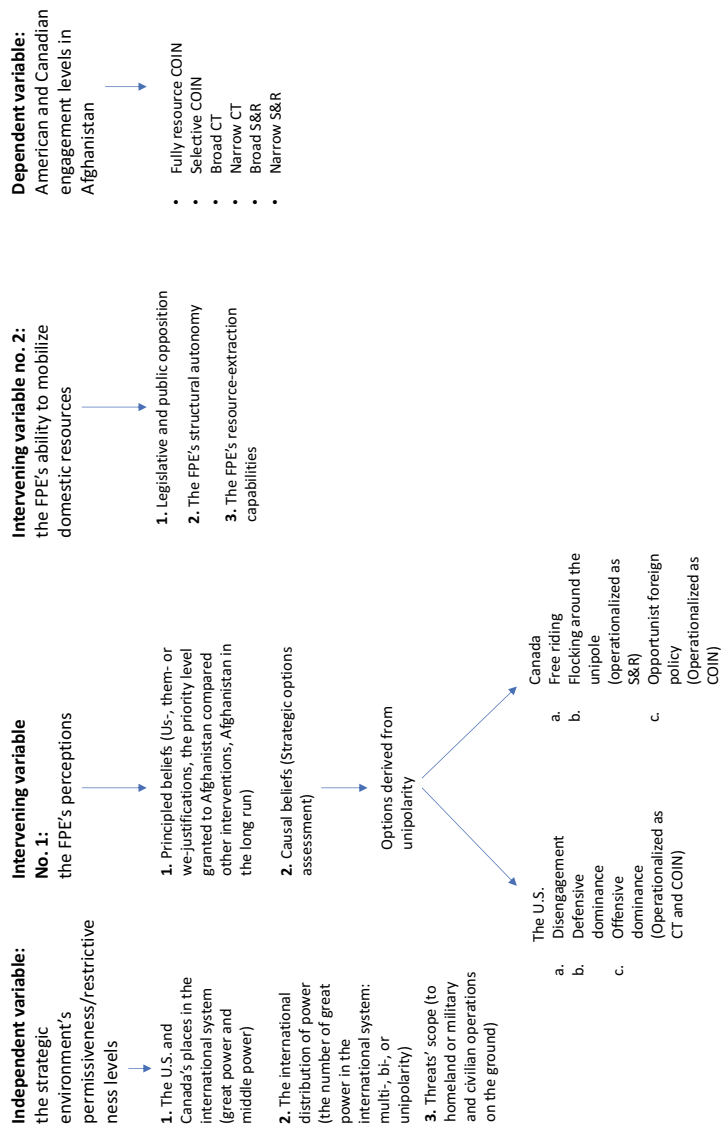


Fig. 2.2 American and Canadian foreign and security policies: operationalization of variables

## NOTES

1. See also Waltz's (1993: 45–50) account of the similarity of the United States and the Soviet Union's foreign policies during the Cold War despite their internal differences.
2. However, it is worth noting that after the death of 4 soldiers in a “friendly fire” with the U.S. National Guard, which was known as the Tarnak Farm incident, Canada left the mission for almost a year to rethink its strategy in Afghanistan. It returns in 2003 within the NATO mission (see Friscolanti, 2005).
3. These operations can be seen either as an active peacekeeping mission or as the second, third or fourth generations of peacekeeping (see Hanhimäki, 2015: 76–77; Sloan, 2016: Chapter 6; UN, 2000: par. 12).
4. On the link between the elimination of contradictions and nation-building, see Sarigiannidis (2007: 522).
5. Even though Paul et al. (2016) criticized the distinction between the population-centric and enemy-centric approaches to COIN in the scholarly literature, it is kept here due to its significance for American and Canadian leaders.
6. This book borrows the term “War for prestige” from Massie (2013: 274–288). See also Saideman (2016: 33–34).
7. Morton Kaplan, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz appraised multipolarity's implications differently. Kaplan and Morgenthau argued that multipolarity implies low levels of instability because the impossibility of estimating great powers' changing intentions shapes an uncertain strategic scenario, which forces great powers to adopt moderate foreign policies. In contrast, Waltz argues that these factors make the international system more unstable because great powers depend more on their capabilities than those of their allies. However, both arguments would suggest limited freedom of action for great powers in the form of either required moderation or impediments (Kaplan, 1957; Morgenthau, 1961; Waltz, 1979: 168).
8. In the literature on Canadian foreign policy, David Dewitt and John Kirton provided a thorough assessment of the implications of a multipolar structure for Canada (Dewitt & Kirton, 1983, 2015: 74–76; Kirton, 2015: 85–90).
9. On a critical assessment of consequentialism, see March and Olsen (1984, 1989, 1998). These authors provide a useful distinction between the *logic of consequentialism* and the *logic of appropriateness*. Even if such a distinction has been conjured up to underpin the new institutionalism, embracing a conception of appropriateness that is not shared by neoclassical realism as the theory informing this book's argument, it helps classify views of rationality. Consequentialism highlights foreign policy approaches

explaining human actors willing and able to choose among different alternatives by evaluating their consequences in terms of the utility for actors' goals. Appropriateness identifies foreign policy approaches attempting to understand human actors following rules that link particular identities with particular situations (March & Olsen, 1998: 949 and 951).

10. Even though there is an extensive literature on this topic, the predominant work about it is Kernell (1986). See also Rice (1987).

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

This chapter aims to assess the post-9/11 strategic environment as the primary, yet indirect cause, of American and Canadian foreign and security policy during the Afghanistan intervention. This assessment constitutes the first analytical step in applying neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. Specifically, to examine the intervention's strategic environment, the version of neoclassical realism used in this study suggests assessing the international system's central features during the years the coalition forces carried out the intervention. Above all, it suggests addressing the levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness for the United States and Canada to undertake their foreign and security policy during this time at the systemic level. These levels resulted from their relative standing and the international system's structure. It also assesses the threats that both countries had to face during the intervention (Ripsman et al., 2016: 38–56).

The point of departure of this assessment is that the international system's functioning is derived from its inherent anarchy and the international distribution of material capabilities. Anarchy is the enabling condition that allows the international system to work as a whole, whereas the international distribution of capabilities allows for explaining both central international outcomes, such as the likelihood of great power

confrontation and balance of power, and the evolution of state behaviour in the form of foreign policy (Rathbun, 2008: 312; Rose, 1998: 151, 157 and 168; Waltz, 1979: 82 and 88–89). It means that neoclassical realism shares structural realism's assessment of the international system to a large extent.

Still, the version of neoclassical realism adopted by this study goes further. In considering systemic factors, such as states' relative standing and the distribution of material capabilities, it seeks to define, respectively, the strategic options that are available to states and the room for manoeuvre to choose among such strategic options (Rose, 1998: 151 and 157). Even though great powers, major powers, middle powers, and minor powers find different strategic options due to their different relative material capabilities, uni-, bi-, and multipolar structures of the international system offer different levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness for both great powers and their allies. More importantly, the analysis of the permissiveness within a type of polarity, such as unipolarity, helps understand why certain states with different material capabilities can adopt strategic objectives similar to those advanced by great powers. This is the case of Canada behaving similarly to the United States during the Afghanistan intervention. Apart from assessing the strategic environment's levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness by focusing on the international system as defined above, neoclassical realism examines these levels considering the threats' scope to be faced by the states under analysis. In the case of this study, these threats derived mostly from the irregular warfare in Afghanistan.

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

With this conception of the strategic environment in mind, this chapter argues that the post-9/11 strategic environment was permissive for the United States and Canada due to the unipolar structure of the international system. In conducting their foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan within a unipolar system, the United States was free to choose offensive dominance, among other available options, such as

disengagement and defensive dominance (Monteiro, 2011–2012: 14; see also Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 15–16; Nexon & Wright, 2007: 253 and 258–261; Posen & Ross, 1996–1997). For its part, Canada could transition from merely flocking around the unipole to embracing an opportunistic foreign policy to meet its own interests.<sup>1</sup>

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

Sections “Assessing the International System During the Afghanistan Intervention”, “Unipolarity Balancing Dynamics and the United States' Strategic Options”, and “The Relevance of Alliance Politics for Lesser Powers in a Unipolar System: Strategic Options for Canada” examine how the unipolar structure offered distinct strategic options to both the United States and Canada. By understanding material capabilities broadly, Sect. “Assessing the International System During the Afghanistan Intervention” provides empirical evidence to support that the international system's structure was unipolar during the research period. This section also examines the distribution of capabilities among the coalition forces intervening in Afghanistan with particular regard to American and Canadian relative power. Sections “Unipolarity Balancing Dynamics and the United States' Strategic Options” and “The Relevance of Alliance Politics for Lesser Powers in a Unipolar System: Strategic Options for Canada” analyse the conditions under which the sole great power and its allies enjoy greater freedom of action and how such conditions were presented during this period. For the United States, as the only great power, the primary condition to enjoy a high room for manoeuvre is the actual absence of countervailing powers with roughly equal material capabilities, attempting to restrict or modify its strategic objectives (see Taliaferro & Wishart, 2013: 52). This condition was met since neither China nor

Russia tried to balance the U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan. For Canada as the unipole's close ally, the primary condition to enjoy greater freedom of action is the increased significance of alliance politics. This condition was equally met during the intervention because NATO became progressively more relevant during the intervention. Above all, the importance of NATO to carry out the intervention increased because the unipole started to mobilize a massive number of resources to fight in Iraq, preventing it from making Afghanistan its sole strategic priority. Thus, Canada had the option of taking advantage of the unipole's call for contribution to the alliance so as to pursue its interests (Massie, 2013: 8).

Sections "The Emergence of Irregular Warfare in Afghanistan", "Al Qaeda's Transformation", "Al Qaeda's Radical Ideology as an Inspiration for Afghan Insurgency", and "Factors Encouraging the Afghan Insurgency" examine the restrictiveness of the Afghan irregular warfare for the United States and Canada. Those sections argue that even though the United States and Canada did not have to face countervailing powers restraining the Afghanistan campaign's strategic objectives, American and Canadian military and civilian operations faced increased resistance on the ground in the form of terrorism and insurgency. After explaining in Sect. "The Emergence of Irregular Warfare in Afghanistan", the emergence of the irregular warfare in Afghanistan, Sect. "Al Qaeda's Transformation" examines al Qaeda's rise and fall. Specifically, it describes how the intervention significantly reduced al Qaeda's operational capabilities to carry out a second attack against the American and Canadian homeland (Jenkins, 2010: 2–3; Wilner, 2009: 2).

Even though this strategic achievement prevented al Qaeda from being a direct threat to the United States and Canada, like it was in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Sect. "Al Qaeda's Radical Ideology as an Inspiration for Afghan Insurgency" argues that American and Canadian forces on the ground had to deal with insurgent groups embracing al Qaeda's radical jihadist ideology. After all, al Qaeda kept spreading its ideology from its new sanctuary on the border with Pakistan so as to promote a strong aversion and relentless fight against the West in Afghanistan. Section "Factors Encouraging the Afghan Insurgency" argues that, apart from embracing al Qaeda's ideology, insurgency in Afghanistan was funnelled by the Pakistan government and population's support and the Afghan government's collapse after the intervention, resulting in the renascent poppy economy.<sup>2</sup> Those factors went hand in

hand with a long tradition of warlords controlling politically and economically small slices of territory, particularly in Southern Afghanistan, where the United States and Canada paid a high price in blood and treasure (Marten, 2006–2007: 54–58 and 69–71; Schetter & Glasser, 2011: 232–233).

Examining the United States and Canada's place in the international system and the Afghan irregular warfare is critical to understanding the availability of strategic options for those countries and the level of permissiveness/restrictiveness to conduct their foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan. However, this examination is not sufficient to explain why exactly the United States.

Chose offensive dominance and Canada transitioned from flocking to opportunism. Neither is it sufficient to explain why both of them operationalized such strategic objectives as CT, S&R, and COIN. Much less clear is why both countries carried out similar COIN strategies between 2006 and 2011. By explaining the American and Canadian FPEs' beliefs, Chapter 4 will explain this puzzle more directly.

### ASSESSING THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM DURING THE AFGHANISTAN INTERVENTION

Empirically, the structure of the international system during the time the coalition forces conducted the Afghanistan intervention remained undoubtedly unipolar. Not only did the United States keep the rank of great power but its overwhelming relative supremacy was undeniable. Even understanding capabilities broadly by considering military, economic, scientific, technological, and other dimensions of national power, the United States showcased its ability to concentrate power to a degree never seen before in the modern international system's history (Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 27–35). In focusing on the nuclear and military dimensions of such supremacy, the United States was unrivalled. The United States started to consolidate its atomic superiority for the first time in decades by developing the capability to disarm Russia and China through a nuclear first strike (Lieber & Press, 2006: 7–8). The United States also managed to consolidate its undisputed military supremacy in “[possessing] command of the global commons [which account for] areas that do not belong to no one state and that provide access to much of the globe” (Posen, 2003: 8). Indeed, its supremacy was based on the ability to dominate the sea, space, and air globally, despite some contested areas

with its rivals. What is more, the United States spent “more than virtually all of the world’s other major military power combined, most of which are U.S. allies” (Posen, 2003: 7).

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

Meanwhile, China managed to spend US\$191,627 million in 2014 after increasing steadily from US\$49,798 million in 2001. The European powers and Japan fixed their defence budgets within the range of US\$40,000 to 60,000 million over the entire period, whereas India’s spending is that of US\$30,000 to 40,000 million. Russian defense spending rose steadily from US\$26,298 in 2001 to US\$71,469 million in 2014, moving from the lowest to the highest defence budgets as compared to the European powers, Japan, and India during the period at hand. Finally, Canadian defense spending was in the range of US\$13,000 to 19,000 million. It increased slightly from US\$13,314 million in 2001 to US\$13,628 million in 2003. That year, it started to grow more rapidly until reaching a peak of US\$18,985 million in 2009, when it began to decrease until reaching US\$17,148 million in 2010. Despite a slight recovery in 2011 with a spending of US\$17,727 million, from this year Canadian defence spending dropped steadily until arriving at US\$15,836 million in 2014, which accounted for the same levels as in 2006.

Such a comparative analysis allows for showcasing why the United States was “the only state capable of projecting major military power globally” (Ikenberry et al., 2009: 8); not mention that given the size of the economy, the U.S. defence spending represented only 2.9% to 4.7% of its GDP during the intervention. The United States started the period by spending 2.9% of its GDP on defence, which peaked at 4.7% in 2010.

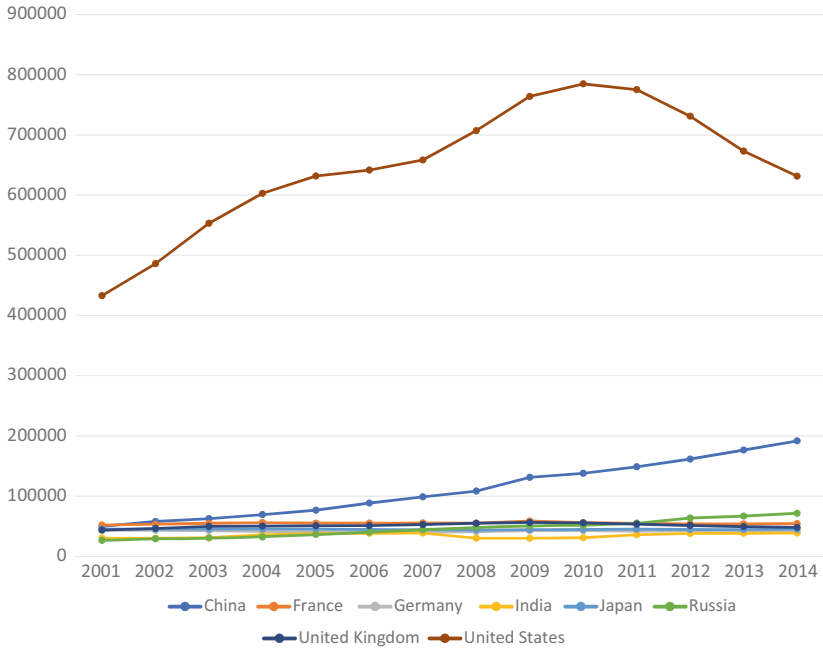


**Fig. 3.1** Defence spending for the United States, Canada, and major powers, 2017 prices US\$m (2001–2014) (*Source* SIPRI, 2019)

That year, it decreased steadily until reaching 3.5%, which was the same level as in 2003 (SIPRI, 2019).

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

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

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

*Source* Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI, 2019)

All in all, even though there were variations in the relative American power, such variations were minor and, accordingly, did not result in a change of the international distribution of power for the period 2001–2014. It is also true if the analysis considers Chinese and Russian defence spending's steady increase during the same period. Even though American defence spending decreased during the late years in absolute and percentage terms compared to global defence spending, it was not strong enough to challenge American supremacy. If a transition from unipolarity to multipolarity takes place, it will occur in a relatively distant future. Since such a transition goes beyond this study's period, the strategic environment's most apparent systemic condition was the international system's unipolar structure. In other words, the "Unipolar Moment," as proclaimed by Charles Krauthammer (1990–1991: 25–33) at the beginning of the 1990s, did not end during the Afghanistan intervention.

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

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

**Table 3.2** Capabilities and engagement levels of primary coalition forces in Afghanistan

| Coalition forces* | 2. Engagement levels                       |                                  |                      |                                      |                                                          |                           |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
|                   | 1. Capabilities                            |                                  |                      |                                      |                                                          |                           |
|                   | 1.1.<br>Annual average<br>defense spending | 1.2.<br>Defense<br>spending rank | 1.3.<br>Size of army | 2.1.<br>Contingent's<br>maximum size | 2.2.<br>Percentage of<br>total combined<br>contingents** | 2.3.<br>Fatalities        |
|                   |                                            |                                  |                      |                                      |                                                          | 2.4<br>Rank<br>fatalities |
| Australia         | 19,635                                     | 5                                | 28,246               | 1660                                 | 1.16%                                                    | 41                        |
| Canada            | 15,845                                     | 7                                | 34,800               | 3079                                 | 2.15%                                                    | 158                       |
| France            | 54,824                                     | 2                                | 1,30,600             | 4005                                 | 2.79%                                                    | 86                        |
| Germany           | 41,432                                     | 3                                | 1,05,291             | 5000                                 | 3.48%                                                    | 54                        |
| Italy             | 30,070                                     | 4                                | 1,07,500             | 4000                                 | 2.79%                                                    | 48                        |
| Netherlands       | 10,211                                     | 8                                | 20,836               | 2200                                 | 1.53%                                                    | 25                        |
| Spain             | 17,172                                     | 6                                | 78,121               | 1606                                 | 1.12%                                                    | 34                        |
| Turkey            | 13,156                                     | 8                                | 2,58,700             | 1840                                 | 1.28%                                                    | 14                        |
| United Kingdom    | 50,902                                     | 3                                | 99,950               | 9500                                 | 6.62%                                                    | 453                       |
| United States     | 6,48,134                                   | 1                                | 6,41,470             | 1,00,000                             | 69.68%                                                   | 2349                      |
|                   |                                            |                                  |                      |                                      |                                                          | 1                         |

*Source* The figures of columns 1.1 and 1.2 were calculated drawing on SIPRI (2019). Saideman (2016: 16 and 22) directly gathered the figures of the columns 1.3, 2.1, and 2.3 from iCausalities, NATO, Albanian Institute of Statistics, and U.S. and Canadian census

\*Coalition forces in Afghanistan were Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States. Ranking figures consider the total of coalition forces

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

Alongside American supremacy, Table 3.2 shows that Canada had the third-highest place regarding the number of fatalities only after the American and British ranks (columns 2.3 and 2.4). Such a figure can be understood by considering that Canada conducted COIN in Kandahar, one of Afghanistan's most dangerous provinces, as of 2006. Still, it is surprising if Canada, as a midrange coalition force, is assessed. After all, carrying out COIN in that province would be expected only of the sole great power and major coalition forces due to the challenging resource mobilization schemes associated with such an operation. As mentioned, Canada's level of engagement provided crucial evidence to support the puzzle of this study.

After having shown that the international system's structure during the intervention was unipolar, the next sections examine the implications of such a structure on American and Canadian foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. In considering that one of the primary expectations within the unipolar system is that the unipole and its allies enjoy a high room for manoeuvre to meet their preferred strategies, those sections examine the conditions under which such room for manoeuvre is likely. According to neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, assessing such conditions allows for highlighting the United States and Canada's strategic broad options derived from the unipolar structure. Above all, examining such conditions helps understand the unipole and its allies' commitment to military engagements like that advanced in Afghanistan.

### UNIPOLARITY BALANCING DYNAMICS AND THE UNITED STATES' STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Addressing the unipole's room for manoeuvre to conduct its preferred foreign and security policy entails examining the primary condition that makes such freedom of action highly likely; namely, the absence of powers willing and able to balance or constrain the unipole's strategic ambitions. Considering such a condition suggests examining the likelihood or unlikelihood of balancing strategies that could come in the form of hard balancing, soft balancing, or asymmetric balancing (Hansen, 2011: 26–30; Paul, 2004: 13). Explaining such scenarios is critical to understand the United States' strategic options during the Afghanistan intervention.

The first scenario—the likelihood of balancing—is based mostly on Kenneth Waltz's balance-of-power theory. It predicts that anarchy as a systemic condition induces balancing among its units so as to prevent

anyone power from achieving dominance. The underlying assumption of such rationale—as explained by Waltz and more recently by Christopher Layne—is that dominance can lead to the misuse of power. As a result, balancing is a systemic outcome in a unipolar system as weaker states worry about a lonely great power succumbing to overextension vices. Even though the dominant power could behave with moderation and restraint, anarchy leads other states to mistrust its managerial skills because such skills do not necessarily result in these states' security. In an anarchical interstate system, they can only trust self-help strategies (Layne, 1993; Waltz, 2000: 13 and 28).

The second scenario—the unlikelihood of balancing—was widely discussed at the conceptual and empirical levels by Stephen G. Brookes and William C. Wohlforth. They hold that those aimed at addressing systemic constraints against the unipole mistakenly assume that balancing dynamics in bi- and multipolar systems will be similar in a unipolar system. Brookes and Wohlforth argue that there is no empirical basis to support it. In a unipolar system, the sole great power has managed to pass the threshold of supremacy in such a way that Waltz's assumption is reversed, namely, that the stronger the leading state is there will be more incentive to check it (Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 3–4, 7–10, 23 and 35; see also Waltz, 1979: 112). In such a system, the causal arrow is instead as follows: “the stronger the leading state is and the more entrenched its dominance, the more improbable and thus less constraining counterbalancing dynamics are” (Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 48). Even if the unipole is concerned about the likelihood of counterbalancing, Brookes and Wohlforth (2008) and others (Dueck, 2009: 149; Hansen, 2011: 2; Jervis, 2009: 207–210; Monteiro, 2011–2012: 13; Mowle & Sacko, 2007: 4; Taliaferro & Wishart, 2013: 52; Walt, 2009: 96–97) argue that unipolarity makes it highly improbable.

Three dominant reasons support it. Firstly, balancing entails a prohibitive cost in a unipolar system (Wohlforth, 1999: 7–8). Since such a structure “resembles a monopoly of power [...] changing the structure by means of confrontation is comparatively [regarding other systems] unlikely” (Hansen, 2011: 44). Secondly, balancing is unlikely due to the hurdles to the assembling of balancing coalitions aimed at effectively checking the unipole. After all, the formation of such coalitions entails high transaction costs and dilemmas of collective action. Not only would balancing imply diplomatic virtuosity in solving balancers' disagreements, but it would also entail prioritizing balancing over regional and domestic

concerns. Without such prioritization, it would be unthinkable to overcome significant differences in power between the unipole and potential balancers. Much more unthinkable would be a single balancer doing the whole job of balancing due, again, to the significant differences in power between the unipole and its rivals. Thirdly, potential balancers are all located on Eurasian lands, making them more worried about each other than the U.S. supremacy. In fact, rather than seeing the United States as a threat given its supremacy, they deemed it an ally against regional threats. At least, it was confirmed during the time the Afghanistan intervention was performed. Even though the third reason is not linked directly to unipolarity as it is more related to geography and perceptions, it is worth noting that it ended up buttressing unipolar dynamics (Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 38–39; Walt, 2009: 96–97).

Operationalizing the stances mentioned above during the intervention entails proceeding to explain the different potential balancing strategies against the unipole: hard balancing, soft balancing, and asymmetric balancing. Hard balancing accounts for classical strategies of “military buildups, warfighting alliances, and transfers of military technology to U.S. opponents” (Pape, 2005: 9). Specifically, hard balancing depends on internal and external balancing aimed, respectively, at increasing material capabilities through the massive mobilization of domestic resources to catch up with preponderant powers and at forming alliances as strength multipliers (see Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 35). Soft-balancing—or indirect balancing—corresponds to the use of “international institutions, economic statecraft, and diplomatic arrangements,” to delay or undermine rivals’ military strategies (Pape, 2005: 10). Asymmetric balancing, which can include interstate interactions and confrontations between states and non-state actors, embraces mostly terrorism and insurgency (Paul, 2004: 16–17).

Unlike hard and soft balancing, asymmetric balancing does not imply counterweight strategies that can result in different international structures but merely a form of opposition or resistance against the unipole. That is to say, terrorist or insurgent groups do not have enough material capabilities to balance in the conventional sense. Accordingly, they can only afford to undermine the unipole and its allies’ strategic objectives by raising the costs of maintaining their supremacy through terrorist attacks and irregular warfare (Layne, 2004: 106–107). As Waltz pointed out, “terrorism does not change the first basic fact of international politics [today]—the gross imbalance of world power” (Waltz, 2002: 350).

Still, terrorism is related to unipolarity because the latter brings about a higher frequency of the former, especially compared to other systems. Specifically, the overwhelming supremacy of the unipole and the international system's subsequent structure encourage some groups to resort to terrorism. Terrorism is always available for the weak, dissatisfied actors with the unipole's political project, who also does not count on another great power to advance its balancing objectives (Hansen, 2011: 84).

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

On the one hand, hard and soft balancing, which are common in bi- and multipolar systems, were undoubtedly absent in Central Asia during the period of this study. China and Russia, the powers with the potential capability to dominate and control their immediate region, did not attempt to contain the U.S. campaign by forming a coalition (external balancing) or by themselves (internal balancing). Although "military coproduction arrangement and major arms sales" (Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 75) were frequent between China and Russia during this time, such a bilateral interaction cannot be seen as an indication of hard balancing. These countries' arrangements and sales sought to meet economic interests more than balancing U.S. ambitions in the region, which was particularly true from Russia's perspective focused on dealing with the decline of its military-industrial complex (Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 75).

Even if both China and Russia had interests in conducting internal balancing by increasing their military capabilities, they could not be considered rivals for the United States, as showcased earlier in comparing their material capabilities. A brief consideration about China's internal balancing is here necessary due to the massive literature about it. On the surface, according to this literature, the unparalleled shift in relative economic power from the West to East and, subsequently, China's rise in economic and military terms could have resulted in its potential ability to balance against the U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan (Khana, 2008; Mahbubani, 2008; National Intelligence Council, 2008, 2012; Zakaria, 2008). What is more, China's increasing economic and military capabilities could have resulted in it becoming a strategic rival to

the United States not only in the Pacific Rim but also in Central Asia (Khana, 2008: 260–261).<sup>3</sup> Since the 1990s, it became apparent that China had begun to reopen the ancient Silk Road, which was bolstered through the Belt and Road Initiative officially launched in 2013. Such a strategy entailed, among other goals, connecting China with Afghanistan through pipelines and road routes and even connecting Afghan cities—for instance, Kabul and Herat—through large construction contracts, with the ultimate purpose of meeting Iran across the “Tajik Belt” (Economy, 2018: 65–66; Mahbubani, 2008: 110). Nevertheless, a deeper understanding of China’s international position in the international system would show that it could not reach the rank of great power during the Afghanistan intervention, which would have increased the likelihood of balancing. Economic pragmatism, more than balancing the Western campaign in Afghanistan, also inspired Chinese strategies in Central Asia.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, China and Russia did not attempt to conduct soft balancing through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This organization, seen as the central Eurasian political, economy and security alliance aimed at promoting a ‘multipolar world,’ would have been the ideal forum to think of this strategy. However, the SCO members were less concerned by the U.S.-led intervention in Afghanistan defying this alliance’s commitment with multipolarity than by Islamic terrorism, especially the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan turning into a transnational guerrilla (Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 74, see also Economy, 2018: 73). Indeed, in the words of Brookes and Wohlforth (2008: 74), “the U.S. deployment to Afghanistan created a contradiction between the SCO’s rhetorical role as a balancing mechanism and its operational role as a regional security organization [aimed at facing Islamic terrorism]. At least initially, China and Russia resolved the contradiction by strongly supporting the United States in the war on terror”.<sup>5</sup>

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

relentless fight against the Western campaign in Afghanistan. The second threat was the rise of the insurgency in Afghanistan, which took advantage of the Afghan government's collapse after the intervention, the Pakistan government's support, a renascent poppy economy, and the long tradition of warlords in that country (Jones, 2008a: Chapter 4; 2008b; Marten, 2006–2007: 54–58 and 69–71).

All in all, except for asymmetric balancing, the unlikelihood of balancing against the United States and, by extension, its allies was apparent during the intervention. There were no rivals willing and able to counterbalance the unipole, resulting in a permissive strategic environment (Wohlforth, 1999: 9). Without global competition, like what occurs in bi- and multipolar systems, the sole great power and its allies conducted their foreign and security policies with a high room for manoeuvre (Kirkey & Ostroy, 2010: 206–208). Unipolarity ended up creating a permissive rather than a restrictive strategic environment in the sense that it allowed the lonely great power to use their military capabilities to meet their interests without having to deal with great power threats and impediments (see Taliaferro & Wishart, 2013: 52).

Taking into account the unipole's high room for manoeuvre to choose its preferred foreign and security policy, this section proceeds now to examine the United States' strategic options within the unipolar system. Drawing on Barry Posen and Andrew L. Ross' analysis of U.S. strategic options during the post-Cold War, Nuno Monteiro highlighted the different options for the United States in a unipolar system; namely: disengagement, defensive dominance, and offensive dominance. Each embrace different views of the "global status quo," corresponding to "territorial arrangements, international political alignments, and the global distribution of power" (Monteiro, 2011–2012: 14). Disengagement refers to the loss of interest in the status quo, allowing other states to modify it according to their preferences. Defensive dominance entails working on preserving all components of the status quo, whereas offensive dominance constitutes the unipole's attempts aimed at modifying at least one of such components in favour of its preferences (Monteiro, 2011–2012: 14). What is more, disengagement is associated with isolationism. Defensive dominance can be operationalized through offshore balancing (preventing the ascent of peer competitors), selective engagement (interventions solely in areas with a high strategic value), and collective security (contribution to security issues through international institutions). Offensive dominance is linked to primacy (controlling

several areas of the world) or global empire (conducting a divide-and-rule strategy within a global centre-periphery network) (Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 15–16; Monteiro, 2011–2012: 14; Nexon & Wright, 2007: 253 and 258–261; Posen & Ross, 1996–1997).

Some scholars agree that the United States adopted offensive dominance after the 9/11 attacks. However, such considerations tended to be associated more with the Iraq invasion and the preventive components of the Bush Doctrine than with the Afghanistan intervention (Miller, 2010: 50–64; Monteiro, 2011–2012: 30–33; Nexon & Wright, 2007: 266–268). When the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan is considered, a more nuanced statement must be taken into account. The United States adopted a defensive-dominance strategy at the very beginning of the intervention as long as it was carried out “against an enemy who attacked the United States first, and also because the United States enjoyed broad multilateral support for the war” (Miller, 2010: 45). However, once the United States replaced its early campaign to overthrow the Taliban regime with CT and COIN, American foreign and security policy in Central Asia looked more like an offensive dominance strategy. The unipole sought to keep an Afghan regime willing and able to contribute to the U.S. campaign by investing in state capacity-building and controlling its regional and international arrangements. These goals fit squarely into offensive dominance.

### THE RELEVANCE OF ALLIANCE POLITICS FOR LESSER POWERS IN A UNIPOLAR SYSTEM: STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR CANADA

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

To begin with, analyzing alliance politics in broad terms entails recalling, as Stephen Walt (2009: 86) pointed out, that “the essential element in a meaningful alliance is a commitment for mutual support against some external actor(s).” Within the unipolar system shaping the Afghanistan intervention, the formation of an alliance against the United States was unlikely due to its prohibitive costs, unsurpassed dilemmas of collective action among the U.S. rivals, and the fact that the United States did not constitute a direct threat to most of the major powers. That is to say, in that unipolar system, a commitment for mutual support against the United States tended to be unlikely. As a result, alliance politics revolved more around the interactions between the unipole and like-minded countries. Such a strategic situation affects both the United States and those countries. On the surface, the United States would not require many allies to advance its strategic objectives due to its overwhelming supremacy. As the sole great power, the United States would also not be worried too much about defections, unlike what would occur in bi- or multipolar systems in which weaker powers could form alliances with other great powers (Mowle & Sacko, 2007: Chapter 5).

However, U.S. supremacy is incomplete because the unipolar system is still anarchical rather than an utterly hierarchized system (Monteiro, 2011–2012: 12–13). Under such a systemic circumstance, the unipole can be concerned, under certain circumstances, with its allies’ flocking and free riding, especially when it starts costly military campaigns, like the American adventures to Iraq and Afghanistan. It means that allies’ flocking around the unipole and free riding could be potential scenarios within a unipolar system. Indeed, as Birthe Hansen pointed out, the flocking/free-riding dilemma, as the most dominant within the unipolar system, would replace the balancing/bandwagoning dilemma (counter-balancing or supporting dominant powers), which is often the case within bi- and multipolar systems (Hansen, 2011: 24).

Flocking entails following the unipole and supporting its strategic goals. Accordingly, it increases the unipole’s room for manoeuvre as it can share the military, economic, political, and diplomatic burden-sharing of military campaigns with its allies. In contrast, free riding means avoiding costs and risks associated with the contribution to collective security and, subsequently, can produce the opposite effect compared to flocking. From the perspective of the unipole’s allies, flocking can occur when such allies have to deal with regional and local threats and, accordingly, need the unipole’s protection. They also opt for flocking if they want to prevent

them from being seen as weak allies or maintain a strategic relationship with the unipole, allowing them to request its help for years to come. Finally, unipole's allies can flock if the unipole defines strategic solutions to deal with security issues (Hansen, 2011: 31–33). Free riding is another option for the unipole's allies because of the general stability in the form of the lack of great power tensions. It is also likely due to the strong involvement of the unipole, which brings about reasonable levels of security irrespective of the lesser countries' contribution and, accordingly, frees up the lesser powers of continually adopting robust foreign and security policies (Hansen, 2011: 33).

To operationalize the scenarios mentioned above, this section proceeds to explain how the alliance politics evolved according to the unipole's critical decisions. During the early three years of the intervention, the United States decided to undertake an Enduring Freedom Operation (EFO) without much strategic and tactical support from NATO. Indeed, the United States was not concerned with the free riding of its allies in such a way that some of them, especially in Europe, shared a “sense of irrelevance” (Hansen, 2011: 69; Press-Barnathan, 2006: 297). However, once the Iraq invasion started in 2003, the United States became more willing to work with their allies and, above all, to promote burden-sharing strategies in Afghanistan. What is more, with the Iraq invasion's increased entanglement, the United States had to request outside support more and more to carry out the Afghanistan intervention.<sup>6</sup> As a result, alliance politics became more relevant, meaning that the unipole's allies would enjoy a high room for manoeuvre to meet their interests within a favourable division of labour (Massie, 2013: 279; Press-Barnathan, 2006: 297–230).

In this context, Canada decided not to adopt a free-riding strategy due to its longstanding alliance with the United States and its interest in participating in the War on Terror. Also, Canada was uninterested in merely flocking around the unipole as expected from its middle-rank position among coalition forces. Instead, Canada chose the third strategic path, as offered by the unipolar system to the unipole's allies, significantly when alliance politics becomes relevant: an opportunistic foreign policy aimed at defining security issues in favour of own interests and increasing influence. The only condition is not to challenge the unipole's overriding security interests or resist the unipole dominance itself (Kirkey & Ostroy, 2010: 208). That is to say, rather than merely flocking around the unipole, Canada made one of the most vital contributions to Afghanistan,

along with the United States and the United Kingdom, and adopted the same strategic objectives as advanced by the unipole. Since 2006, Canada also managed to treat Afghanistan as a “war for prestige” (Massie, 2013: 275 and 277) due to the specific dynamics of unipolarity. (In explaining the Canadian FPE’s belief system, Chapter 4 will explain what a war for prestige meant for Canada in-depth). As Christopher Kirkey and Nicholas Ostroy (2010: 208) maintained:

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

In particular, Canada adopted an opportunistic foreign and security policy during the ISAF expansion towards the South, becoming the most tangible token of the division of labour. Drawing on discussions among the intervening countries between 2003 and 2005, which were possible thanks to the regular NATO meetings, the early stages of such expansion took place in 2005/2006. Given this context, in 2004 the United Kingdom proposed to merge Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the ISAF mission to make their goals more compatible. After all, the West’s strategy had started to be overtly contradictory as the OEF embraced CT goals, and the ISAF mission promoted nation-building objectives. Such a proposal entailed undertaking negotiations with the United States to change the course of the intervention, implying a significant change of responsibilities for countries conducting the ISAF’s expansion. Since 2006, they were responsible not only for reconstructing but also providing security in their areas of operations (Willis, 2012: 985–986, 988–989, and 991). By impacting the intervention’s goals, the United Kingdom managed to maintain its position as a “global strategic player [...] capable of working militarily with the U.S. on something approaching equal terms” (Willis, 2012: 987).

During this shift of strategy, Canada seized the opportunity to define an equally vital contribution on its own terms. Canada assessed the decision to get into Kandahar on its own—that is beyond American pressure—based on its historical experience in the Balkans, as well as on conversations with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, which were possible again thanks to the NATO framework and the increased relevance of the alliance politics as of 2003 (Willis, 2012: 979–1000). The Balkan experience—in the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) and Kosovo Force (KFOR) in the 1990s—left unforgettable lessons as to the type of contributions that Canada should conduct within multinational operations. It was apparent that those contributions should result in international recognition and an increased ability to influence NATO strategic planning. By concentrating resources, Canada would be capable of increasing the impact of its contribution (Willis, 2012: 990). These considerations were critical for Canada’s decision to go South as it became the strategic core of the intervention since 2005/2006. What is more, the specific decision to get into Kandahar, instead of other Southern provinces, such as Herat and Chaghcharan, had to do with logistic reasons and talks with like-minded partners, which was once again likely due to the increasing relevance of alliance politics in a permissive unipolar structure (Willis, 2012: 990–994). Besides the fact that Kandahar met some operational requirements for a Canadian deployment, such as “accessibility” and “cost efficiency,” Canada conducted talks primarily with the United Kingdom and then with the Netherlands. Such talks were critical to defining the Southern deployment’s division of labour while the United States “was now happy to be relieved of the south” (Willis, 2012: 994). The United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Canada not only decided to deploy their forces in Helmand, Uruzgan, and Kandahar, the most dangerous areas of the intervention, but also to assume the challenging objectives of COIN.<sup>7</sup>

In considering the flexibility of NATO rules of engagement, the level of commitment by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Canada was even more remarkable. Even though NATO is a powerful, longstanding alliance that enjoyed an indisputable relevance once the division-of-labour strategy was activated in Afghanistan, its functioning depended heavily on its members’ voluntary contributions to advance its strategic objectives. NATO members maintained national control over their contributions to Alliance operations through caveats. Such caveats

implied imposing restrictions on how NATO members' military deployments are performed in terms of their area of operations, the work with certain allies, and their timing (Saideman, 2016: 21 and 23; Saideman & Auerswald, 2014: 2–3 and 33–44). The result was different strategic postures and levels of commitment. Some members, such as Germany, insisted on seeing the intervention as an S&R mission, whereas others such as Canada transitioned from S&R to COIN (Noetzel & Schreer, 2009: 217). While the United States and Canada, along with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, focused their operations on the most restive regions, as mentioned earlier, Italy, Germany, France, and Norway limited their operations to more secure areas (Jockel, 2014: 6; Jones, 2008a: 105).

Having established that the unipolar structure was permissive for both the United States and Canada, it is necessary to address the extent to which the strategic environment was restrictive for both of them in terms of the threats derived from the Afghan irregular war. According to neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, conducting a broad threat assessment is equally critical to explain the strategic environment that paved the way for the United States and Canada to adopt similar foreign and security policies in Afghanistan. Undertaking this assessment allows this chapter to show that even though the unipolar system enabled Americans and Canadians to choose offensive dominance and opportunistic foreign and security policies freely, their FPEs had to operationalize these policies as irregular warfare strategies. Specifically, those strategies came in the form, first, of S&R or complex peacekeeping and CT and, next, of COIN. Why and how both countries found themselves undertaking COIN precisely between 2006 and 2011 are questions that Chapters 4 and 5 will address by analyzing the American and Canadian FPEs' belief system and their ability to mobilize domestic resources required to increase their engagement levels.

## THE EMERGENCE OF IRREGULAR WARFARE IN AFGHANISTAN

The United States and its allies' immediate military response to al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks was to overthrow the Taliban regime because it had offered sanctuary to al Qaeda, allowing such a group to train and plan the attacks against New York City and Washington D.C. Accordingly, the justification of this response was the threat's clarity posed

by al Qaeda to the United States and its allies' national interests (The White House, 2001). U.S. airpower started degrading Taliban communications throughout the theatre of operations. Simultaneously, Central Intelligence Agency Officers and Special Forces Soldiers fought on the ground, alongside 15,000 Afghans combatants led by local warlords, against the Afghan Taliban regime (Jones, 2008b: 7). Since the overthrow of the Taliban was achieved successfully in only three months, this strategy—combining airpower, few troops on the ground and alliances with indigenous combatants—became known as the “Afghan model” (Andres et al., 2005–2006: 127). It constituted the starting point of an UN-sanctioned campaign undertaken by the United States and its allies to reduce al Qaeda's operational ability to perpetrate other attacks in the United States' homeland and that of its allies. Like the overthrow of the Taliban regime, the reduction of al Qaeda's operational abilities was achieved successfully in the first years of the intervention: al Qaeda leaders were captured or killed, al Qaeda lost its primary training base in Afghanistan, and the last jihadist attack in the West associated with this terrorist group was the bombing in London in 2005 (Jenkins, 2010: 2–3; Wilner, 2009: 2).

However, the victory was incomplete, and even transitory, insofar as the United States, Canada, and its allies had to deal with two serious subsequent threats; namely, (a) the transformation of al Qaeda as the Afghanistan campaign was conducted and (b) the emergence of insurgency in Afghanistan. Both of those threats made Afghanistan a bloody and costly irregular war (see Kilcullen, 2015: 10–24). On the one hand, al Qaeda's transformation entailed transitioning from a centralized terrorist group to a decentralized, diffuse organization operating from Pakistan and promoting a jihadist ideology in Afghanistan without being presented operationally in that country (Mohamedou, 2011: 22–32). That is to say, al Qaeda shifted from being direct to an indirect threat to the United States and Canada. On the other hand, the Afghan insurgency was not only the by-product of the invasion itself but also of pre-existing conditions, being deepened after the invasion. Apart from al Qaeda's radical ideology inspiring those groups on the ground, those conditions were their transnational supporting network operating mainly in Pakistan, the collapse of the Afghan government, the renascent poppy economy, and the significant role of Afghan warlords (Jones, 2008a: Chapter 4; 2008b; Marten, 2006–2007: 54–58 and 69–71; Schetter & Glasser, 2011: 232–233).

Still, with local strategic objectives in mind, the emergent al Qaeda-inspired insurgent groups, the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, the Haqqani network, and Foreign Fighters, were equally an indirect threat to the United States and Canada. Unlike al Qaeda, embracing and promoting a global jihadist campaign against the West, these insurgent groups did not prepare themselves to attack the United States and Canada's homeland but only to repel the coalition forces from Afghanistan. Therefore, the insurgent groups' strategy was similar to that set out by the Mujahideen against the Soviet invaders in the 1980s. However, unlike the Soviet Union, the United States and Canada dealt with different levels of strategic restrictiveness. Even though both countries fought a bloody irregular war, they did not compromise their integrity in the process, which did happen with the Soviet Union. As some historical accounts have pinpointed, the Soviet breakdown was caused not only by Gorbachev's reformist policies and systemic constraints but also by its war in Afghanistan (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999: 693–708).

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

### AL QAEDA'S TRANSFORMATION

Al Qaeda's rise and decline before and after this intervention is the first aspect that a threat assessment must consider. After all, this intervention's underlying justification was al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks that this

group planned from Afghanistan. Reports to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Canadian Senate Special Committee on Anti-terrorism and studies conducted and disseminated by think tanks in the United States and Europe indicated that al Qaeda became the centre of a global jihadist network between the 1980s and 9/11. Still, these reports concluded that its operational capabilities were reduced during the Afghanistan intervention (Jenkins, 2012; Mohamedou, 2011; Sageman, 2009). During the early years of the intervention, al Qaeda's second attack against North America was likely, rendering it a direct threat to the United States and Canada's homeland (see Rumsfeld, 2011: 403). In contrast, during the late years, the U.S.-led campaign brought about the decline of al Qaeda's operational capability to carry out another attack like 9/11.

### *Al- Qaeda's Rise*

Al Qaeda's rise is a by-product of a decade of conflict, from 1979 to 1989, in Afghanistan. This conflict started because the Soviet Union decided to invade Afghanistan to ensure Moscow's influence once a Communist government, coming to power in 1978, had been unable to maintain law and order. The invasion sought to enforce peace through the systemic resort to force and Soviet-style nation-building. Not only did it imply mobilizing 120,000 soldiers, heavy artillery, armoured divisions, and even using chemical weapons against the Afghan population, but it also entailed destructing the pillars of the Afghan social structure and redistributing property nationwide. In the end, the invasion brought about 15,000 dead Soviet soldiers, the killing of a million Afghans, and almost 5 million refugees (Bearden, 2001: 18; Gates, 2014: 360).

As a response, young Muslims mainly from Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Southeast Asia arrived at Afghanistan to wage side by side a 'Holy War' or *jihad* against the Soviet invaders (Jenkins, 2002: 3). These Muslims, who would be consequently called the Mujahideen or "holy warriors,"<sup>8</sup> would receive financial support from the Islamic World, especially Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf States—a group of countries that would be known as the 'Golden Chain.' The Mujahideen would also receive financial support from the United States that funnelled billions of dollars through Pakistan (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004: 55–56). It is worth noting that the then

Pakistani President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq and the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) ended playing a central role within the strategy against the Soviets. Specifically, the Pakistani government and intelligence services turned into the ultimate deciders regarding how and when distributing the supplies and arms obtained with American dollars to the Mujahideen (see Gates, 2014: 335).

Among the young Muslims heading to Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet invaders, Osama Bin Laden “understood better than most of the volunteers the extent to which the continuation and eventual success in Afghanistan [and beyond] depended on an increasingly complex, almost worldwide organization” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004: 55). As a result, after the defeat of the Soviet Union in 1988, Bin Laden, along with Abdullah Azzam and other Arab volunteers, decided that its jihadist movement would not dissolve and “established what they called a base or foundation (al Qaeda) as a potential general headquarters for future jihad” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004: 56).

With the Soviet withdrawal and subsequent collapse in mind, Islamist extremists granted al Qaeda an increased social status in the Arab world, which encouraged Hasan al Turabi, one of the most influential politicians in modern Sudan, to invite al Qaeda to enjoy a haven in that country. In return, Bin Laden helped Sudanese Muslims fight against Christian separatists in the South and contributed to road-building projects. Turabi, one of the planners of the coup d’état that brought to the power Omar al Bashir, paved the way for al Qaeda to establish a “worldwide business operation” in Sudan. This operation included ties with radical Muslims in the Balkans, Northern Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, and Southeast Asia. However, by the late 1990s, the United States and other Western powers, along with Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Libya, and Saudi Arabia, pressured Sudan to stop offering al Qaeda a haven. The United States and its allies feared the emergence of Islamic extremists threatening the West, a fear that came true with the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Libya had already been targets of groups supported by al Qaeda. For its part, Saudi Arabia had fallen out with Bin Laden due to his virulent denouncement of the Saudi participation within the U.S.-led coalition during the 1990 Gulf War and had, accordingly, revoked Bin Laden’s Saudi citizenship (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004: 57–58 and 62–63).

The international pressure forced al Qaeda out of Sudan in 1996, and its members returned to Afghanistan to find a haven again (Vinci, 2009: 112–113). However, al Qaeda's consolidation did not follow an easy pathway in Afghanistan. The Taliban, who would become al Qaeda's strategic allies, did not control key centres, including Kabul, when al Qaeda members arrived in Afghanistan. It is worth noting that, after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, a bloody conflict between the Mujahedeen, including the Taliban, to control Kabul defined the period between 1992 and 1996. Even though the Taliban gained control first of Jalalabad and then Kabul in 1996, when it founded the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, a new militia, the Northern Alliance, was created to resist the Taliban occupation. The geopolitical consolidation of the Taliban and the Northern Alliance's subsequent response brought about another wave of violence between 1996 and 2001 (see National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004: 65) (The last section assesses the extent to which the emergence of warlords defined this period and became one of the factors shaping the insurgency's emergence in the aftermath of 9/11).

It was during this phase that al Qaeda established a strategic alliance with the Taliban. At the beginning, there were tensions between Mullah Muhammed Omar, the leader of the Taliban, and Bin Laden. The latter started to proclaim a new holy war against the West and Afghanistan as a new haven to achieve such purpose, which brought about a new international pressure against the recently constituted Taliban government. As a result, Muhammed Omar forced al Qaeda to move to Southern Afghanistan to keep him under control. Nevertheless, this move ended up being in al Qaeda's best interests in consolidating its primary area of operations. In the end, as Bin Laden managed to bring economic benefits to the Taliban derived from its international connections with the Golden Chain, the Taliban started to enjoy freedom for manoeuvre higher than in Sudan (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004: 47, 65 and 65–66). The U.S. 9/11 Commission—created by Congressional legislation and made of five Democrats and five Republicans to provide strategic assessment and policy recommendations—concluded on this matter the following:

Al Qaeda members could travel freely within the country, enter and exit it without visas or any immigration procedures, purchase and import vehicles and weapons, and enjoy the use of official Afghan Ministry of Defense license plates. Al Qaeda also used the Afghan state-owned Ariana Airlines to courier money into the country. The Taliban seemed to open the doors to all who wanted to come to Afghanistan to train in the camps. The alliance with the Taliban provided al Qaeda a sanctuary in which to train and indoctrinate fighters and terrorists, import weapons, forge ties with other jihad groups and leaders, and plot and staff terrorist schemes. (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004: 66)

With greater freedom for action in Afghanistan, al Qaeda managed to plan the attacks against the West's periphery and its very core, whose most notable achievement was the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001 (Sageman, 2009: 1; Vinci, 2009: 112–113). This attack made al Qaeda not only one of the most serious threats to the United States and its allies but also the leader of a global jihadist network (Jenkins, 2010: 2), whose ties had started to be forged during its time in Sudan. Indeed, it can be argued that from the 1980s to 9/11, al Qaeda managed to change the scale of resentments in the Arab and Muslim world derived from Western colonization. Where other Islamic organizations and movements fought against local authoritarian regimes seen as the near enemy by using military means and occasionally participating in electoral contests and national debates, al Qaeda extended the Islamic fight against the far enemy, that is, the Western supporters of such regimes. Above all, al Qaeda managed to consolidate a jihadist army of professional and disciplined soldiers in the years before 9/11 (Mohamedou, 2011: 13–19).

It is worth noting that, although al Qaeda became the centre of a global jihadist network before 9/11, this terrorist group evolved as a hierarchical, formal structure, especially in the top-tier. Its central staff was made of two unique leaders, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, and a consultative council called *shura majlis*. It directly supervised the most successful attacks against the United States, such as the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the 9/11 attacks (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Jones, 2008: 35). Some plots were undertaken with a certain degree of local autonomy and limited management from the central staff, allowing lower tiers to embrace ample room for strategic innovation.<sup>9</sup> However, al Qaeda carried out its most successful attacks

against the West at the moment when it enjoyed “unity, cohesion, and collective-action capacity” (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Jones, 2008: 34).

### *Al Qaeda’s Decline*

The U.S.-led CT campaign in Afghanistan forced al Qaeda to change its strategy. Al Qaeda had to transition from a centralized organization to a regionalized, decentralized, and even diffused, network (Mohamedou, 2011: 8). Al Qaeda was also forced to find a new secure base on the Afghanistan–Pakistan border to operate more clandestinely. Between 2002 and 2005, from its new base of operations and depending more on local affiliates and allies, al Qaeda launched attacks in Spain and Britain, as well as in the West’s periphery, mainly in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia (Jenkins, 2010: 2–3).

Based on al Qaeda’s transformation, strategic and intelligence analysts agreed in distinguishing between “Al Qaeda Core controlled operations,” “Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist organizations controlled operations,” and “Al Qaeda inspired terrorist plots, carried out either on behalf of al Qaeda or other transnational terrorist organizations” (Sageman, 2009: 4–5; see also Mohamedou, 2011: 20–29; Wilner, 2009: 1). Indeed, with such a distinction in mind, Marc Sageman pointed out that “78% of all global neo-jihadi terrorist plots in the West in the past five years [2004–2009] came from *autonomous homegrown groups* without any connection, direction or control from al Qaeda Core or its allies” [emphasis comes from the original text] (Sageman, 2009: 6). From 2006 on, al Qaeda adopted a sort of “meta-commandment” aimed more at providing politico-religious guidance, as well as strategic advising to its affiliates, than at assuming strategic and operational direction. Such a transformation undoubtedly deepened the distance with its already autonomous affiliates (Mohamedou, 2011: 9). With more difficulties in recruiting combatants, al Qaeda core also started to promote do-it-yourself terrorism. By framing the stigmatization of Muslim communities in the West into its radical ideology, it started inevitably to depend more on young Western volunteers who did not receive any training from al Qaeda (Jenkins, 2010: 6–8).<sup>10</sup>

This transformation is relevant to this study because it indicates that al Qaeda ceased to be the centre of the global jihadist network and was unable to plan another attack on the West as of 2005 from the Afghan–Pakistan border, where its new clandestine ‘headquarters’ ended

up operating (Sageman, 2009: 6–7). To be sure, al Qaeda stopped being an immediate threat to the United States and Canada due to its operational decline to carry out another attack in North America.

Al Qaeda's operational decline coincided with the death of Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011. Although bin Laden was not conducting specific terrorist operations at the moment of his death, and that al Qaeda, by the very nature of its sacred, lengthy battle, was conceived to survive after his death, his inglorious killing by U.S. Navy Seals in Abbottabad, Pakistan, undermined the image of al Qaeda within the global jihadist network. Jihadists had considered his ability to skip the American manhunt as a sign of God's will. As mentioned, Osama bin Laden's leadership had also become critical to al Qaeda. His achievements had transcended the ideology of his group, his "family connections, tribal code, or personal relationship" had allowed this group to forge alliances with the Taliban governing Afghanistan and then fighting as an insurgent group, and his connections with the Golden Chain had enabled his organization to receive permanent financial support (Jenkins, 2012: 4–5).

With the deterioration of its transnational leadership and its need to operate from a secret base in Pakistan, al Qaeda core ended up handing over the fight against the Westerners and the allied Afghan government to the insurgent groups emerging after the U.S. and its allies' intervention. According to Seth G. Jones, the insurgency in Afghanistan was made of "the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, the Haqqani network, foreign fighters (mostly Arabs and Central Asians), tribes based on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and criminal networks" (Jones, 2008a: 37). They managed to control or have a significant operational standing over more than half of the country. Their areas of operations were located from Herat to Nimruz—the Western region—, from Nimruz to Helmand, Oruzgan, Zabol, and Kandahar—the Southern region—and from Ghazni and Paktika to Nurestan, surrounding Kabul by the South—the Eastern region. The Southern and, above all, the Eastern regions were highly compromised due to the Pakistani support for insurgent activities (Jones, 2008a: 37–39).

Not only did the insurgency make the operations of civilian agencies outside Kabul insecure but also it managed to inhibit the advance of United States and Canadian troops and other coalition forces. However, insurgent groups did not constitute a direct threat to the intervening countries' homeland. They could have fought aggressively and operated together to expel the Western presence, yet their fight was locally based

and linked to parochial interests. Unlike al Qaeda embracing a global jihadist battle against the United States and its allies and, accordingly, attempting to attack their homelands or at least their periphery, insurgent groups fought solely against the near enemy, that is, what they perceived as a predatory and corrupt Afghan government (Sageman, 2009: 16–17). That is to say, there was no imminent threat to the United States and Canada’s homeland directly associated with insurgent activity in Afghanistan. Still, those groups embraced al Qaeda’s belief system, which informed their ideology and strategic thinking. The next section addresses the link between al Qaeda’s radical ideology and the Afghan insurgency’s emergence as a threat to the NATO countries, especially those most committed to the intervention, such as the United States and Canada.

### AL QAEDA’S RADICAL IDEOLOGY AS AN INSPIRATION FOR AFGHAN INSURGENCY

Even though al Qaeda’s operational decline was apparent, this terrorist group continued to disseminate radical ideological messages among the public and combatants in Afghanistan and beyond.<sup>11</sup> This ideology was critical to inspire the aggressive fight of insurgent groups against the coalition and Afghan forces, hindering stabilization, reconstruction, and counterinsurgent operations, resulting in a bloody and costly irregular war. The remainder of this section examines the primary ideological and strategic assumptions of al Qaeda’s beliefs and how the Afghan insurgent groups embraced them.

#### *Al Qaeda’s Radical Ideology*

At the ideological level, al Qaeda, which proclaimed the sole authority to interpret the Islamic faith, promoted a new identity for its Afghan adherents and followers in Afghanistan based on the assumption that the Western infidels were seriously attacking Islam (Long & Wilner, 2014: 143–149). Such an identity was reaffirmed on transhistorical and transnational underpinnings. Not only did al Qaeda’s radical ideology highlight a sacred Islamic history in which Allah favoured the true believers, making critical events of such history accessible to present consumption, but also it challenged the world of nation-states. In particular, it replaced the interstate world with a dichotomic world in which those areas where Islam

is fully consolidated, corresponding to “the house of peace,” is distinguished from those where it is not, accounting for the “the house of war”. Al Qaeda’s radical ideology also renamed territories and reaffirmed the cultural background of honour to guarantee the transnational expansion of Islam across northern Africa, the Arab Peninsula, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Specifically, the renaming of territories entailed replacing “Afghanistan” as a privileged theatre of operations by “Khurasan,” a historical term including Afghanistan and its neighbours, whereas a reaffirmed culture of honour was achieved by conjuring up the Pastunwali, the unwritten code of practice for Pashtuns. This code was critical to support the transnational jihad through Afghanistan and Pakistan against the coalition forces in Afghanistan (Long & Wilner, 2014: 131–132).

At the strategic level, al Qaeda’s radical ideology allowed for effective recruitment in proclaiming that infidel Western culture corrupts Muslims’ souls and the extent to which the West has historically threatened Islam’s sacred values by committing the most heinous crimes. In particular, it insists on the need to take revenge on the Westerners due to their “crusader imperialism; the occupation of the Islamic patrimony; the use of munitions against women, children, and elderly believers; the use of torture against the mujahideen in Western prisons; and Westerners attempts to ‘hijack’ the revolutions of the (putative) Islamist-led Arab Spring” (Jenkins, 2010: 4; Long & Wilner, 2014: 134).

By addressing the severity of such offences and, above all, the American, Canadian, and coalition forces’ intervention in Afghanistan, al Qaeda justified armed resistance, including suicide bombings. According to a distorted interpretation of the Quran, al Qaeda considered that the appropriate response to the Western presence in Afghanistan must be jihad, seen as the personal duty of taking up arms rather than personal spiritual searching. God will judge the extent to which such duty is met in life during Judgment Day (Jenkins, 2010: 4). Their battle would accordingly be the most significant since the Prophet’s times taking place on life and being rewarded in the afterlife. If a jihadist has a remarkable depth, “he will take new titles: for example, *batl* (hero), *asad* (lion), and *shaheed* (a martyr/witness)” and celebrate his victory eternally in the paradise (Long & Wilner, 2014: 133).

Holy jihad was used to guarantee recruitment and promote a timeless war to exhaust Western enemies in Afghanistan. According to al Qaeda’s deep-rooted beliefs, the fight against the West started centuries ago and

will extend until Judgment Day or at least until Islam reigns fully among men. Rather than seeing the battle in terms of strategic achievements within timetables as the West does, al Qaeda conceives its adherents' war as an eternal enterprise. During such a battle, moral superiority will defeat advanced military technology, and violent acts against infidels or even innocent Muslims will be morally justified or seen as collateral damage within broader strategic objectives (Jenkins, 2010: 4–5; Long & Wilner, 2014: 135–138).

### *Al Qaeda-Inspired Afghan Insurgent Groups*

The Afghan insurgent groups, such as the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, and foreign fighters, sought to contain the American, Canadian, and other coalition forces. Specifically, those groups became the primary cause of the country's high levels of violence between 2002 and 2006 to precisely undermine the coalition forces' critical strategic objectives (Jones, 2008a: 44). During this period, as documented by Seth Jones, "the number of insurgent-initiated attacks rose by 400 percent [...] the number of deaths from these attacks by more than 800 percent [...] between 2005 and 2006 [...] the number of suicide attacks quintupled from 27 to 139 [...] remotely detonated bombing [increased] more than doubled from 783 to 1677 [...] armed attacks nearly tripled from 1558 to 4542 [and i]nsurgent-initiated attacks rose another 27 percent between 2006 and 2007" (Jones, 2008b: 7–8). More importantly, the Afghan insurgent groups' engagement with such high levels of violence, which helps understand the increased levels of American and Canadian military commitment as of 2006, must be seen as a result of adopting al Qaeda's radical ideology and strategic thinking.

Firstly, these insurgent groups acknowledged al Qaeda's threat assessment as a benchmark, meaning they were willing to conduct a bloody fight against American, Canadian, and other coalition forces and Hamid Karzai's mandate: firstly, as an interim government between 2001 and 2004, and secondly as an elected government for the periods 2004–2009, and 2009–2014. In particular, the Taliban adopted a radical Sunni interpretation of Islam based on the Deobandi School of thought. It follows to embrace the *Sunnah*, that is, a strict interpretation of the Prophet's deeds and seek to impose the *shari'a* law to unify the Muslim community. Before the intervention, the Taliban had managed to control the entire country by imposing a radical ideology, which allowed them to forge,

as mentioned, a strategic alliance with al Qaeda. During the intervention, the affinity between Mullah Omar's ideology and Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri's remained strong and became the basis of robust cooperation between the Taliban and al Qaeda against the Westerners in Afghanistan. Hizb-i-Islami embraced a similar understanding of Islam compared to al Qaeda's radical ideology and, accordingly, considered it necessary to establish a pure Islamic state through Islamic revolution, which equally entailed a direct fight against the coalition forces. For its part, foreign fighters, which were made up of a complex amalgam of combatants from Chechenia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Libya, were inspired by the global jihadism that started with the Mujahideen fighting against the Soviet Union in the 1980s and that al Qaeda sophisticated to start attacking the West during the 1990s (Jones, 2008a: 38, 43, 62; 2008b: 28).

Secondly, insurgent groups were ready to follow al Qaeda's strategic advice regarding the means necessary to conduct their campaign in Afghanistan. To begin with, they focused on local madrasas to recruit young Pashtun combatants and attempted to obtain new revenues through compulsory religious contributions, often resulting in death threats. They adopted tactical knowledge from al Qaeda fighters in Iraq by constructing improvised explosive devices and promoted suicide bombings through the exaltation of martyrdom. With Salafi jihad in mind, insurgents also embraced classical guerrilla warfare to respond to the Western CT campaign. They allowed United States and coalition forces to operate in major cities while operating in rural and inaccessible areas. Their attacks' main targets were coalition forces and their collaborators, such as Afghan government officials, clerics, and teachers opposing the Taliban, NGOs' personal, and civilian agencies guaranteeing elections. These attacks, along with suicide bombings, aimed to create a sense of insecurity among the Afghan population and generate distrust Afghan and coalition forces' ability to stabilize, reconstruct, and secure the country (Jones, 2008a: 50–55 and 63–66; Moghadam, 2008–2009: 59–62).

The ultimate goals of this guerrilla warfare were to adopt exhaustion and displacement strategies. Firstly, an exhaustion strategy, by definition, implies "sapping the energy, resources, and support of the Afghan government and its international partners, making the country ungovernable and hoping that the international community will eventually withdraw in exhaustion" (Kilcullen, 2009: 52). Indeed, the ISAF mission conducted its strategy based on the enemy's exhaustion strategy. Secondly, the

Taliban and other insurgent groups carried out a protracted strategy or displacement strategy, aimed, by definition, at building parallel hierarchies *vis-à-vis* the Western strategy governmental reform. Parallel hierarchies emerged in the form of Islamic governance, security, and justice systems to rule the most basic level of Afghan society and politics, namely, the village, where the population actually exists. The other levels, the central government in Kabul, provinces, and districts, as the primary target of the Western reform programme, were disconnected from the level of villages and ended up being inoperative to reconstruct the country due to their high levels of corruption (Mahendrarajah, 2014: 91, 98 and 107). The American and Canadian transition to counterinsurgency as of 2006 can be seen as a logical response to those parallel hierarchies.

### FACTORS ENCOURAGING THE AFGHAN INSURGENCY

Apart from al Qaeda's radical ideology, several factors paved the way for the insurgency's emergence and endurance in Afghanistan: namely, (a) Pakistan's transnational support, (b) the collapse of the national government that operated more on paper despite the United States, Canada, and other NATO intervening countries' efforts, (c) the emergence of a strong poppy economy, and (d) the historical emergence of warlords challenging the national government institutions. The latter, which has been known as 'warlordism' in the irregular warfare literature (Marten, 2006–2007: 41–73), has been the basis of 'local configurations of violence,' especially in Southern Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> During the intervention, both warlordism and the local configurations of violence were inextricably intertwined with the building of parallel hierarchies *vis-à-vis* the Western counterinsurgency.

To begin with, the scope of the insurgency in Afghanistan depended on the extent to which the Pakistan government, mainly ISI and Frontier Corps, and the Pashtun population in Pakistan, provided its active support. Firstly, insurgent groups received financial, medical, training, and intelligence support from Pakistan officials; not to mention the ease of crossing the border due to their logistical backing. Ultimately, this strategy sought to keep the Afghan regime away from Indian sway, guarantee Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan after the US-led campaign came to an end, and avoid a Pashtun transnational movement between both countries, resulting in regional instability. Secondly, the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, mainly the city of Quetta, and Federally Administrated Areas became havens for insurgents combating in the Afghan provinces

of Kandahar, Oruzgan, Helmand, and Zabol due to the shared ethnicity between Pashtun populations in both countries (Jones, 2008a: 54–60).

The collapse of the Afghan government also fueled the insurgency. As the Afghan regime solely ruled Kabul and surrounding areas, insurgent groups managed to radicalize and indoctrinate a vast section of the population in rural areas. In these areas, there were no bureaucracy and institutional structures to implement taxing and economic policies, provide in-home services, such as electricity, administer the justice sector efficiently and fairly, and guarantee effective law enforcement. Apart from this lack of governance, seen as the government's inability to provide essential public goods and services to population, Afghan security forces, mainly police forces, were poorly trained and equipped and easily corrupted by the emerging poppy economy (Jones, 2008b: 8, 16–17, 20–25 and 34–35). After all, some insurgent groups managed to pay their combatants about US\$ 200 per month compared to the police officers' average salary of US\$ 70 per month (Piazza, 2012: 216).

It is worth noting that, before the intervention, the Taliban had reduced opium cultivation to a 99% in areas under its control (Farrell & Thorne, 2005: 81). This reduction constituted a significant change in the illegal Afghan economy after having been, during the 1990s, “the main source of the world's illicitly heroin supply” derived from the opium poppy (Farrell & Thorne, 2005: 81). However, with the overthrow of the Taliban regime, opium poppy farming emerged even stronger than before. During the period of this study, Afghanistan “produce[d] around 90 percent of the world's supply of illicit opium and nearly 85 percent of global supplies of heroin and morphine originate in Afghanistan” (Piazza, 2012: 213–234). Based on this illegal economy, insurgent groups had the revenues necessary to combat coalition forces and erode the Afghan authority. Specifically, insurgents used these “revenues for the recruitment and payment of foot soldiers [the maintenance of] the loyalty of relatively high-quality segments of the impoverished Afghan labor market,” the bribery of officials and the acquisition of weapons (Piazza, 2012: 214–215). There were also indirect effects of poppy cultivation, such as the emergence of “secondary illegal markets in weapons, illegal documents, illegal cross-border movements in persons, money laundering, and financial transactions that [were] exploited by terrorist groups” (Piazza, 2012: 217). Ultimately, as demonstrated by James A. Piazza, the Afghan provinces with the most significant areas of poppy cultivation, such as Helmand and Kandahar, witnessed at the same time the highest levels of

violence as measured by terrorist attacks and casualties (Piazza, 2012: 213 and 223–224).

Finally, the long tradition of warlords buttered the factors conducive to insurgency's emergence. Based on their charisma and patronage ties, warlords historically managed to take advantage of the lack of central authority in the country to shape the political and economic realms at the local levels. As a result, their leadership became a necessary condition of Afghan insurgent movements since the late 1970s. Some of them took over as the Mujahideen commanders leading the resistance against the Soviet Union with Pakistan's support. Others emerged as a result of revolt within Afghan armed forces to lead independent resistance groups. Before the Taliban rule, those warlords managed to control checkpoints to impose taxes on travellers and constitute an opium poppy economy, which allowed them to increase their authority *vis-à-vis* tribal leaders in providing jobs and security (Marten, 2006–2007: 48 and 54–55).

However, social discontent with some warlords in the 1990s enabled the Taliban to control territory until establishing the Islamic State of Afghanistan. After all, years of suffering that resulted from factional infighting between warlords and extensive atrocities, including the rape of several girls in the summer of 1994, encouraged Afghans to pledge the Taliban's assistance (Cassidy, 2012: 25–26). The increased acceptance of the Taliban did not entail stopping the tradition of warlords' leadership. Some warlords formed the Northern Alliance to conduct a relentless fight against the Taliban and al Qaeda to force them out from Afghanistan. Actually, the Northern Alliance's collaboration with American Forces was, as mentioned, decisive to overthrowing the Taliban regime (Marten, : 55). What is more, "Since the intervention in 2002, virtually no influential Afghan political figure has escaped this label [warlord], which has subsequently become the category to describe all actors trying to spoil, or even cast doubts, on the international agenda of the Afghan reconstruction process" (Schetter & Glasser, 2011: 232). Even though several warlords became an integral part of the Afghan government, allowing the latter to merge their militias with the Afghan forces, most of the warlords continued to lead insurgent groups, particularly in Southern Afghanistan, especially Kandahar (Schetter & Glasser, 2011, 232–233).

## CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this study is to explain why Canada and the United States behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention despite their different positions in the international system. As explained in Chapter 2, despite having conducted, respectively, S&R—or complex peacekeeping—and CT during the early years, the United States and Canada found themselves adopting similar strategies of COIN. The present chapter addressed the first reason for such similarity, namely, the intervention's strategic environment. Based on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, this chapter examined the strategic environment by explaining the international system's primary features and the clarity and scope of threats faced by the United States and Canada. Both of those factors informed the levels of permissiveness/restrictiveness of the strategic environment during the intervention.

With this understanding of the strategic environment in mind, this chapter's core argument was that the United States and Canada found a permissive environment derived from unipolarity dynamics that paved the way for them to choose offensive dominance and transition from flocking to an opportunistic foreign policy, respectively. Still, both of them faced a restrictive environment in the form of irregular warfare, especially the emergent insurgency fighting against the West. Al Qaeda's radical ideology, Pakistan's support, the Afghan government's collapse, the poppy economy, and the long tradition of warlords—especially in Southern Afghanistan—also widened the insurgency scope.

In addressing the international system, this chapter argued that unipolarity was the most salient systemic condition during the intervention. Theoretically, such a type of polarity offers greater freedom of action to the unipole and its allies. Empirically, two conditions must be met to simultaneously guarantee such freedom of action for the unipole and its allies, namely, the lack of countervailing powers and the increased significance of alliance politics. Both conditions were indeed met in Afghanistan: No countervailing power or counterhegemonic coalition emerged to contain or set limits on the U.S. foreign and security policy. Specifically, China and Russia, the potential balancers, were unable or uninterested in carrying out hard, soft, internal, or external balancing against the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan. Also, in undertaking two wars at once, the United States depended more on the NATO division of labour, making

the alliance politics and the U.S. allies more significant. In particular, it allowed Canada to promote its own interests in Afghanistan.

This chapter also argued that the assessment of the international system is necessary but not sufficient to understand the Afghanistan intervention's strategic environment. A complete assessment should include the Afghan irregular warfare threats to the United States and Canada's homeland and military and civilian operations on the ground. Addressing such threats entailed examining al Qaeda's changing role as the architect of the 9/11 attacks against the United States, the emergence of Afghan insurgency resulting from the intervention itself, and those pre-existing conditions that funnelled such insurgency.

With this purpose in mind, this study showed that al Qaeda ceased to be a threat to the United States and Canada's homeland like it was in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Specifically, American, Canadian, and other coalition forces managed to reduce their operational capabilities to conduct direct attacks on the West, including North America, by denying it sanctuary in Afghanistan. However, al Qaeda's radical jihadist ideology, resulting in a firm rejection of the Western way of living, relentless fight against coalition forces and disruption of civilian operations in Afghanistan, constituted a direct threat to both countries on the ground. This radical jihadist ideology, being promoted by al Qaeda from the border with Pakistan, inspired all insurgent groups operating in Afghanistan, such as the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami, and Foreign fighters. These groups were the primary cause of the increased violence from 2002 to 2007, which encouraged coalition forces to assess the extent to which the increase of commitment to the intervention was necessary. The United States and Canada considered this increased commitment indispensable. The insurgent groups, above all, threatened American and Canadian military operations in undertaking an exhaustion strategy and challenged civilian operations in building parallel hierarchies *vis-à-vis* the Western government reform.

Furthermore, several conditions—some of them present before the intervention—paved the way for the emergence of insurgency in Afghanistan. Firstly, the Pakistan government, through ISI and Frontier Corps, and the Pakistani Pashtun population provided support to insurgent groups. Specifically, some members of these groups, along with al Qaeda members, found sanctuary in Baluchistan and Federally Administered areas. Secondly, the Afghan government, which had already been weak during the Taliban rule, collapsed. It could not provide basic public

services, including public security, law and order, and consolidate well-trained Afghan security forces. Thirdly, the collapse of the government went hand in hand with the emergence of the poppy economy. Prohibited during the Taliban rule, this economy flourished during the intervention was performed. Insurgent groups treated this economy as a significant income source, required to recruit and train combatants, obtain weapons, and bribe officials and transport equipment. Some provinces, such as Kandahar and Helmand, where the largest poppy cultivation areas were found, witnessed equally the high levels of violence. Finally, all of those factors were combined with, or deepened by, the long tradition of Afghan warlords, who became critical in the post-9/11 Afghan politics. In particular, in southern Afghanistan, warlords monopolized violence and became critical actors in building parallel hierarchies.

The strategic environment assessment helps identify the available strategic options for the United States and Canada. However, it cannot shed light on why both countries adopted comparable foreign and security policy objectives precisely between 2006 and 2011. Chapter 4 will explain why the United States chose offensive dominance during the whole intervention and why Canada transitioned from flocking to opportunism as of 2005/2006. Specifically, based on American and Canadian FPEs' beliefs, it will analyse why the United States and Canada operationalized offensive dominance and flocking as CT and S&R or complex peacekeeping, respectively, between 2001 and 2005. More importantly, Chapter 4 will address why both countries operationalized offensive dominance and opportunism, respectively, as COIN between 2006 and 2011.

## NOTES

1. Hansen (2011: 33–35) conceptualized the options of flocking and free riding as available for the unipole's allies, whereas Massie (2013) and Kirkey and Ostroy (2010) considered that of taking advantage of given circumstances in a unipolar system.
2. Jones (2008a: Chapter 4; 2008b) offered one of the most exhaustive studies identifying the relationship between the emergence of insurgency, al Qaeda's ideology, and the collapse of the Afghan government.
3. For the potential instability derived from China's rise, see Mearsheimer (2014: Chapter 10). For the way such rise—in the context of the general growing prosperity of Asia—could be good for the world and especially

for the Middle East and Central Asia, see Mahbubani (2008: 1–2, 9 and 176–186).

4. On pragmatism informing Chinese foreign policy, see Weiss (2019).
5. Besides the aforementioned cases, the literature on hard and soft balancing has taken into account Iran and North Korea's internal hard balancing in the form of WMD programs, combined with their offensive rhetoric (Hansen, 2011: 29). The proponents of balancing have also addressed external hard balancing in assessing the Russia-Iran connection. They focus on Russian assistance of the Iranian nuclear program, cooperation in space technology, and military sales between these countries. Finally, several commentators considered the external soft balancing undertaken by Germany, France, Russia, and Turkey during the 2003 Iraq invasion. These cases have nothing to do with the Afghanistan intervention, yet they are mentioned to buttress that they are not strong enough to challenge the unipolar structure during the intervention (See Brookes & Wohlforth, 2008: 77–95).
6. During the post-Cold War, the Iraq invasion was the only intervention in which the United States assumed the overall burden, unlike other campaigns, including the 1990–1991 Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Libya, and the intervention analyzed here (Brooks et al., 2012–2013: 31–32).
7. On an assessment of British counterinsurgency using kinetic and non-kinetic operations in Helmand, see Farrell (2010). On a comparative analysis of Canadian and Dutch counterinsurgency in Kandahar and Uruzgan, see Josep T. Jockel (2014).
8. On an accurate assessment of Mujahideen's varying profiles, see Sageman (2004).
9. On an accurate assessment about how al Qaeda's lower tiers and independent terrorist entrepreneurs were critical to undertake operations with high strategic innovative levels, see Moghadam (2013).
10. Homegrown terrorist attacks and attempts of attacks in Canada and the U.S. were conducted by alone people or small groups which were self-radicalized on the internet. The most known case of homegrown terrorism in Canada inspired by al Qaeda and its affiliates was the failed attempts to detonate a truck bomb in downtown Toronto and assassinate Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other officials in Parliament Hill in 2006. In the United States, the most emblematic cases of homegrown terrorism were the shooting provoked by a Muslim U.S. Army Mayor, Nidal Malik Hasan, at Fort Hood, Texas in 2009 and the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 (Haglund & Lauzon, 2014: 307–309). It is worth noting that al Qaeda core became unable "to infiltrate professional terrorists in the West [...] probably due to good cooperation among intelligence agencies [...]"

- good intelligence databases and increased vigilance and security at airports around the world” (Sageman, 2009: 19).
11. Al Qaeda’s ability to capture the minds of Westerners perpetrating home-grown terrorist acts and to inspire other terrorist groups has been termed *al Qaedaism*. Such a term is also used in a broader sense to refer to an ideology and strategic thinking inspiring combatants and wannabe jihadists in Muslim, Arab and Western societies (see Mohamedou, 2011: 30–32; Wilner, 2009: 2).
  12. This section borrows the term “local configurations of violence” from Schetter and Glasser (2011: 232–236).

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## American and Canadian Security Beliefs: Transitioning to Similar Foreign and Security Policies

This chapter aims to assess American and Canadian foreign policy executives' (FPE) security beliefs as one of the secondary, yet direct causes, of American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention. This assessment constitutes the second analytical step of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. By examining American and Canadian security beliefs, the version of neoclassical realism used in this study operationalizes these categories by breaking them down into two types: principled beliefs and causal beliefs. As Chapter 2 stated, principled beliefs, which distinguish “right from wrong and just from unjust,” inform and justify foreign policy goals, whereas causal beliefs, which correspond to “beliefs about cause-effect relationship,” justify the best way to meet these goals (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993: 9–10). It means that these analytical categories refer to beliefs underpinning foreign policy ends and means.

With this distinction in mind, this chapter draws more attention to the evolution of the American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs during the intervention than to their principled beliefs. This analytical decision is justified not only because of the significant variation of the former as compared to the latter, but above all because of how the variation of American and Canadian causal beliefs sheds light on the puzzle of this

study. As this chapter will demonstrate, Canadian and American foreign and security policies varied simultaneously with their FPEs' causal beliefs. Indeed, these beliefs explain, to a large extent, their similar increased level of commitment in Afghanistan between 2006 and 2011. In contrast, principled beliefs do not allow for, with some exceptions, explaining this variation in foreign policy as these beliefs were relatively similar and static during the intervention. Both American and Canadian FPEs embraced three relatively invariable principled beliefs in conducting their interventions in Afghanistan: one, to protect Americans and Canadians from future terrorist attacks in North America, two, to enhance Afghans' security and quality of life, and three, to assume responsibilities for global stability.

This chapter's core argument is that the United States and Canada's choices of offensive dominance and opportunistic foreign policies were operationalized as counterinsurgency (COIN) during the period 2006–2011 based on their FPEs' causal beliefs. It made the United States and Canada's foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan not only similar but also more ambitious than their previous policies between 2001 and 2005. During this period, these countries had adopted Counterterrorism (CT) and Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R) that constituted adaptations of their strategies of offensive dominance and flocking around the unipole. This shift was also reaffirmed by their FPEs' permanent and variant principled belief systems during the intervention.

Section “[American and Canadian FPEs' Principled Beliefs](#)” examines the executives' principled beliefs that were relatively constant and addresses those that shifted during the intervention. The former helps understand why both the American and Canadian FPEs intervened in Afghanistan as like-minded partners, whereas the latter explains the turning point in 2005/2006. Regarding the principled beliefs that changed during the intervention, this section addresses two American and Canadian stances. Firstly, it scrutinizes how both of them made Afghanistan a top foreign policy priority during the period 2005–2011. Before and after these years, Canadians and Americans had diverse priorities, which competed with and occasionally overshadowed the Afghanistan campaign. Secondly, it examines American and Canadians' assessment of the Afghanistan War's implications in the long run. The American FPE insisted since 2006 on avoiding an open-ended commitment in Afghanistan, so that they decided to increase their commitment to end it as soon as possible. It was a critical decision after having

neglected the Afghanistan War in the previous years. The Canadian FPE made Afghanistan a “war for prestige” after 2005/2006 in the sense that its increased commitment would allow it to be seen as a reliable American and European ally in the long run.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the significance of causal beliefs to understand this study’s puzzle, Sections “Counterterrorism (CT): American FPE’S Causal Beliefs, 2001–2005” to “American FPE’S COIN Causal Beliefs (2006–2011)” aim to address their evolution. These sections argue that between 2001 and 2005, the American FPE undertook CT, whereas the Canadian FPE focused on S&R to meet their security goals in Afghanistan. Different causal beliefs certainly informed these strategies. However, Americans and Canadians decided to broaden their approaches to irregular warfare so as to respond to the unexpected emergence of insurgency in the south of the country as of 2005. Americans decided to merge their CT strategy with a population-centred approach, whereas Canadians linked their S&R strategy with a more direct, large-scale military engagement. For both of them, this transition came in the form of Counterinsurgency (COIN). Above all, in comparing the three strategies’ causal beliefs, these sections allow for inferring that CT and S&R would only partially embrace COIN’s goals. The version of the COIN strategy adopted in Afghanistan involved fighting against the enemy, maintaining the stabilized areas, and reconstructing and developing certain Afghan regions. These objectives were known as the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ components of COIN required to “separate the population from the insurgents” and to “win hearts and minds” (see Canada 2008: Chapter 1, Section 1, 103; Clinton, 2014: 136; The United States, 2006: 1-121–1-136). CT focused solely on “clear” and “hold,” whereas S&R embraced only “hold” and “build.” It means that neither of them was as comprehensive as COIN.

In examining the transition from S&R and CT to COIN, this chapter traces the evolution of American and Canadian FPEs’ beliefs by adopting the logic of consequentialism. This logic entailed identifying how Americans and Canadians FPEs assessed different strategic options by considering their consequences in terms of utility for their goals. It even entails addressing cleavages inside FPEs when they defended different strategies. In considering the FPEs’ principled beliefs and causal beliefs, this chapter privileged those advanced by American Presidents, Canadian Prime Ministers, U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense, and Canadian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence.

## AMERICAN AND CANADIAN FPES' PRINCIPLED BELIEFS

The American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs were relatively constant during the intervention. As expected in their role as close allies, both of them adopted similar foreign policy principled beliefs aimed at justifying the Afghanistan intervention. In attempting to protect the American and Canadian people, contribute to Afghans' security and quality of life, and maintain global stability, by intervening in Afghanistan, these FPEs adopted three types of rationales: namely, the "us-," the "them-," and the "we-" justifications—in the terms advanced by Jean-Christophe Boucher (Boucher, 2009: 720–722).

On the American side, the three rationales were presented simultaneously in the Bush administration's Afghanistan Declaratory Policy (The White House, 2001), and President Bush's central public speeches on Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism (WoT) (Bush, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2007). As documented, President Bush's speeches framed the Afghanistan intervention—and the Iraq invasion—in the dichotomies of good vs. evil, civilized vs. barbaric worlds, and freedom vs. tyranny. As a result, the us-, them-, and we-justifications would come in the form of defending the freedom-based American way of living, the liberation of Afghanistan, and the global commitment to freedom. All three would be threatened by terrorist tyranny (Kuypers, 2006). During the Obama administration, the three rationales were equally presented.<sup>2</sup> Still, the Obama administration sought to adopt a new approach by limiting the mention of these dichotomies and introducing another dichotomy: 'good war' vs. 'bad war.' With this dichotomy in mind, the Obama administration justified the Afghanistan intervention and criticized the Iraq invasion. Afghanistan as the good war would be the war of necessity, which meets the just war and self-defence criteria, whereas the Iraq war as the bad war would be the unjust war of choice.<sup>3</sup> This dichotomy allowed the Obama administration to criticize the Bush administration for having invaded Iraq and, accordingly, for having distracted resources required to facilitate success in Afghanistan (see Clinton, 2014: 148; Gates, 2014: Chapter 6). Barack Obama embraced this principled belief as a Senator during the rally against the Iraq War in Chicago on October 2, 2002, and as a presidential candidate in July 2008. He would continue to embrace this view as president in August 2009 (Obama, 2008, 2009a, 2009c).

In considering other FPE members, it can be argued that, even though their thoughts included the three rationales, some of them privileged one

or two of those. For instance, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld highlighted the us-justification (Rumsfeld, 2011: 355–356, 362, 367–368, 403). For their part, Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton highlighted both the us- and them-justifications (Clinton, 2014: 130–131; Rice, 2011: 90–91 and 94, 108).

On the Canadian side, the Chrétien Liberals, the Martin Liberals, and the Harper Conservatives embraced the three rationalities when referring to the Afghanistan mission (Boucher, 2009: 720–721). Prime Minister Harper's public speech for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in Afghanistan on March 13, 2006, epitomized how the Canadian FPE justified the Afghanistan mission, based on the three rationalities:

You have put yourself on the line to:

- Defend our national interest [the us-justification];
- Protect Canada and the world from terror [the us- and we-justification];
- Help the people of Afghanistan rebuild their country [the them-justification]
- Your work is important because it is in our national interest to see Afghanistan become a free, democratic, and peaceful country [the us- and them-justification] [...] Your work is about more than just defending Canada's interest. It's also about demonstrating an international leadership role for our country [the us-justification] [...] Finally, but no less important, is the great humanitarian work you're doing. Working with the Afghan government and Afghan people to enhance their security helps them. It helps them rebuild their country to make a better life for themselves and their children [the them-justification] (Harper, 2006a).

Still, as Jean-Christophe Boucher argued, the Canadian FPE placed a different emphasis on these rationales. Even though all of them prioritized the us-justification, there were some variations as to the other two rationales. The Chrétien and Martin Liberals highlighted more the we-justification than the them-justification, whereas the Harper Conservatives privileged more the them-justification than the we-justification. The Chrétien and Martin Liberals understood the we-justification in the form of their contribution to the global stability in seeing Afghanistan as the primary front of the WoT and as an apparent challenge of a failing state to the international security, respectively (Boucher, 2009: 725–728). For

both of them, the we-justification also came in the form of their commitment to NATO. As Prime Minister Chrétien pointed out, “Canada had been the first to talk about the use of NATO’s Article 5, which stated that an attack on one member was an attack on all” (Chrétien, 2007: 304). For their part, the Harper Conservatives simultaneously highlighted the us- and them-justifications. Since they made Afghanistan its highest priority, the Harper Conservatives needed to justify the intervention in terms of both Canadian national interests and the betterment of Afghan quality of life (Boucher, 2009: 727). Several of Stephen Harper’s public speeches addressed the us- and them-justification simultaneously (Harper, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2006e, 2007a, 2009).

Similar to the underlying dichotomies of Presidents Bush and Obama’s stances, the Canadian FPE considered that 9/11 had been an attack against the Canadian idea of civilization, and it would deserve a subsequent response. The Canadian FPE would embrace, with a less radical tone, the Bush administration’s principled beliefs regarding the civilized and barbaric worlds. However, the Canadian FPE would reject Bush’s principled beliefs on the Iraq War and, accordingly, they would implicitly embrace the Obama administration’s stance regarding the good war and bad war. Prime Minister Martin offered a good example of this posture in his memoirs in the following terms:

The attacks of September 11, 2001, were an assault on the very idea of our civilization, as the rhetoric of Osama bin Laden and his imitators and followers subsequently confirmed. They were not related to any particular grievance or any identifiable military, social, political or economic objective. There was no demand, however outrageous, that could be met. September 11 was simply an attack on our way of life [...]

If the transition from the Taliban regime to the government Afghans later chose has been a disappointment, it must be in part because the Bush administration became preoccupied with a larger and more dubious adventure in Iraq, whose relationship to September 11 was repeatedly suggested without ever being adequately explained. (Martin, 2008: 390–391)

All in all, in considering the American and Canadian FPEs’ principled beliefs, it can be argued that they were relatively constant during the intervention. Both of them embraced the us-, them-, and we-justifications, with some minor variations. It means that addressing the way the FPE embraced these rationales helps us understand why, as like-minded countries, they decided to intervene in Afghanistan. However, because of

their continuity, these rationales and their underlying principled beliefs, that is, what mattered the most for the Canadian and American FPEs—their people, the Afghan people, and/or global stability—do not help explain the evolution of American and Canadian foreign policy. Above all, these rationales do not allow us to understand their similar foreign policy implementation and comparable engagement levels between 2006 and 2011.

Understanding these engagement levels makes it necessary to examine American and Canadian principled beliefs beyond the rationales mentioned above. Specifically, two principled beliefs must be considered to understand them, namely, the importance of the Afghanistan intervention, among other campaigns, and its significance in the long run. Both of these beliefs varied in the same way as American and Canadian foreign and security policies did.

Firstly, the similarity between Canadian and American foreign and security policy implementation between 2005 and 2011 resulted from similar geographical priorities. The United States and Canada found themselves making Afghanistan a top foreign policy priority precisely during this period. Before 2005 and after 2011, the American and Canadian FPEs had a number of diverse priorities. The American FPE made the Middle East and Asia-Pacific top priorities from 2003 through 2006 and after 2011, respectively. In particular, American leaders deemed the Iraq invasion and deeper involvement in the Asia-Pacific just and proper foreign policies, respectively, during these years, and such policies ended up undermining the Afghanistan policy.

Regarding the Iraq War, President Bush attributed the same importance to it as the Afghanistan intervention. Between 2002 and 2006, Bush repeatedly defined the Iraq War as a good war. The Iraq War would be a “good war” in the sense that it would be both a necessary and just war. Before 2006, the American FPE had not made the distinction between a good war and a bad war and regretted that their opponents did (Rumsfeld, 2011: 682).<sup>4</sup> For President Bush, the Iraq War was necessary because the Saddam Hussein regime represented a threat to the world, the region, and the United States:

[After 9/11] we had to take a fresh look at every threat in the world. There were state sponsors of terror. There were sworn enemies of America. There were hostile governments that threatened their neighbors. There

were nations that violated international demands. There were dictators who represented their people. And there were regimes that pursued WMD. Iraq combined all of those threats. (Bush, 2010: 228)

The Iraq War was equally seen by President Bush as a just war because it would allow for transforming and liberating Iraq. Not only would it enable the United States to deal with a threat to its national interests, but it also “would have [a positive] impact beyond [its] borders” (Bush, 2010: 232). Drawing on his Manichean logic, President Bush argued that the invasion would help to win an ideological battle between radical extremists and proponents of freedom:

The Middle East was the center of a global ideological struggle. On one side were decent people who wanted to live in dignity and peace. On the other were extremists who sought to impose their radical views through violence and intimidation. They exploited conditions of hopeless and repression to recruit and spread their ideology. The best way to protect our countries in the long run was to counter their dark vision with a more compelling alternative.

That alternative was freedom. (Bush, 2010: 232)

Two years after the invasion, President Bush deemed the Iraq War not only necessary and just but also more important than the Afghanistan intervention. In a public speech delivered to commemorate Veterans Day on November 11, 2005, President Bush not only presented a comprehensive strategy for guaranteeing victory in Iraq but, above all, making it the central front in the WoT. The underlying rationale was that the United States should make it a top foreign policy priority because the terrorists were now focusing their activities in Iraq:

Over the past few decades, radicals have specifically targeted Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and Jordan for potential takeover. They achieved their goal, for a time, in Afghanistan. And now they’ve set their sights on Iraq. In his recent letter, Zawahiri writes that al Qaeda views Iraq as, “the place for the greatest battle.” The terrorists regard Iraq as the central front in their war against humanity. *We must recognize Iraq as the central front in our war against the terrorists.* [Italics added] (Bush, 2005)

This rationale would start to shift in 2006–2007 when President Bush replaced the Secretary of Defence and senior commanders conducting the

Iraq and Afghanistan Wars.<sup>5</sup> Even though President Bush made this decision to get back on track with the Iraq War, it offered the possibility to vindicate the Afghanistan mission. After all, the new Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, came in with the idea that Afghanistan had been neglected and the Iraq War had been conducted on the wrong premise. That is to say, his stance, as advanced since 2006, anticipated the Obama administration's distinction between good war and bad war. Secretary Gates wrote:

As I often said while in office, only time will tell whether the invasion of Iraq was worth its monumental cost. The historical verdict, I suspect, will depend on how Iraq evolves and whether the overthrow of Saddam comes to be accepted as the first crack in decades-long Arab authoritarianism that will eventually bring significantly greater freedom and stability to the entire Middle East. *However the question is ultimately answered, the war will always be tainted by the harsh reality that the public premise for invasion—Iraqi possession of chemical and biological weapons as well as an active nuclear program—was wrong.*

*As much as President Bush detested the notion, our later challenges in Afghanistan, especially the return of the Taliban in force by the time I became defense secretary, were, I believe significantly compounded by the invasion of Iraq. Resources and senior-level attention were<sup>6</sup> diverted from Afghanistan.* [Italics added] (Gates 2014: 568–569)

What is more, Secretary Gates provided the time frame in which the Afghanistan mission had been neglected as the Iraq War was prioritized:

the war in Afghanistan was being neglected [...] While we were preoccupied with Iraq, between 2002 and 2005 the Taliban reconstituted in western Pakistan and in southern and eastern Afghanistan. Headquartered and operating in Pakistani cities including Peshawar and Quetta, virtually unhindered by the Pakistan government, the Taliban recovered from their disastrous defeat [by the end of 2001] and again became a serious fighting force. (Gates 2014: 198)

With this diagnosis in mind, Secretary Gates would start a campaign in Washington to adopt a different and more robust strategy in Afghanistan. His ultimate goal would be to have the U.S. transition from CT to COIN in Afghanistan. It would imply not only a new principled belief, making the intervention as important as the Iraq invasion, but also provide

a new way to implement the Afghanistan policy through new causal beliefs (Section “[American FPE’S COIN Causal Beliefs \(2006–2011\)](#)” will address this point in addressing American FPE’s COIN causal beliefs extensively).

As of 2011, the American FPE started to review their foreign policy once again, which would result in a strategic turn to the Asia-Pacific region as being materialized through the 2012 U.S. Defense Strategic Guidance. Not only did this review entail prioritizing the Asia-Pacific but also reducing the significance of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars. Thus, Afghanistan would represent a secondary priority after 2011. At this moment, the American FPE’s primary concern was the changing global distribution of power favouring this region and especially China at the military and economic levels rather than the security situation in Central Asia and the Middle East. The reason behind this transition was that China’s rise would prevent the United States from guaranteeing regional stability and accessing commercial and financial markets in that region (Marsh, [2012](#): 491–496). Secretary Clinton ([2011](#): 57) summarized this strategic turn in the following terms:

As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the United States stands at a pivot point. Over the last 10 years, we have allocated immense resources to those two theaters. In the next 10 years, we need to be smart and systematic about where we invest time and energy, so that we put ourselves in the best position to sustain our leadership, secure our interests, and advance our values. One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore be to lock in a substantially increased investment — diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise — in the Asia-Pacific region. The Asia-Pacific has become a key driver of global politics.

On the Canadian side, the FPE assessed Afghanistan’s importance *vis-à-vis* other multilateral, complex peacekeeping operations between 2001 and 2003 (Chrétien, [2007](#): 304) and other missions in failed and failing states between 2003 and 2005 (Martin, [2008](#): Chapter 23). During those years, Canadian leaders were interested in conducting campaigns in East Africa and Central America as much as in Afghanistan. The Martin Liberals were even prepared for a potential peacekeeping mission to guarantee a peace pact between Israel and Palestine. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Bill Graham described Prime Minister Martin’s view on Afghanistan in the following manner: “when Paul Martin became prime minister in December 2003,

I think it's fair to say that he wasn't really interested in staying on in Afghanistan" (Graham, 2016: 378). Indeed, Prime Minister Martin was more interested in Darfur and Haiti between 2003 and 2005. Such a stance was established in a meeting with General Rick Hillier, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) between 2005 and 2008. In that meeting, Martin (2008: 330) held that the Afghanistan mission should be weighed up in the context of other priorities:

Soon after his appointment, I had an important meeting with General Hillier [...] I laid out my priorities. I knew that General Hillier was a strong proponent of Canada's role in the NATO mission to Afghanistan, which had been triggered, of course, by the 9/11 attacks. They had been masterminded from al Qaeda's bases in Afghanistan, which were under the protection of the Taliban government of the day. *I, too, supported the mission, but I also wanted to make sure that it was set in the context of other priorities.*

'Canada's role in the world is not simply to support a great power,' I said at the outset. 'Canada has its own perspective that it needs to articulate through its military and foreign policies.' First I believed that the world community could not stand passively by in the face of the slaughter in Darfur region of Sudan. I was certain there would have to be a substantial increase in the number of international peacekeeper in the region, and although the African Union might not think it right for our troops to be on the front line, we would want to put in more military advisers and supply funding for the equipment and training of troops from Africa. In addition, as the hemisphere's largest francophone nation, I said we should shoulder special responsibilities in Haiti. Finally, I advised him that I believed we might one day be called upon to play a military role as peacekeepers if there was ever an Israeli-Palestinian peace pact, and that I wanted us to be in position to do so. [Italics added]

With Canada moving from Kabul to Kandahar in 2005/2006, Afghanistan became a priority for the Harper Conservatives until 2011. Over this period, Afghanistan was not only their most critical overseas deployment, but also one of their central foreign policy objectives. Conservatives deemed this deployment as necessary in the search for new economic opportunities and the relationship with the Americas. On March 16, 2010, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon presented the Harper Conservatives' foreign policy priorities in the following terms:

In the recent Speech from the Throne and in the budget statement, the government reaffirmed the four priorities of Canadian foreign policy, through which we have promoted a strong Canada in a changing world: pursuing economic opportunities for Canada, particularly in growing and emerging markets; strengthening and advancing our relations with the United States of America and with our neighbours and friends in the Americas; *contributing to peace and security in Afghanistan as well as preparing for the transition there*; and exercising and strengthening our sovereignty over the Arctic. [Italics added] (Cannon, 2014)

However, the intervention transitioned from a combat COIN campaign to a training mission in 2011. It meant that Afghanistan ceased to be a priority for the Harper administration. Prime Minister Harper stated his position on this matter in the following terms: “We have made tremendous contributions, at tremendous cost, to the Afghanistan mission. As Parliament resolved earlier this year, we will continue to transform Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan *to focus on reconstruction and development in preparation for the end of our military mission in 2011* [Italics added]” (Harper, 2008c).

Secondly, the similarity between Canadian and American foreign and security policy implementation between 2005 and 2011 resulted from their perceptions of the Afghanistan mission in the long run. After 2006, the American FPE deemed Afghanistan a ‘good war’ that should end rapidly, which implied a progressive, robust commitment to fulfill this objective. Above all, it would avoid an open-ending burden in the long run. Even though the need for ending the war promptly was embraced in the previous years, the American FPE had, as mentioned, prioritized the Iraq War and, accordingly, had not taken the Afghan War seriously, making its prompt end unlikely (Gates, 2014: 197–198; Willis, 2012: 986). For Secretary Gates, replacing CT with COIN would precisely entail a change of priorities to end the Afghan War (Section “[American FPE’S COIN Causal Beliefs \(2006–2011\)](#)” discusses this point in-depth).

For its part, after the Kandahar deployment in 2005, the Canadian FPE deemed Afghanistan a “war for prestige” (Massie, 2013: 274–288) in the long run. Based on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, the pursuit of prestige, seen as “reputation for strength,”<sup>7</sup> is critical to understanding the Canadian FPE’s decision to provide military support to the U.S. campaign. It also explains the increase of their commitment through an expeditionary mission in Afghanistan’s most dangerous

province (Massie, 2013: 280). In Kandahar, Canadians would seek to show the successful use of military capabilities in the form of “victory in war,” such as occurred during Operation Medusa.<sup>8</sup> It would undoubtedly entail being a reliable U.S. and transatlantic ally, and increasing their prestige in the long run (Massie, 2013: 280). From their fight in Kandahar, Canadians would start to be seen as peace-enforcers rather than peace-keepers, willing and able to fight battles hand in hand with the Americans. It occurred in a moment when the American FPE had precisely distinguished between two groups among NATO members, depending on their level of commitment. Condoleezza Rice distinguished between ‘fighters’ and ‘peacekeepers’ in addressing the NATO mission in Afghanistan (Rice, 2011: 668). Similarly, Robert Gates deemed NATO a “two-tiered alliance of those who are willing to fight and those who are not” in referring to the Afghanistan mission, especially to the Southern campaign, during the Munich Conference on Security Policy on February 10, 2008 (Gates, 2008; see also Spiegel, 2008).

With this context in mind, several of Prime Minister Harper’s public speeches on the Afghanistan mission inextricably linked the Kandahar campaign to Canada’s prestige (Harper, 2006b, 2006d, 2006e, 2007b, 2007c, 2008a). According to Prime Minister Harper, prestige implied to “regain the trust of our allies to demonstrate that we will pull our weight [in this kind of missions]” (Harper, 2006d). Specifically, in addressing the Kandahar campaign during the Conference of Defence Associations on February 21, 2008, Prime Minister Harper held

that countries that cannot or will not make real contributions to global security are not regarded as serious players. They may be linked by everybody; they may be pleasantly acknowledged by everybody. But then the hard decisions get made, they will be ignored by everybody. That’s not what Canadians want. They want to make a positive difference in a dangerous world. They want us to lead. Our government is resolved to provide that leadership. (Harper, 2008a)

Prime Minister Harper made the same argument in presenting the Canada First Defence Strategy on May 12, 2008:

Ladies and gentlemen, if a country wants to be taken seriously in the world, it must have the capacity to act. It’s that simple. Otherwise, you forfeit your right to be a player. You’re the one chattering on the sidelines that everybody smiles at but nobody listens to. Our government is committed

to ensuring that Canada not only has an opinion, but that Canada is heard, that Canada is protected, and that Canada is a force for good, for positive change in the world. (Harper, 2008b)

To sum up, it can be argued that even though American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs were relatively constant during the intervention, there were variations in these beliefs that help to understand American and Canadian foreign and security policy's transformation and similarity between 2005 and 2011. On the one hand, both of them made Afghanistan a top foreign policy priority during this period. On the other hand, American and Canadian leaders, despite their different reasons, decided to increase their engagement levels. The following sections examine the evolution of American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs by distinguishing between the periods 2001–2005 and 2006–2011 to understand how these renewed engagement levels were operationalized. In a nutshell, these sections scrutinize how Canadian and American FPEs' causal beliefs transitioned from Counterterrorism (CT) and Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R) to Counterinsurgency (COIN).

### COUNTERTERRORISM (CT): AMERICAN FPE'S CAUSAL BELIEFS, 2001–2005

CT constituted the American FPE's primary causal belief during the Afghanistan intervention, especially in the period 2001–2005. According to President George W. Bush, once Afghanistan was liberated, three goals remained: “striking al Qaeda, removing the Taliban, and liberating the suffering people of Afghanistan” (Bush, 2010: 197). Such a purpose would be framed—according to the 2002 National Security Strategy—within a global campaign to “disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations” worldwide by “denying further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary” (The White House, 2002: 6). Afghanistan would be the first battleground of the “War on terror [that would] not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated” (Bush, 2001a).

It is worth noting that the American FPE did not adopt CT homogeneously as some members of the executive took on a narrow approach to CT, whereas others, under certain circumstances, embraced a broader approach. As Chapter 2 explained, the narrow approach focused on kinetic and offensive operations to disrupt and destroy terrorist groups, whereas the broad approach sought not only to conduct such operations

but also to prevent the emergence of the factors conducive to terrorism. Specifically, the broad approach highlighted the significance of nation-building to prevent terrorism from emerging (Rane, 2007: 74–80; UN, 2000).

Over this period, the distinction between narrow and broad approaches to CT informed three central debates about the U.S. foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan. Firstly, this distinction underpinned the discussion between conservative nationalism and neoconservatism as two central American foreign policy doctrines during this period. Such doctrines attribute different importance to nation-building during or after military interventions. Even if both of those doctrines promoted American global preponderance and the need to respond to the 9/11 attacks subsequently through kinetic operations in Afghanistan, they disagreed about the significance of nation-building. Neoconservatism embraced nation-building overtly, whereas conservatism was less convinced by its utility (Hurst, 2005: 77–84). That is to say, each would justify narrow and broad CT strategies, respectively, to address this theatre of operations.

Secondly, the distinction between broad and narrow approaches to CT helps understand the gap between the expected and actual implementation of American foreign and security policy during this period. After all, the Bush administration's foreign and security policy had great expectations during this period by embracing the broad approach to CT in the form precisely of democratic nation-building within the CT strategy (The White House, 2002: Chapter I–II). Still, the Bush administration had to adapt itself to the Afghan irregular warfare by conducting the narrow approach (see Kilcullen, 2015: 13). That is to say, even though the Bush administration attempted to make Afghanistan not just safer through kinetic operations against al Qaeda and the Taliban but also better through nation-building, it had to content itself with pursuing reasonable levels of safety in the country. The latter would also be a purpose that the United States, Canada, and its allies would not be capable of achieving.

Above all, the distinction between narrow and broad approaches to CT informed contending stances inside the American FPE regarding the Afghanistan intervention's implementation during this period. Such differences would embrace the debates mentioned above, between conservatism and neoconservatism, and between expected and actual foreign and security policies. Specifically, President Bush and Secretary Rice embraced the broad approach, whereas Secretary Rumsfeld promoted the narrow approach to CT.

It is worth noting that George W. Bush's causal beliefs after the 9/11 attacks contrast with those advanced during the 2000 electoral campaign. On this transition, indeed, his critics acknowledged a sharp contradiction regarding his approach to nation-building. In 2000, as a presidential candidate, Bush campaigned against "nation-building corps from America," yet, after 9/11, overtly promoted nation-building in Afghanistan and Iraq (Miller, 2010; The Washington Post, 2008). President Bush held that rather than being a contradiction, this constituted a legitimated change of mind, taking into account that new circumstances favoured a broad approach. Rejecting the role of Americans as nation-builders during military operations seemed to him justified to prevent the overextension of military efforts before 9/11, such as in Somalia and Bosnia. However, after 9/11, to him nation-building constituted an essential causal belief to meet American security:

[...] Afghanistan was the ultimate nation building mission. We had liberated the country from a primitive dictatorship, and we had a moral obligation to leave behind something better. We also had a strategic interest in helping the Afghan people build a free society. The terrorist took refuge in places of chaos, despair, and repression. A democratic Afghanistan would be hopeful alternative to the vision of the extremists. (Bush, 2010: 205)

Similarly, Secretary Rice argued that a CT strategy "required not just pursuing and defeating terrorists [but also helping] failed states heal [through] building stable democratic institutions that could provide for their people and prevent the use of their territory for dangerous transnational networks" (Rice, 2011: 148). Rice expected that American foreign and security policy was based thus on "a new security concept [linking] defense, democracy, and development —each integral to success of the strategy" (Rice, 2011: 148). Such a broad approach to CT would help not only to "leave [Afghans] better off than [Americans] had come" (Rice, 2011: 91), but also to

redraw the map of the region [...] An American military presence in Afghanistan and surrounding states —necessitated by the events of 9/11— could ultimately contribute to stability in South-Central Asia. And the emergence of a friendly government in Afghanistan and stronger relations with the 'stans' would anchor American geostrategic influence. (Rice, 2011: 84)

Together President Bush and Secretary Rice's beliefs would epitomize the American FPE's rationale that gave rise to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)'s original goals, as conceived by General Tommy Franks. It would start connecting the Special Forces with CIA teams to pave the way for conventional troops' advancement. Then an extensive air campaign aimed at destroying al Qaeda and Taliban targets, followed by a ground campaign to hunt down remaining fighters, would be conducted. Finally, the United States would seek to stabilize and democratize the country (Bush, 2010: 194). The last goal would entail the expectation to transition from a narrow to a broad CT approach insofar as it would inextricably embody nation-building.

Nevertheless, the American FPE eventually realized that the United States was not prepared for nation-building and, over time, it had to limit its expectations in Afghanistan. That is to say, the goal as mentioned above was substantially limited as George W. Bush himself cast doubts on the real possibilities of nation-building in Afghanistan, which was apparent in his comment in 2010 about the campaign:

As I write in 2010, the war in Afghanistan continues. The Taliban remain active, and the Afghan government is struggling to gain full control of its country. From the beginning, I knew it would take time to help the Afghan people build a functioning democracy consistent with its culture and traditions. The task turned out to be even more daunting than I anticipated. *Our government was not prepared for nation building. Over time, we adapted our strategy and our capabilities.* [italics added] (Bush, 2010: 220)

It is worth noting that a large project of nation-building would have implied efforts to build government capacities and cohesive national identity and political culture, bringing about citizen loyalty to the reconstituted state (see Keane, 2016: 7–23). With a clearer view of nation-building's implications, President Bush's causal beliefs turned out to focus solely on the mere support of the Afghan government's legitimate leadership. According to the president, the bulk of the political effort should support the Afghan government's ability to provide security and order, and other essential services, such as education and health care. It should also guarantee the democratic electoral process and drafting a new constitution in 2004, as conceived by the Afghans (Bush, 2010: 205–208 and 219). That is to say, his concern revolved more around modest state

capacity-building than on large nation-building, which contrasted with the broader nation-building attempts in Iraq after 2003.<sup>9</sup> Finally, President Bush recognized the utility of “maintain a light military footprint,” which set limits to troops’ increase from 13,000 in 2002 to 21,000 in 2006. Such limits sought to prevent the Americans from being seen as “occupiers,” as occurred with the British in the nineteenth century and the Soviets in 1980s (Bush, 2010: 207 and 212).

For his part, the fiercest proponent of the narrow approach to CT was Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. On the surface, such a stance could be seen as a contradiction as Rumsfeld was associated more with neoconservatism that, as mentioned, embraced the broad approach. It must not be forgotten that Rumsfeld was one of the signatures of the Project for the New American Century’s letter to the Clinton administration, making a case for the Iraq invasion since 1998 (Rumsfeld et al., 1998). What is more, as Secretary of Defence, Rumsfeld made a case for regime change in Iraq (Rumsfeld, 2011: Part X), which constituted one of the most well-known neocon arguments during the post-Cold War (see Perle, 2000).

However, a deeper examination would reveal that his specific view on Afghanistan ended up being more conservative than neoconservative. His careful self-limitation in invoking nation-building and setting limits to troops’ increase within the American CT foreign and security policy in Afghanistan underpinned this stance. Indeed, Rumsfeld’s primary plan was not to have a post-war plan in Afghanistan, unlike President Bush and Secretary Rice, who often considered it a common theme. From the beginning of the intervention until the end of his time as Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld made a case against combining CT efforts and nation-building.<sup>10</sup> What is more, in retrospect, Rumsfeld (2011: 682–683) firmly held the need to skip nation-building and to focus solely on the most modest goal of CT:

My position was that we were not in Afghanistan to transform a *deeply conservative Islamic culture into a model of liberal modernity*. We were not there to eradicate corruption or to end poppy cultivation. We were not there to take ownership of Afghan’s problems, tempting though it was for many Americans of goodwill.

[...]

If some later contended that we never had a plan for *full-fledged nation building* or that we under-resourced such a plan, they were certainly

correct. We did not go there to try to bring prosperity to every corner of Afghanistan. I believed—and continue to believe—that such a goal would have amounted to a fool’s errand. It struck me that sending U.S. servicemen and -women in pursuit of an effort to remake Afghanistan into a prosperous American-style nation-state or to try to bring our standard of security to each of that nation’s far-flung villages would be unwise, well beyond our capability, and unworthy of our troop’s sacrifice.

*Our more modest goal was to rid Afghanistan of al-Qaida and replace their Taliban hosts with a government that would not harbor terrorists.* We were willing to let Afghan traditions and processes determine the political outcomes. Our objectives reflected a healthy sense of the limitations of what we could achieve in a country suspicious of foreign influence. [Italics added]

In being the most fierce and consistent proponent of CT, Secretary Rumsfeld’s causal beliefs epitomize the primary assumptions behind American foreign and security policy unambiguously, as actually conducted in Afghanistan during this period (The White House, 2001). For Rumsfeld, a narrow approach to CT in Afghanistan was critical because it allowed the United States to focus on preventing additional attacks, acting promptly and efficiently, and honouring the lessons of history.

Firstly, Secretary Rumsfeld attempted to refine the terminology aimed at framing the Afghanistan campaign to draw attention without distractions to the primary goal “[of preventing] additional attacks against America and [its] interests” (Rumsfeld, 2011: 352). Specifically, Rumsfeld attempted to adjust the term “War on Terror,” as President Bush established from the outset (Bush, 2001a), to avoid broad objectives as those advanced by the broad approach to CT.<sup>11</sup> Even though the Secretary agreed with the term “war” due to its utility to prevent the United States from “treating terrorism as a law enforcement matter and terrorists as common criminals,” Rumsfeld disagreed with the term “terrorism” (Rumsfeld, 2011: 352). Without clarification, such a term would refer more to enemies’ tactics than the enemy itself or would draw unnecessarily broad attention to “generic terrorist” rather than “*Islamist Extremists* [italics in the original]” (Rumsfeld, 2011: 353). As a result, the strategy’s primary aim would be hunting down several terrorist networks, diverting attention from who were the actual attackers of the United States and, above all, who could attack it again. Drawing on a narrow approach to CT, Rumsfeld would also suggest preventing the United

States from mistakenly “including all Muslims” as a threat within the strategy. Accordingly, it would reject the false assumption that the primary threat to the United States’ national interests was Islam as a religion rather than Islamism as a totalitarian political ideology seeking to destroy the way of living of liberal democratic societies. All in all, the United States would not attempt democratic nation-building to root out a conservative Islamic culture but solely to destroy and disrupt al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan (Rumsfeld, 2011: 682).

Secondly, the narrow approach to CT was convenient for Secretary Rumsfeld as it, unlike the broad approach, could be conducted promptly. The broad approach is synonymous with the deployment of overwhelming force, implicating successive surges of thousands of troops in several months; not to mention civilian surges of diplomats and development officers required to complete nation-building efforts. For Rumsfeld, the use of a massive force in such a way would have given the Taliban and al Qaeda the operational capability to respond to the intervention and the time to relocate, respectively. In a nutshell, a broad approach would have implicated months of preparation and implementation, giving rise to a high room for manoeuvre in the short time for Islamist extremists in Afghanistan to conduct additional attacks against the United States (Rumsfeld, 2011: 377).

Finally, during the intervention, Rumsfeld felt compelled to mull over the historical lessons learned from other military engagements that embraced unnecessarily broad objectives and, accordingly, failed colossally. Rumsfeld’s assessment occurred in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, when the Afghanistan intervention commentators started to associate it with the Vietnam War’s quagmire. These commentators also forced the American FPE to establish their position vis-à-vis the Soviet invasion in the 1980s.<sup>12</sup> As far as the Vietnam war is concerned, Secretary Rumsfeld argued that one of President Nixon and Secretary of Defense Mel Laird’s main shortcomings was their attempt to play a leading role rather than a supporting one in the fight, which led the United States to an increased entanglement. Such an interpretation encouraged Rumsfeld to promote the strategy of mentoring and training Afghanistan forces to hand over them the responsibility to provide security to their own country in a post-Taliban era. In his view, this would be the only way to guarantee a practical exit from Afghanistan without compromising American interests in the long run (Rumsfeld, 2011: 393).

Regarding the Soviet intervention, Secretary Rumsfeld agreed with the conventional wisdom that it had been a failure due to its brutality against the Afghan people, its attempt to destroy their culture, and the need to keep the permanent Soviet control through a puppet government (Bearden, 2001: 18). The Soviet invasion would have adopted a broad approach in combining the use of heavy artillery and armoured divisions—enforcing the peace through a systematic killing of Muslims—and Soviet-style nation-building. Unlike the Soviets, Americans would seek to undertake a light footprint military intervention and favour a process to help Afghans select their leaders and guarantee their own security and stability. For Rumsfeld, by preventing the Americans from being seen as invaders or conquerors, the United States would increase the likelihood of a successful mission (Rumsfeld, 2011: 373–374, 377–378, and 404). According to Condoleezza Rice’s review of the Afghanistan intervention’s planning, the historical lesson above was undoubtedly a dominant belief informing the intervention. The bulk of the effort was to attack al Qaeda and the Taliban but attempted to “show the Afghan people a different face than the Soviet Union had at the beginning of the war” (Rice, 2011: 91).

A final clarification is required to understand the scope of Rumsfeld’s approach to CT within his broader belief systems. It is worth recalling that Rumsfeld’s strategic thinking was inextricably associated with the revolution in military affairs (RMA). On the surface, the notion of RMA would contradict Rumsfeld’s approach to CT. RMA has been traditionally synonymous with a dramatic transformation of military doctrines and organizations and ways to fight wars derived from extraordinary advances in technology.<sup>13</sup> Specifically, RMA has been equated to “high-technology conventional warfare” (Ryan, 2014: 42). In contrast, as being undertaken in Afghanistan, CT made technology part of, yet not the core of, a successful strategy. CT was also seen as an irregular warfare strategy far from including conventional warfare means.

However, a deeper examination of his belief systems would reveal that Rumsfeld proposed a different notion of RMA from that traditionally seen by the scholarly community. Rumsfeld equated it to “revolutionary and unprecedented” ways to mix new and old means to respond to an ever-increasing uncertain world rather than to the simple adoption of new technological capabilities (Rumsfeld, 2002: 22). In this regard, the CT campaign in Afghanistan closely squared with his notion of RMA due

precisely to its purpose of combining in a revolutionary and unprecedented way different means to guarantee successful operations without making high technology the core of the strategy. Rumsfeld established this stance since the battle for Mazar-i-Sharif in the following terms:

[Afghanistan] shows that a revolution in military affairs is about more than building new high-tech weapons —although that is certainly part of it. It is also about new ways of thinking and new ways of fighting [...] Coalition forces took existing military capabilities — from the most advanced (such as laser-guided weapons) to the antique (40-year-old B52s updated with modern electronics) to the most rudimentary (a man with a gun on a horse) — and used them together in unprecedented ways, with devastating effect.

This is not to suggest that this same combination of tactics and capabilities should be a model for future battles. The lesson from the Afghan experience is not that the U.S. Army should start stockpiling saddles. Rather, it is that preparing for the future will require new ways of thinking, and the development of forces and capabilities that can adapt quickly to new challenges and unexpected circumstances. The ability to adapt will be critical in a world defined by surprise and uncertainty. (Rumsfeld, 2002: 21–22)

### STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION (S&R): CANADIAN FPE'S CAUSAL BELIEFS, 2001–2005

S&R constituted the Canadian FPE's primary causal beliefs during the Afghanistan intervention from 2001 through 2005. According to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Canada decided, “after the overthrow of the Taliban government [...] to position [...] troops to stabilize the situation, protect the new government and the Afghani people, and help to keep the peace” (Chrétien, 2007: 305). Minister of Foreign Affairs Bill Graham pointed out that this purpose would be consistent with “many skills and specialties that the Canadian Forces had employed for decades with the UN” (Graham, 2016: 374). However, according to Prime Minister Paul Martin, it would also imply balancing conflicting tasks of reconstruction efforts and military engagement (Martin, 2008: 395).

The Canadian FPE adopted two approaches to S&R depending on the level of risk that they were willing to take during the intervention. First, a low-risk approach to S&R, and secondly, a moderate-risk approach to S&R. Ultimately, the Canadian FPE would adopt a high-risk mission during the period 2006–2011 when the United States and

Canada both assumed high levels of risk similarly. As Chapter 2 explained, a low-risk approach to S&R embraces the fundamental goals of stabilization and reconstruction, including the support for the demobilization of fighters, the building of new military and police forces, the supervision of constitutional reforms, the monitoring of democratic elections, and the promotion of economic reconstruction (Sloan, 2016: 106). A moderate-risk approach to S&R focuses not only on the tasks above mentioned but also may include moderate warfighting campaigns.

As far as the low-risk approach to S&R is concerned, it was adopted when the Canadian FPE attempted to negotiate their country's participation in the ISAF mission between 2001 and 2003. The European-led forces in Kabul were promoting this mission as a response to the 2001 Bonn Agreement and the UN Security Council's 1386 resolution on December 5 and 20, 2001, respectively. The Bonn Agreement established an Interim Authority, provided a legal framework as the new Constitution was discussed and issued and attempted to pave the way for integrating all armed forces within an overall reconciliation plan (UN, 2001). The resolution 1386 supplemented such an agreement in establishing the ISAF "to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas" (UN Security Council, 2001). All in all, such a mission fit in well with the low-risk approach. Foreign Minister Graham recognized this level of risk, which also conjured up the level of commitment Canada had been adopting in previous missions of peacekeeping:

Established under the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, ISAF was a UN-mandated mission to provide security as the Afghans established a transitional government. It seemed, therefore, the type of *modest, low-risk mission* with which Canadians were familiar and comfortable, more like *classical peacekeeping* under multilateral auspices than open combat alongside the Americans. [emphasis added] (Graham, 2016: 225)

However, the United Kingdom rejected the Canadian contribution to the European-led forces. Therefore, the Canadian FPE had to select the second option at that moment, namely, to join OEF and to adopt a moderate-risk approach to S&R. Regarding this decision, Minister Graham held the following:

When the Europeans dragged their heels on our offer to join to the International Security Assistance Force to help in Kabul, we contributed in another way in February 2002 by sending a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry to join the Americans in the southern province of Kandahar, where the Taliban were still strong. *This operation was obviously a combat mission, not a peacekeeping one [...].* [Italics added] (Graham, 2016: 252)

In this regard, it can be argued that the European allies' rejection and the negotiation with the United States made risk escalation inevitable for the Canadian FPE (see Justin Massie, 2013: 279). It is worth noting that both Prime Ministers Chrétien and Martin worried about risk escalation during the mission insofar as their successors increased their level of engagement with the Afghanistan mission. Such worries made sense within the progressive transition from the low- to moderate-risk approach to S&R. Firstly, the Canadian FPE decided to take over the leadership of the ISAF mission in 2003 when the mission was still focused on Kabul (Government of Canada, n.d.). Even though the mission's responsibility passed from the UN to NATO, there were some reasons to consider this mission as a low-risk one. The alliance was "in no mood for expansion," and the primary goal was still stabilization and reconstruction (Sloan, 2012: 4). Accordingly, the Chrétien administration considered that it would constitute a low-risk mission appropriated for both Canada's skills and consistent with their traditional deployments. When the mission started to expand to cover the entire country, this administration decided to stay in Kabul as it constituted a reasonable risk for Canadians. For this reason, Prime Minister Chrétien complained that his successor decided to go south because of the inherent risk escalation attached to such a decision. About the 2003 mission and his complaint about Martin deciding to go south in 2005, Chrétien argued the following:

Even though the commitment [in 2003] would require on our part many troops and a lot more money, we were going to get our soldiers into a more secure place where their assignment was *closer to traditional peacekeeping*. When ISAF's mandate expanded to include other regions of the country, I made sure that we remained in or around Kabul. In retrospect, it was a very good deal for Canada. *Later [in 2005], unfortunately, when my successor took too long to make up his mind about whether Canada should extend our term with ISAF, our soldiers were moved out of Kabul and sent south again to battle the Taliban in the killing fields around Kandahar.* [Italics added] (Chrétien, 2007: 305)

Secondly, the Canadian FPE decided to go to Kandahar in 2005 within the NATO mission aimed at securing the country when the Afghan government proved incapable of exercising authority beyond Kabul. In attempting to explain the rationale behind this decision, Prime Minister Martin argued that the moderate-risk approach to S&R would inform it. Not only would this decision include Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) aimed at providing security, stability, and reconstruction, but also the military campaign would be limited in scope and length. For this reason, Martin considered that the Harper Conservatives abandoned the core of the mission when they chose to focus extreme attention on the military campaign and failed to set a time limit on it. Like Chrétien accusing Martin of risk escalation, Martin would do the same with the Conservatives:

It is important to understand the strategy as it was originally devised, because as the troops moved into Kandahar and began military operations under the Conservatives, its two principal thrusts were largely abandoned. The plan General Hillier presented to me was based on Provincial Reconstructions Teams, meaning the gradual restoration of order by the military in expanding circles, with reconstruction intimately linked and immediately underway once the area was secured. There was no point in dominating an area militarily if we did not win the fight for ‘hearts and minds’ once we got there. In my time as prime minister, we never envisaged a *broad military campaign that would make reconstruction effort more difficult, if not impossible, as we bit off more than we could chew. In my view, the change in strategy under the subsequent government was unfortunate.* I don’t think anyone, including me, expected the Taliban resurgence that Canadian troops encountered when they moved to Kandahar. I do believe, however, that the virtual abandonment of reconstruction efforts in the first year or so of the new government was a mistake.

Second, when I was prime minister, I made a *one-year commitment to Kandahar [...]* a *short-time limit was necessary* if we were going to retain flexibility for our forces and have maximum leverage with NATO. [Italics added] (Martin, 2008: 395)

As these reflections from the prime ministers involved in decision-making regarding the Afghan intervention show, the Canadian FPE was particularly aware of how the mission ended up transitioning from a low-to moderate-risk approach to S&R. To capture such a transition, they used a specific conceptual distinction between classical peacekeeping, on

the one hand, and the new generations of peacekeeping, on the other hand. The former aims to monitor cease-fires between warring parties and constituted the primary rationale behind Canadian operations during the Cold War. The latter may include the support of the implementation of complex and multidimensional peace agreements, the enforcement of cease-fires through low-level military operations, and the combination of combat missions and peacebuilding efforts (Sloan, 2016: Chapter 6; see also Hanhimäki, 2015: 76–77). Not only did it constitute the primary framework for Canadians since the Bosnian war, but it also was reaffirmed between 2001 and 2005 in Afghanistan.

Specifically, on this matter, Chrétien held that “By March [2002], our soldiers fought alongside the Americans in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan. Even more than Bosnia, this operation was really about *peacemaking more than peacekeeping* [Italics added]” (Chrétien, 2007: 305). Similarly, Martin said, “I understood that this [mission] was more a *peacemaking than a peacekeeping mission* [Italics added]” (Martin, 2008: 392), and Minister Graham sought to frame the Afghanistan mission into the term “peace-keeping heavy,” as compared to classical peacekeeping in the following terms:

Traditional peacekeeping, sometimes referred to as ‘peacekeeping lite,’ presumes that you’re there to help warring parties keep a peace they both want by means of lightly armed troops operating under restrictive rules of engagement. But most peacekeeping these days is peacemaking or ‘*peace-keeping heavy*.’ It often takes place in a combat situation between highly armed opponents, many of whom are non-state actors. As a result, when a Canadian government decides to put our troops into such a dangerous environment, both our military and our civilian leaders must ensure that they are properly equipped, properly trained, and operating under rules of engagement that will allow them to protect both themselves and civilians. [Italics added] (Martin, 2008: 378)

That is to say, when the Chrétien and Martin Liberals used such terms as “peace-keeping heavy” and “peacemaking,” they referred to the need to move away from classical peacekeeping to meet their security goals in Afghanistan. Above all, they referred to these terms to justify the need to embrace the moderate-risk approach to S&R.

Even though transitioning from classical to complex peacekeeping entailed risk escalation, this process did not imply that the Canadian FPE adopted a similar level of risk during the period 2001–2005 as

that advanced by the American FPE. It must not be forgotten that the Americans embraced a high-risk approach during the entire intervention. Indeed, based on their place in the international system, Canadian leaders drew different historical lessons from military interventions. Rather than being worried about the failures of great powers' overextension, such as the Vietnam War or the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, the Canadian FPE evoked historical cases much more in line with Canada's role as a middle power. Such an overextension would be an unlikely mistake to make for middle powers due to their limited capabilities.

Specifically, the Canadian FPE had in mind the lessons learned from the Balkan wars and the Haiti intervention to justify the moderate-risk approach to S&R in Afghanistan. In the Balkan wars, especially with the transition from UNPROFOR to a more robust NATO-led operation aimed at implementing the 1995 Dayton Accords, it was apparent that a classical peacekeeping mission had been ineffective. There was no peace to keep there, and impartiality *vis-à-vis* the warring parties was impracticable (see Sloan, 2016: 104).<sup>14</sup> In Haiti, it was evident that the use of force alone was not enough to conduct stabilization and, accordingly, reconstruction became equally required to guarantee population support and maximize security gains. In a nutshell, the security–development nexus became imperative (Baranyi, 2014; Government of Canada, 2009; Government of Canada—Embassy of Canada in Haiti, n.d.), and Canadian leaders considered that their country as a middle power had the capacity to mobilize resources to meet this goal, rather than to overextend their capabilities to conduct a high-risk mission like the Americans were doing in Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup>

During the Martin years, the lessons learned from the Balkans and Haiti ended up justifying the 3D and “whole-of government” discourses as the ultimate way to deal with interconnected threats in failed and failing states. Both of these doctrines aim to combine diplomacy, defence, and development strategies and mobilize resources in a coordinated form between government agencies to deal with interconnected threats in Afghanistan (Graham, 2016: 379). These objectives ended up refining Canada's foreign and security policy during this period.<sup>16</sup> At the specific level of security, this approach was combined with the doctrine “Three-block War,” aimed at broadening Canadian forces' tasks. These forces now would conduct combat operations against militias, then would undertake stabilization to keep the peace, and finally would provide humanitarian relief (Government of Canada, 2005b: 8).

It is worth noting that, unlike peacekeeping, the 3D, whole-of-government, and Three-Block War approaches were not originally Canadian contributions to strategic thinking. The 3D and whole-of-government approaches were being used during this period by different OECD countries, including the United States, to intervene in failed and failing states (OECD, 2008), whereas the Three-Block War was initially proposed by the U.S. General Charles Krulak for the Marine Corps in the late 1990s (see Desrosiers & Lagassé, 2009: 672). This doctrine was also close to that of “war amongst the people,” as developed by the British General Sir Rupert Smith.<sup>17</sup>

However, the Canadian FPE, compared to the American FPE, referred to such approaches with a different intensity level. While Americans assigned these approaches a secondary role, Canadians deemed them their most critical foreign policy guidance during this period. After all, for Americans, the means offered by these approaches were accessory measures to their CT campaign, whereas, for Canadians, these approaches were, by definition, the pillars of their S&R mission. Even though the actual implementation of them by the Liberal and Conservative Canadian FPEs was subject to criticism (Saideman, 2016: Chapter 6), the truth was that they constituted the Canadian FPE’s primary expectations. Not only did Ministry Graham call Afghanistan the “3D war” (Graham, 2016: Chapter 15), but he also argued that the approaches, as mentioned above, provided critical means to achieve Canadian security goals in Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, he attached significant importance to each of them:

From the beginning, Canada saw ISAF as a ‘whole-of-government’ or ‘3D’ mission, in which defence, diplomacy, and development came together to establish long-term stability by mobilizing the resources of DND, DFAIT, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). My own thinking had been influenced by Rupert Smith’s *Utility of force*, in which he discussed the demands of the recent complex operations he termed ‘war amongst the people’. The US Marine Corp’s concept of the ‘Three Block War,’ which evolved from the American experience in failing states [...] also had a major impact on our vision for the Afghanistan mission. That idea referred to the fact that our Armed forces were being asked to carry out overlapping missions at any one time. (Graham, 2016: 379)

The two previous sections indicated that the American and Canadian FPEs’ causal beliefs supported their CT and S&R strategies in Afghanistan. On the one hand, the American FPE discussed the utility

of broad and narrow approaches to CT and ended up implementing the latter. The American executive justified the narrow approach because it focused on preventing additional attacks without distractions, especially avoiding unnecessarily broad objectives, which constitute a lesson learned from the Vietnam War and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Canadian FPE discussed the utility of transitioning from a low-risk to a moderate-risk approach to S&R. The latter was reaffirmed with the executive's decision to enter Kandahar in 2005, paving the way for adopting a high-risk engagement since 2006. Like the American FPE, Canadian leaders had in mind lessons learned from their interventions. Specifically, they learned from their participation during the Balkan wars and the Haiti mission how ineffective classical peace-keeping could be and how critical a whole-of-government approach could be to advance security objectives in failed states. In a nutshell, American and Canadian executives found themselves perceiving the Afghanistan intervention through different causal beliefs. However, the differences between American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs would be lessened as of 2005/2006.

### TRANSITIONING TO COUNTERINSURGENCY (COIN)

During the period from 2006 to 2011, the American and Canadian FPEs adopted similar causal beliefs. Rather than perceiving the frontal fight against the enemy or the stabilization and reconstruction of the secured areas as the sole, most effective way to meet their security goals in Afghanistan, respectively, both the United States and Canada considered it necessary to transition to a more robust commitment. These increased engagement levels occurred due to the emergence of the Afghan insurgency in the South and the growing insecurity levels in the entire country. Americans merged CT, which was focused on the destruction and disruption of the enemy, with a population-centred approach, whereas Canadians linked their S&R goals, aimed at focusing on the factors conducive to terrorism, with a more direct military engagement. For both of them, this transition meant adopting and carrying out COIN strategies.

According to the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2009–2013), “The slogan for the [COIN] strategy became ‘Clear, hold, and build.’ The goal was to rid an area of insurgents, defend it so they couldn’t return, and invest in infrastructure and governance so residents saw

an improvement in their lives and would begin defending themselves” (Clinton, 2014: 136). Such goals would depend, as pointed out by the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (2006–2011), on “the effective partnering of military efforts with civilian experts,” to guarantee the combination of “military operations with robust reconstruction efforts, with Afghan [forces and government] fully integrated” (Gates, 2014: 211). On the Canadian side, COIN in the form of ‘clear, hold, and build’ was publicly recognized only after the Manley Report was issued in Canada in 2008 and the American FPE conducted a threat assessment based on General McChrystal’s analysis of the security situation in Afghanistan in 2009 (Sloan, 2012: 10; see also Stein & Lang, 2007: 187). However, it can be argued that Canada started to embrace the spirit of this approach since the moment when the Canadian FPE combined the 3D and whole-of-government approaches with the intensive war mission in Kandahar. Combining stabilization and reconstruction with a direct fight against the Afghan insurgency paved the way for embracing the COIN campaign’s primary causal beliefs—clear, hold, and build (see Graham, 2016: Chapter 15).

Based on the convergence between American and Canadian FPEs’ causal beliefs, the departments of defence and strategic doctrine centres in both countries—the Land Force Doctrine and Training System in Kingston, Ontario, and the U.S. Counterinsurgency Center in Kansas—were capable of developing similar COIN doctrines (Leprince, 2015: 105). Specifically, the Canadian COIN doctrine, as developed by the Department of National Defence (DND), set out the same central objectives as those advanced by the *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3–24* (see United States, Department of the Army, 2006: 1-121–1-136). After riding an area of insurgencies through offensive operations, stabilization and reconstruction operations would seek to (a) “win and hold popular support,” (b) “[focus on] breaking the link between the insurgent and the people [which] include measures to address and resolve grievances that lend support and credibility to the insurgency,” and (c) help provide a legitimate government as a real alternative to insurgency’s political project through “a comprehensive approach, with multiple agencies and other government departments, often enabled through a coalition effort” (Canada, Department of National Defence, 2008: Chapter 1, Section 1, 103).

Still, promoting COIN was not an easy task at home. Both American and Canadian FPEs’ primary proponents of COIN had to battle

with other FPE members, as well as with other Washington and Ottawa officials to implement the strategy. This battle was particularly intense at the senior level in the American presidential system, compared to the Westminster Canadian parliamentary system. After all, the American political system is based on the de-concentration of power. Not only does it limit the executive *vis-à-vis* the legislative branch, but it also results in a significant room for manoeuvre for senior and deputy actors. Ultimately, the American political system's functioning makes opposing views inside the American FPE more likely. In contrast, the Canadian political system draws on the concentration of power in the prime minister's hands and on the strict party discipline in the House of Commons. Both of those factors make more unlikely cleavages inside the FPE, even though it is always a potential possibility (Burney et al., 2015: 201; see also Dahl, 2003: 110–116; Lijphart, 2012: Chapter 7).<sup>18</sup> (Chapter 5 will return to this matter in addressing American and Canadian abilities to mobilize domestic resources.)

Even though every comparison of Canadian and American foreign and security policies must consider the aforementioned institutional arrangements, these arrangements acquired a particular significance between 2005/2006 and 2011. The American FPE prioritized the Afghanistan War during this period and, subsequently, this decision brought about a huge controversy inside the American FPE about the strategy to be implemented to make Afghanistan precisely a top priority. For its part, the Canadian FPE's primary decisions ended up being controlled by the prime minister, especially during the Harper administration, who took advantage of the Canadian political system to monopolize the Afghanistan intervention's decision-making process. During the Martin years, controversies inside the FPE occurred, but not with the same intensity as their American counterparts. During the Harper years, interdepartmental struggles were more common than opposing views within the FPE.

It does not mean that Canadian FPE dealt with lesser challenges than their American counterparts. Interdepartmental struggles made the Canadian FPE's strategy implementation just as difficult as on the American side. Neither does it mean that the American FPE did not have to deal with interdepartmental disputes. These disputes occurred on both American and Canadian sides as the Departments of Defence and the Military had more resources and were ready for warfighting missions. In contrast, civilian agencies, such as the Department of State (DoS), the U.S. Agency

for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Agriculture (DoA), on the American side, and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), on the Canadian side, dealt with budgetary constraints and were more inclined to promote S&R. On both sides, the military and civilians focused on different aspects of the COIN strategy and did not necessarily have an interest in reconciling their opposing preferences (Keane & Wood, 2016: 104–105; Saideman, 2016: 70–75, 98–100). This study argues that focusing on how the American and Canadian FPE proponents of COIN had to deal with top-tier controversies and interdepartmental struggles, respectively, captures well their primary challenges under the aforementioned institutional arrangement and political circumstances.

On the American side, the FPE proponents of COIN, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, engaged in intense debate with Vice President Joe Biden and other senior advisers in the White House.<sup>19</sup> Vice President Biden and President Barack Obama's advisers overtly criticized COIN as being implemented in Afghanistan. Indeed, some of them, especially Vice President Biden, recommended maintaining the CT strategy, but with a slight increase of troops. It was known as CT plus. On the Canadian side, the original proponent of COIN was Minister of Defence Bill Graham. As early as July 2005, Minister Graham implicitly supported the model, as being implemented in Afghanistan and Pakistan months later, and backed Rick Hillier's appointment as the Chief of Defence Staff (Graham, 2016: 383 and 399), whose plan would be to combine precisely the combat mission and the PRT strategy (Martin, 2008: 395). This model, which was the pillar of Canadian COIN strategy, would eventually be reaffirmed by the Harper Conservatives. Minister of Defence Graham had to battle in Cabinet meetings to promote the developing strategy. For their part, while working cohesively, the Harper Conservatives had to deal with interdepartmental jealousies between DND, DFAIT, and CIDA, which ended up undermining COIN goals (Graham, 2016: 389 and 391).

In the final analysis, it can be argued that dealing with these controversies allowed the American and Canadian FPEs to refine their perceptions about the scope and utility of COIN *vis-à-vis* other strategic options. The next two sections address this point.

### AMERICAN FPE'S COIN CAUSAL BELIEFS (2006–2011)

Even though COIN represented the American FPE's primary causal beliefs during the Afghanistan intervention since 2006, they examined different strategic options to refine their foreign and security policy towards that country. Secretaries Gates and Clinton criticized two strategic options during this period, namely, *fully resourced COIN* (option 2) and *CT plus* (option 3), and, accordingly, proposed a *limited COIN* strategy (option 1) due to its strategic usefulness as compared to these options. A fully resourced COIN came in the form either of a massive increase of troops (option 2A) or of a comprehensive strategy aimed at mobilizing civilian and military resources at the domestic, regional, and international levels (option 2B). Firstly, since it required a massive increase of troops, fully resourced COIN (option 2A) would entail specifically transitioning from 68,000 troops in 2009 to 108,000 in 2011, which would continue the rise that had already taken place from 32,000 to 68,000 during the period 2006–2009. As promoted by the military, especially General Stanley McChrystal, the U.S. ISAF commander between 2009 and 2010, and Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the period 2007–2011, this increase would have been necessary to meet the 'clear' and 'hold' goals of the COIN strategy (Gates, 2014: 364, 379, and 381). It is worth noting that the military even dared to propose 80,000 additional troops, which would have resulted in 148,000 troops in total (Clinton, 2014: 132–133).

During the debate about the increase of troops, Secretary Gates was supportive of the military, even though this matter brought about a civilian-military fracture.<sup>20</sup> Gates considered that an increase of troops was critical to guarantee the success of the COIN strategy, but he was sceptical about McChrystal and Mullen's proposal of additional 40,000 troops. For him, it would have scant usefulness in the short term. The military had requested additional troops to disrupt the Taliban's expected summer offensive in 2009 and to guarantee the August presidential election taking place that year. Yet, since this number of troops could only be sent through successive phases due to logistical constraints, they would be incapable of getting there in time to achieve the goal, as mentioned above (Gates, 2014: 337–338).

Gates also began to think of the likelihood that the massive increase of troops would encourage Afghans to see Americans like the Soviets,

provoking a disconnection between the Americans and the Afghan people (see Kagan, 2009). Finally, like Rumsfeld, Gates was worried about the likelihood of ending up promoting nation-building that a fully resourced COIN would imply:

I began to have misgiving about whether the foreign military presence in Afghanistan was growing to the point where most Afghans would begin to see us as ‘occupiers’ rather than allies. Up to that point, all indications—polling and the like—suggested that most Afghans still saw us as allies. But more than anyone else at senior levels in Bush 43’s administration, I had been involved with Afghanistan and Pakistan during the 1980s and had watched the Soviets fail despite having nearly 120,000 troops there: their large presence (and brutal tactics) turned Afghans against them. Historically, Afghanistan has not been kind to foreign armies. *I began to worry aloud about where the tipping point in terms of the number of foreign troops might be* and to act on that worry. [Italics added] (Gates, 2014: 218)

Secondly, a fully resourced COIN would be synonymous with “a stronger, smarter and comprehensive strategy” (option 2B) (Obama, 2009b). It would aim to adopt a regional approach—including Afghanistan and Pakistan—to mobilize “all elements of [US] national power” to build Afghan forces to provide security and to bring major international efforts from allies and those with a stake in Afghanistan. As proposed by President Obama’s televised speech on March 27, 2009, and known as the AfPak strategy, it sought to meet the COIN strategy’s three components. Not only did it address the ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ components, just as the military’s increase-of-troops strategy proposed, but it also focused on the ‘build’ component. The former would imply the approval of 17,000 soldiers, reaching a total of 85,000, whereas the latter would result in a civilian surge of “agricultural specialists and educators [...] engineers and lawyers,” which would be critical “to advance security, opportunities, and justice — not just Kabul, but from the bottom up in the provinces” (Obama, 2009b). According to Secretary Gates, it was a robust strategy because even though the president “never used the words *counterinsurgency* or *counterterrorism* in the speech [...] the strategy that he announced was clearly a blend of both [Italics in the original]” (Gates, 2014: 343).

Secretary Gates had his own doubts about this second way to conduct COIN. Specifically, he questioned the likelihood of meeting the two

criteria required to be successful with such a strategy, namely, the massive deployment of civilians, especially from the Departments of State and Agriculture and the Agency for International Development, as well as Pakistan's disposition to work with the United States, granting to the fight against the Taliban and al Qaeda the same strategic value. On the one hand, a massive civilian surge comparable to the military one was unlikely as the American FPE's assessment often focused on the strategy's military component. In other words, a massive civilian surge would have entailed thinking of civilian strategy seriously and the American FPE were not willing to do it (Gates, 2014: 476). On the other hand, over the entire intervention, it was clear that Pakistan would not have the same strategic goals as those advanced by the United States and its allies. Not only was Pakistan more worried about its potential confrontation with India, but it also tended to adopt a hedging strategy in preparation for the U.S. troops' withdrawal and in response to its distrust of the Western campaign in Afghanistan. As a result, Pakistan ended up being more tolerant of the Afghan Taliban, including permitting their leaders to enjoy sanctuary in Quetta (Gates, 2014: 343; Rice, 2011: 126 and 128; Rumsfeld, 2011: 688–689).

CT plus (option 3), which Vice President Biden primarily proposed, focused on lethal attacks on the Taliban and other forces and the training of the Afghan army and police (Woodward, 2011: 234). As a result, this option would be made up of direct and indirect CT measures against the enemy, brushing aside the population-oriented COIN approach. This option implied sending 20,000 additional troops, the half for direct CT and the other half for indirect CT, which would have resulted in 88,000 troops in total in Afghanistan (Gates, 2014: 379). To be sure, it would have entailed the same military surge as proposed by AfPak strategy, but without a civilian surge.

For the proponents of CT, it would be better than COIN as it focused solely on the fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan. It would reduce the dependence on the partnership with Pakistan, would decrease the number of casualties, and would temper the jihadist narrative. It would also avoid a massive effort at reconstruction—which proponents of CT called nation-building in a pejorative way—in a country where there is little infrastructure. Finally, it would improve the quality of intelligence. The last point was an essential difference between COIN and CT in Afghanistan. For the proponents of COIN, it is a better strategy to gather adequate intelligence due to direct contact with the population. In

contrast, the proponents of CT argued that theirs is better for collecting intelligence because the Afghan population would be more available to cooperate with the U.S. and allied forces when a lesser intrusive strategy in the daily Afghan life is being conducted (Fair, 2011).<sup>21</sup>

Secretary Gates made a case for COIN and against CT precisely because, for him, an adequate intelligence relies on “significant U.S. presence in Afghanistan,” plus CT had already failed in the previous decades. Having adopted a remote-control CT, the United States had been incapable of preventing the 9/11 attacks, and in having conducted CT plus or COIN minus during the early years of the intervention, it had failed to stabilize the country, giving momentum to the Taliban insurgency (Gates, 2014: 374). Secretary Clinton similarly backed this stance in the following terms:

The problem [...] was that if the Taliban continued to seize more of the country, it would be harder to conduct effective counterterrorism operations. We wouldn't have the same intelligence networks necessary to locate the terrorists or the bases from which to launch strikes inside or outside Afghanistan. Al Qaeda already had safe havens in Pakistan. If we abandoned large parts of Afghanistan to the Taliban [as suggested by Biden's CT], they would again have safe havens there as well. (Clinton, 2014: 138)

With all of these considerations in mind, the American FPE chose selective COIN (option 1), as proposed by Secretary Gates and backed by Secretary Clinton, despite the fact that Vice President Biden had vehemently opposed it. This strategy aimed to break the stalemate, as brought about by the strengthened Taliban insurgency between 2006 and 2009, by going further than CT plus. However, it sought to narrow the expectations of fully resourced COIN by focusing on disrupting and defeating the Taliban with lesser military forces and paying particular attention to the south and east regions with a timeline in mind. In a nutshell, selective COIN attempted to take advantage of the COIN strategy's primary causal belief, namely, ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build.’ But it attempts to prevent the United States from embracing a broad, open-ended commitment (Gates, 2014: 344, 364, 375 and 571).

According to its proponents, the most crucial advantage of this strategic option was that despite the increase of troops, as requested by the military, or President Obama's AfPak strategy, it did not entail abandoning CT. Firstly, selective COIN deemed CT necessary to meet the

‘clear’ and ‘hold’ component of counterinsurgency, that is, “to degrade the Taliban’s capabilities to the point where larger and better trained Afghan security forces could maintain control of the country and prevent the return of al Qaeda” (Gates, 2014: 344). Secondly, selective COIN entailed sending 30,000 additional troops and pushing the allies to obtain the remaining 10,000 troops required to meet McChrystal’s plan. Finally, selective COIN sought to embrace the primary goals of the President’s March strategy by focusing on “providing security in Afghanistan’s cities, bolstering the government, and delivering services to the people, rather than waging a battle of attrition with the Taliban insurgents” (Clinton, 2014: 130). However, as the gap occurred during the Bush administration between the expected broad approach to CT and the actual narrow approach to CT, the Obama administration had to narrow further selective COIN. In the final analysis, the discourse of “a stronger, smarter and comprehensive strategy” in the form of selective COIN was replaced by that of “Afghan good enough.” It meant recognizing success in the campaign when Afghans “doing something barely adequately was better than [the United States] doing it excellently” (Gates, 2014: 344; see also Landler, 2017).

### CANADIAN FPE’S COIN CAUSAL BELIEFS (2005–2011)

Like the American FPE, the Canadian FPE adopted COIN as their primary causal belief during the Afghanistan intervention between 2006 and 2011. This posture did not result from a heated debate at the senior level, as observed on the American side. For example, as Minister Graham pointed out, “The prime minister, the Cabinet, the Quebec ministers, and the caucus all came on board for a rapid, combat-type mission to supplement the efforts of our PRT in Kandahar and the SAT in Kabul” (Graham, 2016: 382–383). This would be the basis of the nascent COIN strategy. As the core of the new strategy, the deployment of troops to Kandahar (option 1) rather than to other Southern provinces—Herat (option 2) and Chaghcharan (option 3)—, was not subject to controversy. Based on a set of causal beliefs, Canadian FPE acknowledged the political, strategic, and logistic importance of option 1. At the political level, Canadian FPE considered the Kandahar deployment critical to respond to the urgent claim from several actors, including President Karzai; the British; the Americans, the Canadian General Ray Henault, acting as the Chairman of NATO’s military committee (2004–2008); and

Chris Alexander, the Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan (2003–2005) (Graham, 2016: 380–381; see also Sloan, 2012: 5).

At the strategic level, the Canadian FPE highlighted the value of choice to focus on Kandahar insofar as there were like-minded countries in Southern provinces Canada could work with, such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Their shared experience in the Balkans showed all three that they share “similar psychological rules of engagement,”<sup>22</sup> as being shaped by their “similar military capabilities, political and military outlook, ways of operating, and general ethos” (Willis, 2012: 991). In contrast, a deployment to Herat or Chaghcharan, instead of Kandahar, would have implied working with Italians or Belgians, who did not precisely share the same engagement rules (Saideman, 2016: 30; Stein & Land, 2007: 182; Willis, 2012: 992). Furthermore, as compared to Herat and Chaghcharan, Kandahar would also increase Canada’s international recognition and the ability to influence NATO strategic planning as the core of the NATO mission in the South began to revolve around Kandahar (Willis, 2012: 990). As mentioned, Afghanistan also ended up being a war for prestige. In remembering what General Hillier and DND officials considered in deciding the Kandahar deployment, Minister Graham explained the strategic rationale underpinning the Kandahar deployment in the following terms,

Though General Hillier was a huge admirer of the United States, he often said to me, ‘The people I want on my wing are not the Americans, because whenever they get into trouble, they just call in the B52s and bomb the shit out of everybody, and that causes more political problems than they solve with their military stuff. I want the nice, solid Brits and the Dutch, and we’re going to go at this in our own way.’ DND officials concurred, pointing out that working with Britain and the Netherlands would also allow us to build on our previously successful partnership with both countries in Bosnia. We conducted long negotiations with them, and ultimately, we all decided to send our PRTs south [...]. (Graham, 2016: 380)

At the logistic level, the Canadian FPE realized that Kandahar met all of the operational requirements for a Canadian deployment such as ‘accessibility’ and ‘cost efficiency,’ taking into account that the move from Kabul to Kandahar would be easier operationally. The minimal conditions necessary to guarantee such deployment in Chaghcharan were, for instance, more difficult to meet as there was no suitable airfield. It is worth noting that some critical analysts argued that the Canadian

FPE, especially the prime minister, took too much time in deciding the contribution during the new phase of expansion of the NATO mission South and, accordingly, they were forced to choose Kandahar logistically (Saideman, 2016: 30; Stein & Lang, 2007: 182). After all, those analysts held that, in a moment when NATO members had already taken over their commitment, “There was no place left in Afghanistan for Canada to deploy” (Stein & Lang, 2007: 182). Prime Minister Martin responded to this criticism by highlighting, however, the logistical reasons underlying the mission.

General Hillier and the senior people at Defence worked out the plans for our future deployment to Kandahar. Some confusion later arose about whether Canada ended up in Kandahar because it was all that was available by the time we made the decision to redeploy. The fact is we could not have deployed earlier because our overstretched troops needed an ‘operational pause’ to recuperate and retrain. Moreover, there were logistical advantages to Kandahar because of its proximity to Kabul, which would allow us to draw on the supply chain we had already set up there. (Martin, 2008: 394)

Despite the consensus on the Kandahar deployment, there were occasional debates inside the FPE. At that moment, keeping S&R where it was still possible—especially in Kabul—(option 4) was presented as an alternative to the COIN strategy in Kandahar (option 1). This debate was epitomized by Minister Graham and Minister of International Development Aileen Carroll (2003–2006) during a Cabinet meeting. Secretary Graham was interested in having CIDA spent money in Kandahar to support the military strategy and undertake a genuinely COIN strategy there—or in his terms: a 3D war. However, Minister Carroll was more interested in spending foreign aid dollars to strengthen the Afghan finance ministry because her primary purpose was to avoid a financial crisis in Afghanistan by helping the central government in Kabul (Graham, 2016: 391). Graham perceived this controversy as a frequent debate between DND and CIDA and held that, unlike the American commanders, who never have to fight for resources to undertake reconstruction efforts, Canadians did, making their strategy comparatively more inefficient:

One thing that particularly annoyed me was that a lot of the money CIDA did spend took the form of government-to-government aid to the central government in Kabul. A feature of the way the Americans did things in

Afghanistan that I admired was that military commanders on the ground had substantial aid budgets under their direct control, which they could use so that security and reconstruction efforts in the same area dovetailed. An American general could order the digging of a well or the building of a hospital on his own authority, and the same soldiers who provided security could bring tangible proof to the population that their lives were improving. Canadian officers could not do that: all they could do was call Ottawa, where we had to fight to get the money from CIDA. (Graham, 2015: 67)

For their part, based on the Martin Liberals' decision to get to Kandahar in 2005, the Harper Conservatives reaffirmed and strengthened the COIN strategy (option 1). Under the premise that "it's time to consolidate those gains on the ground and use them to advance reconstruction, because the long-suffering Afghan people desperately need hope for a better future for their families and communities" (Harper, 2007a), the Harper Conservatives took advantage of the Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-AFG) to conduct COIN in Afghanistan. The JTF-AFG served well for this purpose. Not only had it gathered the efforts of all Canadian Armed Forces assets deployed in southwest Asia, but it also was made up of several elements that allowed the Harper conservatives to meet the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' components. After all, the JTF-AFG, whose headquarters were located at Kandahar airfield, included mostly a battle group, the Operational Mentor Liaison Team (OMLT), the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT-A), and the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT) (Government of Canada, 2014). The battle group aimed to provide security in Kandahar by supporting the Afghan National Army and cooperating with other ISAF forces, and, above all, 'clearing' armed groups of insurgents. The OMLT and SAT-A sought to meet the COIN's 'hold' component. The OMLT aimed to train and advise the Afghan National Army units in Kandahar, whereas the SAT-A, which was mostly made up of Canadian colonels positioned at the top of several Afghan government ministries, sought to advise the entire Afghan government to implement a cohesive strategy against the Taliban insurgency (Cox, 2007: 1–5; Marten, 2010: 223; Saideman, 2016: 75). This team also set out to refine the PRT's performance and connect the Canadian and Afghan governments' strategic goals in Afghanistan (Auerswald & Saideman, 2012: 67; Marten, 2010: 223; St-Louis, 2009: 60). Finally, the PRT met

the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components. By facilitating the reconstruction and development efforts from several international donors and contractors, the PRT sought to strengthen the Afghan government’s legitimacy and authority (Cox, 2007: 3).

Like the Martin Liberals, the Harper Conservatives faced similar challenges regarding increased interdepartmental controversies, which resulted in hurdles to conducting their preferred COIN strategy (option 1). One of the most salient controversies was about the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT-A), which was part of the Kandahar original plan, as proposed by General Hillier and backed by Prime Minister Martin and Minister Graham. Despite its strategic usefulness for COIN strategy, SAT-A was subject to criticism from DFAIT and CIDA and even DND’s civilian personal. Civilian personal at home and in Afghanistan deemed it a token of military overreaching, duplicating civilian efforts (Saideman, 2016: 75). For them, the SAT-A could have even duplicated the efforts of international agencies, ISAF and U.S. Headquarters (Combined Forces Command—Afghanistan, CFC-A) in Afghanistan (St-Louis, 2009: 61). Of particular interest was how DFAIT shifted its stance as to this initiative. While Ambassador Alexander was one of the SAT-A’s key promoters, his successor Arif Lalani was one of his primary opponents. In the end, the Canadian FPE terminated this programme in 2008 and did not supplant it with another similar initiative (Marten, 2010: 222 and 224; Saideman, 2016: 75). Even though Bill Graham was not in office when this issue intensified between 2006 and 2008, he was worried about this controversy as it epitomized “flaws in [the] 3D strategy.” Graham (2016: 389) explained this issue in the following terms:

Instead of DND, DFAIT, and CIDA working in harmony toward common objectives, they often clashed over fundamental differences or petty feuds. Among the casualties was the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) [...] some Ottawa officials—including some in Defence—argued that [the SAT’s] functions would be more properly performed by civilian personnel, whether from DFAIT or CIDA, despite all the evidence that few civilians with the necessary qualifications were willing to work in the violent conditions in Afghanistan. They also worried that the SAT had become Hillier’s personal ‘embassy’ in Kabul, offering strategic advice directly to Karzai and his government without going through the proper channels, maybe even for the benefit of DND itself. Many who were most familiar with the on-the-ground situation in Kabul saw the closing of the SAT as a significant loss. In my view it was driven by inter-departmental jealousies rather than a genuine disagreement over the best way to achieve our national goals.

Since this controversy occurred at the mid-managerial level, and there were no cleavages at the senior level, the Harper Conservatives managed to keep their COIN strategy. Above all, with a prime minister controlling the strategy and how it was presented to the public (Boucher, 2009: 722 and 724–725), the Harper Conservatives managed to renew the COIN mission in 2006 and 2008. Conservatives also managed to divide the opposition and, accordingly, to define the strategy with a high room for manoeuvre at home (Saideman, 2017: 137–138) (Chapter 6 will return to this issue). This room for manoeuvre was also favoured by the unipolar permissive strategic environment (as discussed in Chapter 3). In this regard, the COIN strategy evolution depended more on the Canadian FPE's perception and the development of Afghan irregular warfare than on domestic and international constraints.

At this point, it was apparent that having chosen Kandahar as its theatre of operations, the Canadian FPE perceived it necessary to engage not only with the 'clearing' of insurgency but also with stabilization and reconstruction. Yet, the evolution of Afghan irregular warfare forced them to think of COIN's 'clear' goal as the dominant component between 2006 and 2008. Indeed, the Canadian-led Medusa Operation aimed at fighting against the Taliban in the Panjwavy and Zhari districts of Kandahar Province marked this period. During this battle, CAF and their American, Dutch, and British allies had no alternative but to stop an enemy that was threatening the Western campaign by massing their troops and by using conventional warfare strategies in the form of "Soviet tactical defence" (Day, 2008).

Despite having trained for undertaking COIN's three goals, CAF saw themselves forced to react to the relentless, large-scale battle only. What is more, even if CAF and their allies were capable of "clearing" the area, the scale of the battle made COIN intelligence a difficult and even impossible task to fulfill. This type of intelligence would have been critical to undertake the 'hold' and 'build' components of COIN as it would entail knowing the Afghan tribal system and the Taliban's deep connection with the Afghan social fabric (Khan, 2007). With Operation Medusa, Canada and its allies prevented Kandahar and probably the entire country from falling into the Taliban's hands. However, the lack of counterinsurgency intelligence allowed the Taliban to transition from conventional to guerrilla warfare.<sup>23</sup>

However, the overemphasizing of the 'clear' component of COIN was untenable in the face of mounting casualties. Thus, the Canadian FPE

decided to review the strategy in 2008. Not only did this review implicitly include the debate regarding the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ or the civilian components of COIN, as occurred in the American case, but it was also anticipated by several months of U.S. General McCrystal’s assessment. In a public speech on October 12, 2007, Prime Minister Harper announced a committee’s formation, which would help move the debate in that direction (Harper, 2007c). As chaired by John Manley, Liberal MP between 1988 and 2004 and deputy Prime Minister between 2002 and 2003 and Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2000 and 2002, this committee would examine four options and deem others, if necessary, as suggested by Prime Minister Harper. Taking into account that the option of keeping the COIN strategy in Kandahar (option 1) was never left out, the Harper Conservatives and the Manley committee considered five options in total in 2008.

Option 2 would be “to continue training the Afghan army and police with the goal of creating self-sufficient indigenous security forces in Kandahar province so Canadian troops can start withdrawing in February 2009” (Harper, 2007c). This option, while already being undertaken by the OMLT at that moment, would imply leaving out the ‘clear’ component (Cox, 2007: 4). Option 3 would be “to focus on reconstruction in Kandahar province, which would require some other country or countries to take over our security role” (Harper, 2007c). This option would similarly entail brushing aside the ‘clear’ component and, accordingly, negotiating with NATO to get an equivalent battle group to replace the Canadian one (Cox, 2007: 4). Option 4 would be “to shift Canadian security and reconstruction efforts to another region of Afghanistan” (Harper, 2007c). This option would imply keeping COIN’s three components, yet a sensitive negotiation with NATO would be necessary to find another appropriate place that meets the alliance’s requirements (Cox, 2007: 4). For Canada, this option would also require re-examining the political, strategic, and logistical reasons considered in choosing Kandahar as a theatre of operations, as appraised by the Martin Liberals. Finally, option 5 would be “to withdraw all Canadian military forces after February 2009 except a small contingent to provide security for our remaining aid workers and diplomats” (Harper, 2007c). This option would simply end the Canadian involvement in NATO-ISAF mission (Cox, 2007: 4). In a nutshell, options 2–5 would imply modifying, or reversing the COIN strategy.

The Manley Report “concluded that [the options 2-5] are deficient” (Manley et al., 2008: 30). They precisely left out a comprehensive approach, like that adopted by the COIN strategy, brushed aside the strategic advantages of fighting in Kandahar without “setting artificial deadlines in time” (Manley et al., 2008: 32) or failed to acknowledge how hard it could be to find a replacement in Kandahar from other NATO member in the case of Canadian withdrawal (Manley et al., 2008: 30–33). In deeming those options deficient, the Report sought to provide another option aimed at reorienting the Afghanistan mission. It came in the form of a refined version of the COIN strategy.

The COIN strategy between 2006 and 2008 had overemphasized the ‘clear’ component, so that the Report drew attention to recovering the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components. Yet, the Report was cautious that the pendulum would swing too far, by brushing aside the first component. After all, recovering the COIN strategy’s original goals would imply granting all three components the same strategic value. The Report held that “a successful counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan requires [...] more ISAF forces,” which makes Canadian contribution critical to the alliance’s success (Manley et al., 2008: 35). It also stated that “Canada’s contribution to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan should be revamped giving higher priority [...] to direct, bilateral project assistance that addresses the immediate, practical needs of the Afghan people, especially in Kandahar province, as well as longer-term capacity building” (Manley et al., 2008: 38). The Report finally argued that this renewed, balanced commitment with the COIN strategy should go hand in hand with an equivalent effort from the allies. Indeed, the Report made the Canadian commitment contingent on ISAF allies’ effort in the following terms.

[T]o improve the safety and operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces in Kandahar, the Government should secure for them, no later than February 2009 [...] “an additional battle group (of about 1,000 soldiers) to Kandahar by NATO and/or other allies [...] To better ensure the safety and effectiveness of the Canadian contingent, the Government should also secure medium helicopter lift capacity and high-performance Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance before February 2009. (Manley et al., 2008: 35 and 38)

The Manley Report thus helped the Harper Conservatives to refine their COIN causal beliefs. The Report allowed the Harper administration to recognize that a new position aimed at coordinating the whole civilian effort in Kandahar, especially undertaking a cohesive development and reconstruction strategy, was critical to the mission's success. It came in the form of the appointment of the Representative of Canada in Kandahar (RoCK), aimed at coordinating all Canadian civilian efforts, including those being undertaken by "DFAIT, CIDA, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Department of Public Safety and the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC)" (Saideman, 2016: 47). In being "coequal with the CF commander," the RoCK allowed civilian agencies to have more direct access to foreign policy implementation. Meanwhile, the Harper Conservatives managed to control the three components of the strategy more efficiently (Saideman, 2016: 47).

The Harper administration also took advantage of the Report's recommendation suggesting to pressure allies to support the Canadian involvement in Kandahar in the form of a battle group, heavy-lift helicopters, and Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR). The battle group was necessary to continue with the 'clear' and 'hold' components, whereas UAV and ISR were critical to protecting CAF from Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) from the Taliban and other insurgent forces. All of those criteria were met. The United States provided the battle group, and the Canadian government was capable of buying the required helicopters and UAV from the U.S. army and a Canadian firm, respectively (Sloan, 2012: 8–10).

Those factors, along with the 2009 U.S. troop surge, allowed the Canadian COIN effort to be concentrated on a narrower area of operations. As the American FPE decided to send 30,000 troops, most of them to the Kandahar province, the Canadian-led Task Force Kandahar (TFK) managed to focus its activities on Dand and Panjwavy Districts in that province. According to a study conducted by Caroline Leprince on Canadian COIN in Kandahar, in those districts, Canadians were able to develop the village approach aimed at empowering districts and villages. The purpose was to provide security and infrastructure in return for local chieftains' promise to guarantee fiscal transparency, contribute to developing a security network, and encourage other communities to undertake the same efforts (Leprince, 2015: 106). Above all, security would be provided by the Afghan National Army troops after being mentored by the CAF. Once COIN's three components were achieved, Canadian

troops would move on village by village to replicate the model (The Globe & Mail, 2009).

According to its proponents, the essential advantage of the Canadian selective COIN in the form of the village approach in specific districts was that it would help to leverage Canadian leadership and prestige in Afghanistan. In theory, with a more focused, balanced strategy in mind, Canada would demonstrate its ability to conduct a successful COIN strategy while its allies would acknowledge its efforts. There is evidence that the Canadian implementation of the village model in Afghanistan allowed the Canadian FPE to meet their leadership and reputation expectations. As implemented in the Deh-e-Bagh village in the Dand District since June 2009, Canada's village model was praised by General McChrystal. He argued that "more model villages around the country, adding that such sustainable-development projects are key to winning the support of the population" (CBC News, 2009). Indeed, General McChrystal's rearrangement of the COIN strategy essentially drew on Canada's village model (The Globe & Mail, 2009: A16).

What is more, Caroline Leprince's study, as mentioned above, demonstrated that Generals Jonathan Vance and Dean Milner managed to have a strong influence on American officers, allowing for revisioning the American COIN strategy in practice. Indeed, they enhanced the strategy itself. Canadians sought to upgrade the 'clear-hold-build' approach by replacing it with the 'define-shape-clear-hold-build-enable' model. That is to say, the 'define,' 'shape,' and 'enable' components were added to the strategy. The 'define' component aimed to gather intelligence information to undertake better operations. As mentioned, one of the COIN strategy's failures was the lack of knowledge of the tribal system, the role of the local leaders, and the significance of both of these factors to success in the implementation of COIN. The 'define' component would fill this gap. The 'shape' component would seek to provide options other than kinetic operations, based on deeper knowledge of local leaders, population, and the insurgent forces in place. The final stage, informed by the 'enable' component, would provide permanent stability by encouraging locals to find their own solutions (Leprince, 2015: 111–112; see also Coombs, 2013: 16–24).

## CONCLUSION

Contrary to structural realism's expectation that countries placed *differently* in the international system will behave and define their strategic objectives *differently*, American and Canadian FPE found themselves adopting similar foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan between 2006 and 2011. Drawing on the analysis of American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs and causal beliefs during the intervention, this chapter's primary argument was that this similarity was the result of comparable beliefs during this period.

They embraced similar principled beliefs as close allies. Such beliefs allowed them to perceive similarly the need to intervene in Afghanistan by following us-, them-, and we-justifications during the entire intervention. The American and Canadian FPEs embraced not only similar justifications to intervene in Afghanistan but also equal engagement levels after 2006. The former does not necessarily conflict with structural realism's central tenets, but the latter undoubtedly represents a challenge. Even though structural realism could explain allies justifying military interventions similarly, it would hardly be capable of explaining similar engagement levels of allies with different material capabilities.

Based on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, this chapter explained these engagement levels taking into account American and Canadian FPEs' changing geographical priorities and perceptions of what would imply staying in Afghanistan in the long run. These priorities and perceptions were analysed as principled beliefs, along with the us-, them-, and we-justifications. On the one hand, American and Canadian FPEs perceived Afghanistan as their top foreign policy priority between 2006 and 2011. Before 2006, the American FPE regarded the Iraq War not only right and just but also the central front of the WoT, whereas the Canadian FPE deemed Darfur and Haiti as important as Afghanistan. After 2011, the American FPE made a strategic turn to the Asia-Pacific region due to their changing perceptions of the global distribution of power, whereas the Canadian FPE started to prepare their exit from Afghanistan, changing from a combat to a training mission. On the other hand, the American FPE resolved to increase their commitment to end the war promptly and, accordingly, to avoid an open-ended commitment, whereas the Canadian FPE made the same commitment, but for different reasons; they saw Afghanistan as a war for prestige. It would allow Canada to be a reliable American and European ally, as well as a global player in the long run.

This chapter, however, drew more attention to the American and Canadian FPEs' causal beliefs because they help to understand the nature of the United States and Canada's increased engagement after 2006 in-depth. Specifically, examining the evolution of these beliefs allows for understanding that, despite their similar ends in Afghanistan, Americans and Canadians varied in how they attempted to achieve these ends. Indeed, they chose different means, namely, Stabilization & Reconstruction (S&R), Counterterrorism (CT) and Counterinsurgency (COIN). These means attempted to operationalize in Afghanistan the options offered by the strategic environment. Gravitating towards the sole great power and opportunist foreign policy were operationalized as S&R and COIN in the Canadian case, whereas offensive dominance was operationalized as CT and COIN in the American case.

Even though the American FPE debated narrow and broad approaches to CT, depending on their perceptions regarding the utility of merging the fight against the enemy with nation-building, they ended up choosing the narrow approach. Not only did this approach fit with U.S. conservative nationalism and the evolution of Afghan warfare, but it also derived from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's causal beliefs. During this period, the Canadian FPE selected S&R as a lesser-risk operation as compared to CT. Yet, they transitioned from a low-risk approach to a moderate-risk approach. This constituted risk escalation depending on the level of military engagement. Not only was it a result of Canadian negotiation with the United States and other NATO members, but it also derived from Prime Minister Martin and Minister Graham's causal beliefs. They were interested in seeing Afghanistan as a 3D war.

Since 2006, both American and Canadian FPEs were forced to shift their approaches to the irregular warfare in Afghanistan. Americans and Canadians realized that their respective approaches aimed at fighting directly with the enemy and stabilizing and reconstructing the secure areas, respectively, were not enough. They had to increase their engagement, which came in the form of COIN. As being conducted in Afghanistan, COIN was more ambitious than CT and S&R. At the strategic level, it can be argued that COIN was a blend of both CT and S&R by addressing 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' objectives.

The analysis of how American and Canadian FPEs sought to meet their security goals in Afghanistan—to protect the Canadian and American peoples, to enhance the Afghan quality of life, and to contribute

to the global stability—relied on neoclassical realism’s logic of consequentialism. Thus, the chapter focused on identifying how they selected strategic options, among others, based on their utility to fulfil such goals. This logic was particularly relevant to understand American and Canadian perceptions of their strategic options after 2005/2006. On the one hand, the American FPE examined three options, namely, selective COIN (option 1), fully resourced COIN (option 2) in the form of the increase of troops (option 2A), and a stronger, smarter, and comprehensive strategy (option 2B), and CT plus (option 3). On the other hand, the Martin Liberals examined four options, namely, to conduct COIN in Kandahar (option 1), in Herat (option 2), and Chaghcharan (option 3), or to keep S&R where it was still possible (option 4). For their part, the Harper Conservatives examined four options, namely, to keep the COIN strategy in Kandahar (option 1), to focus solely on the training of the Afghan army and police (option 2), to return to S&R in Kandahar (option 3), to keep COIN, but in another region (option 4), or to withdraw the CAF after February 2009 (option 5). In examining these options, American and Canadian leaders ended up reaffirming their COIN strategy. This chapter termed this strategic option as selective COIN to refer to the intention to narrow their COIN theatre of operations.

In the final analysis, based on their own preferences, both of these countries followed their own strategic paths, finding themselves adopting comparable belief systems between 2006 and 2011. In this regard, the present chapter constituted the second piece of the puzzle of this study. Chapter 3 addressed the first piece of puzzle in examining the strategic environment shaping American and Canadian foreign policies towards Afghanistan and, especially, in examining the impact of the unipolar structure and the nature of the Afghan irregular warfare. That chapter argued that unipolarity allowed Canada and the United States to enjoy a high room for manoeuvre. Yet, the United States and Canada adapted themselves to the evolution of Afghan warfare, especially to the strengthening of the insurgency in 2005/2006. Chapter 5 will examine the third piece of the puzzle of this study, namely, the American and Canadian PFE’s ability to mobilize domestic resources to meet their principled and causal beliefs.

## NOTES

1. This chapter borrows the term “war for prestige” from Massie (2013: 274–288) to explain the Canadian FPE’s view of Afghanistan over this period.
2. See, for instance, the most emblematic speech of Barack Obama regarding Afghanistan: Obama (2009b).
3. On the analysis of this dichotomy during the Obama years, see Cortright (2011).
4. The opponents identified by Rumsfeld, who established this distinction, were Rohde and Sanger (2007), The Week (2008), and Gonyea (2009).
5. General Peter Pace (October 1, 2005–September 30, 2007) was replaced by Admiral Michael Mullen (October 1, 2007–September 30, 2011) as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with the all the Joint Chiefs. General John Abizaid (July 7, 2003–March 16, 2007) was also replaced by Admiral William J. Fallon (March 16, 2007–March 28, 2008) as the U.S. Central Commander. It is worth noting that the U.S. Central Commander’s area of responsibility is Central Asia and Middle East and mostly Afghanistan and Iraq (see Gates, 2014: 574).
6. In the original text, the word “were” is in italics.
7. Hawtrey (1952: 64) coined this term and Gilpin (1981: 32–34) developed it conceptually.
8. The victory in war would be the most important indicator of the reputation for strength (Gilpin, 1981: 32).
9. Paul Bremer, Presidential Envoy to Iraq led the drafting of a special report on U.S. nation-building missions in Germany, Japan, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan to examine historical experiences as guidance to conduct nation-building in Iraq. This report, which was attached to an unclassified memo sent by Ambassador Bremmer to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, held that the Bush Government “adopted a more modest set of objectives [...] in Afghanistan [as compared to Iraq, where] Administration’s efforts to reverse the trend toward ever larger and more ambitious American led nation building operations has proved short lived [...] In Iraq the United States has taken on a task comparable in nature to the transformational attempts still underway in Bosnia and Kosovo, and in scope to the earlier American occupations of Germany and Japan” (Bremmer, 2003).
10. Weeks after the 9/11, Rumsfeld argued that “Nation-building does not have a brilliant record across the globe. It’s a very hard thing to do. It’s a hard thing for the people in a country to make a nation work well, and it’s even harder for foreigners, strangers, to go into a country and think that they know what the template, what the model ought to be for that country” (The Washington Times, 2001).

11. According to Rumsfeld (2004), "How we describe and set up the problem determines how we will deal with it —what priorities we establish and, in short, what we and our allies do to deal with the problem."
12. Rumsfeld drew his historical interpretation of the Afghanistan intervention on and responded to the next list of sources: Tanner (2009), Bearden (2001: 17–30), Gannon (2001), Editorial-Dallas Morning News (2001), Dowd (2001), and Apple (2001).
13. On a thorough analysis of different definitions of RMA and related doctrines, see Sloan (2002: 3–17).
14. Regarding the historical lessons learned from the Balkans and why Canadians had to transition to complex peacekeeping in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Martin pointed out the following: "Canadians have long treasured our distinguished service as peacekeepers, dating from the era of my father [ Paul Martin, Secretary of State for International Affairs between 1963 and 1968] and Lester Pearson — and rightly so. During the recent decades, however, it became clear that the 'classic' peacekeeping role we played for so many years [...] was no longer what world events were demanding. We had moved into an era in the Balkans, for instance, in which peacekeepers were called upon to play a much more *robust role, helping to create the peace rather than just preserving it, and even helping to rebuild failed and failing states [Italics added]*" (Martin, 2008: 329).
15. Based on lessons learnt from Haiti, Prime Minister Martin explained how Canadians had to think of stabilization–reconstruction nexus seriously: "I [...] strongly believe that you cannot do much good in failed or fragile states with military force alone. You need to engage people's hearts and minds, and the way to do this is rebuild economic infrastructure along with social and political and judicial institutions. One of the lessons of Haiti is that military intervention without this kind of follow-through means that you have to come back time and time again, intervening in crises but never fixing the underlying problems" (Martin, 2008: 392).
16. The rationality behind such approaches was established by the *Canada's International Policy Statement* in the following terms: "The Government of Canada believes that an integrated '3D' approach, combining diplomacy, defence and development, is the best strategy for supporting states that suffer from a broad range of interconnected problems. In short, our official aid programs and our broader international policies must operate in tandem. This requires government departments to work more closely together—from planning through to execution—so that contributions as disparate as police force training, civil engineering and private sector development combine into one, comprehensive approach to capacity building" (Government of Canada, 2005a: 20).
17. Smith distinguished the old paradigm of the interstate industrial war from that of the new one in which the war occurred "amongst the people."

Using cases like that of the Balkan wars, Smith argued that the new type of war does not occur on a battlefield upon which armies engage. Instead, it occurred “in the presence of civilians, against civilians, in defense of civilians. Civilians are the targets, objectives to be won, as much as opposing force” (Smith, 2005: 3–4 and Chapter 9).

18. On an analysis of the impact of such institutional arrangements on U.S. foreign and security policy decision-making process, see Rice (2011: 3–4, 14–22).
19. Robert Gates held a hotly debated with Thomas E. Donilon, Deputy National Security Advisor between 2009 and 2010 and National Security Adviser between 2010 and 2013; Denis McDonough, Deputy National Security Advisor between 2010 and 2013; David Axelrod, Senior Advisor to the President between 2009 and 2011; Douglas Lute, Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan between 2007 and 2010; and Rahm Emmanuel, White House Chief of Staff, between 2009 and 2010 (Gates, 2014: 352, 385, 482–483).
20. President Obama, Vice President Biden, and the White House advisers felt that the military had attempted to pressure them publicly to obtain the required increase of troops, as well as to criticize their leadership. On the one hand, General David Petraeus, Commander of the United States Central Command (USCETCOM) between 2008 and 2010 and Commander of the ISAF between 2010 and 2011, held, in an interview with the Washington Post Journalist Michael Gerson, that the military could not guarantee success in Afghanistan without more troops. On the other hand, Stanley McChrystal, Commander of ISAF between 2009 and 2010, gave an interview to the Rolling Stone journalist Michael Hastings, allowing Hastings to criticize the U.S. Afghanistan strategy and reveal the military’s dissatisfaction about the civilian leadership, especially President Obama and Vice President Biden (Gates, 2014: 367–368, 487–488; Gerson, 2009; Hastings, 2010).
21. See also Secretary Clinton’s summary of Vice President Biden’s CT strategy (Clinton, 2014: 138).
22. Ministry Bill Graham borrowed these words from his Norwegian counterpart, Kristin Devold (Graham, 2016: 380).
23. Yet, Canada adopted a similar selective COIN strategy, as advanced by the United States, that is, a COIN strategy aimed at clearing, holding, and building a determined area (Graham, 2016: 399).

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# Domestic Hurdles, Canadian and American Foreign Policy Executives (FPEs)' Structural Autonomy and Resource-Extraction Capability

This chapter aims to assess the American and Canadian foreign policy executives' (FPE) ability to mobilize domestic resources as another secondary, yet direct, cause of American and Canadian foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention. This assessment constitutes the third and final analytical step of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. To examine Canadian and American FPEs' ability to mobilize domestic resources, the version of neoclassical realism used in this study suggests examining “domestic hurdles to such mobilization” and “state power in the form of [resource] extraction capabilities” to conduct their preferred foreign and security policy (Taliaferro & Wishart, 2013: 48).

As Chapter 2 stated, domestic hurdles come mostly in the form of public and legislative opposition. It means that such hurdles are derived from the level of public satisfaction and the degree of elite consensus—as expressed in the level of agreement between the FPE and the legislative branch or between the governing and opposition parties—regarding the FPE's foreign and security policy. Neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy considers that state power depends on the structural

autonomy of the FPE to make foreign and security policy decisions within their respective political systems. Specifically, it analyses the FPE's structural autonomy according to constitutional and institutional arrangements informing the executive-legislative relationship, meaning the executive's room for manoeuvre to make decisions *vis-à-vis* legislative oversight (see Ripsman, 2002). State power also refers to the FPE's ability to forge elite consensus and promote social cohesion around their foreign and security policy. When elite consensus or social cohesion is unlikely, neoclassical realism addresses the FPE's ability to overcome the legislative branch and the public's obstacles (see Christensen, 1996; Schweller, 2006: Chapters 2–3; Zakaria, 1998). Both structural autonomy and agential ability to deal with opposition impact the FPE's capabilities to extract domestic resources in the form of legislative appropriations. In the end, those resources are critical to implementing their foreign and security policies (see Taliaferro, 2006: 464–495).

Because Chapter 4 showed the convergence of Canadian and American COIN belief systems from 2005/2006 through 2011, the current chapter focuses on the same period to assess American and Canadian state power. Neoclassical realism equates state power to the FPEs' ability to mobilize domestic resources to conduct their foreign policies by overcoming domestic hurdles and taking advantage of their structural autonomy. This means that this chapter's assessment of American and Canadian state power is synonymous with examining the aforementioned ability. In focusing on the period between 2005/2006 and 2011, this chapter helps examine the link between American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs and causal beliefs and American and Canadian state power during this period.

This chapter's core argument is that both the American and Canadian FPEs managed to implement their preferred security policies due to their ability to take advantage of their structural autonomy to overcome domestic hurdles. Such autonomy allowed them to deal with increasing legislative and public opposition to the intervention between 2006 and 2011. Above all, during this period, American and Canadian FPEs showed their ability to extract fiscal resources to undertake their COIN foreign and security policies. Such abilities were by far more profound than during the period between 2001 and 2005.

Sections 'The Elite Consensus During the Afghanistan Intervention's Early Years' to 'Public Opposition to American and Canadian Coin Strategy' examine the elite consensus and broad public support

informing Canadian and American foreign and security policies during the Afghanistan intervention's early years. These sections also explain how the elite consensus broke apart and the public support dropped in the United States and Canada when the FPE started to formulate and implement the COIN strategy. Even though the decline of the legislative and public support was more and more apparent between 2006 and 2011, section '[Understanding the Scope of American and Canadian FPEs' Structural Autonomy](#)' explains that American and Canadian FPEs enjoyed a similarly high structural autonomy to deal with those domestic hurdles. This section contradicts the conventional wisdom that presidential and Westminster parliamentary systems are different in terms of the FPE's room for manoeuvre to make decisions. American presidents' bold assertions of unilateral power regarding security and defence issues since the Cold War and the culture of Congress' deference to the president as a commander in chief have rendered the American FPE's structural autonomy similar to that enjoyed by the Canadian Prime Minister. In practice, therefore, the American FPE's room for manoeuvre is similar to the Canadian Prime Minister's war prerogative.

Section '[The American FPE 'Went Public', and the Canadian FPE 'Went Silent'](#)' examines how the American and Canadian FPEs took advantage of their structural autonomy levels to overcome public and legislative opposition. Based on such levels of autonomy, both American and Canadian FPEs attempted to control how the public regarded the Afghanistan intervention and, especially, the COIN strategy. The American FPE sought to hide several apparent failures of the intervention through a message of coherence and strategic breakthrough to legitimate American engagement (Thomas, [2020](#); Whitlock, [2019](#)). Despite waging a war, the Canadian FPE used the terms 'mission' and 'engagement,' preventing the public from being aware that Canada was at war, especially between 2005 and 2011 (Boucher & Nossal, [2017](#): 6–7, 44). Some differences were encountered regarding American and Canadian strategies to overcome domestic hurdles. American FPE made high-profile public speeches rather than lobbying the individual members of Congress (McHugh, [2015](#): 4). In contrast, the Canadian FPE attempted to silence the opposition by consulting Parliament about the intervention's extension and then stopped talking about the intervention (Saideman, [2016](#): 49–50). This section uses the terms 'going public' and 'going silent' to characterize both of those strategies.<sup>1</sup>

Despite using different strategies to deal with the legislative branch and the public, the final section argues that both American and Canadian FPEs managed to obtain relatively similar levels of financial resources to undertake their COIN strategy. Even though the United States and Canada's fiscal resources were certainly different in absolute terms, a percentage analysis of fiscal resource distribution shows the similarity of American and Canadian resources-extraction capabilities to undertake the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' components of the COIN strategy. Above all, it shows that these countries' similar levels of engagement in Afghanistan were apparent not only in rhetorical but also in material terms.

### THE ELITE CONSENSUS DURING THE AFGHANISTAN INTERVENTION'S EARLY YEARS

In the aftermath of 9/11, the American and Canadian FPEs enjoyed a high room for manoeuvre to formulate and implement foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. This came in the form of elite consensus, as depicted by American and Canadian political parties' stances on the Afghanistan intervention during the legislative debates and their ideological platforms. In the United States, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents approved in Congress a joint resolution allowing

the President [...] to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harboured such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons. (U.S. Congress, 2001: Section 2 (a))

Such a resolution, which passed on September 18 with a vote of 420 to 1 in the House—with ten Representatives who did not vote (U.S. House of Representatives, 2001: H5683)—and 98 to 0 in the Senate—with two Senators who did not vote (U.S. Senate, 2001), granted to the American FPE “one of the largest blank checks in the country's history” (New York Times—Editorial Board, 2019). The only dissenting vote came from Democratic Representative Barbara Lee during the debate of the 107th Congress's first session on September 14, 2001. Representative Lee warned about the risks of an unrestrained response aimed at relying exclusively on military action. Not only could it be incapable of avoiding

more terrorist acts against the United States, but it could also endanger more civilians amid the crossfire. Lee also highlighted how an immoderate response could entail inflaming race, religion, and ethnicity-based prejudice and bring about an open-ended commitment in Afghanistan similar to the Vietnam War (Lee, 2001: H5672).

In Canada, elite consensus came in the form of multi-partisan support through the endorsement of the Canadian Alliance, the Progressive Conservatives, and the Bloc Québécois to the Liberal Chrétien administration's decision to cooperate with the United States. These parties also supported the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which defines the principle of collective defense. Like the United States, there was only one dissenting voice against the decision (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 106). As the NDP leader between 1995 and 2003, MP Alexa McDonough encouraged, during the 37th Parliament's first session on September 17, 2001, a restrained and reflexive response that would honour the traditional Canadian peaceful position regarding conflict resolution. What is more, McDonough argued that Canadians' role as Americans' close friends should be to advise them to avoid acting based on blind revenge. A revenge-based military response would not prevent terrorist acts from happening again as it would end up victimizing innocent people around the world. In this regard, McDonough's (2001) position shared several points with those advanced by the U.S. Representative Lee.

With only two dissenting voices in the United States and Canada, there was broad consensus in both countries regarding foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. However, this consensus started to break apart between 2004 and 2006. The next sections address these developments in the United States and Canada.

### THE BREAKDOWN OF THE ELITE CONSENSUS IN THE UNITED STATES

Republicans and Democrats in the United States started to deem the Afghanistan intervention differently in 2004. Specifically, their differences become irreconcilable in considering the Democratic and Republican parties' platforms in 2004 and 2008. Republicans thought that the Bush administration had successfully paved the way for Afghanistan's liberation and managed to build a successful partnership with Pakistan within the

War on Terror (WoT). The 2004 Republican party platform expressed its stance on Afghanistan in the following terms:

Today, Afghanistan is a world away from the nightmare of the Taliban. Twenty-eight million people are free. That country has a good and just president. Boys and girls are being educated. Women are respected. Many refugees have returned home to rebuild their country, and a presidential election is scheduled for this fall. The terror camps are closed and the Afghan government is helping us to hunt the Taliban and terrorists in remote regions. Today, because we acted to liberate Afghanistan, a threat has been removed, and the American people are safer [...] Three years ago, Pakistan was one of the few countries in the world that recognized the Taliban regime. Al Qaeda was active and recruiting in Pakistan. Pakistan served as a transit point for al Qaeda terrorists leaving Afghanistan on missions of murder [...] Today, the governments of the United States and Pakistan are working closely in the fight against terror. Pakistan has helped capture Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the operational planner behind the September 11 attacks, and other terrorists. Pakistani forces are rounding up terrorists along their nation's western border. Today, because we are working with Pakistani leaders, Pakistan is an ally in the War on Terror, and the American people are safer. (Republican Party, 2004)

In contrast, the 2004 Democratic platform regarded the American intervention as a substantially mishandled foreign and security policy. Democrats argued that the Bush administration had not seriously taken the long-term component of this policy. Thus, the Afghanistan policy should focus on objectives other than overthrowing the Taliban to guarantee a safer and more stable country. Specifically, the United States should draw attention to reconstruction efforts, the expansion of NATO forces, the Afghan army's training, the reintegration of warlords, and the fight against the opium trade. The Democrat platform expressed this matter in the following terms:

Nowhere is the need for collective endeavor greater than in Afghanistan. The Bush Administration has badly mishandled the war's aftermath. Two years ago, President Bush promised a Marshall Plan to rebuild that country. Instead, he has all but turned away from Afghanistan, allowing it to become again a potential haven for terrorists. We must expand NATO forces outside Kabul. We must accelerate training for the Afghan army and police. The program to disarm and reintegrate warlord militias into society must be expedited and expanded into a mainstream strategy. We

will attack the exploding opium trade ignored by the Bush Administration by doubling our counter-narcotics assistance to the Karzai Government and reinvigorating the regional drug control program. (Democratic Party, 2004)

Besides, the Democratic platform did not regard Pakistan as an ally in the war on terror. Instead, it considered Pakistan regarding its tensions with India and, accordingly, the increasing regional instability. Above all, the platform was concerned about how terrorists operating in Afghanistan could access nuclear weapons through Pakistan (Democratic Party, 2004).

By 2008, the disagreements between Republicans and Democrats about the Afghanistan policy became more profound. Not only did they disagree about the progress of the existing Afghanistan policy but they also became even more divided from each other's positions regarding the burden that the invasion of Iraq was having on the Afghanistan intervention. The 2008 Republican party platform insisted on the United States' ability to advance its objectives in Afghanistan, even if the intervention required a more robust strategy to succeed and depended on Pakistan's vital role as an actual strategic partner in the WoT. It also argued that the American government should not conduct a more robust strategy in Afghanistan in the form of COIN at the expense of the Iraq War. After all, Republicans regarded Iraq as equally strategically important to American national interests as Afghanistan, which would echo President Bush's principled beliefs, as explained in this chapter. The Republicans addressed this topic in the following terms:

In the seven years since U.S. troops helped topple the Taliban, there has been great progress—but much remains to be done. We must prevail in Afghanistan to prevent the reemergence of the Taliban or an al Qaeda sanctuary in that country. A nationwide counterinsurgency strategy led by a unified commander is an essential prerequisite to success. Additional forces are also necessary, both from NATO countries and through a doubling in size of the Afghan army. The international community must work with the Afghan government to better address the problems of illegal drugs, governance, and corruption. We flatly reject the Democratic Party's idea that America can succeed in Afghanistan only by failure in Iraq [...] We must expand our ties with the government and the people of Pakistan. We support their efforts to improve democratic governance and strengthen civil society, and we appreciate the difficult but essential role Pakistan plays in the fight against terror. (Republican Party, 2008)

In contrast, the 2008 Democratic party platform deemed the Afghanistan policy as one that had squandered a critical opportunity to build a new American century. As a result of not having concentrated sufficient resources on Afghanistan due to the Iraq war's distraction, the United States undermined its prestige and leadership globally. According to this platform, this policy was also unable to make the Afghanistan–Pakistan nexus, that is, to deem Pakistan, especially the tribal regions, as a haven for al Qaeda. Thus, this policy should build a partnership with Pakistan to include it as a part of the American and NATO strategies. In this regard, the Democrats' stance on Pakistan changed compared to that held in 2004. That year, Pakistan was not associated yet with Afghanistan within the coalition's perception of threats to be faced. As mentioned, Democrats had solely linked Pakistan as a threat to nuclear proliferation and the tensions with India. The Democratic Party held the stance above in the following terms:

After September 11, we could have built the foundation for a new American century, but instead we instigated an unnecessary war in Iraq before finishing a necessary war in Afghanistan [...] The greatest threat to the security of the Afghan people—and the American people—lies in the tribal regions of Pakistan, where terrorists train, plot attacks, and strike into Afghanistan and move back across the border. We cannot tolerate a sanctuary for Al Qaeda. We need a stronger and sustained partnership between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and NATO [...] We will ask more of the Pakistani government, rather than offer a blank check to an undemocratic President [...] The central front in the war on terror is not Iraq, and it never was. We will defeat Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where those who actually attacked us on 9-11 reside and are resurgent. (Democratic Party, 2008)

The coming to power of the Obama administration brought about a renewed attention to the Afghanistan War insofar as focusing on this war had been one of Obama's campaign promises. Along with the pressures that the Bush administration had faced during its last two years in power from both Republicans and Democrats to scale down the Iraq war, this promise gave rise to a bipartisan agreement in 2009. This agreement would involve the importance of the Afghanistan War *vis-à-vis* the Iraq invasion. However, it did not mean another consensus like that observed in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Republicans

and Democrats remained at loggerheads about Afghanistan and especially about military engagement levels in that country (McHugh, 2015: 10).

Republicans in Congress pressured the Obama administration to “make an unqualified commitment to securing victory” (McHugh, 2015: 11), by arguing three critical points within the public debate. Firstly, Republicans argued that there was no option other than winning in Afghanistan. According to Senator McCain, a different outcome would drive Afghanistan to “[descend] into a cauldron of violence, hatred and human rights atrocities [once again]” (McCain, 2009). It would also give new opportunities to terrorist attacks, and “destabilize the entire strategically vital region, including nuclear-armed Pakistan” (McCain, 2009). Secondly, Republicans drew attention to the subsequent need to support “a properly resourced counterinsurgency policy, adapted to the unique culture and geography of Afghanistan [...] to success there” (McCain, 2009). Senator Lindsey Graham, as a critical member of Senate Armed Services Committee, reaffirmed this point in arguing that “The best way to deny al Qaeda a training camp in Afghanistan is to support an Afghan army and police force that can deny them that opportunity, have the Afghan people stand up for themselves with our help” (Graham, 2009). As a result, Republicans argued that CT, as compared to COIN, would fail to achieve American interests in Afghanistan (Graham, 2009). Finally, Republicans considered it necessary to respond to General McChrystal’s request for more combat troops, even if the United States and its allies do not find the Afghan government a solid and credible ally (McCain, 2009).

In contrast, Democrats responded to all three points by setting conditions for an increased American engagement in Afghanistan. The first point, which the Democratic Congress embraced, was the need to set a timetable for Afghanistan after avoiding putting one for Iraq year after year (Woodward, 2010: 232). The second point, held primarily by the House, was about the opportunity cost of spending money in war instead of using it domestically to bridge the growing fiscal gap. In particular, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi argued that there was “serious unrest” among Democrats over President Obama’s possible surge in troops due to the fiscal implications for the American economy (Kane, 2009). The third point, which several congressional democrats defended, was that the American government should limit its intervention due to the Karzai government’s excessive dependence on American and allied forces to provide security to its country. For them, the Afghan government’s

inability to provide essential public services to its people was apparent (McHugh, 2015: 11). With this diagnosis of the Afghanistan situation in mind, some key Representatives, such as David Obey, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and John Murtha, who was known for his vehement criticism against the Iraq war, threatened to reject additional resource appropriation for funding additional surge troops in Afghanistan (McHugh, 2015: 10–11).

### THE BREAKDOWN OF THE ELITE CONSENSUS IN CANADA

In Canada, the elite consensus breakdown was apparent from 2006 through 2008 insofar as Liberals, the New Democratic Party (NDP), and the Bloc Québécois adopted contending attitudes towards the Conservative strategy in Southern Afghanistan. Those attitudes resulted from party disagreement regarding the Canadian transition from the non-combat peacekeeping mission to the combat COIN strategy (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 108–110). The NDP denounced this transition vehemently, whereas Bloc Québécois and Liberals proposed a balancing act between combat, reconstruction, and diplomacy goals (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 86).

The NDP's position was consistent with its non-combat stance as expressed in its 2006 party platform. In that platform, the NDP advocated for Canada's return to peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention principles. Such principles would have implied recovering the original mission in Kabul and, accordingly, promoting an immediate withdrawal of troops from Kandahar and ceasing to be "an interchangeable part with the U.S. military" within the COIN strategy (New Democratic Party, 2005: 44). In particular, Jack Layton, the NDP leader between 2003 and 2011, argued that "the current counter-insurgency mission is not the right mission for Canada" (Layton, 2007c). Not only was it heavily focused on combat, brushing aside diplomacy, development, and reconstruction but the Harper Conservatives also had "neither defined what 'victory' would be, nor developed an exit strategy from this counter-insurgency mission" (Layton, 2007c). During the opposition motion of April 2007, the NDP.

condemns [the Harper] government and calls for it to immediately notify NATO of our intention to begin withdrawing Canadian Forces now in a safe and secure manner from the counter-insurgency mission in

Afghanistan; and calls for Canada to focus its efforts to assist the people of Afghanistan on a diplomatic solution, and re-double its commitment to reconstruction and development. (Layton, 2007c)

Furthermore, the NDP made two proposals that implicitly challenged the COIN strategy. Firstly, the NDP considered it necessary for MPs to vote on troops' deployment to enhance legislative oversight over the intervention, which had been promised by the Harper Conservatives during the campaign (Layton, 2006). Secondly, it promoted a comprehensive peace process with the Taliban fighters, which would have entailed brushing aside the COIN strategy's 'clear' component (Black, 2007; Curry, 2006; McDonough, 2006; Savoie, 2007).

The Bloc Québécois and the Liberal Party argued that balancing the combat mission with development, reconstruction, and diplomatic initiatives was required to set conditions for success in Afghanistan. Firstly, the Bloc Québécois' 2008 election platform held that "Canada will always have a role to play in Afghanistan in the International Security Assistance Force [however] Canada should be available to accept another, less aggressive, type of mission. Canada should serve in the more stable provinces of the country" (Bloc Québécois, 2008: 212, quoted by Boucher and Nossal [2017: 110]). Similarly, rather than questioning the continuity of the Afghanistan mission, Bill Graham, the Liberal Party's interim leader, held that Parliament should address the conditions to keep the intervention framed in terms of the 3D approach upon which this mission was based initially. This would imply addressing the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' components of the COIN strategy simultaneously. During the House's first debate to extend the Afghanistan mission in 2006, Graham argued that

There is no point in sending our military for an additional two years [until 2009] if this House does not hear from the government that it will be committing the amount of aid necessary to rebuild Afghanistan and recreate Afghanistan. I hope I will hear from the foreign affairs minister or the defence minister about how we are rebuilding governance structures, how we are dealing with corruption and how we are dealing with other issues. (Graham, 2006; see also Ignatieff, 2006)

However, unlike the Bloc Québécois, the Liberals were in a difficult position to assume a unified stance against the Conservative COIN strategy. Besides the fact that the transition from peacekeeping to COIN

had occurred during the Liberal Martin administration, Liberals were selecting a leader to replace Paul Martin after losing the 2006 federal election. During the debate mentioned above, Bill Graham was unable to force his caucus to support the intervention's extension, even though he considered it necessary. Indeed, the two MPs running for the liberal leadership, Michael Ignatieff and Stéphane Dion, adopted different positions as to the extension. As a result, Liberals were deeply divided, with 73 out of 103 choosing to vote against the extension (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 86). Liberals supporting the mission conjured up the them-justification, as explained in Chapter 4, to legitimize the Canadian presence in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> Liberals opposing the extension complained more about the nature of the extension debate than about the Canadian presence in Afghanistan—which was a stance shared with the Bloc Québécois (see Duceppe, 2006). For those Liberals, the debate had placed parliamentarians in an untenable position because they had to decide about this important topic without having access to secret information, which would have been critical to making an informed decision. This Liberal faction also complained that the debate on the decision had lasted only six hours, compared to the ten-week debate that their Dutch counterparts had held in discussing the same matter. Most of them considered this debate disrespectful as the government had held that the extension would take place regardless of the voting results. Finally, Liberals argued that the Conservative stance had brought about a “culture of secrecy” regarding the Afghanistan intervention (see Bagnell, 2006; Folco, 2006; McCallum, 2006; Owen, 2006; Szabo, 2006; Thibault, 2006).

Finally, all opposition parties criticized the Canadian government's handling of detainees. It is worth noting that the handling of detainees became an extremely challenging issue for several intervening countries. Except for the United States, these countries did not build long-term prisons and, accordingly, had to decide at a certain point to hand over the detainees either to the Afghan government or the United States. This decision constituted a moral dilemma because torture and humiliation in Afghan and American facilities—especially Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay—had become common practices. Handing over detainees also constituted a legal dilemma. On the one hand, the intervening countries could not deal with detainees under custody in the long run. On the other hand, handing over detainees knowing that they would be tortured could be a war crime according to the Geneva Convention. Specifically, for

Canada, shifting its strategy as of 2005/2006, this decision was particularly problematic. After all, COIN ended up being synonymous with a more aggressive strategy driving Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to detain more individuals (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 118–119; Saideman, 2016: 58–61). Without exception, the opposition parties took advantage of this situation to embarrass deeply the Canadian FPE's foreign and security policy towards Afghanistan.

The parliamentary debate on this issue had two crucial moments, namely, 2006–2007 and 2009–2011. Between 2006 and 2007, the detainee issue went hand in hand with the opposition parties' criticism of the mission's purpose. Nevertheless, between 2009 and 2011, this issue became the only deep disagreement between the opposition parties and the Harper Conservatives. As this chapter will mention, the Harper administration managed to curb the critique of the Afghanistan intervention as of 2008 (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 121–133).

In the period between 2006 and 2007, the opposition parties presented three arguments to criticize the Conservative government's handling of detainees, which could have undermined the intervention's whole integrity (see Davies, 2007; Ignatieff, 2006). Firstly, according to those parties, the Canadian government had set no provision for Canadian officials to monitor the human rights situation of detainees handed to the Afghan Intelligence Service and National Directorate of Security. Without such a provision, the Canadian government would have violated the Geneva convention and, consequently, would not have protected their soldiers from prosecution at the international level. Such provision was vital after Amir Attaran, a professor at the University of Ottawa law school, alleged that "Afghanistan tortures detainees" (Siksay, 2006; see also Barbot, 2007; Black, 2006a, 2006b; Cotler, 2007a, 2007b; Goodale, 2007; Ignatieff, 2006; Layton, 2006). It also became necessary after knowing that the Red Cross and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, which should have monitored detainees, could not conduct in practice a comprehensive and quick assessment of Canadian detainees' human rights situation. Several MPs argued that these organizations did not have the resources and capacity to conduct such a task (see Cotler, 2007a; Duceppe, 2007; Redman, 2007a).

Secondly, the opposition parties criticized the Conservative government, especially the Minister of National Defence Gordon O'Connor, for having misled Parliament on this matter. O'Connor would have supported two untruths, namely, that the organizations mentioned above

had been doing their job and that there have not been allegations of torture and extrajudicial executions (see Bachand, 2007; Barbot, 2007; Coderre, 2007a; Dion, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Duceppe, 2007; Ignatieff, 2007b, 2007c; Layton, 2007a, 2007d; Marleau, 2007a; Redman, 2007a, 2007b; Szabo, 2007). Opposition parties also insisted that the Conservative government had conveyed a misleading message about who would monitor the detainees after being handed over. First, Conservatives assured that the Red Cross and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission would accomplish this purpose. Next, Conservatives speculated that the government could monitor this situation through Correctional Services. Finally, the Harper administration ended up asseverating that it had signed an agreement with the Afghan government to deal with this issue directly. In the end, it was hard to know who was monitoring the detainees' human rights situation (Dion, 2007b; Marleau, 2007b; see also Jennings, 2007; Lalonde, 2007).

Thirdly, the opposition parties accused the Conservative government of having covered up the illegal practices as mentioned above (see Dion, 2007a; Ignatieff, 2007a; Layton, 2007b; Redman, 2007b). Based on this argument, some of them alleged a *breach of privilege*, which occurs when an outside person or body or a Member of the House obstructs or impedes the performance of the House's functions. The Conservative government would have committed such an affront by not responding to the MPs' questions about the detainee issue directly, misleading the House, or covering up the real human rights situation of Canadian prisoners turned over to Afghan authorities (Paquette, 2007; Szabo, 2007). In addition, some MPs held that the Conservative government had prevented some witnesses from attending the committees to respond to questions related to the detainee issue and give evidence about torture in Southern Afghanistan (see, for instance, Coderre, 2007b).

It is worth noting that there was a heated debate between the NDP and Liberals on the detainee issue. Like the other opposition parties, the NDP accused the Harper Conservatives of handing over the detainees despite their knowledge of common forms of torture in Afghan imprisonment facilities. However, the NDP went further in arguing that Liberals had created the problem. After all, through General Rick Hillier, the Martin administration had signed the memorandum of understanding on detainees between Canada and Afghanistan, which had contained no provision to oversee what happened with detainees after being handed over. For the NDP, the Harper Conservatives should renegotiate the

memorandum to transfer detainees to third parties right away to meet Canadian obligations under international humanitarian law. This memorandum should look like the treaty that the Netherlands had signed with the Afghan government (see Lalonde, 2007; Layton, 2006).

In the period between 2009 and 2011, the detainee issue revolved around Richard Colvin's testimony before the 15th meeting of the Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan. Offered on November 18, 2009, this testimony helped the opposition parties reactive their criticism against the Harper Conservatives (see Bachand, 2009; Dewar, 2009; Dosanjh, 2009). As a senior Canadian foreign service officer serving in Afghanistan between 2006 and 2007, Colvin supported the opposition's arguments and helped them scale up the controversy to another level. Firstly, Colvin named in his testimony all the senior officials who had prevented themselves from acting despite knowing that the Afghan Intelligence Service and National Directorate of Security were torturing Canadian detainees. On the civilian side, Colvin referred to David Mulroney, the Deputy Minister responsible for the Afghanistan Task Force; Margaret Bloodworth, National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister; Colleen Swords, Assistant Deputy Minister for international security; and Arif Lalani, Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan. On the military side, Colvin mentioned General Rick Hillier, the chief of the defence staff and Lieutenant-General Michael Gauthier, commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (Colvin, 2009).

Secondly, Colvin compared Canada's behaviour with that of its NATO allies in southern Afghanistan, including the British and the Dutch, to show the extent to which Canadians had failed on the detainee issue. Colvin argued that Canada had handed detainees to Afghan authorities six and twenty times as many as the Dutch and the British, respectively. Unlike them, Canada had not monitored detainees' human rights situation after their handing over and had not implemented a speedy process to inform the Red Cross about their situation. According to Colvin, the lack of follow-up to detainees' situation and parliamentary accountability aggravated such a situation. On the one hand, without accurate record-keeping, Canada did not even know the detainee's fate once the military transferred them to Afghan authorities. Once Canada informed the Red Cross about the transfer of detainees, which usually was too late, this organization was incapable of locating them. On the other hand, the Canadian government did not inform Parliament appropriately about the

detainee situation, which brought about a culture of secrecy, unlike the British and Dutch political process (Colvin, 2009).

The opposition against American and Canadian COIN strategy in Afghanistan came not only from the legislative branch but also from the American and Canadian publics. The next section addresses the increasing opposition from the public. As this section will show, such opposition emerged after a period of broad support in both countries, following similar patterns to those observed in the legislature. It is worth recalling that in examining legislative and public opposition, this chapter aims to meet the first aspect to be analysed according to neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy. This aspect refers to the need to consider domestic hurdles before analyzing how the American and Canadian FPEs overcame such hurdles to conduct their preferred foreign and security policies in Afghanistan.

### PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO AMERICAN AND CANADIAN COIN STRATEGY

In the United States, the public had backed the Afghanistan intervention in the early years. In October 2001, a CBS poll reported that 87% of Americans supported the intervention (Good, 2011). However, the public started to react negatively to the war in 2006, and by mid-2009, it was deeply split on the matter (Good, 2011; Jacobson, 2010: 591–592; McHugh, 2015: 10). According to a 2009 Gallup poll, 50% of the Americans opposed the United States FPE's decision to send more troops to Afghanistan, 41% were in favour, and 9% had no opinion. That is to say, the public found itself deeply divided about one of the most critical decisions aimed at deepening the COIN strategy. More importantly, within the 50% opposing the troop surge, 82% of Americans, against 14%, favoured the U.S. troop's complete withdrawal. It means that an essential number of Americans considered it necessary not only to stop sending more troops but also to withdraw them (Newport, 2009). It is worth noting that three other prestigious pollsters, such as Post/ABC, CNN/ORC, and AP-Gfk, shared these war opposition figures (Good, 2011).

The Gallup poll also showed that the intervention had created “an unusual set of political cross-currents,” especially highlighting Republican and Democrat respondents' contrasting views (Newport, 2009). In

the early years, Republicans had favoured a Republican President's decision to increase the troops' levels steadily and, in 2009, found themselves supporting a Democratic President's decision to reach the highest levels of troops in Afghanistan. Specifically, 63% of the Republicans favoured sending more troops, whereas 30% opposed it. Only 7% of Republicans had no opinion. In contrast, Democrats, who had rejected military escalation, ended up opposing a Democrat President's decision to increase the military engagement. In particular, 62% of the Democrats opposed sending more troops, whereas 30% favoured it. Only 8% of Democrats had no opinion. In considering Independents, the opposition to the troop surge was similarly apparent. 54% of the Independents opposed the troop surge, whereas 38% favoured it. Only 8% had no opinion (Newport, 2009). The Obama administration found itself in an odd position in being pressured by Republicans to scale up and Democrats and Independents to scale down the troops' levels. However, the 2009 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES) showed a favouring shift in public attitude towards the war after President Obama's high-profile announcement of the second troop surge in December 2009 (Jacobson, 2010: 603). As discussed below, this public announcement was the primary strategy that the Obama administration adopted to get support directly from the public and indirectly from Congress and, accordingly, to overcome domestic hurdles to deepening the COIN strategy.

In Canada, the initial public support dropped significantly when the intervention transitioned from complex peacekeeping to COIN in 2006 and "remained lukewarm at best and hostile at worst" until 2011 when the intervention turned into a training mission (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 157). During the early years of the intervention, public opposition stayed below 40%. However, it increased by seven points at the beginning of the Kandahar mission and rose by five points again during the 2008–2009 extension debate (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 157–158). In 2010, an August Reid poll showed that 53% of Canadians opposed the Afghanistan intervention, whereas 39% supported it. The poll also displayed that 43% of Canadians regarded the fight against the Taliban within the COIN strategy as a mistake and 44% claimed to have no idea of what the intervention was all about. Interestingly, 59% of Canadians were not optimistic about President Obama's full-resourced COIN strategy (Angus Reid Institute, 2010).

Like the United States, public opinion in Canada was not homogeneous. Yet, the public did not split along partisan lines. Instead,

Canadian public opinion was divided by “cultural, linguistic, and sociological differences [Specifically] English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians had fundamentally different views of war and the human cost of war” (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 176). In 2010, British Columbia, Ontario, Atlantic Canada, and Alberta supported the intervention with 49, 47, and 45%, respectively, whereas Québec’s opposition levels were the highest with 71% (Angus Reid Institute, 2010). Historical precedents of Québec’s opposition to Canadian participation at war would underpin this stance. Specifically, French-Canadians opposed their country’s participation in the U.K.-led military interventions in 1899, 1917, and 1944, which also nourished the myth of Québec’s pacifism or anti-militarism. However, “classifying Quebecois as pacifists is somewhat of an oversimplification” (Boucher & Roussel, 2008: 137). A broader historical assessment would show that Quebecois supported Canadian military engagement during several post-Cold War missions, including the Kabul mission after 9/11 (Boucher & Roussel, 2008: 137). As mentioned, Québec’s vehement opposition against the Afghanistan intervention began during the COIN period. As Jean-Christophe Boucher and Stéphane Roussel pointed out, explaining Québec’s historical stance on military interventions should not necessarily be related to alleged pacifism but instead to Quebecois’ reactions derived from their perceptions of Canada being hijacked by foreign interests. This factor would explain Quebecois opposition to the aforementioned British interventions and the Canadian transition from S&R to COIN, implying a rapprochement to American interests (see Boucher & Roussel, 2008: 137–139).

In considering the legislative and public reactions regarding the implementation of American and Canadian COIN strategies, the FPE in both countries did not have an easy pathway. Domestic politics was a battleground for both of them. However, the United States and Canadian FPEs had an extraordinary advantage in reaching their preferred foreign and security policy options: executives in both political systems enjoyed a high structural autonomy, which helped them elaborate a strategy to overcome domestic hurdles. The following section argues that structural autonomy was similar in both countries regardless of the differences between the American presidential system and the Canadian Westminster parliamentary system. This section assesses structural autonomy in terms of the executive-legislative relationship as it is a privileged constitutional and institutional indication of such a level of autonomy. It is worth recalling that, according to neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign

policy, analyzing the American and Canadian FPEs' structural autonomy is critical to understand subsequently their agential ability to mobilize domestic resources to meet their strategic objectives in Afghanistan.

## UNDERSTANDING THE SCOPE OF AMERICAN AND CANADIAN FPEs' STRUCTURAL AUTONOMY

Conventional wisdom argues that presidential and parliamentary systems involve distinct forms of executive-legislative relationship (Lijphart, 2002: 115–116; Linz & Valenzuela, 1994: 3–22), resulting in the executive enjoying varying degrees of structural autonomy in conducting foreign and security policies (Elman, 2000: 97). In the United States, following the paradigmatic scheme of a presidential system, the separation of power would often mean a rough balance between the president and the Congress, a dual democratic legitimacy and, accordingly, the sharing of constitutional war powers (Linz & Valenzuela, 1994: 5–7 and 115–116). The U.S. Founding Fathers strongly supported this norm as they never expected that the president would declare and conduct war without Congress' consent (Hendrickson, 2015: 2). Not surprisingly, the U.S. Constitution's Article I, Section 8, established that the president does not have the power to declare war, instead Congress is granted this power. Also, several subsequent declarations reaffirmed Congress' war powers, such as the U.S. Senate's declaration of war in 1812 against the U.K. and the U.S. Congress' war declaration of 1898 against Spain.<sup>3</sup>

After the American FPE entered into a war with Vietnam without any declaration of war, Congress attempted to get its powers back again through the War Powers Resolution of 1973. This Resolution, which two-thirds of the Congress passed, overcoming President Richard Nixon's veto, defined its scope in section 'The Breakdown of the Elite Consensus in the United States' in the following terms: "It is the purpose of this joint resolution to fulfil the intent of the framers of the Constitution of the United States and insure that the collective judgement of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities." Section 'The Breakdown of the Elite Consensus in Canada' also established that "The President in every possible instance shall consult with Congress before introducing United States Armed Forces into hostilities." According to Section 5(a), this consultation will apply to every military engagement that lasts more than sixty days with the possibility of a thirty-day extension (U.S. Congress,

1973: 555). All in all, the 1973 Resolution sought to reaffirm the sharing of war powers norm, as established by the Constitutional Convention, which the Vietnam War's decision-making process had jeopardized. Above all, this resolution seemed to indicate a "special wartime procedure to 'check and balance' future presidents 'prone' to war" (Hallet, 2012: 78).

In the Canadian parliamentary system, the concentration of power prevented the logic of a balance of power between the executive and legislative branches from emerging. Parliament is in theory the only source of democratic legitimacy, and the government's authority relies heavily upon the confidence of it, which could come in the form of "parliamentary majority or tolerance of minority governments" (Linz & Valenzuela, 1994: 5). Canada has also embraced the Westminster tradition, meaning that the Prime Minister and Cabinet enjoy a royal prerogative to deploy armed forces. In this regard, "Cabinet is not legally required to consult Parliament when exercising this power, which grants Westminster executives near complete control over military deployments" (Lagassé, 2017: 280). This prerogative power, which can be traced to the English kings' feudal responsibilities to preserve the peace, has been in Canada "enshrined in the common law, codified in [the] *Constitution Act*, and only partially constrained by statute law" (Lagassé, 2010: 6), such as the *National Defence Act* and the *Emergencies Act* (Lagassé, 2010: 7–8; see also Lagassé, 2013: 1–4).

In highlighting the differences between presidential and Westminster parliamentary systems, conventional wisdom's expectation would subsequently be that the American and Canadian FPEs would have enjoyed different structural autonomy levels *vis-à-vis* the legislature in conducting foreign and security policy. The former would have dealt with a delicate balance of power, resulting in a moderate structural autonomy. The latter would have enjoyed the concentration of power's institutional consequences, bringing about a high structural autonomy. Specifically, during the Afghanistan intervention, this difference would have been apparent because Canadian parliamentary committees, unlike their American counterparts, did not have any budgetary authority that could have been used to control the scope of the intervention. Opposition parties were also unable to discuss sensitive issues in-depth as they did not have security clearance. While Canadian MPs just complained about the intervention based on what the media revealed, American counterparts conducted oversight of FPE based on direct access to security and defense

sensitive information (Saideman, 2016: 62–63). What is more, the U.S. Congress members would have achieved a more profound oversight through different strategies, including “appointing a special inspector general, public and closed hearings, Member and staff delegations to Afghanistan, letters to executive branch officials, and public statements” (Thomas, 2020: 5).

Conventional wisdom would also argue that in more majoritarian systems, such as the Canadian Westminster parliamentary system, the FPE would enjoy a high room for manoeuvre to transition from a moderate to robust military engagement, as occurred with the 2006 Canadian shift from S&R to COIN in Afghanistan. After all, the legislature would not have been able to constrain such ambitions. By contrast, in less majoritarian systems, such as the American presidential system, the FPE would not easily increase military engagement without the support of Congress (Elman, 2000: 97; see also Howell, 2011; Howell & Pevehouse, 2007: 95–107). To sum up, in focusing on constitutional differences between the American Presidential system and the Canadian Westminster parliamentary system, conventional wisdom would highlight different degrees of the FPE’s structural autonomy.

However, a deeper understanding of American foreign and security decision-making processes would show that the American FPE has enjoyed a similarly high structural autonomy compared to the Canadian FPE. American FPE’s structural autonomy has indeed increased significantly since the Cold War (Hallet, 2012; Hendrickson, 2015; Irons, 2005; Rudalevige, 2005; Schlesinger, 2004). With the omnipresent threat posed by the Soviet Union, the political system ended up giving presidents a more expansive role in questions of war and peace. For much of the Cold War period, Congress practiced the norm of constitutional war power abdication. Although Congress attempted to get some of its power back in the form of the 1973 War Power Resolution, which set out a requirement that the President must “consult” with Congress before and during every military operation that lasts more than sixty days, this rarely constrained the ability of the President to commit troops into hostile situations. During the 1980s and 1990s, for example, American Presidents conjured up expansive definitions of the term “consult” to avoid consequential discussions with the Congress. Historical evidence shows that American presidents’ daring stances on their unilateral power as commanders in chief ended up being accepted unreservedly by the Congress (Hendrickson, 2015: 9–11). As a result, before 9/11, it was

already apparent that a culture of Congress' deference *vis-à-vis* president as a commander in chief had become more dominant than the constitutionally established sharing of war powers between the president and Congress (Weissman, 1995).

The 9/11 attacks encouraged the U.S. president to make bold assertions on unilateral power and the Congress to keep the culture of deference in security and defence matters. Both of these factors reaffirmed the high structural autonomy that American FPE had enjoyed in the previous decades. During the early years of the Afghanistan intervention, the evolution of the American political system allowed the Bush administration to develop a theory of presidential power. It established that "any law that restricts the commander in chief's authority is presumptively unconstitutional [meaning that] the president may exercise an 'override' authority in the unlikely event that Congress would by statute seek to restrain the president" (Adler, 2006: 526). Such a theory, which contradicts the modest authority granted initially to the commander in chief by the Constitutional Convention, went hand in hand with the U.S. Congress's lack of appetite to oversee substantial issues in-depth (Ornstein & Mann, 2006: 75). According to Norman J. Ornstein and Thomas E. Mann, Congress did not assess how the intervention was precisely performed and how taxpayers supported it. Neither did Congress appraise to what extent the laws on this matter have been rightly executed and how the government had monitored public agencies and private contractors' performance. Above all, it did not address to what extent the American president had respected constitutional bounds (Ornstein & Mann, 2006: 72). Congressional oversight of the FPE's foreign and security policy collapsed in practice in focusing solely on undertaking "'fire alarms' hearings" and adopting merely "routine budget review" rather than a budgetary plan aimed at constraining or guiding strategic objectives in Afghanistan (Ornstein & Mann, 2006: 68 and 71–72).

The FPE's bold assertions of unilateral power and the culture of Congress' deference remained in place during the Obama administration. This administration adopted a renewed form of preventive military force, similar to that advanced by the Bush administration, in using drone technology in Afghanistan—although this practice was much more dominant in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia—to kill members of al Qaeda with no trial at all. It became known as President Obama's "kill list" (Becker & Shane, 2012; Hendrickson, 2015: 29–37). The American political system also gave President Obama and his aides the option

to spend little time persuading Congress about his troop surge plans' significance (Hendrickson, 2015: 2–3 and 37). Journalistic investigations of the 2009 troop surge decision-making process showed that Congress members were not key actors able and willing to lead such a process (see Baker, 2009; Woodward, 2010). As mentioned above, some Congress members criticized the Iraq invasion's burden on the Afghanistan intervention, the lack of long-term sense in Afghanistan, Pakistan's contradictory role, and the Afghanistan government's dependence on the NATO intervening countries to succeed. Yet, such criticisms were nothing more than yearnings regarding what the United States should have done.

Having explained how the American FPE's increased high structural autonomy brought about similar autonomy levels in both the American and Canadian political systems, it is necessary to consider a likely counterargument against this similarity: the variations of the Canadian FPE's structural autonomy during a minority-government period, which was the case between 2004 and 2011. On the surface, a minority government would mean a lower room for manoeuvre for the FPEs in Westminster parliamentary systems to conduct their foreign and security policies.

However, as this chapter will show in analyzing the Harper Conservatives' strategies to deal with Parliamentary and public opposition to their COIN strategy, "minority power may mean more power, not less" (Saideman, 2016: 54). It is apparent under certain circumstances: if the executive plays its cards right and the opposition parties are incapable or disinterested in cooperating to hold the executive accountable. Still, it should not be seen as one of the Canadian political system's structural properties but as a factor related to political parties' agential skills. To begin with, the Harper Conservatives carried out two effective strategies that allowed them to overcome the minority government's institutional restraints. Firstly, they consulted the Parliament to extend the military deployment in Afghanistan. Even though this decision could have meant the implications of a minority government's constraints, it brings about a false sense of parliamentary support, which ended up strengthening the Conservatives. Once they obtained the approval of the extension in 2006 and 2008, they also used this card to silence the opposition parties when they attempted to criticize the intervention. That is to say, every time that opposition parties criticized the intervention, Conservatives recalled that they had approved its extension (Lagassé, 2017:

292–293). Secondly, Harper appointed the Manley Panel to obtain multi-partisan support to his COIN strategy, which proved more successful than expected. This panel gave Conservatives and opposition parties everything they most wanted: a commitment proposal without a fixed deadline, meeting Conservatives' expectations, and a balancing act between the military engagement and development and reconstruction programmes, corresponding to opposition parties' primary concerns. As a result, this panel helped to vanish the Afghanistan intervention's political debate as of 2008 (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 110–111; Saideman, 2016: 46–47 and 51).

The lack of cooperation between opposition parties and their disinterest in conducting a meaningful opposition, through, for instance, a vote of no confidence, buttressed the effects of Conservatives' strategies. Based on their postures, as explained earlier, opposition parties could have formed a coalition against the Harper Conservatives' COIN strategy, even if coalition governments are not typical in Canada. A revolution in Canadian foreign and security policy could have implied a revolution in Canadian political tradition, especially in partisanship cooperation to hold the government accountable. However, opposition parties did not want to force another election because the polls indicated that they would have lost parliamentary seats (see Saideman, 2016: 52 and 54).

All in all, during the time the Afghanistan intervention was performed, the American and Canadian FPEs enjoyed similar levels of structural autonomy. In both cases, the FPEs' structural autonomy was historically institutionalized, and executives endeavoured to keep this autonomy. As a result, the U.S. President, like the Canadian Prime Minister, became the ultimate foreign and security policy decider and the legislature the follower (Hendrickson, 2015: 37). The following section addresses how American and Canadian FPEs seized their structural autonomy to deal with the opposing voices in the legislatures and publics' lack of enthusiasm regarding the intervention. As mentioned, both structural autonomy and agential abilities to overcome domestic hurdles are essential for neoclassical realism to explain state power in the form of the FPEs' ability to extract resources required to meet its strategic objectives.

## THE AMERICAN FPE ‘WENT PUBLIC’, AND THE CANADIAN FPE ‘WENT SILENT’

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Canadian and American FPEs shared similar causal beliefs between 2006 and 2011. Such a similarity encouraged American and Canadian FPEs to adopt specific strategies to overcome opposing legislative voices and public dissatisfaction against their preferred COIN foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan during this period. With similar beliefs in mind about the strategy to be undertaken in Afghanistan, American and Canadian FPEs decided to seize their structural autonomy to overcome domestic opposition.

American FPE made public statements rather than starting a complex bargaining process with Congress, whereas the Canadian FPE aimed to divide the opposition by paradoxically consulting Parliament and then stopped talking about the intervention. In this regard, the former ‘went public’ unhesitatingly, whereas the latter ‘went silent’ progressively at the domestic level to manage to conduct their preferred COIN strategies in Afghanistan. To be sure, both of these strategies would have been hard to conduct without the structural autonomy that both the United States and Canadian FPE exhibited. It is worth noting that in analyzing the President’s public leadership, several American presidential scholars have used the term ‘going public’ to refer to the President’s preference to make “high-profile policy speeches” rather than lobbying individual Congress members directly. According to such scholars, the President’s goal is to get support from the public directly and the legislature indirectly to undertake his public agenda (McHugh, 2015: 4).<sup>4</sup> By inference, ‘going silent’ would mean not talking about a controversial topic to prevent an opposition from emerging. In Canada, this practice was also synonymous with what Philippe Lagassé termed the “laundering” of the Afghanistan intervention (Lagassé, 2017: 291–292). This meant consulting Parliament about the extension of intervention to create the general sense that there was an elite consensus on this matter and to divide the opposition when required. It also entailed referring to the intervention as a ‘mission’ rather than as a ‘war’ (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 6–7, 82).

### *American FPE’s ‘Going Public’ Sub-Strategies*

In the United States, during the period that the COIN strategy was performed, the American FPE implemented its ‘going public’ strategy

through two sub-strategies: (a) controlling the public message about what was happening in Afghanistan and (b) presenting a public balancing act between the contrasting Republican and Democratic stances (McHugh, 2015: 12). Both the Bush and Obama administrations undertook the first sub-strategy, yet the Bush administration pursued it more strongly than Obama. For the Obama administration, the second sub-strategy was more relevant, especially when it had to get support to reach the highest level of the troop surge by the end of December 2009.

After interviewing more than 600 U.S. and NATO policymakers in Afghanistan and senior Afghan officials, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) helped reveal the first sub-strategy aimed at controlling the public message. Specifically, the *Washington Post* utilized the Freedom of Information Act to access those confidentially conducted interviews. The public knew the transcripts of these confidential interviews under the name of ‘the Afghanistan Papers.’ By examining those interviews, the Post showed how the Bush and Obama administrations made “explicit and sustained efforts [...] to deliberately mislead the public.” Both of those presidents, their teams, and military commanders “assured Americans year after years that they were making progress in Afghanistan and the war was worth fighting” (Whitlock, 2019). Yet, the situation was different on the ground. Taken together, those interviews displayed several structural failures of the intervention. Among those failures, the *Washington Post*’s investigation highlighted the lack of clarity of the U.S. goals, competing priorities between agencies and lack of expertise, the U.S. funding’s negative effects particularly in the form of increased corruption, and poor coordination with the multinational coalition (Thomas, 2020). All in all, the interviewers’ sense of substantial incoherence contradicted widely the American FPE’s message of coherence delivered to the public. The way the American FPE controlled the message was particularly problematic when the United States increased its engagement levels by transitioning from CT to COIN.

The second sub-strategy, aimed at making a public balancing act to conciliate different views on the Afghanistan intervention, was particularly apparent by the end of 2009. Specifically, this strategy was discernible in President Obama’s public speech on December 1st of that year. In this high-profile public speech, President Obama sought precisely to address the Republicans and Democrats’ different views on the troop surge to guarantee the COIN strategy’s progress (McHugh, 2015: 12). On the one hand, after an intense debate with the senior military and

Joe Biden's team, President Obama supported a plan to send additional troops to focus on the 'clean' and 'hold' components of the COIN strategy. It certainly met the primary Republican concern. President Obama announced: "as Commander-in-Chief, I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan [...] These are the resources that we need to seize the initiative" (Obama, 2009).

On the other hand, President Obama's speech addressed Democrats and Independents' fears regarding American troops' scaling up. Firstly, President Obama argued that the Afghanistan intervention was not only an American war but, accordingly, the U.S. troop increase would be added to the U.S. allies' military contribution. It would also allow the United States and its allies to hand over the responsibility to the Afghan forces to guarantee the security in the country. Above all, the speech set out an ending date of the COIN strategy: July of 2011, which indeed echoed the Democratic legislative and public request to withdraw the troops in the short run. President Obama referred to this point in the following terms:

Because this is an international effort, I've asked that our commitment be joined by contributions from our allies. Some have already provided additional troops, and we're confident that there will be further contributions in the days and weeks ahead. Our friends have fought and bled and died alongside us in Afghanistan. And now, we must come together to end this war successfully. For what's at stake is not simply a test of NATO's credibility—what's at stake is the security of our allies, and the common security of the world.

But taken together, these additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011. (Obama, 2009)

Secondly, President Obama argued that the troop surge would be part of a more comprehensive strategy that would include a "civilian surge" and "effective partnership with Pakistan." The scaling up of troops would create the conditions to hand over responsibility, and the civilian surge would reinforce the 'hold' and 'build' components of the strategy. The partnership with Pakistan would help attack the new safe-haven of the insurgent groups in Afghanistan–Pakistan border. This comprehensive

strategy would also depend on holding the Afghan government accountable, which undoubtedly became one of the most dominant requests from the opposition voices. The speech addressed the last point in the following terms:

The days of providing a blank check are over. President Karzai's inauguration speech sent the right message about moving in a new direction. And going forward, we will be clear about what we expect from those who receive our assistance. We'll support Afghan ministries, governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver for the people. We expect those who are ineffective or corrupt to be held accountable. And we will also focus our assistance in areas—such as agriculture—that can make an immediate impact in the lives of the Afghan people. (Obama, 2009)

As documented by Gary Jacobson, the 2009 CCES conducted a poll to examine the public mood regarding the troop surge on November 10 and December 8, 2009, by asking respondents whether they wanted to increase, decrease, or maintain the existing number of troops. Conveniently, this question, which was asked before and after Obama's high-profile public speech on December 1st, showed the success of going public during the most challenging moment of the COIN strategy's implementation. Certainly, there was an insignificant change among Republicans, whose approval of the troop increase fluctuated between 68 and 72%, being consequently high before and after President Obama's public announcement. The Independents' approval levels were equally insignificant with a slight increase from 53 to 55%. However, Democrats' approval of the troop surge increased dramatically from 26 to 40% (Jacobson, 2010: 603–604). This indicates that the public announcement helped persuade the most critical opponents of the COIN strategy. As the final section will show, the strategy of going public equally succeeded in Congress. Even though the FPE did not expend significant time attempting to persuade Congress, the latter ended up providing everything the former requested to conduct their strategy between 2006 and 2011.

### *Canadian FPE's 'Going Silent' Sub-strategies*

In Canada, the FPE implemented their 'going silent' strategy through two sub-strategies, namely: (a) controlling the public perception of the

Afghanistan intervention and (b) undermining the legislative opposition to the COIN strategy by calling for the ‘mission’ extension debates. In going silent rather than going public, the Canadian FPE’s control-message sub-strategy was different from that undertaken by the American FPE. The latter attempted to publicly uphold the coherence of its strategy, whereas the former tried to hide the fact that Canada was conducting a bloody war between 2006 and 2011. Another aspect to highlight in addressing the Canadian ‘going silent’ strategy is that the Harper administration was the only one during the period of this study undertaking the second sub-strategy. After all, during the Harper years, it was the first time that the FPE consulted Parliament about military deployment extensions.

The first sub-strategy, aimed at controlling the public message, entailed shaping how the intervention itself was depicted. According to Jean-Christophe Boucher and Kim Richard Nossal, rather than using the term ‘war,’ Canadian FPE used terms like ‘mission’ or ‘engagement’ to refer to what Canada was doing in Afghanistan (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 6–7). This meant that Canadian FPE “carefully and consciously avoid telling Canadians that their country was at war in Afghanistan, or that Canadian troops and other government officials were being sent to a war zone” (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 44). Justifying a Canadian involvement in a war would have certainly implied going against deep-rooted Canadian public beliefs. Those beliefs have historically been closer to liberal internationalism, in general, and peacekeeping, in particular, and during the Harper era, the Canadian public embraced those beliefs strongly (Paris, 2014). To guarantee that the ‘mission’ or ‘engagement’ narrative was rightfully conveyed, the Harper administration started to control not only what the Conservative caucus could say about the intervention but also the “talking points” of DFAIT, CIDA, and the DND (Saideman, 2016: 49). Also, unlike the Chrétien and Martin years when the cabinet, especially the ministers of foreign affairs, were more active in justifying the Canadian efforts in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Harper became the predominant communicator (Boucher, 2009: 722).<sup>5</sup>

As of 2008, the message control strategy sought to silence not only wayward voices inside the government and agencies playing a central role in Afghanistan but, above all, every mention of the intervention. As Stephen Saideman pointed out, Prime Minister Harper was interested in making public speeches about Afghanistan until 2007. After that year, the Prime Minister stopped talking about the intervention and decided not to react to dramatic events between 2008 and 2011, such as the

continued killing of Canadian soldiers in Kandahar and the prison break in 2011. Unlike the period between 2006 and 2007, during the period between 2008 and 2011, Prime Minister Harper lost interest in publicly supporting the Canadian COIN strategy in Afghanistan (Saideman, 2016: 49–50).

This strategy went hand in hand with the appointment of the Manley Panel. In providing a common ground to the Harper administration and the opposition parties, the panel paved the way for stopping all talk about COIN's overall goals. Indeed, the Manley Report constituted a balancing act, like that advanced by President Obama's speech of December 1st, aimed at giving the Harper Conservatives and the opposition parties what they asked. The Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois, and the NDP were able to claim the achievement of making development and reconstruction programmes once again important aspects of the government's policy agenda. For its part, the Harper Conservatives managed to gain broader support for staying in Afghanistan. Thus, the Manley Report created a political environment that made an in-depth discussion about the intervention unnecessary during the 2008 federal election (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 110–111; Saideman, 2016: 46–47 and 51).

The second sub-strategy consisted of consulting Parliament to create a sense of elite consensus and undermine the opposing voices against the COIN strategy. As Philippe Lagassé has recalled, the Canadian FPE is not legally obligated to get approval from Parliament to deploy and extend military deployments. After all, this is a distinguishing feature of the Westminster parliamentary system (Lagassé, 2017: 280). However, some voices from opposition parties called for war prerogative reform since the Chrétien years, and the Conservative Party echoed such voices during the 2005–2006 federal election. When the Harper Conservatives came to office, one of the first decisions was precisely to consult Parliament about the extension of the COIN strategy in Kandahar (Lagassé, 2017: 290–293). With a vote of 149 to 145, Parliament approved the extension until 2009, despite the Bloc Québécois, the NDP, and a large majority of Liberals voted against it (House of Common Debates, 2007; Lagassé, 2017: 292; Saideman, 2016: 44–45). After the Manley Report considered Canadian troops' withdrawal on a specific date inconvenient as the intervention's success depended on a long-term approach, the Conservatives brought the extension motion again before Parliament. With a vote of 198 to 177, with a lesser majority of liberals, compared to the previous

voting, voting against it, Parliament approved the extension of the COIN strategy until 2011 (House of Common Debates, 2008; Lagassé, 2017: 292).

On the surface, the Harper Conservatives' decision to consult Parliament could have precisely indicated an increased commitment to the war prerogative reform and, accordingly, the executive's deference to Parliament. However, a closer examination of how exactly the events evolved during this period would show that their real strategy was to create a false sense of elite consensus, undermine opposition parties' criticism and dodge responsibility. Each of these objectives would reinforce the 'going silent' strategy. Firstly, Conservatives used the voting about the extension as synonymous with Parliament's approval of the Afghanistan intervention as a whole. Even though the NDP, Bloc Québécois, and part of the Liberals never approved the COIN strategy's goals, Conservatives managed to create the narrative that the intervention had been a parliamentary decision (Lagassé, 2017: 292–293). Secondly, the consultation of Parliament and, consequently, the extension's approval was instrumental in avoiding vexing questions about the mission. Every time that opposition parties criticized the mission, Conservatives reminded the public that the former had approved its extension (Lagassé, 2017: 292–293). Thirdly, the parliamentary debates allowed the Harper Conservatives to "abdicate responsibility for the most costly Canadian military effort since Korea" as it prevented the opposition parties from holding them accountable (Saideman, 2016: 55). In addition, the disagreements between the opposition parties and inside the Liberal party prevented them from cooperating to restrain the Conservatives' strategies in Afghanistan (Saideman, 2016: 55). It means that the Harper Conservatives avoided honouring the principle of responsible government inextricably linked to the executive's royal prerogative power. In Westminster Parliamentary systems, it makes no sense that the executive enjoyed a royal war prerogative without honouring the principle of responsible government (see Lagassé, 2010: 6–13).

After having explained the strategies for circumventing legislative and public opposition, the next section will examine the practical outcome of these strategies. Specifically, it will address how American and Canadian FPEs showed similar resource-extraction capabilities to undertake the 'clear', 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components. Examining the FPEs' structural autonomy, ability to overcome domestic resources, and resource-extraction capabilities meet the third and final analytical step of neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy.

## AMERICAN AND CANADIAN FPEs' RESOURCE-EXTRACTION CAPABILITY

This study views the American and Canadian FPEs' resource-extraction capability to conduct COIN foreign and security policies in Afghanistan as synonymous with the appropriation of resources for conducting the 'clear', 'hold', and 'build' components of such a policy. This means that this study considers the fiscal impact of the American and Canadian COIN in Afghanistan rather than its economic impact to examine the FPE's resource-extraction capability. Such an analytical decision is justified because the fiscal cost is directly associated with the FPE's resource-extraction capability, whereas the economic costs, including the fiscal and private costs incurred by "[American and Canadian forces'] members, their families and the larger community" (Macdonald & Staples, 2008: 9), would have to do with the intended and unintended consequences of the FPEs' decisions. From a broader perspective, the economic costs would also divert attention from the FPE's resource-extraction capability. After all, it may include the macroeconomic impact of the intervention or the opportunity costs of using resources to conduct COIN in Afghanistan, affecting the inversion in other strategies, theatres of operations, and non-war options (Brown University—Watson Institute International & Public Affairs, 2021).

In contrast, the fiscal costs provide a more accurate understanding of the FPE's resource-extraction capability in focusing directly on the FPE's ability to get funds to deploy, support, and transport troops overseas, to undertake and support military operations, to reset obsolete, damaged or destroyed equipment during the military operation, to conduct intelligence activities and to provide coalition support. This would meet the 'clear' component of COIN. The fiscal costs also allow for examining the FPE's capacity to obtain resources to train Afghan security forces. Since this was vital to prepare the Afghanistan government to provide security to the country on its own, it would meet the 'hold' component of COIN. Finally, those costs account for diplomatic operations—including paying staff and providing security to diplomatic personal and building embassies—, and foreign assistance aid in the form of development and reconstruction programmes. This means that examining those costs helps explain the FPE's ability to mobilize resources to meet the 'build' component of COIN (Belasco, 2014: 8–9, and 16–17; OPB, 2008: 6 and 12).

All of those fiscal costs came in the form of operating expenditures supporting the intervention as incurred mostly by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of State (DoS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Canadian Department of National defence (DND), the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Those organizations were in charge of conducting the American and Canadian intervention in Afghanistan and, especially, implementing the COIN strategy between 2005/2006 and 2011. Given that the purpose of this section is to examine those fiscal costs directly associated with the COIN strategy in Afghanistan as a way to assess the FPE's resource-extraction capability, this study excludes the cost of taking care of the American and Canadian veterans (Belasco, 2014: 8–9 and 16–17; OPB, 2008: 6 and 12).

Due to the lack of transparency in Canada's fiscal reporting, it is difficult to identify the fiscal resources for supporting the Afghanistan intervention compared to the United States. In the United States, it is clear that the intervention was “not funded with new taxes or war bonds, but by deficit spending and borrowing,” which will add interest to war funding at least until the 2050s (Crawford, 2018). In Canada, this is not clear. As explained in Chapter 2, calculating the costs of civilian and military operations in Afghanistan is difficult because there are no specific legislative appropriations for Afghanistan operations. Also, Departments did not accurately inform the intervention's incremental costs, and the costs of the intervention sometimes do not match with legislative appropriations (OPB, 2008: 9 and 32; Perry, 2008: 707). These factors make identifying where monies come from rugged as well.

On the surface, a simplistic correlation between the costs of Canadian operations in Afghanistan and the total defence spending would suggest that the monies supporting such operations come from deficit spending, especially during the COIN period. After all, operations in Kandahar's increased costs went hand in hand with a defence budget's steady increase. It rose from US\$15,141 in 2005 to US\$19,467 million in 2009, when it decreased until arriving at US\$15,977 and US\$16,238 million in 2013 and 2014 (SIPRI, 2019). However, a deeper analysis of defence budget planning, as conducted by David Perry, would suggest that the intervention's costs, including the COIN period, were planned within the Defence

budget's reference levels of that period. It would indicate that the incremental costs of operations in Afghanistan came from reprioritization: the operations would have been funded through redirecting monies from other defence priorities (Perry, 2008: 713–714).

### *Funding for the U.S. COIN*

The United States undertook its intervention in Afghanistan by mobilizing defence personnel and capital assets through Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), under the DoD's guidance. The military effort went hand in hand with the deployment and support of diplomat and development officers, who implemented development and reconstruction programmes led by the State Department (DoS) and USAID. Specifically, between 2006 and 2011, DoD, DoS, and USAID were in charge of implementing the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components.

The American FPE managed to fund the 'clear' and 'hold' components of COIN by obtaining increased budget authority granted to the DoD to conduct war operations in Afghanistan. Table 5.1 allows for contrasting the war funding for DoD allocated to counterterrorism (CT) between 2001 and 2005 and counterinsurgency (COIN) between 2006 and 2011. The annual average war funding to conduct CT was US\$15.9 billion, which could be slightly lower if the analysis splits the war funding of US\$20 billion for 2001 and 2002. For its part, the annual average war funding for the DoD became US\$58.9 billion over the COIN period, which would consequently represent almost four times higher than the average yearly war funding over the CT period. This was the result of a significant, steady increase from US\$17.9 billion in 2006 to US\$113.3 billion in 2011, the year the funding reached its peak.

For the American FPE, this funding was especially important to guarantee the significant increase of troop levels in Afghanistan, coinciding with the transition from CT to COIN. After overthrowing the Taliban regime, the number of troops increased from 10,000 in 2002 to 20,000 in 2005 as the troops started to cover the country. Due to the deteriorating security situation reported by the U.S. top officers since 2006, the FPE doubled the level of troops again, reaching 40,000 in 2008. This progressive increase would continue with the troop surges of 2009, bringing about 100,000 soldiers in May 2011 (Belasco, 2014: 10–11).

With the war funding, the American FPE specifically managed to fund the 'hold' component of COIN by obtaining legislative appropriated

**Table 5.1** War funding for DoD and DoS/USAID (FY 2001–FY 2011)

| <i>Fiscal years (figures in \$ US billion)</i>                        | <i>2001/2002</i> | <i>2003</i> | <i>2004</i> | <i>2005</i> | <i>2006</i> | <i>2007</i> | <i>2008</i> | <i>2009</i> | <i>2010</i> | <i>2011</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| DoD (CT, 2001–2005; ‘clear’ and hold components of COIN) <sup>a</sup> | 20               | 14          | 12.4        | 17.2        | 17.9        | 37.2        | 40.6        | 56.1        | 87.7        | 113.3       |
| ASFF (the ‘hold’ component) <sup>b</sup>                              | 0                | 0           | 0.3         | 1.3         | 1.9         | 7.4         | 2.8         | 5.6         | 9.2         | 11.6        |
| DoS/USAID (the ‘build’ component) <sup>a</sup>                        | 0.8              | 0.7         | 2.2         | 2.8         | 1.1         | 1.9         | 2.7         | 3.1         | 5.7         | 4.1         |

*Sources* <sup>a</sup>DoD and DoS/USAID figures were collected by Livingston and O’Hanlon (2014) from estimates of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, U.S. Departments of Defense and State, and U.S. Congressional Research Service  
<sup>b</sup>Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) figures were gathered by Belasco (2014: 62) from “Public laws, congressional appropriations reports, DoD budget justification materials, and DoD Cost of War Update Reports” (see also SIGAR, 2014: 74)

resources for the Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). Congress created this fund “to provide the ANSF with equipment, supplies, services, training, and funding, as well as facility and infrastructure repair, renovation, and construction” (SIGAR, 2014: 74). Thus, this funding aimed to “provide [...] time and space for ANSF [Afghanistan National Security Forces] and the GIROA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] to build the capacity to secure their own country [and accordingly to hold] the gains made by International Security Assistance Force,” as a requirement to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a haven for international terrorism (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2014: 4). Even though this funding was appropriated to the DoS in FY 2004, it was transferred to the DoD to be implemented in the following years (Belasco, 2014: 61). Subsequently, the DoD allocated three budget activities, namely, Defense Forces (Afghan National Army, ANA), Interior Forces (Afghan National Police, ANP), and Related Activities (mainly Detainee Operations) to disburse the money (SIGAR, 2014: 75).

Congress and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan (SIGAR) cast doubts about the Train-and-Equip programme being financed by ASFF. Both were concerned about contractors’ performance, the lack of trainers, and DoD’s capability to coordinate its activities with the State Department and other NATO members. Congress and SIGAR also worried about logistics failures, insufficient infrastructure to support the basic needs of ANSF, the high levels of attrition of Afghan forces, illiteracy, absenteeism, and drug abuse. The most salient concern was probably related to the widespread corruption among the military and police officers. Corruption often came in the form of selling and pilfering of supplies, including weapons and fuel, illegal checkpoints, diversion of personnel, and payroll abuse, among other practices (Belasco, 2014: 62; SIGAR, 2010, 17–20). In a nutshell, regardless of the United States and its allies’ efforts, some Congress members and SIGAR argued that several systemic factors were preventing “independent army and police forces for Afghanistan” from developing (SIGAR, 2010: 17).

Even though the doubts about this programme’s viability were increasingly apparent during the intervention, the FPE managed to convince Congress to increase the ASFF year by year progressively. Table 5.1 shows that before 2004, there were no monies allocated to the ‘hold’ component because it was not essential for CT. However, as of 2004, Congress not only created the funding for the ‘hold’ component but also increased it steadily from US\$0.3 billion in FY 2004 to US\$1.9 billion in FY

2006. As compared to the funding appropriated in FY 2006, which is the turning point of this study, the funding was quadrupled, reaching US\$7.4 billion in 2007. Although this funding decreased significantly to US\$2.8 billion in FY 2008, it never returned to the lower levels before 2006. Indeed, it increased dramatically again until reaching US\$11.6 billion in FY 2011. All in all, the period 2004–2006 could be seen as one of transition linking CT and COIN strategies with some monies allocated to the ‘hold’ component, whereas the period 2006–2011 would be one aimed at reaffirming the need to hold the gains obtained by the ‘clear’ strategy.

The American FPE acquired funding for the ‘build’ component by appropriating resources to guarantee the DoS and USAID’s operations in Afghanistan. It is worth noting that during the CT period, the war funding for the DoS and USAID increased from US\$0.8 billion in 2001/2002 to US\$2.8 billion in 2005 and drooped to US\$1.1 billion in 2006. Once COIN started to be conducted, the war funding for the State and USAID increased steadily until reaching US\$5.1 billion in 2010 and decreased slightly to US\$4.1 billion in 2011.

### *Funding for Canadian COIN*

Canada conducted its intervention in Afghanistan through several military operations, governance, development, and reconstruction programmes, which implied mobilizing defence personnel, diplomats, development officers, and capital assets. Under the DND’s guidance, CAF mostly conducted operations Apollo, Accius, Archer, Argus, Altair, and the two phases of operation Athena. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) conducted governance, development, and reconstruction programmes.

Specifically, between 2006 and 2011, DND, DFAIT, and CIDA were in charge of implementing the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ COIN components. Canadian COIN strategy was coordinated by Task Force Kandahar (TFK) headquarters located at Kandahar. The military commander led the ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ components, being accountable to the DND through Canadian Expeditionary Force Command in Ottawa. As of 2008, the ‘build’ component was coordinated by the Representative of Canada in Kandahar (RoCK), who oversaw all Canadian civilian agencies and reported to DFAIT and CIDA (Leprince, 2013: 361). Resource mobilization for COIN mainly occurred through the budget authority granted

to DND, DFAIT, and CIDA to fund the military operations, and governance, development, and reconstruction efforts within the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT).

Like the American FPE, the Canadian FPE managed to fund the ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ components of COIN by obtaining increased budget authority granted to the DND to conduct military operations in Afghanistan. Table 5.2 allows for contrasting DND funding to conduct S&R between 2001 and 2005 and COIN between 2006 and 2011. The average annual war funding to conduct S&R was US\$342.8 million. For its part, the average yearly budget for the DND activities in Afghanistan became US\$957.3 million over the COIN period. It would account for almost three times higher than the average yearly funding over the time CAF conducted complex peacekeeping. S&R funding increased from US\$206.3 million in FY 2001–2002 to US\$573.9 million in FY 2003–2004 and decreased until reaching US\$307.4 million in FY 2004–2005. In the following years, DND funding started to rise as CAF turned its activities into COIN. It reached US\$403.1 million in FY 2005–2006 and then increased dramatically until peaked US\$1036.6 million in FY 2008–2009. It decreased very slightly, reaching US\$966.3 million in FY 2010–2011.

Specifically, the Canadian FPE managed to fund the ‘clear’ COIN component by obtaining and mobilizing resources for the second phase of operation Athena (2006–2011). During this phase, CAF conducted combat operations in the Dand, Arghandab, Panjwayi, and Zhari districts in the Kandahar Province (Government of Canada, 2018). The total resources allocated to this operation were US\$4636.6. The Canadian FPE also obtained resources to conduct the ‘hold’ component through operations Archer and Argus. Operation Archer (2005–2006) allowed senior CAF members to partake in the US-led Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CST-A) to mentor the Afghan Defence and Interior ministries and help them to reorganize, train, and equip the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. Operation Argus (2005–2008) deployed the Strategic Advisory Team Afghanistan (SAT-A) to advise the Afghan government to implement a cohesive strategy against the Taliban insurgency (Cox, 2007: 1–5; Marten, 2010: 223; Saideman, 2016: 75). The resources allocated to operations Archer and Argus together were US\$591.6. Indeed, these missions increased the Canadian commitment significantly as compared to the previous operations conducting complex peacekeeping. Those operations were Apollo

**Table 5.2** S&R and COIN Funding for DND and CIDA (FY 2001/2002–FY 2010/2011)

| <i>Fiscal years<br/>(figures in \$<br/>US<br/>million)<sup>a</sup></i>                                        | <i>2001–<br/>2002</i> | <i>2002–<br/>2003</i> | <i>2003–<br/>2004</i> | <i>2004–<br/>2005</i> | <i>2005–<br/>2006</i> | <i>2006–<br/>2007</i> | <i>2007–<br/>2008</i> | <i>2008–<br/>2009</i> | <i>2009–<br/>2010</i> | <i>2010–2011</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| DND (S&R<br>2001–2005,<br>'clear' and<br>hold<br>components<br>of COIN,<br>2006–<br>2011) <sup>b</sup>        | 206.3                 | 223.1                 | 573.9                 | 307.4                 | 403.1                 | 779.55                | 1037.7                | 1036.6                | 966.3                 | 966.3            |
| Operation<br>Athena<br>(S&R,<br>2003–2005,<br>'clear'<br>component<br>of COIN,<br>2006–<br>2011) <sup>b</sup> | 0                     | 0                     | 410.7                 | 283.7                 | 83.57                 | 511.55                | 1028.6                | 962.74                | 962.7                 | 962.7            |
| Archer and<br>Argus<br>(‘hold’<br>component<br>of COIN) <sup>b</sup>                                          | 0                     | 0                     | 0                     | 0                     | 300.1                 | 257.21                | 14,326                | 21,012                | 2101                  | 2101             |

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

| <i>Fiscal years<br/>(figures in \$<br/>US<br/>million)<sup>a</sup></i> | <i>2001–<br/>2002</i> | <i>2002–<br/>2003</i> | <i>2003–<br/>2004</i> | <i>2004–<br/>2005</i> | <i>2005–<br/>2006</i> | <i>2006–<br/>2007</i> | <i>2007–<br/>2008</i> | <i>2008–<br/>2009</i> | <i>2009–<br/>2010</i> | <i>2010–2011</i> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| CIDA (the<br>'build'<br>component) <sup>c</sup>                        | 44.89                 | 117.5                 | 98.38                 | 110.8                 | 101.2                 | 174.78                | 280.8                 | 213.94                | 214.9                 | 219.7            |

*Sources* <sup>a</sup>Original figures are in Canadian dollars. The historical exchange rate used is 1: 1.0470107843 (July 31, 2011)

<sup>b</sup>DND figures and the costs of operations Athena, Archer, and Argus were collected by Perry (2008: 724) from DND departmental performance reports (FY 2002–2003 to FY 2006–2007) and from DND's plans and priorities (FY 2001–2002, 2007–2008, and 2008–2009). Figures of FY 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 are Perry's estimates. Similar figures were collected by OPB (2008: 29) from DND, Finance and Corporate Services for FY 2001–2008 to FY 2008–2009

<sup>c</sup>CIDA figures were collected by the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer from CIDA (OPB, 2008: 29; see also DEATD, 2015)

(2001–2003), Accius (2002–2005), Altair (2004–2008), and the first phase of Athena (2002–2005).<sup>6</sup>

The Canadian FPE obtained resources for the ‘build’ COIN component by appropriating resources for CIDA’s activities in Afghanistan. During the period Canada conducted complex peacekeeping, the funding for CIDA increased from US\$44.89 million in FY 2001–2002 to US\$117.5 in FY 2002–2003, which would be its peak during this period. From FY 2003–2004 to FY 2005–2006, funding remained relatively steady and ranged between US\$98.38 and US\$101.2 million. This funding increased substantially within the CIDA budget, reaching its peak in FY 2007–2008 with US\$280.8 million. During the following years, it decreased slightly, ranging between US\$213.94 and US\$219.7 million.

Figure 5.1 compares the budget levels granted to the ‘clear’, ‘hold’, and ‘build’ components of American and Canadian COIN at the percentage level between 2005/2006 and 2011. The ‘clear’ component was by far the most important within the American and Canadian COIN funding. In the case of the United States, the percentage of the total funding ranged between 76.2% in FY 2007 and 87.3% in FY 2008, when Congress appropriated the lowest and highest amounts. In the case of Canada, these budgetary levels were similar to those of the United States, ranging between 78% in FY 2007–2008 and 82.7% in FY 2010–2011. Yet, these levels experienced an apparent exception during FY 2005–2006, when there were more appropriated resources to the ‘hold’ component, accounting for 59.5% of the total funding. Actually, during those years, the ‘hold’ component doubled the amount of the ‘clear’ and ‘build’ components, representing 20.4 and 20.1%, respectively. However, as of 2006–2007, the Canadian COIN budget’s resource distribution started to look more similar to the general trend, with the ‘clear’ component attracting the highest amount with 54.7% of the total appropriated resources. This component ended up doubling and tripling the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components, representing 26.95 and 18.3% of total resources, respectively.

In comparing the resource distribution between the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components, the United States attracted more resources to the former than the latter. During FY 2007 and FY 2011, the ‘hold’ component quadrupled and tripled the ‘build’ component budget, accounting for 18.93 and 9.8% as compared to 4.8 and 6.1%. During FY 2006, FY 2009, and FY 2010, the ‘hold’ component doubled the ‘build’ component, representing 10, 9.4, and 9.8%, as compared to 5.7, 5.2, and 6.1%.

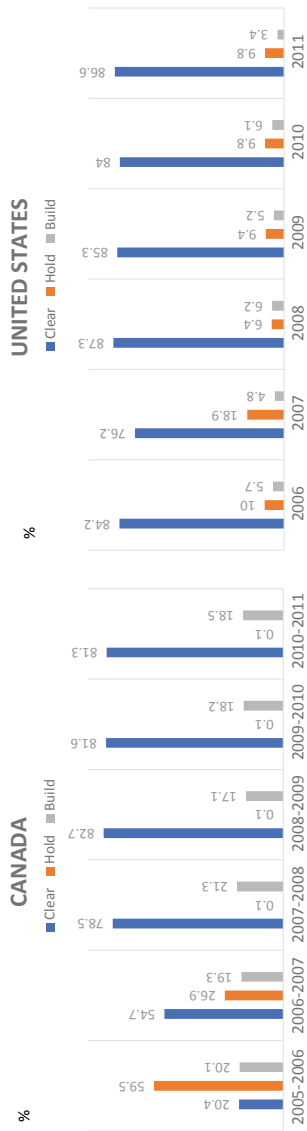


Fig. 5.1 American and Canadian COIN resource distribution (percentage levels) (2005/2006–2011)

Finally, during FY 2008, the ‘hold’ component’s budgetary levels were slightly higher than those of the ‘build’ component, representing 6.4% compared to 6.2%.

For its part, Canada concentrated more resources on the ‘build’ component except for the FY 2005–2006 and FY 2006–2007. As mentioned, during this year, the ‘hold’ component was higher than the ‘build’ component, with 59.1 and 26.95% compared to 20.1 and 18.3%. This atypical distribution of resources resulted from the appropriation of Operation Archer’s resources only between 2005 and 2006. Between FY 2007–2008 and FY 2010–2011, the ‘build’ component was, by far, higher with 21.3, 17.1, 18.2, and 18.5% compared to 0.1% allocated to the ‘hold’ component.

## CONCLUSION

Structural realism cannot assess why and how, despite their different positions in the international system, the United States and Canada behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention. In contrast, the version of neoclassical realism adopted by the present study is well-equipped to achieve such a goal. This book has shown that this theoretical framework allows us to unravel this puzzle in drawing significant attention to the intervening variables shaping the 9/11 strategic environment’s impact on the United States’ and Canada’s engagement levels in Afghanistan. In this study, the intervening variables were the level of similarity of the American and Canadian FPE’s security beliefs and their comparable ability to mobilize domestic resources. In analyzing the evolution of these variables, Chapter 4 and the present chapter explained, respectively, why and how the United States and Canada found themselves precisely conducting comparable COIN strategies from 2006 to 2011.

Drawing on neoclassical realism as a theory of foreign policy, the present chapter’s primary argument was that the American and Canadian FPEs took advantage of their structural autonomy to overcome increasing legislative and public opposition to the intervention between 2006 and 2011. Above all, during this period, American and Canadian FPEs showed their ability to extract fiscal resources to undertake their COIN foreign and security policies, which were by far more profound than during the Afghanistan intervention’s early years.

This chapter started by examining the domestic hurdles that the American and Canadian FPEs had to overcome. After enjoying legislative and

public support to undertake their foreign and security policies during the early years, American and Canadian FPEs had to deal with the breakdown of the elite consensus and negative reactions from the public during the years that both of them performed COIN. Opposition voices in the U.S. Congress criticized the extent to which the Iraq invasion had diverted attention from the Afghanistan intervention, the lack of a long-term approach, the contradictory role of Pakistan and the Afghan government's increased level of corruption and inability to provide essential public services, including security, without the support of the NATO intervening countries. For their part, opposition parties in the Canadian Parliament criticized the way the FPE had emphasized the military engagement over the reconstruction and development programmes, especially the extent to which the Harper Conservatives had abandoned Canada's traditional peacekeeping mission. All opposition parties used the detainee issue to embarrass the Harper Conservatives' COIN strategy in Afghanistan.

American and Canadian FPEs also faced opposition from the public. According to polls, 87% of the Americans supported the Afghanistan intervention in 2001. However, in 2006 the public started to react negatively, and by 2009 only 41% favoured the most critical component of the COIN strategy; namely, increasing the number of American troops. In particular, President Obama found himself in an odd position. Republicans, who had been traditional supporters of the troop escalation, kept supporting him, whereas Democrats reacted negatively to the troop surge. Similarly, public support among Canadians dropped when Canada entered Kandahar. In the early years of the intervention, the opposition was below 40%. Yet, during the years CAF fought in Kandahar, 53% of the public opposed the campaign, and 59% of Canadians were not optimistic about the American FPE's troop surge. It is worth noting that, unlike the American public, which was organized along partisan lines, the Canadian public was divided between English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians.

Despite such increased legislative and public opposition, American and Canadian FPEs' similar principled and causal beliefs encouraged them to increase their level of commitment in Afghanistan. American and Canadian FPEs also enjoyed comparable structural autonomy levels in their political systems that constituted an undisputable leverage point for increasing their commitment and, above all, for conducting similar foreign and security policies towards Afghanistan. This chapter challenged the conventional wisdom suggesting that the FPEs enjoy different

structural autonomy levels *vis-à-vis* the legislative branch in presidential and Westminster parliamentary systems. Specifically, this is apparent in comparing the functioning of the American and Canadian political systems during the period of the present study. The American FPE's bold assertions of unilateral power and the U.S. Congress' deference to the President as a commander in chief since the Cold War have transformed the foreign and security policy decision-making process in the United States. Rather than following the principle of sharing constitutional war power between the President and Congress, as advanced by the U.S. Founding Fathers and the Constitution, the American political system has evolved to make the President the ultimate decider and Congress the follower. During the Afghanistan intervention, especially between 2006 and 2011, it is hard to see substantial, practical differences between the American President's authority to wage wars and the Canadian Prime Minister's royal war prerogative.

Those comparable high levels of structural autonomy, along with similar beliefs of what should be done in Afghanistan between 2006 and 2011, led American and Canadian FPEs to look for strategies to deal with legislative and public opposition. Both of them attempted to control the public message about the intervention. The American FPE conveyed a message of coherence and strategic breakthrough year after year to justify the intervention. However, it was far from reality. The increased incoherence of the intervention's objectives, the lack of coordination between agencies and between the United States and the multinational coalition, the adverse effects of American funding, and the Afghan and Pakistani governments' inability to become reliable partners were more and more apparent during the COIN period. For its part, the Canadian FPE made sustained efforts to mislead the public by not referring to what Canadians were doing during this period as a war. The Canadian FPE was aware that the terms 'mission' and 'engagement' matched better with the Canadian public's deep-rooted peacekeeping beliefs.

American and Canadian FPEs attempted additional strategies to deal with the legislative and public opposition. The former 'went public', whereas the latter 'went silent.' The American FPE made high-profile public speeches to conciliate contrasting views on the COIN strategy. In contrast, the Canadian FPE attempted to silence opposition voices by paradoxically consulting Parliament about the extension of the 'mission.' The former managed to get positive reactions from the public and, by extension, from the legislature, whereas the latter succeed in

creating the sense that the Afghanistan intervention had received parliamentary support, which allowed the Harper Conservatives to abdicate their responsibility. Despite those different strategies, both of them were able to extract similar amounts of financial resources at the percentage level that enabled them to implement the ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ components of the COIN strategy. Even though Canada and the United States had different resource distribution regarding the ‘hold’ and ‘build’ components, with the United States highlighting the former and Canada the latter, both allocated similar levels of resources to the ‘clear’ component. Canada and the United States used 76.2–87.3% and 78–82.7% of their COIN funding, respectively, to conduct the ‘clear’ component. As a result, both American and Canadian FPEs considered the direct fight against the insurgency the most critical Afghanistan strategy.

In the final analysis, both countries managed to obtain financial resources to conduct their ‘clear,’ ‘hold,’ and ‘build’ COIN strategies, exhibiting similar abilities to mobilize domestic resources and comparable resource-extraction capabilities. By analyzing these abilities and capabilities, the present chapter constituted the third and final piece of this study’s puzzle. Taken together, Chapters 3–5 argued that to understand this puzzle, it is necessary to assess three dimensions: namely, the strategic environment in the form of polarity and the degree of threats’ clarity, the FPEs’ beliefs, and domestic politics. This book now proceeds to analyse the empirical implications derived from the in-depth analysis of these dimensions and, above all, from the previous chapters’ findings. This will be the purpose of the concluding chapter.

## NOTES

1. On the term ‘going public,’ see Kernell (1986).
2. An example of this justification was Rodger Cuzner’s (Cape Breton-Canso) (2006) stance: “When things get tough, that is not the time to flinch, and that is why tonight I will stand to support the motion. We all wrestle with the same questions. People come to me all the time and ask what in the name of God our young men and women are doing in Afghanistan. Why are we in Afghanistan? I think that over time we have come to learn what troubles face that nation. People are able to connect the dots when they watch the evening news and when they think back to 9/11. They know that Afghanistan was just a breeding ground for terrorism. They know that terrorist cells were rampant within that country. When they look at the pictures on TV, they see the squalor, the poverty and the hunger. They

see women being abused and terrorized. As for education in Afghanistan, there was virtually no public education system five years ago. People here understand that and they know that at the root of the squalor is the lack of education.”

3. For a deep analysis of these declarations and resolutions, see Hallet (2012: Chapters 2–4).
4. Even though there is an extensive literature on the United States President’s going-public strategies, the predominant work about it is Kernell (1986). See also Rice (1987).
5. It is worth to notice that the Harper administration was informed about the intervention’s progress by the Afghanistan Task Force (ATF)’ quarterly reports, suggesting that the primary inputs for the communication strategy was provided by the ATF (see Coombs, 2019, 34).
6. Operation Apollo (2001–2003) contributed to “the international campaign against terrorism.” Not only did it imply transporting and maintain troops to support American CT efforts, but it also entailed providing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) to the coalition effort. Operation Accius (2002–2005) aimed to support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, especially regarding security capacity building. Operation Altair (2004–2008) sought to support OEF through naval interoperability with its American counterparts in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. The first phase of operation Athena (2003–2006) sought to provide security in Kabul and surrounding areas (Government of Canada, 2018).

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## Unravelling the Research Puzzle

This book aimed to address a puzzle: why and how the United States and Canada's engagement levels during the intervention became similar between 2006 and 2011. Based on neoclassical realism, the central argument was that these similar engagements resulted from similar systemic stimuli from the strategic environment, foreign policy executives (FPE)'s strategic beliefs and abilities to mobilize domestic resources. Specifically, the first empirical finding was that the United States and Canada enjoyed similar levels of freedom to conduct their preferred foreign and security policy options in Afghanistan derived from the international system's unipolar structure during the intervention. Those countries were free to undertake offensive dominance and opportunistic foreign and security policies, respectively. However, the evolution of the security situation on the ground forced them to operationalize their options as irregular warfare strategies.

The second empirical finding was that the American and Canadian FPEs' principled beliefs were largely unchanged during the entire intervention, whereas their causal beliefs varied significantly. In overall terms, addressing their similar principled beliefs helped understand why the United States and Canada intervened in Afghanistan as like-minded countries, whereas their changing causal beliefs explain why specifically

both countries increased their engagement levels, founding themselves adopting comparable COIN strategies between 2006 and 2011. The third empirical finding was that the American and Canadian FPEs took advantage of their structural autonomy to carry out communication strategies aimed at dealing with public and legislative opposition. These strategies enabled them to obtain the required fiscal resources to advance their COIN foreign and security policies. If the previous finding explains the why, this finding addresses how the American and Canadian governments reached similar engagement levels.

The main aim of this concluding chapter is to clarify the implications of these findings. Section “[Process-Tracing: Making Sense of American and Canadian Similar Engagement Levels](#)” addresses the interaction of all factors analysed in the empirical chapters by using a process-tracing methodology, which is to say that it examines the simultaneous occurrence of these factors within a causal and sequence analysis. Section “[Empirical Implications Derived from Unravelling the Puzzle](#)” examines the empirical implications derived from addressing this study’s puzzle and Section “[Learning from American and Canadian Experiences in Afghanistan](#)” discusses what we could learn from American and Canadian experiences in Afghanistan.

## PROCESS-TRACING: MAKING SENSE OF AMERICAN AND CANADIAN SIMILAR ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

After addressing all pieces of the puzzle individually, we can now fit them together to make sense of American and Canadian similar engagement levels in Afghanistan. This section achieves this purpose by using a process-tracing methodology. Because neoclassical realism is the theory that explains this study’s puzzle, this section seeks to turn a sequence-of-events narrative into a neoclassical realist *analytical* causal explanation (see George & Bennet, 2005: 211). This explanation aims to highlight the path-dependence processes that allowed the FPEs’ perceptions and ability to mobilize domestic resources to reaffirm the effects of unipolarity and the Afghan irregular warfare on American and Canadian engagement levels. To be sure, tracing this process helps identify the causal mechanism that led both countries to adopt similar COIN strategies between 2006 and 2011 (see Mahoney, 2015: 206).

To address this process, this section distinguishes between sufficient, necessary, contributing, and INUS conditions within the causal and

sequence analysis. A sufficient condition is a factor that alone causes the occurrence of an event. A necessary condition is an indispensable factor to bring about an event. Even though it could be reaffirmed by or accompanied by other factors, this factor is essential because without it an event will not occur. A contributing condition is a factor that “increase[s] the probability of an outcome” and, consequently, tends to reaffirm necessary conditions. An INUS condition corresponds to an “essential component of a *combination* of factors that are *jointly sufficient* for an outcome” (Mahoney, 2015: 203).

Figure 6.1 shows the causal and sequence mechanism that led the United States and Canada to adopt similar commitment levels during the Afghanistan intervention. Orange dots correspond to factors occurring at the strategic environment level. Blue and yellow dots refer to the FPEs’ changing perceptions and factors related to domestic politics’ dynamics, respectively. Green dots refer to the FPEs’ critical decisions regarding the changing engagement levels. In this regard, orange, blue, and yellow dots represent causes and green dots correspond to outcomes within this causal and sequence analysis. In understanding this process in a complex manner, this section considers the FPEs’ critical decisions as both outcomes and causes within a path-dependence process.

The process-tracing is as follows: after the 9/11 attacks, the United States initiated a retribution campaign to disrupt and destroy al Qaeda’s operations in Afghanistan and overthrow the Taliban regime (Bush, 2010: 197; The White House, 2002: 6). The Taliban regime was considered as much a threat as al Qaeda because it refused to turn over al Qaeda members, especially Bin Laden, and shut down their camps (The White House, 2001). In sharing the same threat assessment, the United States and Canada started to mobilize special forces, beginning the WoT at the international level (Jones, 2008b: 7; VAC, n.d.). The Afghanistan campaign was initiated with the support of the United Nations (UN) and NATO by establishing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the invocation of NATO’s Article 5. This article constituted the primary umbrella for Canadian operations Apollo (2001–2003), Accius (2002–2003), Altair (2004–2008), and Athena’s first phase (2002–2005). In this first phase of the process-tracing, 9/11 was the sufficient factor conducive to the early American and Canadian

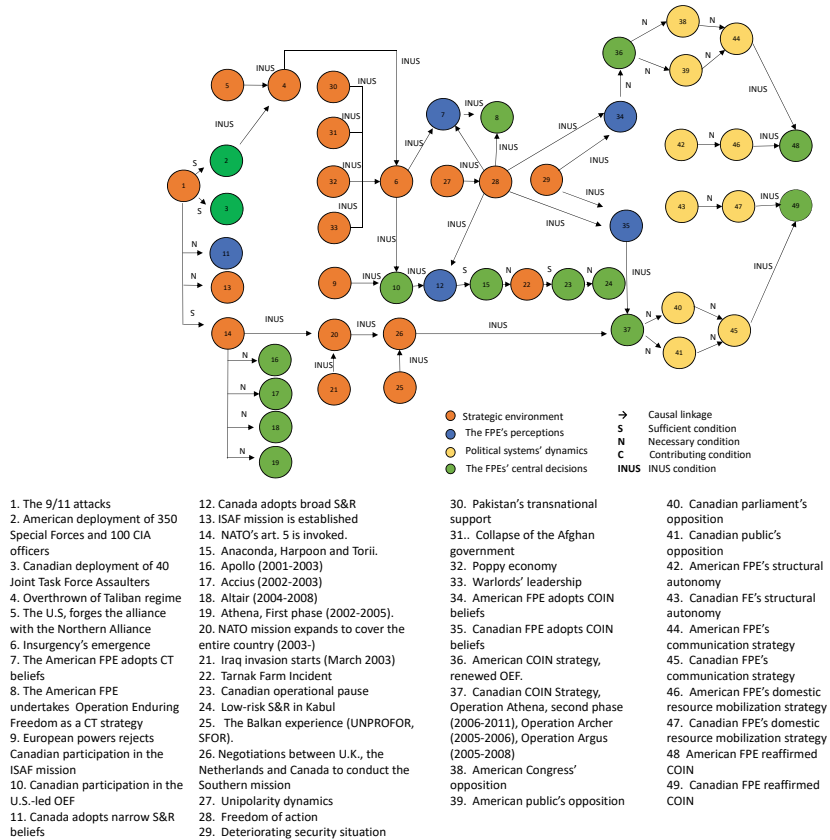


**Fig. 6.1** Process-tracing resulting in COIN strategies

deployments in Afghanistan and the UN and NATO's support for the intervention.

Amidst this international support, the U.S. special forces managed to ally with the Northern Alliance to overthrow the Taliban regime (Andres et al., 2005–2006: 127; Jones, 2008b: 7). The immediate result was turning the Taliban into an insurgent group and the emergence of other insurgent groups. Apart from the overthrowing of the Afghan regime

and al Qaeda's radical ideology, other factors, such as Pakistan's transnational support, the collapse of the Afghan government, the renascent poppy economy, and warlords' leadership conditioned the insurgency's emergence and endurance (Jones, 2008a: Chapter 4; 2008b; Marten, 2006–2007: 54–58 and 69–71; Schetter & Glasser, 2011: 232–233). In this second phase of the process-tracing, all these factors became the INUS conditions of the Afghan insurgency.

The Afghan irregular warfare occurred when the structure of the international system was unipolar, meaning that both countries could choose freely among the available strategic options. The United States and Canada chose offensive dominance and flocking around the sole great power, respectively, and operationalized these options as CT and S&R operations within the WoT. Specifically, OEF, which had initiated as an operation depending on special forces and the alliance with the Taliban's fiercest enemies, turned into a CT campaign (Rumsfeld, 2011: 682–683). Meanwhile, Canada, which had adopted narrow S&R in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, embraced a risk escalation engagement by deciding to participate in the U.S.-led CT operation and, accordingly, carrying out a broad S&R mission. This decision entailed entering eastern and southern Afghanistan, especially in Kandahar for the first time, within the Operations Anaconda, Harpoon, and Torii (Boucher & Nossal, 2017: 17). In this third phase of the process-tracing, the Afghan insurgency's emergence and unipolarity dynamics were INUS conditions for the United States and Canada to adopt narrow CT and broad S&R beliefs.

Rather than being derived from the desire to support the U.S. CT operation, the Canadian decision resulted from a limited set of available strategic options. Expressly, European powers had rejected Canadian participation in the ISAF mission and, accordingly, Canada had to choose to participate in the U.S. OEF (Graham, 2016: 225 and 252). In fighting along with the United States, Canada assumed more risks that came in the form of the Tarnak Farm incident, forcing Canadian leaders to adopt an operational pause. Canada would return in 2003 by adopting a low-risk mission in Kabul within the NATO mission. In this fourth phase of the process-tracing, the European rejection was an INUS condition of the Canadian participation in the U.S.-led OEF and this participation was the necessary factor of the Tarnak Farm incident. This incident was subsequently sufficient for Canada to decide to adopt an operational pause, and the time that Canada was out of the mission allowed it to rethink its contribution to the Afghanistan mission, becoming a necessary factor to return to Kabul.

On March 20, 2003, the United States started the Iraq invasion, making it more dependent on their NATO allies to conduct the Afghanistan intervention. Specifically, the alliance politics gained importance and, accordingly, the intervention became performed as a division-of-labour operation (Massie, 2013: 279; Press-Barnathan, 2006: 279, 297–299). As a result, NATO assumed the leadership of the ISAF mission on August 14, 2003. In this fifth phase of the process-tracing, the Iraq invasion and the invocation of NATO's Article 5 were the INUS conditions of the increasing expansion of NATO mission.

With the NATO-led ISAF mission gaining increasing importance, Canada initiated negotiations with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands to define their contribution to Afghanistan. All three decided to increase their engagement levels by choosing the most dangerous areas as their new theatres of operations: Helmand, Uruzgan, and Kandahar. The Canadian FPE decided to enter Southern Afghanistan based chiefly on the Canadian lessons in the Balkans in the 1990s (Willis, 2012: 979–1000).

In 2005/2006, both the United States and Canada also decided to increase their levels of engagement as the deteriorating security situation became more apparent (see Jones, 2008b: 7–8). To deal with this situation, the United States and Canada enjoyed greater freedom of action derived again from unipolarity dynamics. The American and Canadian FPEs replaced their CT and S&R beliefs with COIN beliefs. The former broadened OEF's scope, whereas the latter implemented Operation Athena's second phase (2006–2011) and operations Archer (2005–2006), and Argus (2005–2008) to conduct the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components. In this sixth phase of the process-tracing, the deteriorating security situation and the unipolarity dynamics were INUS conditions for the United States and Canada to adopt COIN beliefs and, accordingly, their COIN strategy. In the case of Canada, another critical INUS condition was the negotiation with the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in defining the Southern strategy.

The increased American and Canadian engagement levels gave rise to public and legislative opposition in both countries. However, based on their high structural autonomy within their political systems, American and Canadian FPEs carried out strategies to reaffirm their COIN campaign, enabling the FPEs to obtain the required resources to carry out the 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' COIN components. In this final phase of the process-tracing, the American and Canadian FPEs' communication

strategies could be seen as a response to legislative and public opposition. Along with their structural autonomy, these strategies became the INUS conditions explaining these FPEs' abilities to reaffirm their COIN strategies.

Unravelling this study's puzzle—why and how countries placed differently in the international system can behave similarly—has important empirical implications. Specifically, it impacts our understanding of American and Canadian foreign and security policies. The next section addresses these implications.

### EMPIRICAL IMPLICATIONS DERIVED FROM UNRAVELLING THE PUZZLE

By responding to why and how the United States and Canada behaved similarly during the Afghanistan intervention, this book questioned three dominant hypotheses in the literature. Specifically, by using a neoclassical realist *analytical* causal explanation, as informed by process-tracing methodology, it defied the bandwagon-effect, military ascendancy, and compensation theses. The bandwagon-effect thesis means that Canada adapted itself to the United States in the hope of getting future benefits, which would, by definition, entail subordinating Canadian interests to the United States. The military ascendancy thesis means acknowledging the remarkable roles of the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND) and General Rick Hillier that would have exerted pressure on the Canadian FPE to reposition Canada within the NATO intervention. The compensation thesis suggests that Canada sought to amend its decision not to participate in the Iraq War by increasing its engagement in Afghanistan.

In tracing the process bringing about American and Canadian similar engagement levels, this research rejected these hypotheses in the sense that the American influence, the Canadian military pressure, and the Canadian need to compensate the United States were not sufficient or necessary factors of this outcome. According to the importance that the conventional wisdom assigned to these hypotheses, proving these theses correct would imply demonstrating the importance of these factors in that way and, above all, show that there were no necessary or sufficient factors other than these.

Neither of these conditions can be found. Not only did these factors have less importance than attributed by these theses' proponents, but

other factors also were necessary to explain why and how the United States and Canada ended up behaving similarly. According to the process-tracing, these factors were the unipolarity dynamics, Canadian alliance with European powers and NATO, the deteriorating security situation on the ground, the FPEs' perceptions, structural autonomy, and abilities to control the public message. The remainder of the section assesses the actual relative weight that we could attribute to the American influence, Canadian military pressure, and the Iraq invasion as factors affecting the similarity of American and Canadian engagements in Afghanistan.

Firstly, the longstanding alliance with the United States was a central referent for Canadian FPE: they were willing and able to support the initial intervention aimed at overthrowing the Taliban regime and to participate within the U.S.-led OEF in several moments. Indeed, Canada justified the different phases of the intervention in the same way as the United States, which entailed supporting the U.S.-led WoT. However, the Canadian FPE had in mind the alliance with European powers and NATO during the entire intervention. What is more, both factors became the primary referent in the two critical moments in which Canadian leaders decided to increase their country's military and civilian engagement. The first moment corresponded to the transition from a low-risk S&R mission to a moderate-risk S&R campaign in 2002. As explained, rather than being the result of Canadian leaders' need to bandwagon to OEF, it was the by-product of European powers' rejection of Canadian participation in the ISAF mission. The second moment referred to the Canadian transition from a low S&R mission to a COIN combat campaign in 2005/2006. Again, it depended on the Canadian FPE's negotiation with their European counterparts after the Afghanistan intervention became a division-of-labour mission.

Secondly, in tracing the process bringing about American and Canadian COIN strategies between 2005/2006 and 2011, the military influence is a factor that must be considered. General Rick Hillier planned the articulation of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the combat mission in Kandahar within the 3D approach (Martin, 2008: 395), the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT-A) allowed CAF staff to advise the Afghan government to conduct the COIN 'hold' component (Auerwald & Saideman, 2012: 131; Marten, 2010: 221 and 223), and Generals Jonathan Vance and Dean Milner managed to upgrade the COIN strategy, which General McCrystal acknowledged (The Globe and Mail, 2009). However, this research showed that the Canadian FPE were

the actors in charge of making the most critical decisions. The Chrétien administration decided to promote NATO's Article 5 actively in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 (Willis, 2012: 982), enter in Kandahar in late 2001, make an operational pause in 2002, return to Afghanistan in 2003. The Martin administration chose Rick Hillier as Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) to operationalize its 3D strategy (Saideman, 2016: 37; see also Government of Canada, 2005) and decided to enter in Kandahar in 2005 to reaffirm its view on Canada's global position. The Harper administration decided to refine the COIN strategy by appointing the Manley committee and controlling the public message, which entailed picking up lesser vocal CDS. Indeed, Harper became the primary communicator of the strategy. This administration also decided to consult the parliament to extend the COIN strategy twice and did not consider anyone, including the military, to transition to a training mission between 2011 and 2014 (Saideman, 2016: 98–99). In this regard, the Canadian FPE's beliefs and abilities to mobilize domestic resources were necessary factors of the increased engagement, whereas the military influence should be treated as a contributing, secondary factor.

Thirdly, the Iraq invasion was a relevant factor in shaping the Afghanistan intervention. Specifically, the American decision to carry out two wars simultaneously made the NATO alliance more relevant to conduct the Afghanistan campaign, paving the way for the U.S. allies to undertake meaningful contributions as of 2005/2006. However, we cannot link the Iraq invasion with the increased Canadian engagement levels like conventional wisdom suggests. Even though Canadian officials might have needed to compensate the United States, there was nothing to compensate. The American FPE was not interested in a Canadian military commitment in the Iraq War, and Canada was already contributing to this war by providing naval vessels and aircraft (Gross & Lang, 2007: 50; Willis, 2012: 984). The process-tracing of the intervention also reveals that Canada considered a vital role in the ISAF mission because it was simply an appropriate mission according to the FPE's S&R beliefs long before the Iraq invasion began to attract attention. Even though the Canadian FPE always considered Iraq as part of their calculations, the important aspect is that it was not a necessary or contributing factor. Neither can it be considered as an INUS condition affecting the Canadian engagement levels. Between 2005/2006 and 2011, several factors at the systemic, individual, and national levels brushed aside thoroughly the connexion between the Canadian decision not to contribute militarily to the Iraq War and its engagement levels in Afghanistan.

The primary empirical contribution derived from unravelling the puzzle was not only to challenge three dominant theses in the literature but, above all, to provide a more compelling thesis about why and how the United States and Canada behaved similarly in Afghanistan. As mentioned, the argument was that several factors were critical to explaining this outcome, such as unipolarity, the complex emergence of Afghan insurgency, American and Canadian FPEs' perceptions, and ability to mobilize domestic resources. By utilizing neoclassical realism, this book placed these factors in different levels of analysis and assigned them relative significance in distinguishing independent and intervening variables affecting these countries' level of engagement as the dependent variable. Based on a process-tracing methodology, it linked these factors within a complex causal mechanism.

By showing the occurrence of factors on both American and Canadian sides bringing about the outcome above, this book managed to undermine the ideas of the "Americanization" of Canadian foreign and security policy and the syndrome of "parochialism" of the United States regarding its Northern neighbour. On the surface, the Afghanistan intervention might be used to illustrate the "Americanization" of Canadian foreign and security policy because Canada could have adapted itself to the U.S-led campaign. However, a deeper analysis, as presented by this study, provided a more nuanced argument. Although the bilateral trade and defence ties with the United States are factors that Canadian leaders must consider permanently in formulating their foreign and security policy, it does not mean that they could not define their preferences and mobilize extensive resources when required on their own. To be sure, the variation of Canadian engagement levels in Afghanistan allows us to make a case against Americanization because these engagement levels had to do less with the American influence than with systemic opportunities, perceptions, and domestic politics.

Furthermore, the way this book unravelled the puzzle helps avoid the unipole's parochialism regarding its allies in general and Canada in particular. Under certain circumstances, the United States could depend on its allies to achieve its security goals. In overextending its capabilities, especially in starting costly military campaigns simultaneously, the unipole must indeed share the burden of international security with its allies. This was precisely what happened when the United States carried out the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars simultaneously: the United States gave Canada a critical opportunity to become a significant actor in implementing the coalition forces' strategy in Southern Afghanistan.

## LEARNING FROM AMERICAN AND CANADIAN EXPERIENCES IN AFGHANISTAN

A final question is needed to conclude this book: what can we learn from American and Canadian experiences in Afghanistan?<sup>1</sup> This book could shed light on several aspects of the Afghanistan intervention, such as the overall functioning of foreign and security policy decision-making in both countries; the level of (in)effectiveness of different irregular warfare strategies, including S&R, CT, and COIN; the quality of collective efforts between American and Canadian government agencies and the multinational coalition, or the extent to which these countries had a real chance of success in the so-called 'graveyard of empires.' However, a central aspect must be analysed due to its dominance within the assessment of factors bringing about these countries' similar engagement levels: the freedom of action that both enjoyed at the systemic and domestic levels. Specifically, this book concludes that the United States and Canada's experiences in Afghanistan teach us that freedom of action does not necessarily result in entirely adequate foreign and security policies.

At the systemic level, it showed that the international system's unipolar structure provided the sole great power and its allies a high room for manoeuvre. Yet it did not give rise to adequate foreign and security policies. It was particularly true for the United States insofar as unipolarity allowed it to conduct simultaneously two costly campaigns. Without attempting to deepen into the debate about how unjustified and unnecessary the Iraq War was and the apparent adverse consequences for the Middle East and American leadership, we can argue that the American goals of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency could have been pursued much better if the American FPE had focused solely on Afghanistan. However, based on the high freedom of action provided by the international system, the United States did not carry out a focused intervention for most of the time it was performed.

Canada's experience in Afghanistan teaches us equally that the international system's unipolar structure provided this country with the freedom to conduct a broad set of objectives in complex theatres of operations, including classical peacekeeping, low-risk S&R, moderate-risk S&R, and, above all, COIN combat campaigns. It means that unipolarity offered Canada the opportunity to behave as a major power and even a great power. However, this type of freedom can give rise to a costly overextension of military and civilian capabilities, such as occurred between 2006

and 2011 in Afghanistan. This overextension might be justified in the short term as it can result in some strategic benefits, such as becoming a reliable and credible ally of Western powers, including the United States and European NATO members. What is more, it also might allow Canada to become a strategic global player. However, overextension tends to be unjustifiable in the long term as Canada cannot keep up the pace of this type of intervention. The human and economic costs are too high as compared to the limited strategic benefits.

On the ground, the freedom of action provided by the international system allowed the United States and Canada to transition from humble strategic goals adequate to deal with highly complex theatres of operations to more ambitious goals. Overthrowing the Taliban regime and disrupting al Qaeda's operational capabilities in Afghanistan constituted a justifiable objective that also gave apparent results. As this study explained, based on intelligence reports, al Qaeda leaders were captured or killed, this terrorist group lost its haven in Afghanistan, and the last jihadist attack attributed to it was the bombing in London in 2005 (Jenkins, 2010: 2–3; Wilner, 2009: 2). However, the fighting against insurgency trying to address all factors conducive to it through the COIN 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' components in the long term seemed to constitute an unfruitful, ambitious purpose. All the factors bringing about the Afghan insurgency remained present during the period that this book considered (2001–2014). Insurgents kept embracing a radical ideology making the Westerners in Afghanistan their primary enemies, Pakistan continued providing transnational support to insurgents, but the Western constitutional reform did not result in the consolidation of the Afghan government willing and able to provide basic public services, the training of Afghan forces proved unsuccessful, the poppy economy emerged even stronger than before the Taliban prohibition, and the historical leadership of warlords become one of the primary features of the post-9/11 Afghan politics. The complexity of this theatre of operations did question the effectiveness of ambitious irregular warfare strategies, especially COIN. Could the United States and Canada have won Afghans' hearts and minds through 'clear,' 'hold,' and 'build' components? Could it have been even possible by using a selective COIN strategy?

At the domestic level, the United States and Canada's experiences in Afghanistan teach us that the American president and Canadian prime minister and their teams enjoy a high room for manoeuvre to conduct their preferred foreign and security policies. Their political systems

provide them sufficient freedom to mobilize domestic resources to implement their policies. According to neoclassical realism, it is not wrong itself. Since they are dealing with sensitive security and defence issues, it is expectable that the FPEs get access to privileged information to identify systemic constraints, security threats, and opportunities and become the ultimate deciders. However, apart from considering information from states' politico-military and intelligence apparatus, the FPEs must consider the public's expectations and hold a constructive dialogue with the legislative branch in conducting their foreign and security policies.

The increased freedom of action allowed American and Canadian FPEs to dodge their publics completely. The American and Canadian FPEs worried more about controlling the public message than satisfying legitimate public demands. Excepting some segments, the public in both countries expressed their opposition to the increased American and Canadian engagement levels overtly. The American public worried about an open-ended engagement, whereas the Canadian public opposed COIN in being contrary to the principles of peacekeeping and humanitarianism. To be sure, in not considering these demands seriously, the public in both countries ended up on the sidelines.

This freedom of action also enabled the FPEs to avoid a constructive dialogue with the legislative branch. It was particularly true in the case of Canada. Rather than holding a fruitful debate, the Harper Conservatives were interested in creating a false sense of parliamentary support and avoiding their responsibility through the extension debates. As a result, the content of the COIN strategy never was subject to discussion between Conservatives and opposition. The latter also failed to conduct a genuine assessment of the intervention in not having direct access to security and defence sensitive information, which constitutes another reason for the Canadian FPE's high structural autonomy (Saideman, 2016: 55 and 62–63). The U.S. legislative branch gave everything the executive requested because of its deference to the executive's power. Despite having more accountability powers *vis-à-vis* Canadian parliament, the U.S. Congress also did not conduct a budgetary debate aimed at constraining or guiding strategic objectives in Afghanistan. Congress did not appraise how the Afghanistan intervention was precisely performed and how taxpayers supported it. Above all, it did not assess the extent to which the American president had respected constitutional limits (Ornstein & Mann, 2006: 68, 71–72; Saideman, 2016: 55 and 62–63).

These evaluative comments are barely addressed here because the primary aim of this book was to provide a theoretical and empirical argument. Consequently, the value of this book must be assessed in these terms. It explained how far realism in general, and neoclassical realism in particular, can go in attempting to conduct comparative foreign policy analysis. Even though this book addressed in-depth the puzzle of why and how countries differently placed in the international system can behave similarly, it argues that this analysis opens the possibilities to assess more comparative foreign policy puzzles. About all, realism's future research could be triggered by the need for going further Waltz's (1979: 72) original puzzle: why and how states *similarly* placed in the international system behave *similarly* despite their domestic differences. As we know, this puzzle came into being in what is known as structural realism. Apart from the puzzle that this book addressed, realist theory could consider two additional puzzles: (a) why and how states *differently* placed in the international system behave *differently* and (b) why and how states *similarly* placed in the international system behave *differently*. Those puzzles would be logical inferences of structural realism and neoclassical realism. It means that realist theory's breakthrough, especially when it is used to compare state behaviour, depends on accepting structural realism and neoclassical realism as two essential parts of a realist broader project.

More importantly, this study helped review critically conventional wisdom about American and Canadian foreign and security policy. Specifically, it encouraged questions about the actual degree to which Canadian foreign and security policy has allegedly been Americanized. It also raised questions about the extent to which the United States can afford itself to minimize or be parochial with its allies in conducting interventions in highly complex theatres of operations. However, despite being based on an extensive number of primary and secondary sources, this book is still essentially an individual researcher's work, whose findings must continue being developed to deepen its theoretical and empirical implications.

## NOTE

1. Saideman (2016, 2017) asked a similar question in the case of Canada. However, this study provides a different response based on its different approach.

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