FOUR

POLITICAL WILL AND SECURITY

Afghanistan, Summer 2002[1]

Throughout the summer of 2002, fighting between rival warlords continued as it had for almost thirty years. The private armies of the warlords sometimes numbered in the tens of thousands, and huge caches of arms were found throughout the countryside. In an effort to stop these clashes, the United States began to train a new national army, hoping that it would be able to reestablish the peace. But the largely illiterate soldiers of this new army were not well paid and had a tendency to desert their posts. The warlords refused to let their best men join the national force, fearing that the new army would be used against them if it ever became strong enough.

Organized violence permeated the country. Dozens of civilians were killed in the eastern city of Gardez when a warlord attacked it with rockets. On the western border, the town of Zaranj was considered so dangerous that the United Nations would not allow refugees to return to it. In the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, a member of the local population who worked for the UN Food and Agricultural Agency was dragged out of bed in the middle of the night and shot; another UN worker in the same city had his home attacked by an armed gang who raped all of the women living there. The newly appointed governor of the southern province of Khost could not take up his duties because a local warlord would not let him. The warlord's brother occupied the governor's offices with a large group of armed men; after promising to vacate the premises so that the government

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could establish itself, he returned later the same night to sleep in the building with his militia. Meanwhile, the markets in this provincial capital were shuttered because of the violence, and protective sandbags lined the street corners and rooftops to try to stop the passage of bullets.

A small peacekeeping force (known by the acronym ISAF), led first by Great Britain and then by Turkey, worked under UN authorization in the capital of Kabul. Its presence probably dampened local street violence, but it was forbidden from going beyond the territory of the city. In Kabul, five policemen were arrested in uniform for firing on this peacekeeping force. It turned out that their intended target was not the peacekeepers, but a local police chief. 160 people were arrested by the central government because of what the authorities said was an attempt to destabilize the new regime. An assassination attempt against the Minister of Defense failed, but the bomb that was used killed five innocent bystanders. A couple of months later, an assassination attempt against one of Afghanistan's three vice presidents succeeded.

Beyond the small official peacekeeping force, American and allied special forces troops also provided aid to the local population in strategically important regions where Taliban and al Qaeda forces might still be hiding, aid that sometimes resembled complex peacekeeping operations in other places in the world. The Americans attempted to stop fighting between warlords in areas where ongoing U.S. military operations were at stake, and sent soldiers to guard the presidential palace, but made clear in their press conferences that those efforts were secondary to their main military mission.

A drought plagued the country, and local health officials reported that disease and malnutrition levels were increasing. Western governments and international aid agencies did provide food and agricultural assistance, medicine and health care, clothing and educational materials to the local population, but their efforts were concentrated in the larger towns and cities, which were actually less needy than rural areas. Anyone who traveled away from large population centers was likely to be attacked by bandits, so aid simply could not get through elsewhere. Much more money was promised to the country than was actually delivered. This was at least in part because international donors believed lawlessness and instability in the country were so great that any additional money would simply disappear.

As the U.S.-led war against al Qaeda and the Taliban wound down, the liberal democratic international community vacillated about how to approach Afghanistan's future. On the one hand, the international community wanted a strong, stable, westward-leaning central government

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to emerge in Kabul. The United States and its allies pressured various Afghan leaders to ensure that the *loya jirga*, the grand council of political representatives that met in June 2002, elected Hamid Karzai as the country's transitional leader. Karzai practiced tolerance toward Afghanistan's competing ethnic groups and factions, and was seen by the West as someone who could forge a cooperative government to overcome the legacy of the long civil war.

On the other hand, the United States—and every other capable country as well—was reluctant to create the large and robust international peacekeeping operation that Karzai wanted to have deployed on Afghan territory. The situation in Afghanistan was allowed to crumble back into the same anarchy that it saw in the 1990s after the withdrawal of Soviet occupation forces. Even while U.S.-led forces were battling the remnants of the Taliban and al Qaeda in one area of the country, the groundwork was being laid elsewhere in Afghanistan for the resurgence of anti-Western militancy and terrorism in years to come.

While the security situation in Afghanistan quickly fell off the front-page headlines of major U.S. newspapers as the war wound down in 2002, conditions there did not improve greatly with time. The Taliban regrouped and staged raids from Pakistani territory. Warlords continued to fight the battles they had waged against each other for the past two decades. Both the remnant coalition forces throughout the country and the peacekeepers in Kabul endured ongoing attacks. Amidst all this, the civilian population suffered, and their trust in the good will of the international community declined as their hopes for a peaceful new life were not realized. Afghanistan was a country crying out for a robust, large-scale UN-authorized peacekeeping force to restore order, but the United States refused to lead such a force itself, and no one else volunteered for the job.[2] Finally in mid-October 2003, NATO forces (who had taken over the peacekeeping mission a few months before) were authorized to spread out to other selected regions of the country, cooperating with the U.S. occupation forces under an expanded UN Security Council mandate.[3]

Unfortunately this set of circumstances, where powerful states are slow to send robust forces into dangerous and difficult situations, and solid peacekeeping operations are delayed as a result, is all too typical. Sometimes pundits chastise the United States for being the world's policeman, but in fact the opposite is true: Washington is reluctant to use its resources

for police operations, and in the absence of American leadership there is often no one else willing to take on the responsibility.

In recent times we have seen this lack of American follow-through even in circumstances where U.S. military action has contributed to the instability in a society. The scenario of postwar Afghanistan was immediately repeated in Iraq, where the Pentagon appeared to have no cohesive plans in place for what would happen after the spring 2003 war. Weeks after the active war ended, armed gangs roamed not only the countryside but also the capital of Baghdad itself, looting everything from books off university shelves to the city's electrical power grid cables. No one stopped them.[4] Kurds and Arabs in the north of Iraq resumed the armed clashes that many experts had predicted as soon as the Baath regime security forces were out of the way. American troops were initially flummoxed.[5] The failure of American troops to even guard the arsenals of the old regime soon had tragic consequences, as moderate local leaders, the American occupiers, and even the broader international aid community in Iraq found themselves subject to deadly terrorist bombings. Insurgents targeted everything from the mosques of anti-extremist Muslim clerics to the Baghdad headquarters of both the United Nations and the International Committee for the Red Cross—not to mention the hotel where the U.S. occupation regime was based and the daily patrols by American troops.

It was obvious that something like this was likely to happen in Afghanistan and Iraq without the presence of robust outside policing before either war started. The failure of the United States to learn the lessons of the past decade of its involvement in complex peacekeeping operations was in some sense shocking. Yet the lack of political will to deploy forces for effective security keeping isn't a new phenomenon among great powers who intervene abroad. This chapter explores how insufficient political will hobbled the effectiveness of attempts to achieve security in foreign societies in both the imperial and complex peacekeeping eras.

In both eras, intervention in the periphery was a relatively low priority for the great powers. This meant that the security policies followed by the occupying forces in both the colonies and the peace-kept territories were not always well matched to the supposed political goals of the states who sent them there. Stable political development isn't possible if people are afraid for their lives and possessions. The absence of real security in the target countries undermined the ability of the intervening states to gain the kind of political control they sought.

In the imperial era, the problem was that military forces on the ground were allowed to do too much, without sufficient oversight from their capitals. Despite their strong interest in establishing territorial mastery of their

colonies, each of the three liberal imperial powers wanted to keep their costs in running the colonies as low as possible. As a result, they directed many fewer bureaucratic resources to their colonies than toward other aspects of their foreign and defense policy. The resulting lack of policy attention meant that colonialism suffered from inconsistency, and that those ruled by outsiders suffered from the arbitrary and sometimes cruel decisions made by administrators who were unchecked by their client states back home. The message that the empires hoped to instill in the colonies, that all good things come from cooperation with liberal great powers, was not conveyed in practice.

In recent times, the problem has been that military forces on the ground have often been prevented for political reasons from doing enough to ensure their control over the security situation in target countries. Like the colonial operations that preceded them, complex peacekeeping operations have also tended to be a relatively low priority for the states that have led them. As a result, especially in the cases where the United States has played a significant role in leading the operations, the primary concern has been to preserve the future war-fighting capabilities of the troops, rather than to do the best possible job of securing the societies whose welfare is at stake. Further concerns about cost have led Washington to rely increasingly on reservists rather than active-duty soldiers for what amount to long-term and dangerous hardship tours abroad. The domestic political costs of this choice have further sapped the will of the United States to lead robust peacekeeping operations with confidence.

Then there is the issue of casualties. The United States goes to war with the expectation that it will suffer casualties in combat. But at least part of the problem faced in these supposedly non-combat situations is that U.S. troops sent on peacekeeping operations—as well as occupation duty—along with those of some of the NATO ally states, have often been instructed to privilege their own safety over the achievement of mission goals. This has meant they have to limit their participation in activities that resemble policing—things ranging from guard duty to riot control—because police work in unstable societies is inherently dangerous. Since adequate civilian police forces have not been available to fill the gap, security has suffered, as has the local population's trust in the intentions of the international community. It is hard to convince people to follow a particular model of government when doing so doesn't bring them personal security.

We saw the consequences of these combined problems most starkly in both Afghanistan and Iraq. As soon as the war in Afghanistan was won, war against Iraq topped the U.S. defense agenda and the Pentagon wanted

to focus its personnel requirements on the Gulf. As soon as the open warfare period in Iraq was won, attention shifted again, to the possibility of war in Korea and to instability in Liberia and Colombia, and the Pentagon appeared surprised and dismayed to learn that a minimum of 100,000 U.S. troops would be required for the secure occupation of Iraq.[6]

It might appear that the colonial era and the peacekeeping era are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Imperial militaries were often too brutal in the actions they took, and peacekeepers are often too reluctant to take action. Yet there has been a key common factor explaining these situations—both have been low priority and underfunded activities—and a key common result: the chosen methods of using military forces on the ground have subverted the ability of outsiders to achieve security in target societies. And in turn, insecurity has made the idea of achieving control over the political agenda in those societies difficult to achieve.

The Costs of Inattention in Colonialism

Since the imperial powers had a strong interest in the occupation and welfare of their colonies (as chapter 3 argued), it would seem logical to conclude that colonial policy should have received a great deal of attention in the capitals. Yet it did not. Even though Great Britain, France and the United States all believed at the turn of the twentieth century that their colonies were important to their security interests, their foreign policy attention was focused elsewhere. The primary concern for each of them—and indeed the reason for their occupation of colonies in the first place—was the competition they faced from the other great powers and their fears of future great-power war in Europe. The details of how their empires were run were much less interesting and important to the overall scheme of their security strategies than was the European theater, as long as their ability to occupy colonial territory was maintained. In practice, this meant that the actions taken by imperial representatives in the colonies received little attention or oversight, either from the imperial governments at home or from the public at large.

The national military command hierarchy in each of the three imperial capitals wanted to ensure that precious defense resources would not be wasted on the colonies. The focus of military planning at the turn of the twentieth century was on the great power skirmishes that occurred in Europe as the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires declined, and on the war between the great powers that everyone thought would arrive soon (and indeed did arrive in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I). Those at the

top believed that the tactics used against poorly armed native uprisings in the colonial frontiers were irrelevant for these more important upcoming wars, and the generals feared that troops too accustomed to colonial actions might be left badly prepared for real battle.[7] The idea that what the troops did in the colonies was unimportant for real military planning certainly contributed to the capitals' relative neglect of colonial administration, which in practice was often conducted by military governors.

Neglect meant that there was no sustained bureaucratic effort to create consistent, long-term strategies of colonial development. Few central state resources were directed toward supervising what went on in the field. As a result, colonial polices varied significantly over time as newly elected governments came and went, and the directives handed down by ministerial officials were often not actually implemented.[8] Even the standard truism that the French practiced an assimilationist policy in their colonies, trying to make the occupied people second-class Frenchmen, while the British practiced a policy of indirect rule, allowing the occupied to be themselves as long as they gave allegiance to the crown, turns out to be more a convenient fiction of the capitals than an accurate description of imperial reality. Administrators in the field tried whatever they thought might work to keep the subject populations in check, whether or not it fit with the goals of their capitals.

Neglect was exacerbated by the technical shortcomings that made communicating across long distances difficult at that time in history. Detailed oversight from the capitals was not feasible, certainly not in anything resembling real-time. As a result, colonial populations found themselves subject to the judgments and whims of individual administrators on the ground. All three imperial capitals largely allowed the "man on the spot" in the colonies to decide what to do in any given circumstance, because he was seen as the expert who had the most knowledge about what the real situation on the ground was. A new term, "man-on-the-spotism," was even coined to describe the lack of clear planning that went into colonial developments.[9]

Neglect from the capitals allowed the military officers who often served in colonial governorship roles to ignore their orders to show restraint, and instead to brutalize the locals with impunity. While many colonial officials were well intentioned, not all of them were. Some scholars have even argued that colonial service attracted sadistic and violent misfits from mainstream society, who knew they could torture and kill people without consequence, and who faced little competition for jobs that were considered by most people in the capitals to be unpleasant because of their health risks and inconvenient locations and facilities.[10]

The instances of abuse tended to be concentrated in the dangerous areas where counterinsurgency campaigns were being waged. Many officers resented the force restrictions they officially faced, believing that colonial populations could only be tamed through violence that would show them who was boss. Especially when the colonial occupation forces were targeted for vicious attack by guerrilla fighters whom they considered barbarians, the desire for revenge could easily lead enraged soldiers to lose sight of the broader imperial goals of carrying out a low-cost and peaceful occupation of the colonies. Even British officers, who are the most famous (and often self-congratulatory) advocates of waging hearts and minds campaigns, regularly stooped to the temptation to carry out indiscriminate retaliatory violence against villages and crowds when individuals attacked or thwarted them.[11] Crops were burned, homes were destroyed, and guns were shot into peaceful political gatherings. Obviously, the knowledge that these events had happened filtered out to people living in the stable areas of the colonies, and the cruel and deadly actions taken in the counterinsurgency campaigns tended to undermine the efficacy of the hearts and minds campaigns waged elsewhere.

In both Britain and France, officers sent to the colonies were widely viewed as being socially inferior to their counterparts who remained in the capitals.[12] Often they were people who were unable to buy their way into a more desirable posting in a comfortable location. This meant they had something to prove, and prove themselves they did. After serving in the colonies these officers often had an even harder time fitting back into the metropolitan armies in the capitals, because their comrades resented the medals they had won through their exploits.[13] Colonial officers often rose to the top ranks because of their battle achievements. In France, most of the high command who fought in World War I had colonial experience,[14] despite the previous suspicion that those who fought in the colonies were unprepared for real war; and in Britain, almost every regiment cycled some units through service in India at the least.[15]

Military medals and promotion at this time were largely earned through conquest[16]—which of course gave the "man on the spot" in the colonies an incentive to provoke skirmishes and engage in territorial expansion even when it went against the orders he had received from his capital. In the words of one British colonial veteran who came from a military family himself, growing up in Pashtun territory at the fringes of the Indian colony, "The [Northwest Frontier] was a wonderful training ground. . . . Enough people got killed and wounded to keep everybody on their toes. There was always the chance of winning a decoration and the certainty of a campaign medal. Many a military reputation had been built on a Frontier war."[17]

This meant that colonial commanders would sometimes provoke warfare in order to have an excuse to expand their areas of control, without the knowledge of their capitals.[18] Given inadequate communication capabilities and the general lack of public interest in the colonies, officers on the ground were assumed to be the most knowledgeable people about local conditions and were respected for their expertise. Especially when those officers said that security was deteriorating and that going to battle was necessary in order to maintain existing colonial possessions, their capitals tended not to doubt them or to investigate too deeply.[19]

In imperial times, then, even when seemingly liberal states were in the lead, neglect and inattention meant that the humanitarian intentions of the capitals were often not realized in the field. The messages that the empires wished to send about political and social reform were not adequately communicated, and instead the subject populations rightly associated colonialism with arbitrary violence. The imperial capitals lacked the political will to put adequate resources toward solving the complex problems that surrounded the governing of their colonies, and as a result they lost a tool to help them in their quest for political control. Even though, as chapter 3 has argued, they had an incentive to win over the colonial populations for the sake of low-cost rule, they squandered the good will of their subjects by failing to put sufficient effort into overseeing their agents in the field.

The Costs of Not Prioritizing Peacekeeping

In contrast, military activities on complex peacekeeping operations have not lacked oversight. If anything, they have been constrained too tightly by governments at home who are eager to conserve resources for more important activities. The actions of peacekeepers are often second-guessed in their capitals for the sake of domestic political battles being waged at home. Despite this difference in the political management of operations, a similar underlying factor often impeded the effectiveness of both kinds of operation: in both eras, the capitals have focused their foreign and defense policy attention elsewhere. Complex peacekeeping missions often end up being less successful than they could have been because the noble goals that originally inspired the intervention are not adequately connected to the means that are actually available to use in them. Political officials do not want peacekeeping troops to enter into danger that could lead to casualties—and hence political costs—especially when those costs could affect other, more important, war-fighting missions.

In the 1990s it was thought that the problem of low political will that

often plagued peacekeeping operations might be resolved by having single strong states or "coalitions of the willing" lead these operations. Having lead states with strong interests in the operations' outcome was also identified as a way to overcome the inadequacies in training, intelligence, and coordination that so often bedevil traditional Chapter Six peacekeeping missions. All the same, the states involved in Chapter Seven operations are still often unwilling to provide the resources that would be truly necessary to fully perform the tasks at hand. It is especially instructive to focus on the example of the United States, because U.S. military forces were usually key players in the complex peacekeeping missions of the 1990s.

U.S. leadership in the UN Security Council (and in NATO) has often been necessary for the missions to get off the ground, even in cases such as Interfet in East Timor where U.S. forces played a relatively small role in the overall operation. (While the small number of U.S. troops there primarily provided logistics and communication support and advice, Australian forces maintain that the American presence was absolutely crucial to Interfet's success.) Military budgets and personnel levels were drastically cut throughout Western Europe and North America just as the number and complexity of peacekeeping operations was growing in the 1990s, because the publics in these countries wanted a peace divided in the aftermath of the cold war. This meant that states were not eager to take on the responsibilities and expense involved in leading complex peace operations. With few exceptions, a common pattern emerged: political leadership by the wealthiest and most powerful state, the United States, was necessary for a complex peacekeeping mission to come into being.[20]

Yet the U.S. was reluctant to lead if the risk of casualties was too high. Throughout the presidential administrations of both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, the idea of sending U.S. forces on peacekeeping missions engendered a great deal of domestic political controversy. Often the debate followed party lines, with Democrats arguing on behalf of a major peacekeeping role for U.S. military forces, and conservative Republican legislators and administration officials responding that American defense resources—including the lives of troops and the willingness of the public to support the military—should be conserved for more important missions. In 2002, for example, when talking about events in Afghanistan, numerous Republican White House and Defense Department officials called peacekeeping activities "nonmilitary" operations, referring to them as tasks that anyone could do, whereas no one else could take on the warfighting responsibilities of U.S. soldiers.[21]

But in cases where a strong U.S. national interest in having a military presence in a peacekeeping operation has been clearly at stake, American

troops have not stayed home. Instead they are sent on missions even when they lack the range of resources to actually accomplish mission goals. Often, too few troops with the wrong kind of training are sent on missions that are too large in scope. Washington has engaged in numerous military peacekeeping operations without paying adequate attention to their advance planning and coordination, leaving beleaguered soldiers on the ground to pick up the pieces as best they can. We saw this clearly in Haiti in 1994, and yet the problem still existed by the time the hot-war phase ended in Iraq nine years later. Even the most powerful liberal democratic state can have a hard time establishing coherent policy when it comes to peacekeeping.

This problem first came to public light in the late 1990s. A 1996 Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) study revealed that a major problem faced by U.S. military commanders in peacekeeping and other nontraditional operations was inadequate coordination with American civilian authorities, including the aid officials who might be involved in humanitarian assistance policy.[22] Military planners lacked a clear sense of what they would be expected to do, and often found themselves scrambling, in the absence of clear civilian directives, to find appropriate personnel for nontraditional duties. Most of the burden of these new peacekeeping activities fell on the so-called civil affairs officers, people who were trained in the areas of administration, engineering, and construction, or other services such as medicine. What made the problem worse was that 97 percent of civil affairs personnel were drawn from the reserves.[23] In other words, they were people (usually older and hence more established in civilian life than active-duty personnel) who did not expect to be called up during peacetime for long stints away from their families and regular jobs, and their deployment was therefore accompanied by a host of new social and political difficulties.[24]

In 1997, at least in part in response to the JCS study on coordination problems, Clinton issued a national security directive, PDD-56, which was supposed to lead to more integrated planning across U.S. agencies for future peacekeeping operations. While the actual directive remains classified, a publicly released version calls for more training to be given to both military and civilian peacekeeping officials based on lessons learned from previous operations, and requires the Deputies Committee of the U.S. National Security Council (an interagency group representing various cabinet departments) to establish working groups to prepare interagency implementation plans for future contingencies.[25] Yet a follow-up study conducted by an outside consulting group in 1999 concluded that "the spirit and intent of PDD 56 directed-training is not being followed" and that "no one has stepped forward in the leadership role."[26] According to

the presidential directive, peacekeeping was supposed to be an important component of how the United States defined its role in international security. Yet it was not important enough for a concerted planning effort to be made. Several years later, in both Afghanistan and Iraq, successful and highly professional U.S.-led military actions were followed by ad hoc, piecemeal efforts at establishing security in war's aftermath. Waging war, not building peace, was where the Pentagon put its resources—and reservists, called up for long stints away from their normal lives, were still left to pick up the pieces. By September 2003, there were 20,000 American Army Reserve and National Guard troops serving in Iraq and neighboring Kuwait, and their tours were being extended to a year.[27] This trend of relying on reservists began in the peacekeeping operations of the 1990s; by 2000, for example, over 20 percent of American forces who had been deployed in Bosnia were reservists.[28]

The United States and Policing

There is a related set of sensitive political issues that arises when the United States is a key player in the operations—as the lead state in the Haiti mission, for example, or as a sector commander and behind-the-scenes propellant in the NATO missions in Bosnia and Kosovo. The United States military tries to avoid taking on police-like functions as much as possible, at least in part to avoid casualties on missions like peacekeeping that are considered less central to U.S. security concerns than war-fighting. Policing is considered too risky for soldiers to do, and not within their core competencies. The goal is to conserve the lives and preserve the essential war-fighting skills of troops who may be needed in future wars, while maintaining public support for military action by limiting the perception that troops are being put in harm's way for no good reason.

There are certainly other countries whose military organizations resist, or are even constitutionally forbidden, from taking on police duties. (The next chapter will look at the example of Spain, which is constitutionally prevented from having its military forces engage in police actions, including on NATO peace operations.) Peter Viggo Jakobsen notes that a variety of KFOR leaders, including commanders from Great Britain and Germany, not just the United States, have been reluctant to have military troops perform police duties.[29] There are also countries whose military organizations have resisted multinational political directives to engage in particular policing activities, even though as organizations they are perfectly willing and capable of engaging in police activities in general. (The next chapter

will look at the case of French troops in Kosovo.) But as in colonial times, the French and (especially) the British military organizations, as well as strong British allies like Australia who had some experience in late colonial warfare, are in general quite willing to employ their troops flexibly for policing activities. All of these countries' military organizations, alongside such stalwart traditional peacekeepers as Canada, have also been quite accepting of the notion that peacekeeping operations might cause casualties among their troops, and that the possible death of soldiers is an acceptable risk to take. The United States has been an outlier in its reluctance to take on policing duties and to risk casualties on peacekeeping missions, and this has meant that Washington's goals for these complex missions are not well matched with the means available to fulfill them.

A peculiar political handicap that the United States has faced in participating in peacekeeping missions in recent years is the legacy of the operation in Somalia, described earlier in this book.[30] The American experience on that mission gave U.S. policymakers a very different understanding of the dangers involved in peacekeeping operations from that held by most Western countries. Most of the U.S. military operation in Somalia was in fact well run and successful. The strong American military presence helped get food to the population, and frequent shows of force for the most part kept the warlords cowed. But what the word "Somalia" will always conjure up in the minds of U.S. policymakers is the disastrous October 1993 raid in Mogadishu.

In retrospect the tactical mission to try to get Aideed's supporters in a crowded marketplace was poorly planned, even though the capture technically succeeded. Its designers did not consider the contingencies that any commander should know might arise in the fog of war, and the troops were left with an insufficient tool kit of alternative plans. Yet U.S. congressional leaders reacted strongly to the apparent principle behind the event, rather than to its particulars; they rallied against the idea that U.S. troops should be put in danger for something that was not clearly in the U.S. national interest. Washington had no particular stake in Somalia in 1993, beyond humanitarianism. The lesson that many Americans, probably wrongly, took away from Somalia was that it was a mistake to become involved in peacekeeping missions when the United States didn't have a direct interest at stake, because peacekeeping was a dangerous business doomed to failure. American lives and resources should be preserved for the wars that needed to be fought.

This one, relatively minor (except for its ultimate consequences) tactical operation in the whole scheme of American involvement in Somalia in fact bore little resemblance to most activities carried out on peacekeeping

operations in most places in the world. Instead it resembled the kind of counterinsurgency warfare waged by U.S. forces in Vietnam—preparing and waging a battle against an armed enemy who is surrounded by civilian supporters. It also resembles the raids carried out in Bosnia today by NATO forces against indicted war criminals. But it is important to keep in mind that those raids are usually not led by normal peacekeeping units under the command of the SFOR mission, even though the press often reports them as if they were. Instead they are mostly carried out by special combat forces acting under purely national command. SFOR is informed of their actions and coordinates its activities with them, but they are not part of the peacekeeping mission per se.[31]

What happened in Somalia had virtually nothing to do with the kind of civilian-oriented policing operations that are more commonly part of complex peacekeeping missions today. Indeed what is particularly sad is that earlier in the Somalia operation U.S. soldiers had worked hard to create and train a local Somali police force, and had successfully detained local criminals themselves when it was necessary as part of their mission to restore security in the country.[32] Policing in the Somalia peacekeeping operation worked. It was instead a counterinsurgency effort that led to the casualties which provoked withdrawal.

The message that the public has taken away from Somalia has had an unfortunate side-effect for future U.S. participation in peacekeeping missions of all kinds, and especially for the U.S. ability to adapt to doing police work on those missions. Force protection—the act of ensuring the safety of one's own troops—became more important in the United States than meeting any of the actual mission goals.[33] Commanders were told that the American public would tolerate zero casualties on peacekeeping missions, and understood this to mean that their own career advancement depended on them keeping their troops out of harm's way. As a result, U.S. policy on peacekeeping missions has often been to keep troops safe by insulating them from the local population as much as possible.

Previously we saw what this meant for U.S. operations in Haiti in 1994: American troops were often unable to intervene directly to restore civil order in the frenzied situation they found on the ground, because they were discouraged from taking police action in response to civilian disputes. In the Balkans, this approach meant that U.S. troops were prohibited from patronizing shops or cafés off-base, because mingling with the locals was seen as being too dangerous, and all village patrols by American soldiers had to be conducted by soldiers carrying M-16 automatic rifles and wearing Kevlar helmets and flak jackets.[34] Early on in Bosnia, U.S. patrols had to move out with a minimum of four vehicles[35]—emphasizing their status

as military occupiers. This made it difficult for U.S. soldiers to establish the kinds of personal relationships with local inhabitants that are required for policing duties to be carried out successfully. U.S. troops look both frightened and frightening.[36] American officials sometimes denigrate the NATO troops who do fraternize with the locals, claiming that those who get too friendly aren't respected, and talking about the instances where the forces of other countries have "gotten in trouble"—as when a Spanish security unit got drunk at a pub in the Bosnian Croat city of Mostar and was disarmed by the locals.[37] But other NATO military officers refer dismissively to the American troops with their bulky protective gear as "Ninja turtles."

In practice, U.S. troops in the Balkans do engage in police activities alongside their NATO partners. They are especially proud of the border patrol duties they perform, for example to interdict smuggling between Kosovo and Macedonia.[38] Yet because of the American stress on force protection and strictly military methods, some of the other police-type actions that U.S. troops have been involved with seem to have veered back and forth between startled retreat and aggressive ham-handedness. American forces have an uncomfortable relationship with the idea of doing police work on peacekeeping missions.

On the one hand, American troops have learned that they are not supposed to put themselves in danger in police-type operations. Several times U.S. army peacekeepers deployed on NATO operations in Kosovo have been called back mid-mission by their commanders for force protection reasons.[39] For example, U.S. troops were involved in a NATO response to ethnic rioting and murder in the city of Mitrovica, located in the French area of peacekeeping operations in Kosovo in February 2000. In an effort to regain control of the Serbian side of the city, NATO launched an intensive search operation to look for weapons inside ethnic Serb houses. The NATO command called American troops in to be involved in the search. In retrospect, American forces believe that they were to some extent set up by the French, because they had expected French troop support for their action which did not materialize.[40] Be that as it may, the Americans made a truly careless tactical error, given the violence they should have known they were likely to encounter during a forceful search in a hostile sector: the civilian interpreter they used for their part of the search was an ethnic Albanian, whose presence provoked outrage from the ethnic Serbs who were being subject to the search.

While the interpreter was withdrawn, mobs later began stoning, punching, and kicking the American soldiers, who withdrew rather than use violence in response.[41] What was particularly surprising is that the Americans had not expected the level of violence they encountered; they had apparently

not gone in with the riot gear necessary to protect themselves from the protestors, such as face masks and rubber bullets.[42] According to a report by Jeffrey Smith in the *Washington Post*, one laughing Serb said to another at the demonstration, "I told you that they are going to leave."[43] It had become common knowledge that the United States withdrew from Somalia after its soldiers were killed in Mogadishu, and as a result Washington gained the reputation for withdrawing from peacekeeping operations under the threat of casualties, rather than sticking out the difficulties of violent situations where civilians were involved.

On the opposite extreme is an example that stands out for its echoes of another era: the way that U.S. forces have sometimes handled raids on Kosovar villages that are suspected of hiding illegal weapons or of harboring hate-crime perpetrators. *Washington Post* reporter Dana Priest has reported in some detail about the general level of rough treatment, including slapping, death threats, and other forms of brutality, that were often used (at least early on in the mission) by U.S. troops trying to track down criminals.[44] Those actions, however, were later subject to internal investigations, and several soldiers and officers were punished for their failure to follow the rules. What is surprising about the case that follows is that its outline is provided by the American troops themselves, who apparently saw nothing amiss in the actions they took.

American forces officially state that they have been careful on such "cordon and search" missions in Kosovar villages to strictly observe proper human rights procedures. Yet a report about a helicopter raid in the newsletter that is produced by American forces on the ground in Kosovo has an uncomfortable resemblance to a scene in Francis Ford Coppola's movie *Apocalypse Now*. The movie, set during the American war in Vietnam, is based on Joseph Conrad's novel about nineteenth-century colonial governorship in Africa gone wrong, *Heart of Darkness*. The 2001 article describes a 5:00 a.m. surprise mission, where an unnamed ethnic Albanian border town in Kosovo was surrounded and house-to-house searches were conducted for weapons, contraband, and ethnic rebel identification documents. U.S. forces went into the mission both by helicopter and by armored vehicle. The article states, "As the sun dawns over the horizon, the morning silence . . . is broken by [Wagner's] music 'Flight of the Valkyrie [sic—the standard title is "Ride of the Valkyries"].' Several helicopters, tanks, and personnel carriers then accompanied the music."[45] In the 1979 movie, American attack helicopters broadcast that same triumphal music as they begin strafing and napalming a Vietnamese village at sunrise, and their commander (played by Robert Duvall) says, "Yeah, I use Wagner—scares the hell out of [them]."

Since the movie was very popular—it won two Academy Awards and was re-issued in a new version in 2001—it is likely that at least some of the Kosovars undergoing the cordon and search caught the reference. U.S. forces have defended the surprise element in the cordon and searches as necessary in a fundamentally uncooperative environment. One officer I spoke to explained that they had to broadcast some kind of alarm to wake up the sleeping villagers and let them know that the forces mean business. An American civilian official at NATO headquarters said that the situation was so bad at that time in those Kosovar villages that "no one" would object to the style of the raids done there.[46] Nonetheless, it is hard to think of an alarm that would put further psychological distance between the military occupation forces, and the villagers whose safety they were ostensibly there to protect. If the ultimate goal is to have Kosovars "own" the process of political change so that it continues after the military presence is withdrawn, it is probably not a good idea to associate that change with being shocked out of bed by helicopter loudspeakers playing Wagner at 5 a.m., as they descend on a village and surround it with tanks. (According to Priest, they rarely found much of any value in these searches anyway.)

Military Professionalism and Policing

American officials and analysts often state that military and police officers are trained for different things, and that this means their activities should be kept separate from each other. The apparent errors noted in the preceding examples in dealing with the psychological vulnerabilities of the involved populations might serve to confirm that assessment. Military forces are trained to fight and win wars, the argument goes, while police are trained to go out on patrols and perform investigations. Military troops work best in large, well organized groups and are skilled at using violence or the threat of violence to deter and kill enemies. Police officers work best as individuals or in pairs and use the law to deter and detain criminals.[47]

But these observations alone about the existing strengths and skills of military versus police personnel don't explain the fervency of the arguments made on this issue. In the imperial era, military personnel did police work as a matter of course. Despite the many striking examples that have come down in history where their actions went wrong, British troops in particular were known for their ability to exercise disciplined restraint and effectiveness in their colonies, when dealing with situations like riots.[48] Many Western countries today—including the United States—have a track

record of using military personnel in policing roles with no ill effects. Active duty American military personnel have sometimes been called in to deal with domestic civil disorder that has left local police overburdened, as in the unrest in Los Angeles following the Rodney King police brutality crisis in April 1992.[49] Canadian troops have helped Canadian police deal with potentially violent situations, including a 1990 armed standoff with native Mohawks over land rights that brought the soldiers acclaim for their professionalism and fairness.[50] British military personnel have done a lot of police work, called "aid to the civil authorities," in Northern Ireland. While some of their actions have provoked heated controversy (especially the activities of military intelligence units, who are widely accused of having practiced torture in detention centers), British forces often express pride in their own political objectivity and restraint, again in dealing with riots, for example, and say that their skills in this area reflect the lessons they learned from empire.[51] Christopher Bellamy notes that "some of the hardest, toughest fighting soldiers in the world excel in peace-support operations," and adds that his survey data indicate that "local populations have most respect for peacekeepers who are also unmistakably professional soldiers, robust in their manner and well equipped."[52]

Yet many hawks in the United States believe that for soldiers to do police work—and peacekeeping in general—will lead to a loss of military professionalism. Military resources are scarce, the argument goes, and as noted above, many argue that the United States should not be wasting its well-trained warriors on missions that anyone can do.[53] Asking military officers to perform tasks not directly tied to fighting and winning the nation's wars is said to degrade their war-fighting capabilities. Many senior American officers who have been involved in peacekeeping operations, however, do not agree with this argument. They admit that unit performance in highly specialized war-fighting skills, such as the use of heavy weapons, declines after a peacekeeping stint and needs remedial work to be brought back up to speed.[54] But at the same time, soldiers gain more unit cohesion because of the need to work together in difficult environments, and junior officers come back from peacekeeping operations with better decisionmaking skills, a greater ability to take individual initiative with confidence, and a greater understanding of what combat conditions are really like in the midst of uncertainty.[55] These are all things that are valued in today's complex battlefield, where small units are dispersed among an innocent civilian population that has enemy elements hidden within.

Nonetheless, the argument that peacekeeping leads to a decline in military professionalism continues to be heard frequently inside the Pentagon. It probably dates from the classic 1957 book by Samuel P. Huntington on

American civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State*. Huntington argued that "a distinct sphere of military competence" sets officers apart from the rest of society, namely "the direction, operation, and control of a human organization whose primary function is the application of violence."[56] He believed that the military governorships carried out by U.S. forces in Germany and Japan following World War II were especially damaging to the military mindset, and that this in turn caused civilians to neglect "the postulates of professional military thinking."[57]

Almost immediately after Huntington's book was published its major points were challenged by sociologist Morris Janowitz, who argued that the combination of nuclear deterrence (which would prevent major war from breaking out) and an expanding defense bureaucracy (which demanded new military administrative skills) had permanently changed what military professionalism meant in the United States.[58] No longer would military officers be primarily engaged in fighting major wars. Professional officers instead should be thought of as people who had specialized skills, a strong group identity and a set of governing ethics and standards of performance. The particular set of skills considered important within their profession would change with time, and would inevitably become more diverse as technology and society became more complex. Janowitz recognized even in 1960 that the military organization preferred not to take on what he called the "constabulary outlook" associated with policing, but it was not for reasons of professional competence and training. Instead, military officers tended to feel that those duties were less prestigious than war-fighting.[59] It is not surprising that this institutional tendency continues, but this insight suggests that it is a result of the political reward structure practiced in the United States, rather than any innate characteristic of the military mindset or training. The imperial armies gave medals to those who waged war in the periphery, and thereby discouraged officers from practicing the calm diplomacy that would actually have made their empires easier and less costly to manage. It is ironic that the United States may be in some way following in their footsteps today.

Some might argue that policing by regular troops isn't necessary. There are specially trained military forces—U.S. military police (MPs), for example, and the special hybrid forces that some countries have, like the French *gendarmerie* or the Italian *carabinieri*—who have at the ready the necessary tools to do such work.[60] Large numbers of U.S. MPs were in fact scheduled to be sent into Iraq in May 2003, as order deteriorated there in the postwar environment. These troops are experts in riot control techniques, in the proper handling of evidence and prisoners, and in obtaining and analyzing intelligence data from their interactions with the local

population and local police forces.[61] Likewise, the U.S. constabulary forces in postwar Germany (whom Huntington found so inappropriate) were, after the initial war termination period, volunteers who reenlisted after their combat tours were over, and then given special training in police duties.[62] But there simply aren't enough of these specially trained forces to be at the ready in every situation where a police presence is demanded on peacekeeping operations—especially in an era when the military budgets of many European states have been drastically cut, and these hybrid forces may be needed for ethnically motivated civil unrest at home.

There is no doubt that it would be better to have well trained *civilian* police officers—experienced in conducting investigations, in collecting evidence, and in detaining prisoners, and less intimidating to the local population—do the bulk of police work on peacekeeping operations if it were possible. But often, as in the case of mid-1990s Haiti discussed in the previous chapter, they simply are not available in time. In virtually any peacekeeping operation it takes police forces a long time to gear up for entry, since there is no standing reserve of police units trained and ready to go. This is what Michael Dziedzic calls "the deployment gap."[63] When military troops arrive in the theater first, someone has to keep order, and it falls on the soldiers to do so. Often those being asked to take on these duties are not the military police or trained constabulary forces; they are instead whoever happens to be present in the field when the need for their help arises.

Beyond this timing issue, there are simply not enough highly qualified civilian police officers to be sent on the multitude of complex peacekeeping missions that require them. Some countries, like Canada and Australia, do have national police forces (the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Australian Federal Police, respectively) who are regularly assigned to peacekeeping missions by their governments. But most of the slots for international police personnel on peacekeeping missions must be filled by individual volunteers, and it is very difficult to recruit highly qualified people for these jobs. Most urban police forces throughout the world already feel that they are understaffed, and it is not surprising that they discourage their personnel from volunteering for foreign duty. Individuals who take leaves of absence to serve abroad are often warned that their chances for promotion at home will evaporate. Retirees can be sent as the commanders on police missions, but it is hard to get enough cops to walk the beat. As a result, many of the personnel slots on international police missions in places like Kosovo are filled by people who are not trained in police departments, but instead as park rangers or security guards. They lack the skills necessary to investigate violent crimes or control riots.[64] And according to

Priest, in places like Kosovo they are often there for the money, and reluctant to risk life and limb to get out among the local population and investigate crime.[65]

This means that often there is no one except regular military forces available to take on policing duties. When they do so either half-heartedly, or with excessive zeal, their capitals' desires to have a safe and secure environment left in their wake cannot be well fulfilled. Like the empires of the last century who rewarded their officers for war-fighting, not pacific colonial duty, the leaders of peacekeeping operations today find that their ability to get their goals met is hampered by a narrow definition of military professionalism. Once again, ends and means don't match, and the intentions of the capitals fail to be fulfilled by the actions taken.

Recognizing the Problem

Calls for something to be done about the dearth of good police forces on peacekeeping operations are not new. They have emanated from the UN community, from the United States Army, and from think tank analysts.[66] What the comparison to the colonial experience highlights, however, is two key lessons involved in the politics of building security in foreign countries.

First, military personnel will do what they are rewarded for doing in terms of advancement and recognition in their organization. If military personnel are not rewarded for taking actions that contribute to the security of occupied territory, then it will be impossible for the international community to establish political control in those areas. Unless directed otherwise, military officers will probably gravitate to what they do best, and what they joined the military to do: to plan, fight, and win wars. In the imperial era, that won them medals; in today's era, it is usually the path to promotion. It is not coincidental that civil affairs work on peacekeeping operations is assigned to reservists; the more "important" work of war-fighting is left to those who will advance in the organization. Insufficient political attention is paid to the problem of policing.

Political scientist Deborah Avant argues, "We should expect that military organizations will be responsive to civilian goals when military leaders believe that they will be rewarded for that responsiveness."[67] She cites promotion policy as a key mechanism for rewarding the behavior of officers—a point which is reinforced by the imperial experiences of Great Britain, France, and the United States. Peter Feaver agrees that "assertive control" by civilians is necessary to ensure that those with professional military knowledge and expertise are truly fulfilling the demands of the

democratic polity, and agrees with Janowitz that professional militaries in modern societies are capable of many functions other than war-fighting.[68] Most recently, Eliot Cohen has urged American civilian leaders to be less hesitant in exerting control over the military officers whose job it is to serve them, noting that the emergence of what amounts to a new imperial army in the United States demands rethinking of the traditional concerns associated with mass armies of the twentieth century.[69]

Yet the second key lesson that the colonial experience highlights and the peacekeeping era confirms is that none of this urging will make a difference if the civilian leaders of liberal democracies do not recognize the importance of these missions to their own national interests. If their attention is focused on war-fighting, police actions will not matter to the public, and the design of military operations in these areas will not be subject to the kind of political pressure that is necessary for anything to be adequately planned or funded in a democracy. The experts can talk all they like about the need for reform, but the talk will have no effect if the issue remains a low priority in leaders' minds.

While the argument continues to be heard that the public will not tolerate casualties on peacekeeping missions, several studies have demonstrated that this was false even in the immediate aftermath of Somalia.[70] Instead, the evidence shows that the public will rally around military missions, even dangerous humanitarian missions, when the political chiefs in Washington take the lead in explaining why those missions are important. It is not that liberal democratic states are incapable of being good peacekeepers; it is instead that leaders must make peacekeeping missions a priority if they are to maintain the political will to do them well.

Aracinovo: Politicization Avoided

It is difficult to demonstrate with hard facts that American political sensibilities have gotten in the way of on-the-ground peacekeeping effectiveness. This is because it is hard to tease out exactly who is responsible for particular decisions on peacekeeping operations—whether it is civilian Pentagon appointees who represent the political interests of the presidential leadership, or instead senior military commanders who wish to preserve their resources, and who represent the accumulated wisdom of the officer corps. But an example where civilian political interests in casualty avoidance were sidelined, and where mission effectiveness appears to have been enhanced as a result, occurred in the Macedonian town of Aracinovo, just outside the capital of Skopje, in June 2001.

U.S. troops have been based in Macedonia as part of the extended mission of the KFOR peacekeeping operation in neighboring Kosovo. Skopje is very near the Kosovo border, and a portion of the Skopje international airport, known as Camp Able Sentry, has been used as the major rear area for resupplying the American forces headquartered at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo. Macedonia therefore has special strategic significance for the United States. The tensions between the country's ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians have to some extent mirrored the tensions in neighboring Kosovo, and they were worsened by the influx of huge numbers of ethnic Albanian refugees during the height of the Kosovo war in spring 1999. Yet despite some violent incidents, Macedonia had initially remained relatively peaceful in the initial KFOR era. It also remained relatively pro-American because of earlier U.S. participation in the UN Preventative Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) that had protected the Macedonian border from the Yugoslavian civil wars of the mid-1990s. This made Macedonia an attractive ally for Washington when the KFOR peacekeeping operation began in 1999, especially since it was hoped that an ongoing U.S. military presence in the country might keep ethnic violence quelled.

But by mid-2001, there had been months of skirmishing between Macedonian government forces (who were primarily ethnic Slavs) on the one side, and ethnic Albanian irregular forces on the other (many of whom were at least technically Muslim). The Albanian rebel forces were reportedly flowing back and forth across the border from Kosovo, receiving supplies and funding from the commanders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). In June, a contingent of 150 Albanian rebel fighters who had been challenging government forces was pinned down by government troops in the town of Aracinovo. Ethnic Albanians and Macedonians had lived together peacefully in Aracinovo in the past. But now the Macedonian government forces destroyed the town's mosque, arguing that it was being used by the rebels as a staging base for mortars that could hit both the airport and a major oil refinery. Ethnic resentment skyrocketed as the town became a flashpoint, leaving the country on the brink of out-and-out civil war.[71]

NATO and EU officials, hoping to avoid the outbreak of a larger conflict that could once again send the entire Balkans region spiraling into ethnic chaos, brokered a ceasefire between the rebels and the Macedonian government. The Macedonian government agreed, by some reports under heavy NATO and EU pressure, to allow the rebels to leave the town under NATO guard (and using NATO transportation), in exchange for the rebels laying down their weapons.[72] The NATO Secretary General's personal representative, Pieter Feith (a civilian), ordered an American officer (whom he

technically outranked) to use his troops for this purpose, since no one else was available in the region. The American commander complied, and American civilian contractors acted as the bus drivers for the withdrawal. The Albanian rebels left under American protection, and the tension in Aracinovo was broken. The next night, though, a nationalist Macedonian mob attacked the parliament building in Skopje, angry at what they saw as a government sell-out. They accused the American civilian contractors of secretly training KLA fighters.

While Macedonian leaders feared that civil war would result, it did not; and in retrospect the successful withdrawal and disarmament of rebels in Aracinovo probably helped prevent civil war. Indeed American actions on the ground contributed to NATO's credibility as an impartial go-between in the Macedonian conflict. Two months later, NATO forces were asked to come in on a new peacekeeping mission in the country, with the support of both the government and the rebels. NATO troops on that new mission collected rebel weapons in what was known as Operation Essential Harvest—an action that helped reassure both sides that their ceasefire would hold. While this latter operation certainly did not convince the rebels to turn in their best weapons, it did provide a mechanism for outside European forces to maintain a presence in the country, helping to prolong a stable peace that would otherwise have been shakier.

But American participation in the Aracinovo withdrawal was a fluke that almost didn't happen. If Bush administration officials had been aware of what was going on, the notion of an escort reportedly would have been overruled because of the danger involved. It turns out that the whole set of events transpired on a summer weekend. No one in Washington had been expecting it in advance, and that reportedly meant that there was no one in the White House who knew about the events at the time.[73] The rumor is that when the whole story was revealed the next day, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was both embarrassed and angry at having been kept out of the loop. According to one U.S. official, while the troops have the "right of immediate response" to save lives and protect property when they are deployed on peacekeeping missions, there must be a clear understanding of the limits of what this means, so that "junior" commanders in particular do not make "subjective decisions" about the situation and embroil U.S. forces in actions that exceed their mandate.[74]

The officer leading the American convoy was Colonel Anthony J. Tata—not a junior rank of commander at all. While it is not clear from public sources exactly what communication transpired on the ground, it appears from news reports that Brigadier General William C. David, the commander of the American presence in Kosovo, was well enough

informed of the events that he was able to watch them via camera transmissions from an unarmed aerial drone flying overhead. Both the Pentagon and the Macedonian defense ministry also received this real-time footage.[75] The problem, from the U.S. perspective, was therefore not that the U.S. military organization was brought into a set of events against its commanders' best judgment. Instead, it was that the Secretary of Defense was not given the opportunity to pre-approve a tactical action that put American troops in harm's way.

As the Americans were trying to return to their base at the Skopje airport after the successful escort was completed, their way was blocked by an angry and armed Macedonian mob that was probably incited by disaffected government security forces. Working with advice provided by General David (who was using the real-time drone footage), Col. Tata decided to retreat and have the now-empty bus convoy take a series of detours back to base in order to avoid confrontation. Other NATO troops helped out by ensuring that the roads used by the Americans were cleared of mines.[76] The troops arrived back at base safely, if later than expected. But the possibility of danger was very real, and it is understandable why an attack on U.S. forces would have been a political nightmare, since the whole relationship between peacekeeping in Kosovo and Macedonia would have been difficult to explain to the public.

This was a case where the NATO command of a UN-authorized peacekeeping operation approved an action with full American military command knowledge and support. The action was probably necessary for the ongoing success of the U.S. effort in Kosovo, since instability surrounding Camp Able Sentry in Macedonia would have been very detrimental to the functioning of Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo. There was a large U.S. military presence around Skopje as a mandated part of KFOR, and the conflict between Macedonian and Albanian forces was within mortar range of American base operations. Furthermore, this action had the full backing and real-time knowledge of the host Macedonian government where the American deployment was in place. Yet the White House wanted ultimate control and veto over how the troops would be used in order to prevent the possibility of confrontation and casualties—and indeed as commander-in-chief, it was ultimately the U.S. president's responsibility to decide how U.S. forces should be employed.

This case is emblematic of the difficulties that liberal democracies have in doing peacekeeping well. The American public, as represented by its leaders, has every right not to send its forces into harm's way for a reason that it does not understand to be in the national interest. Yet to exercise that right of democratic control over the military may very well impede the

effectiveness of an operation that ultimately protects American security. A U.S. Central Intelligence Agency report on the greatest foreign threats to the United States at the end of 2001 put Macedonian instability near the top of the list.[77] While it is always risky to engage in counter-factual analysis, thinking about what might have been, in this case the fact that the U.S. military took action without close political oversight was probably a good thing.

The Fickleness of Political Will

What the comparison between the colonialism of a hundred years ago and more recent complex peacekeeping operations highlights is the fact that great power liberal democracies are by nature inconsistent in their foreign military policies. They have a tendency to start off in high-minded directions that lack sufficient priority to ensure good follow-through. This is especially the case in circumstances like colonial occupation and peacekeeping, where perceived core national security interests are not at stake but the potential cost in lives and treasure is high. Politics demands responsiveness to what the public seems to want, and cohesion is often sacrificed as particular political administrations come and go.

This shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone. It does, however, suggest that the attempts made by liberal democratic states to direct foreign societies in particular directions are quixotic. The more tasks that either occupation authorities or peacekeepers have taken on, the more room for slippage there is. In the next chapter we will see how much harder this becomes in multilateral operations, where even military allies who would seem to share a vision of security can trip each other up because of their domestic political limits. What this means is that rather than trying to do too much too eagerly, the international community should concentrate on doing fewer things and doing them better, with more foresight and more communication with their domestic publics about why these few things matter.