Democratic Politics and NATO War Making:
Great Britain, Germany and America in the Kosovo Crisis

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NATO's ability to assume an activist military role in the international system will depend on the capacity of its member states to generate and sustain domestic support for using military force and for adapting to the changing military conditions that evolve over the course of armed conflict. This article argues that the ability or willingness of national leaders to use force through NATO will vary significantly depending on the arrangement of their democratic political institutions. In the Kosovo war, while Great Britain was a persistent advocate of a ground assault, Germany threatened to veto any such NATO action. The United States was between these extremes, only slowly moving toward acceptance of a ground assault over the course of the conflict. The key variable, "institutional vulnerability" (defined by the degree to which the executive is vulnerable to being removed from office and losing decision-making autonomy to legislative opponents), is the basis for contrasting Britain's Westminster parliamentary, Germany's coalition parliamentary, and America's presidential systems, and for explaining their policy differences in this crisis.

Key words: democratic peace, NATO, Kosovo, intervention

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Introduction

In terms of military capabilities, NATO is clearly the most formidable international organization in history. The current concentration of power within the alliance is even more significant given the absence of a great power rival that could impose external limits on how NATO might use its capabilities. This situation has presented NATO with an unprecedented opportunity to reevaluate its role in the international system, to consider a new strategic vision that moves beyond NATO's traditional focus on simply defending the territory of its member states. As early as 1991, NATO leaders adopted a new "Strategic Concept" that laid the foundation for new missions that could include peacekeeping in civil and international conflicts and humanitarian intervention outside NATO territory. This was followed in 1994 by the introduction of the Combined Joint Task Force concept, which would provide the organizational structure to use NATO assets for these new roles.[1] The most ambitious proposals for new "out-of-area" missions have included counter-terrorism, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction held by "rogue" states, even Major Theater War in the Middle East or on the Korean peninsula.[2] Most recently, NATO leaders from across the alliance have recommitted to ensuring NATO can actually carry out vigorous military operations since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.[3] The war against Serbia in 1999 is the most dramatic example yet of the kinds of missions NATO might pursue in the future, and it was clearly a test of NATO's military

[1] "United States Security Strategy for Europe and NATO." Department of Defense: Office of International Security Affairs (June 1995), 7-9. This Strategic Concept is reprinted in North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 1995), 237.

[2] For the most recent collective statement of NATO's new Strategic Concept, see *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*. Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D.C. on 23rd and 24th April 1999. Accessed on March 7, 2002, at http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm. Also see, *Strengthening Transatlantic Security: A U.S. Strategy for the 21st Century*, Department of Defense, December 2000.

[3] "NATO to Focus on Anti-Terror Role," *New York Times* (June 5, 2002), accessed on http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/international/AP-NATO-Defense.html on June 5, 2002.

capabilities. More importantly, Kosovo was a test of the alliance's *political capabilities*, specifically, the ability to generate and sustain political support for using military force and for adapting to the changing strategic conditions that evolve over the course of armed conflict.

Arguably, NATO's political capabilities, not its military capabilities, will have the greatest impact on the alliance's potential to expand its security role in the post-Cold War international system. This claim seems out of step with the vast majority of the research to date on NATO's future, which tends to focus on needed improvements in its military capabilities. This literature mainly focuses on shortfalls in the technological base of the European militaries in such areas as precision guided weapons, intelligence, and rapid deployment, and operational capabilities in defense planning and command and control.[4] As important as these military issues may be, very little has been said about the political dimensions of NATO operations. Several scholars do call attention to how the collective action problem will impede NATO's ability to pursue out-of-area operations. For example, Lepgold argues that individual members simply lack the incentives to assume the risks and costs of missions that do not have a direct impact on their territorial security.[5] While the collective action problem may indeed present an important hurdle for NATO operations, it is also essential to consider how the domestic politics

[4] For example, see David Gompert and Richard Kugler, "Free-Rider Redux: NATO Needs to Project Power (and Europe Can Help)," *Foreign Affairs* vol. 74, no. 1 (January/February 1995): 7-12; Stuart Croft, Jolyon Howorth, Terry Terriff, and Mark Webber, "NATO' Triple Challenge," *International Affairs* vol. 76, no. 3 (2000): 495-518; Michael O'Hanlon, "Transforming NATO: The Role of European Forces," *Survival* vol. 39, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 5-15; James P. Thomas, *The Military Challenges of Transatlantic Coalitions* (Oxford University Press, 2000). Improving European military capabilities has also been a priority with the United States government. See Defense Secretary William Cohen, *Defense Capabilities Initiative* (1998). This need has been highlighted by the disproportionate commitment of U.S. and European forces during the Kosovo war. See William Drozdiak, "Allies Need Upgrade, General Says," *Washington Post* (June 20, 1999), A20. A recent NATO Defense Minister meeting confirmed the priority being placed on modernizing European forces and closing the technological gap between the United States and other allied states. "NATO to Focus on Anti-Terror Role."

[5] Joseph Lepgold, "NATO's Post-Cold War Collective Action Problem," *International Security*, vol. 23, no. 1 (summer 1998): 78-106. See also John R. Oneal and Paul F. Diehl, "The Theory of Collective Action and NATO Defense Burdens: New Empirical Tests," *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 2 (June 1994): 373-396; Glenn Palmer, "Corralling the Free Rider: Deterrence and the Western Alliance," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 2 (June 1990): 147-164.

of NATO members will affect alliance decision-making on a range of potential missions. This political challenge for NATO is two-fold: 1) NATO military operations depend on consensus among its members, which means that technically any individual member can veto the initiation of military force or significant changes in how force is used once NATO is engaged in a conflict; 2) NATO is an organization composed of democratic states, which means that political leaders must be concerned with how the use of force will affect their political standing back home with voters and potential political opponents. These two features of NATO link the domestic politics of using military force within individual member states to decision making for the alliance as a whole. NATO political leaders not only negotiate among themselves over how to respond to a particular security problem, they must also contend with domestic actors – such as opposition political parties, the legislature, or the electorate – who may challenge and even block the leadership's preferred approach to that problem.[6]

In 1949, while signing the NATO treaty in Washington, British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin observed, "at last, democracy is no longer a series of isolated units; it's a coherent organism." While the democratic character of NATO members has not been universal over the course of its history, since the end of the Cold War the notion that NATO's political character is first and foremost democratic, certainly has taken hold.[7] However, in the abundant literature on NATO from the past decade, research that explores the link between democracy, domestic politics, and NATO operations is surprisingly scarce. While NATO is an even more democratic "organism" now than Foreign Minister Bevin foresaw in 1949, the question remains – how "coherent" is it? The Kosovo war is an important case, indeed the only case, for evaluating how

[6] Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization*, vol. 42, no. 3 (summer 1988): 427-460.
[7] See *The Alliance's Strategic Concept* for recent references to NATO's democratic values and identity.

democracy at the individual state level affects NATO at the operational level for the duration of a military conflict.

During the Kosovo war, the challenge of maintaining alliance unity in the face of fragile political support within a number of member states became a priority objective for NATO, on par with actually achieving NATO's objectives in Kosovo itself.[8] How NATO actually waged this war, the strategic choices made over the kinds of force to apply and how, would be decisive in determining whether the alliance could hang together and see the war to a successful conclusion.[9] Beginning on March 24, 1999 NATO waged an increasingly hard-hitting air campaign to compel Serbian military forces to withdraw from the province of Kosovo, to halt a Serb ethnic cleansing campaign aimed at driving hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians into the bordering states of Macedonia and Albania, and to force the Serb leadership to accept a NATO peacekeeping force for Kosovo that might bring an end to the roiling civil conflict there. After two and a half months of bombing, however, it appeared that the air campaign would fail to meet these objectives. In fact, from the beginning of the conflict the NATO strategy produced a growing chorus of critics who argued that the only viable option for achieving these goals was an invasion of Kosovo or Serbia proper with ground troops.[10] In fact, nearly a year before the

[8] Alliance unity as a top priority was repeated in virtually every public statement from President Clinton and his cabinet officers. For example, see the text of the president's remarks of April 2, 1999, April 5, 1999, and April 22, 1999, in Philip E. Auerswald and David P. Auerswald, eds., *The Kosovo Conflict: A Diplomatic History Through Documents* (Cambridge: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 781-82, 794, 883-84. Even Prime Minister Blair recognized that alliance unity was the top priority for NATO in this conflict. See his press comments of April 18, 1999. Text in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 871.

[9] This was also felt as an acute constraint on military action by General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander for NATO. According to Clark, "at the political level the measure of merit [for the strategic options] is to retain Alliance solidarity and the full support of our regional partners." Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 184. On the PBS program *Frontline*, General Clark noted that "no set of targets and no bombing series was more important than maintaining the consensus of NATO." Quoted in Scott A. Cooper, "The Politics of Airstrikes," *Policy Review* no. 107 (June 2001), 7.

[10] Miles A. Pomper and Chuck McCutchear, "As Kosovo Crisis Escalates, Calls Increase to Reconsider Use of Ground Troops," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly* (April 3, 1999), 809-811; Rowan Scarborough, "Military Experts See a Need for Ground Troops," *Washington Times* (March 30, 1999), A1; Bradley Graham, "Joint Chiefs Doubted Air Strategy," *Washington Post* (April 5, 1999), A1; Eric Schmitt, "The Powell Doctrine is Looking Pretty Good

war began, General Wesley Clark, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, and General Klaus Naumann, Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, agreed that air power alone in any future conflict over Kosovo was unlikely to meet NATO's objectives, and any use of air power must be tied directly to the threat of further escalation with ground troops.[11] Both General Clark and General Naumann continued to press this view on a ground assault in the months preceding the war and throughout the actual conflict.[12] Less than two weeks into the war General Clark told General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Joe Ralston, Vice Chairman, that the "air campaign was not having the desired effects," and that NATO must consider preparing for a ground assault. He repeated this assessment to NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and General Naumann on April 9, 1999, arguing for an invasion in July.[13] Despite the strategic rationale behind a ground assault, at the political level NATO never broached this option. In fact, during the April 1999 NATO summit meeting in Washington, NATO leaders deliberately kept any discussion of escalation off the agenda. On the first morning of the Washington summit, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen warned Clark to say "nothing about ground forces. We have to make this air campaign work, or we'll both be writing our resumes."[14]

The political pressure to avoid the risks of introducing ground troops seems to support the claim about the limiting effects of democratic domestic politics found in recent literature on democracy and conflict decision making. It is important to note, however, that the reluctance of individual NATO members to escalate the conflict was far from uniform. Prime Minister Blair

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Again," *New York Times* (April 4, 1999), 5; Jamie Dettmer, "Send in Troops or Flip a Coin," *Insight on the News* (June 14, 1999), 8; "Grounded in Kosovo," *Time* (May 31, 1999), 60; Michael Hirsh, "Victory over Milosevic was Actually a Pretty Close Call," *Newsweek* (July 26, 1999), 58.

[11] Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 117.

[12] Ibid., 119-120, 166, 245, 253, 260, 263.

[13] Ibid., 236, 252.

[14] Ibid., 269.

of Great Britain, from well before the conflict actually began, was a consistent and vigorous advocate of deploying ground forces. Chancellor Schroeder of Germany, on the other hand, adamantly and publicly opposed any such escalation of the conflict, rebuking Blair in the process. Between these two extremes, President Clinton of the United States consistently resisted any suggestion that a ground assault was inevitable or necessary, while reluctantly coming to accept this option as it became more likely that NATO would fail to achieve its goals in Kosovo altogether.

Variation in the positions taken by Great Britain, Germany, and the United States on this question was not simply the result of differences of opinion on strategy, nor was it the result of differences in domestic public opinion on the ground assault option. Drawing from recent work in the democratic peace literature, this article argues that variation in the willingness of these NATO members to escalate the conflict is linked to variation in the institutional arrangement of their domestic political systems. Political leaders in different democratic settings will confront different degrees of "institutional vulnerability," that is, the degree to which domestic opposition to military force will actually produce political repercussions for state leaders as the costs of armed conflict increase. In the case of the Kosovo crisis, Prime Minister Blair was clearly the least vulnerable to political repercussions. He could assert bold support for a ground assault knowing that his control of a disciplined majority party in this Westminster parliamentary system was sufficient to prevent any opposition within the House of Commons from threatening his tenure in office or from imposing any legislative constraints on government policy. Chancellor Schroeder, in contrast, depended on support from his Green Party partners to sustain his governing coalition. A NATO ground assault was likely to incite vigorous opposition from the Green Party, which had even threatened to defect from the government over the issue. Schroeder

was vulnerable to a complete collapse of his government and the accompanying political damage to his Social Democratic Party. Unlike Schroeder, President Clinton's personal institutional position was secure whether NATO increased its commitment in the Kosovo conflict or not, which reduced the potential political costs of military escalation. Yet unlike Blair, the separation of powers in the American system meant that Clinton could not control the legislature. He was vulnerable to opposition in Congress, which had the ability to impose constraints on conflict escalation or even demand de-escalation. The president's main concern, therefore, was to limit the costs of the Kosovo conflict in order to forestall a concerted challenge from Congress.

The article presents this argument in two parts. First, it explains the significance of institutional variation among different types of democratic states. In simple terms, all democratic political leaders must worry to some degree about the potential political costs of pursuing high-risk or costly military initiatives. All must worry to some degree about interference in decision making over the use of force by other domestic political actors. Yet the degree to which the executive is vulnerable to being removed from office by the general electorate or the legislature, or vulnerable to losing control of the policy making agenda to the opponents of using force, will vary depending on the institutional arrangement of the different democratic states. Understanding the different degrees to which democratic political leaders are vulnerable provides tremendous insight into the risks they are willing to assume when initiating or escalating the use of military force. Based on the implications of this argument, the article next demonstrates that the institutional arrangement of Great Britain, Germany, and the United States had a direct impact on how each addressed the question of escalation to the use of ground troops in Kosovo. It concludes by drawing out the implications of institutional variation among NATO members for the alliance's ability to actually pursue a wide range of security missions in

the future. The argument also provides insight into the potential capabilities of an independent European security force now under consideration.

Institutional Variation and Democratic Constraints on the Use of Force

Over the past 15 years, the "democratic peace" phenomenon has clearly been among the most prominent areas of research in the field of international relations. Scholars continue to find innovative ways to test and explain a range of empirical claims on how democracy may act as a constraint on the use of force. The bulk of this research has been primarily concerned with explaining and testing the 'dyadic' democratic peace finding that democracies are only less war-prone with each other, while being as war-prone as non-democracies in general.[15] As a result, our understanding of the 'monadic' effects of democracy – the degree to which democratic features constrain the use of force against democracies and non-democracies alike – remains grossly underdeveloped.[16] Specifically, comparative research on how democratic institutions affect conflict decision-making and the likelihood of military force remains in its infancy.[17]

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[15] Harvey Starr, "Why Don't Democracies Fight One Another? Evaluating the Theory-Findings Feedback Loop," *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* vol. 14 (1992), 43; Melvin Small and J. David Singer, "The War-Proneness of Democratic Regimes," *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, vol. 1, no. 4 (summer 1976): 50-69; Erich Weede, "Democracy and War Involvement," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 28, no. 4 (December 1984): 649-664; Zeev Maoz and Nasrin Abdolali, "Regime Type and International Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 33, no. 1 (March 1989): 3-35; Bruce Russett and Zeev Moaz, "The Democratic Peace Since World War II," in *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Propositions for a Post-Cold War World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[16] James Lee Ray, *Democracy and International Conflict: An Evaluation of the Democratic Peace Proposition* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 20; Miriam Fendius Elman," Introduction: the Need for a Qualitative Test of the Democratic Peace Theory," in *Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer?*, ed. Miriam Fendius Elman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 40.

[17] Propositions on the relationship between institutions and war-making certainly have a distinguished and long-standing heritage in this literature. A key referent for much of the contemporary democratic peace literature is the institutional argument advanced by Immanuel Kant in *Perpetual Peace* [1795], ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge University Press, 1970). Early institutional arguments on war and peace were also advanced by John Jay, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison in the *Federalist Papers* (New York: Penguin Books, 1961). For recent work on democratic institutions and international conflict see, R. J. Rummel, *Power Kills: Democracy as a Method of Non-Violence* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997); Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, chap. 2; T. Clifton Morgan and Sally Howard Campbell, "Domestic Structure, Decisional Constraints, and War: So Why Kant Democracies Fight?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 35, no. 2 (June 1991): 187-211; T. Clifton Morgan and Valerie L. Schwebach, "Take Two Democracies and Call Me in the Morning: A Prescription for Peace?" *International Interactions*, vol. 17, no. 4 (1992): 305-320.

Several recent studies have made the important point that a serious deficiency in the literature on democratic institutions and military force is the lack of systematic research on the effects of institutional variation across different types of democratic states.[18] While all democracies divide power in some way, and all modern democracies hold their leaders accountable to an electorate, different democratic states do so in very different ways. Among the major sub-regime types of democratic government – such as presidential, Westminster parliamentary, coalition parliamentary, and semi-presidential – the differences in these features are striking.[19] To the degree that democratic institutions have an impact on the willingness or ability of political leaders to use military force in their foreign policy, it is important to investigate whether institutional variation makes a difference in the degree to which they will actually face domestic constraints.[20] Along these lines, a key question is how will the institutional arrangement within different types of democracies affect the ability of political leaders to pursue their preferred policy without interference from political opponents or the fear of being removed from office? In other words, what particular institutional features increase or decrease the ability of other political actors to impede the use of military force, and increase or decrease the executive's risk of being removed from office by the voting public or by a loss of legislative confidence?

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[18] David P. Auerswald, "Inward Bound: Domestic Institutions and Military Conflicts," *International Organization*, vol. 53, no. 3 (summer 1999): 469-504; Miriam Fendius Elman, "Unpacking Democracy: Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Theories of Democratic Peace," *Security Studies* 10, no. 2 Peterson, Ripsman.

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[20] The impact of this institutional variation on the decision-making process and policy outcomes is a key area of interest in both the comparative literature on democracy and the literature on international political economy. For example see, Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Arend Lijphart, ed. *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives, and Outcomes* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. *Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1978); G. John Ikenberry, David A. Lake and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *The State and American Foreign Economic Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). Students of democracy and military conflict would benefit from following these examples.

To answer this question and apply it to NATO war making in the Kosovo crisis, this article advances the concept of "institutional vulnerability." This concept provides the basis for evaluating the likelihood of institutional constraints in a particular political system, whether democratic or non-democratic,[21] and to compare the likelihood of institutional constraints across different types of democracies. The concept of institutional vulnerability provides the means to develop a continuum of different democratic states that describes which are more or less likely to be constrained in their use of force than other states.

Executive Vulnerability

The concept of institutional vulnerability has two dimensions; the first is executive vulnerability. This is a measure of the risk faced by the executive of being removed from office for pursuing high-cost, high-risk foreign policy, or for failing to achieve foreign policy goals through the use of military force. There are two possible ways that the executive in a democracy may be removed from office: by being voted out of office at the next election, or, in some democracies, by losing a vote of legislative confidence. This type of political penalty, however, would only be imposed after the executive has already initiated the use of force. To have an *ex ante* constraining effect on the use of force, the executive must exercise self-restraint in foreign policy as a way to avoid the political repercussions that might jeopardize his or her tenure in office. The actual impact of executive vulnerability on policy choices depends on the immediacy of the threat of actually being removed from office, and the executive's willingness to act in the face of this threat. The more immediate the threat of losing office, the more likely is the executive to exercise self-restraint and avoid the use of force.

[21] Joe Hagan makes the important point that even leaders in authoritarian political systems face institutional constraints, they must contend with other domestic political actors who work to influence policy, and must worry about the "selectorate" that put them in power and subsequently may remove them. Joe D. Hagan, "Domestic

In much of the democratic peace literature, executive vulnerability is defined in terms of "electoral accountability." The often-repeated claim is that democratic leaders will be risk-averse in foreign policy because they are risk-averse with their own political fortunes. If political leaders must worry about being punished by voters during the next election, they may avoid foreign policy choices that impose public costs or hold the potential for failure.[22] Electoral accountability is also the mechanism that may link public opinion with policy making. A common assertion in literature on democratic foreign policy is that political leaders must be concerned with the loss of public support in a foreign policy crisis because it may indicate eventual penalties at the ballot box.[23] Despite the focus on electoral accountability in the democratic peace literature, it only seems to have a constraining effect in periods immediately preceding an election, when armed conflict may actually influence voter decisions.[24] In addition, the threat of electoral penalties should have greater influence over the executive's decision making when leadership selection occurs more often. The more frequent the elections, the more mindful the executive must be of public opinion and the likelihood of electoral penalties. A loss of public support will have less significance for a leader who is secure in office for an extended period of time or who cannot stand for election again. Additionally, the executive may believe

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Political Systems and War Proneness," *Mershon International Studies Review*, 38 (1994): 183-207. See also, Morgan and Campbell, "Domestic Structure, Decisional Constraints, and War."

[22] David L. Rousseau, Christopher Gelpi, Dan Reiter, and Paul K. Huth, "Assessing the Dyadic Nature of the Democratic Peace, 1918-1988," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 90, no. 3 (September 1996), 513; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, *War and Reason: Domestic and International Imperatives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Kurt Gaubatz, *Elections and War: the Electoral Incentive in the Democratic Politics of War and Peace* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Kenneth A. Schultz, "Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War," *International Organization* vol. 53, no. 2 (1999): 233-266; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Randolph Siverson, "War and the Survival of Political Leaders: A Comparative Study of Regime Types and Political Accountability," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 89, no. 4 (December 1995).

[23] For a discussion of this point, see Bruce Russett, *Controlling the Sword* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 87-110.

[24] Gaubatz, *Elections and War*, 138, 140-141.

that there is sufficient time to rebuild public support after pursuing unpopular policies or suffering a foreign policy setback.[25]

Executives in some democracies may exercise a bit more control over the immediacy of electoral vulnerability by controlling the timing of elections. For example, a British prime minister can choose when to call elections, within a five year window, and thus to some extent influence the immediacy of the electoral threat during an international crisis. In contrast, an American president faces elections at fixed intervals and has no control over the immediacy of the electoral threat. Ultimately, however, institutional differences among democracies will have less impact on electoral vulnerability than the independent timing of a crisis within a particular democracy's electoral cycle. It is just as likely that a crisis will arise soon after an election in a presidential system when electoral accountability should have the least effect, and late in the British electoral cycle when the Prime Minister has little time left to reduce electoral vulnerability. In summary, it is important to point out that there is "no consistent effect of electoral politics [or public opinion] on relative belligerence of democratic foreign policy."[26] Public opinion alone tells us very little about when executives exercise self-restraint or pursue the use of force.

Executive vulnerability is not limited to electoral accountability, however. Another measure of the executive's risk of being removed from office is the degree to which he or she depends on retaining the confidence of other political actors, such as the legislature or members of a coalition government. This important feature of democratic regimes has been largely neglected in the democratic peace literature, yet it is a crucial variable in a majority of

[25] Daniel Geller, *Domestic Factors in Foreign Policy: A Cross-National Statistical Analysis* (Cambridge, MA: Shenkman Books, 1985), 63.
[26] Gaubatz, *Elections and War*, chap. 2.

democratic states, specifically those with parliamentary forms of government.[27] In fact, this particular threat to the executive will have a much greater impact on decision making than the nebulous link between public opinion and elections. Unlike elections, the collapse of a governing coalition or a legislative vote of no confidence can have an immediate impact on the executive's tenure in office. As Auerswald notes, an "executive will be especially cautious when domestic institutions contain procedures for immediate challenges to office tenure."[28]

In parliamentary systems, the chief executive and the governing cabinet are selected by parliament, not by a direct popular vote, and must maintain the legislators' confidence to avoid being removed from office. The degree of vulnerability to actually being removed from office varies, however, between parliamentary systems based on the Westminster model, and those that use a proportional representation voting system. In a Westminster system, such as in Great Britain, the plurality voting system is designed to produce a single party majority in the House of Commons. The prime minister is selected by this majority and his or her position is secured by party unity in the legislature until the next elections.[29] This lowers the prime minister's risk of being removed from office for pursuing costly foreign policies or suffering military setbacks.[30]

In contrast, in a proportional representation parliamentary system, like Germany's, numerous smaller parties can stand for and win legislative seats, reducing the likelihood that any one party will win a majority in parliament. As a result, the governing cabinet is usually composed of members of different political parties who align in order to win a confidence vote in the legislature. The chief executive in a coalition government can lose his or her position very easily in this system, if members of the coalition pull out of the government over strong policy

[27] Lijphart, *Democracies.*
[28] Auerswald, "Inward Bound," 472.
[29] Lijphart, *Democracies*, 6-7.
[30] Auerswald, "Inward Bound"; Elman, "Unpacking Democracy."

differences. The chief executive in this system must remain sensitive to the interests of coalition partners, because he is highly vulnerable to being removed from office.[31] Coalition governments in Germany have become increasingly fragile in recent years as party affiliation has declined and with electoral reforms in 1985 that improved the ability of smaller parties to gain seats in the lower house, the Bundestag.[32] The two main parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) have suffered an erosion of core supporters, while the Green Party gained ground at their expense.[33] This has further reduced the number of seats held by the largest party after an election, thereby broadening the influence of coalition partners in governments the dominant party forms. In the fall of 1998 these trends produced a victory for the Social Democrats, who then formed a coalition with the Green Party. For the first time the Greens found themselves at the center of policy making with three cabinet portfolios - the Foreign Ministry, Health, and Environment – and significant leverage over the government.

In contrast to each of these parliamentary systems, the chief executive in a presidential system does not depend on the legislature for gaining or maintaining office. Presidents are elected in direct popular votes, so their institutional positions are much more secure between elections than their counterparts in parliamentary systems, particularly those in proportional representation systems.[34] As a result of these institutional differences in the executive's vulnerability to being removed from office among these three types of democratic systems, we

[31] Lijphart, *Democracies*, 23-30.
[32] Helmut Norpoth, "Elections and Political Change: German 'Sonderweg'?" in *The Federal Republic of Germany at Fifty*, ed. Peter Merkl (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 92; Susan Scarrow, "Political Parties and the Changing Framework of German Electoral Competition," in *Stability and Change in German Elections: How Electorates Merge, Converge or Collide*, eds. Christopher J. Anderson and Carsten Zelle (London: Praeger, 1998), 311.
[33] Peter M. Gluchowski and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "The Erosion of Social Cleavages in Western Germany, 1971-97," in *Stability and Change in German Elections*, 17-29. More recently, support for the Green Party seems to be on the wane. cite
[34] Auerswald, "Inward Bound," 474, 477; Elman, "Unpacking Democracies".

would expect the chief executive in a proportional representation system like Germany to be more risk averse than the chief executives in presidential and Westminster systems.

On the basis of executive vulnerability alone, it is hard to confidently predict the differences between a presidential system and a Westminster system. It is clear that a president cannot be removed from office by the legislature (except under particularly serious circumstances through impeachment), while in principle a prime minister in the British system can.[35] Yet the political party system in Great Britain has a strong centralizing effect on discipline within the majority party. According to Lijphart, "Because the cabinet is composed of a cohesive majority party in the House of Commons, it is normally backed by the majority in the House of Commons, and it can confidently count on staying in office and getting its legislative proposals approved. The cabinet is clearly dominant vis-à-vis Parliament."[36] It is fair to argue then that while the prime minister in this system does face some degree of vulnerability to being removed from office, it is slight, and therefore virtually indistinguishable from the low vulnerability of an American president.

Decision Making Autonomy

The second dimension of institutional vulnerability is "decision making autonomy." This key variable affecting the potential for institutional constraints on the use of force is the degree to which the executive can control the policy agenda and the decision process on questions of war and peace.[37] In concrete terms, to control the crisis decision process the executive must be able to minimize interference from the legislature. As the executive becomes more vulnerable to

[35] An excellent example is the forced resignation of British Prime Minister Anthony Eden in 1957 following the Suez Canal crisis of 1956. David Carlton, *Britain and the Suez Crisis* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1989).
[36] Lijphart, *Democracies*, 7.
[37] Auerswald, "Inward Bound," 474-475; Elman refers to this as the degree of "executive discretion" over decision-making, in "Unpacking Democracy,".

interference, it becomes more difficult to use military force in the face of political opposition.[38] This is not to imply that chief executive's are necessarily more war-prone compared to legislators. A peace-prone executive with significant freedom from legislative involvement can more easily resist pressure to use military force during crises. Yet as authority over decision-making is more widely dispersed, there is an increase in the likelihood that some source of political opposition to the use of force can shape policy choices.

As with the executive's vulnerability to being removed from office, the degree to which chief executives can exercise decision-making autonomy will vary among different types of democratic regimes. Democracies that provide the executive with a significant degree of autonomy may be more likely to use military force than democracies in which decision-making can be substantially influenced by the legislature. Among the three democracies at the center of this study, we would expect Great Britain to be much less constrained than both the United States and Germany, and Germany to be more constrained than the United States. As noted previously, the British prime minister is the leader of the majority party in parliament, which insulates the prime minister from opposition to the use of force that may arise among other parliamentary parties that simply do not have the institutional leverage to impede government policy. The political incentives built into this system also reduce the likelihood of challenges to government policy arising from within the majority party. As Steve Bos points out, the electoral success of members of the main parties depends to a great extent on the party's success and its reputation. Members of parliament from the governing party thus have an incentive to promote efficient decision-making and methods for overcoming the collective action problem within the

[38] Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*; chap. 2; Morgan and Campbell, Domestic Structure, Decisional Constraints, and War,"; Morgan and Schwebach, "Take Two Democracies and Call Me in the Morning,"; Susan Peterson, "How Democracies Differ: Public Opinion, State Structure, and the Lessons of the Fashoda Crisis," *Security Studies* 5 (autumn 1995), 5; Elman, "Conclusion: Testing the Democratic Peace," in *Paths to Peace*, 493.

party if there are disagreements on policy. In foreign policy, this results in Members of Parliament gladly delegating more control over policy to party leaders.[39] Another centralizing feature of the Westminster model is that party members depend on the leadership to move up in the ranks and to advance their own political careers. This means that any challenges to the cabinet's policies from within the governing party can result in severe career penalties for the dissidents.[40] As a result, the prime minister enjoys almost total control over setting the foreign policy agenda and following through on decisions involving the use of force.

In contrast, the American president and the chancellor in the German proportional representation system must always contend with the potential for legislative intrusion in the decision making process. While political leaders and scholars debate the degree of authority the American president should have over war-making,[41] it is clear that Congress does have the constitutional authority to impose severe legislative restrictions on whether and to what extent the United States uses military force abroad.[42] Despite the reluctance of Congress to interfere in foreign policy for political reasons, particularly during times of crisis, Congress retains the authority to do so if sufficient political momentum builds to oppose the use of force in a particular context. This is illustrated quite clearly by Congress' willingness to cut off funds for the use of force in Cambodia and Laos in 1971, to repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution of 1964 that President Johnson had used as his authorization to fight in Vietnam, and ultimately to deny funds for all combat operations in Southeast Asia in 1973.[43]

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[39] Steve D. Bos, "A Two-Level Rational Actor Model: Legislators, Committees and Foreign Policy," 4-10. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, Massachusetts, September 1998.
[40] Ibid., 10.
[41] For a small sample of this large literature, see the contributions in *The Fettered Presidency* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy, 1989).
[42] Louis Fisher, *Presidential War Powers* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1995).
[43] Ibid., 118.

The German chancellor's decision-making autonomy can also be seriously undercut by members of his own governing coalition who represent other political parties in the legislature. According to Tsebelis, coalition government increases the number of "veto players," those "individuals or collective actors whose agreement is required for policy action."[44] Cabinet members in a coalition do not share the same interests in party solidarity and the success of the government as those in a Westminster system, so they are more likely to press rival policy views and risk failure in government action. Because the chancellor's ability to press ahead with policy initiatives and retain power depends on keeping coalition partners from defecting, he must contend with parliamentary opposition if it is reflected by members of his coalition. This provides tremendous institutional leverage to the opponents of force, who may refuse to support the chancellor's preferred policy unless it reflects their concerns. They may ultimately threaten to pull out of the coalition if the chancellor attempts to pursue particular military initiatives.[45] Bos notes that coalition governments are more constrained because the political parties that compose the coalition are not willing to delegate authority over policy making as they are in two-party systems. Backbenchers from all parties want to retain more control over the government and enhance the role of parliamentary committees on important issues, including foreign affairs.[46]

For both the American president and the German chancellor, recognizing where the *political threshold* is between the absence and initiation of legislative action becomes crucial for avoiding losing control over policy making. It is important to recognize that while the legislature always has the potential to assert a role in foreign policy decision-making, the actual degree of

[44] George Tsebelis, "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism," *British Journal of Political Science* 25 (1995), 301.
[45] Lijphart, *Democracies*, 23-30.
[46] Bos, "A Two-Level Rational Actor Model," 6-9.

legislative involvement will vary in the United States and Germany significantly. During periods of crisis, legislative interest and involvement may increase, but it will probably fall well short of dramatic efforts to seriously impede the use of force by legislative restraint on executive decisions or by defections from coalition governments. Yet as a particular crisis becomes more serious and involves higher risks, imposes higher costs, or a positive outcome seems less certain, the use of force may cross a political threshold that triggers dramatic legislative intervention in the policy process.[47] Once the threshold is crossed, legislative action may impose direct constraints on the use of force, as in the Vietnam example noted above. This is what President Lyndon Johnson called the "political sound barrier."[48] Similarly, after the Christmas bombing of 1970, Henry Kissinger explained Congress' restrictions on air power to Vietnamese President Thieu by noting that this operation had "reached the limit of domestic possibilities." It had reached a political threshold Congress felt was intolerable. Once this barrier is broken, the president or chancellor must contend with direct opposition from members of the legislature and the public. Through interaction between the executive and legislators during a crisis it may become clear where the political threshold is that would likely trigger opposition. Concern over losing decision making autonomy may provide a strong enough incentive for the executive to

[47] A number of students of the democratic peace have implicitly recognized this concept of a political threshold distinguishing different types of military force and the increasing likelihood of domestic constraints as the risks involved or the severity of the violence increases. The very definition of war used in the democratic peace literature – conflicts involving at least 1000 battle deaths – is based on the notion that below this death threshold states are involved in lower level uses of violence, often not ordered by central authorities or intended to escalate to full war. In addition, some scholars have argued that covert operations by one democracy against another should not count against the dyadic democratic peace claim because they "imply very different political processes than does a war publicly and officially undertaken. Because they may by undertaken under circumstances when overt war is not acceptable…" See Bruce Russett, "The Fact of Democratic Peace," in *Debating the Democratic Peace*, 69-72. Another threshold argument is that democracies do not wage preventive wars, which are fought simple to prevent a rising rival from eventually surpassing the attacker in relative power, rather than to address a specific dispute or preempt an imminent attack from an adversary. According to Schweller, democratic publics see the unprovoked nature of preventive war as crossing a normative threshold that is intolerable. As a result, democratic political leaders are constrained from fighting this type of conflict. Randall L. Schweller, "Domestic Structure and Preventive War: Are Democracies More Pacific?" *World Politics* (January 1992), 235-269.

avoid crossing the threshold in the first place, which requires avoiding the use of force that would have this effect.

Figure 1 summarizes the variation in institutional vulnerability among a Westminster parliamentary, a proportional representation parliamentary, and a presidential democracy, and the hypothesized effect of this variation on the relative probability that their democratic institutions will impede the use of military force. We would expect democracies with high executive vulnerability and low decision-making autonomy to be the most constrained, and those with low executive vulnerability and high decision-making autonomy to be the least constrained. According to these variables, we should find a continuum of institutional constraints, with Great Britain being the least constrained, Germany being the most constrained, and the United States in the middle (because of its low decision making autonomy combined with low executive vulnerability).

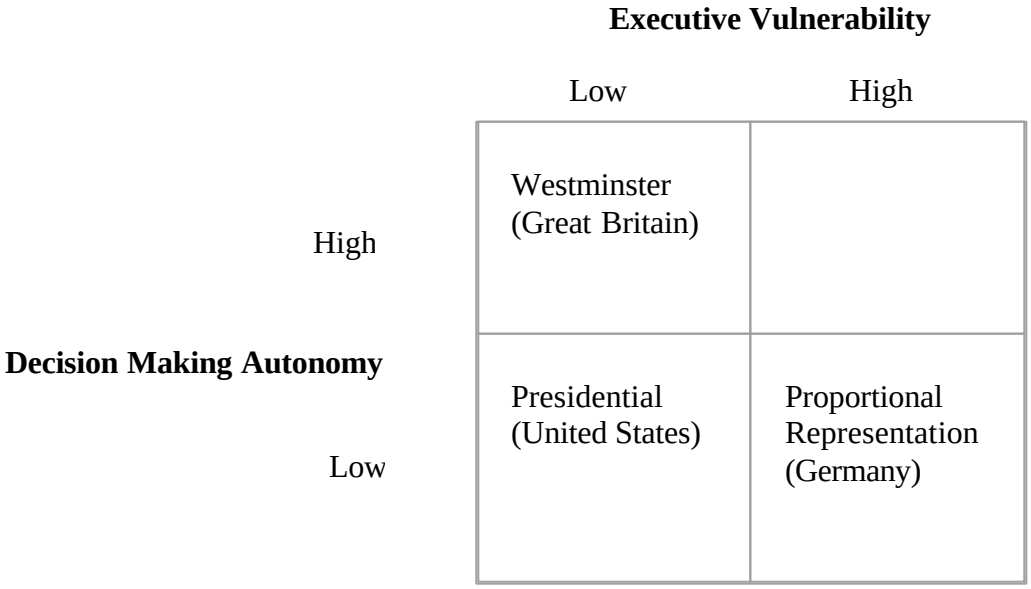

Figure 1. Institutional Vulnerability In Different Democracies

[48] Michael D. Pearlman, *Warmaking and American Democracy: The Struggle Over Military Strategy, 1700 to the Present* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1999), 361, 389.

Before looking at the empirical record on the Kosovo conflict, a final note on institutional analysis is necessary. The emphasis on political institutions here follows the path carved by the broader literature on "new institutional" analysis in political science. The core proposition in this research is that "political institutions define the framework within which politics takes place."[49] According to Krasner, "The preferences of public officials are constrained by the administrative apparatus, the legal order, and enduring beliefs."[50] Institutions not only set the rules for political competition and decision making, they provide resources or leverage for various political actors to shape policy outcomes as well.

It is important to point out, however, that institutions do not "determine" policy outcomes. As Risse-Kappen notes, "state structures do not determine the specific content or direction of policies."[51] Other variables, such as the personal preferences of state leaders, the distribution of hawkish and dovish sentiment in the legislature, public attitudes on or societal interests in a particular foreign policy issue, or cultural norms on using force, may provide the actual political substance of any given policy problem. Institutional analysis alone will never provide a full account of political behavior and outcomes. However, these attitudinal variables say nothing about which political actors can actually play a role in the policy debate, the actual leverage different political actors have over decision making, the political penalties that might be imposed by one set of actors against another, or the incentives political actors have to either act on or not act on their preferences. Institutional analysis can provide important insight into how

[49] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *American Political Science Review* 74 (September 1984), 734-750.
[50] Stephen D. Krasner, "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics* 16 (January 1984), 228. See also, Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); G. John Ikenberry, "Conclusion: An Institutional Approach to American Foreign Economic Policy," in *The State and American Foreign Economic Policy,* eds. G. John Ikenberry, David A. Lake, and Michael Mastanduno (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).
[51] Risse-Kappen, "Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies," 485.

public opinion, opposition parties, legislators and members of a coalition government or cabinet, actually affect the ability or willingness of a state leader to take the risks associated with armed conflict.

Conflict Escalation in Kosovo: Germany, the United States and Great Britain

The previous section presented the concept of institutional vulnerability, with executive vulnerability and decision-making autonomy as its two main components, to argue that the likelihood of institutional constraints on the use of force will vary significantly among different types of democracies. According to this measure, the British Prime Minister should experience the lowest degree of institutional constraints, the German chancellor the greatest degree of institutional constraints, while the American president falls between these two extremes. This section employs this proposition to help explain variation in the willingness of these three major NATO members to escalate the Kosovo conflict from the use of air power alone to the use of ground troops.

The record clearly shows that Great Britain was an early and persistent advocate of the use of ground forces to compel Serbian military and paramilitary troops to withdraw from Kosovo, thereby bringing an end to the mass expulsion of Kosovar civilians from Serbia into Albania and Macedonia, and to end the escalating civil conflict between the Serbian government and the Kosovar rebels. In contrast, Germany vociferously objected to any escalation of the conflict, while Chancellor Schroeder dismissed any discussion of the consequent risk of losing the conflict as a "specifically British debate on war theories."[52] Not only would Germany refuse to participate in an invasion, Schroeder announced that he would veto the option for NATO as

[52] Text of Schroeder's comments in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 987. See also, Eric Schmitt, "Germany's Leader Pledges to Block Combat on Ground," *New York Times* (May 20, 1999), A1; Roger Cohen, "Schroeder's Blunt 'No' to Ground Troops in Kosovo Reflects Depths of German Sensitivities," *New York Times* (May 20, 1999).

well. Early in the crisis President Clinton had explicitly declared that NATO would not mount an invasion of Kosovo with ground forces. However, as weeks of bombing seemed to produce no progress towards NATO's objectives, the American position began to shift. On May 18, 1999, the same day Schroeder said no to ground troops, Clinton declared that NATO "will not take any option off the table,"[53] signaling the possible need for ground forces. More importantly, while the president's rhetoric began to change, behind the scenes his national security team was slowly moving towards accepting the need for a ground assault. By June 2, the administration had concluded that an invasion was the only viable option left to achieve victory, and that it would be carried out "in or outside NATO."[54] In effect, the British, American and German positions can be arrayed across a continuum on the dependent variable in this study: the willingness to abandon the air strikes only strategy and significantly escalate the conflict through the use of ground troops.[55] The question is, does variation in institutional vulnerability among these three democracies help explain the variation in their responses to this vital question of strategy in the Kosovo war?

In theoretical terms we would expect to find Great Britain the least inhibited in the use of force, therefore more willing to escalate, Germany the most inhibited in the use of force, therefore least willing to escalate, and the United States somewhere in between. These theoretical expectations certainly correlate with the actual positions taken on this question. The remainder of this section looks more closely at the domestic politics of the Kosovo war within Germany, America, and Great Britain to show that in fact the evidence supports the theoretical

[53] James Kittfield, *National Journal* (May 22, 1999), 1404.
[54] National Security Advisor Samuel Berger memo to the president. Quoted in Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 160.
[55] Steve Chan makes the important argument that democratic peace research should not be limited to simply examining the propensity of democratic states to engage in war. "War is just one extreme segment of a long spectrum of organized violent activities." Democracy may also have an important impact on "the *scope*, *severity*,

claim advanced in this paper. The findings presented below have much larger implications than simply offering a particular explanation for NATO war making in this one case. Because NATO as an organization uses consensus decision-making procedures, it depends on agreement, or at least the absence of overt opposition, from all its members before it can initiate the use of force or make significant changes in strategy while force is being used. NATO's missions will be limited by those states that, because of domestic opposition that threatens executive tenure or legislative intervention, refuse to sanction a particular policy.

Germany

The most decisive impediment to the escalation of NATO's war in Kosovo, within the context of NATO as an institution, was the persistent and vigorous objection of Germany. German reluctance can in turn be traced directly to domestic politics. Specifically, it is rooted in Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's vulnerability to opposition within his own government and the danger of quickly losing his hold on power should NATO proceed with the use of ground troops. Given Germany's refusal since World War II to contemplate the use of military force outside the strict confines of NATO collective defense,[56] it is notable that the German government and the German public not only approved of the NATO air campaign, but also agreed to send forces into combat for the first time since 1945. More surprising still is the support for the air campaign provided by the Green Party leadership within Schroeder's coalition government. The Green Party's traditional views on international relations were grounded solidly in strict pacifism and anti-NATO protest.[57] In the Kosovo crisis, however, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer,

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and duration of wars." Steve Chan, "Democracy and War: Some Thoughts on Future Research Agenda," *International Interactions*, vol. 18, no. 3 (1993), 207; emphasis in original.

[56] Hans W. Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?" *Survival* vol. 42, no. 2 (summer 2000): 56-80.

[57] Margit Mayer and John Ely, *The German Greens: Paradox Between Movement and Party* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

the senior Green Party member of Schroeder's government, was an unwavering advocate of the use of air power to stop the persecution of Kosovar Albanians by the Serbian government. But what German domestic politics also demonstrate is the clear political threshold between air power and a ground assault that, had it been crossed, would have put Schroeder's government and the fate of his Social Democratic Party in jeopardy of losing power. It was this specific fear that persuaded Schroeder to make his bold pledge that Germany would block any effort by NATO to escalate the conflict with ground forces.

For Chancellor Schroeder, participation in the Kosovo campaign was important for two reasons. It marked the coming of age of a united Germany that insists on being treated as a "normal" state because it can act like one, particularly when the need to use military force arises. Second, participation in the conflict was justified simply because NATO allies, Germany in particular, had a moral obligation to "contain the on-going human catastrophe" there.[58] For Schroeder, participation in this campaign was a crucial test for Germany. In a speech to the German Bundestag, he proclaimed,

> Given our German history, we cannot leave any doubt about our reliability, determination and steadfastness. Germany's integration in the western community of nations is part and parcel of our raison d'etre. We do not want a separate lane for Germany. And we must recognize that Germany's role has changed following the collapse of state socialism. We cannot shirk our responsibility.[59]

The humanitarian goals of the air campaign also proved decisive in generating support within the Green Party and with the Foreign Minister.[60] It also produced and sustained majority support for intervention from the German public until the end of the conflict.[61]

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[58] Interview with Lally Weymouth, *Newsweek* (April 26, 1999), 33.
[59] Text in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 866.
[60] Josef Joffe, "A Peacenik Goes to War," *New York Times Magazine* (May 30, 1999), 30.
[61] In early April 1999, over 60% of the German public supported the air campaign. *Time International* (April 19, 1999), 37. By mid-May, after nearly two months of bombing, approval had slipped; 54% still approved of the operation, a number that remained steady into the first week of June. Among European countries, only Great

While Germany remained steadfast in its support of the air campaign, several features of the domestic politics of the Kosovo war revealed that escalation beyond air power alone would put the government on dangerous political ground. Majority public opinion in Germany and the opposition Christian Democrats in parliament opposed a ground invasion.[62] This opposition was of little consequence, however, when compared to the most dangerous political condition of all: any move to escalate the war would rupture the Social Democrat-Green coalition and bring down the Schroeder government. Driving this danger was an increasingly bitter split within the Green Party between Foreign Minister Fischer's faction, which supported the air power strategy, and the more traditional pacifist faction that opposed continued bombing. An early sign of the growing dissent within the party was an Easter weekend protest march that drew 50,000 participants.[63] But as long as Fischer refused to sanction the use of ground forces he could maintain majority support within the party and defeat any challenges to his leadership and policies. This support was most severely tested in a showdown between the two factions during a Green Party congress held on May 13, 1999. Anti-war demonstrators nearly shut the convention down, and Fischer himself was hit with a paint bomb inside the meeting hall before the party's vote on the war policy. During the ruckus gathering, Fischer pleaded with his party to "not cut me off at the knees" by calling for an end to the bombing campaign. Party delegates finally voted 444 to 318 to pass a compromise resolution that supported NATO's campaign, yet which also urged a temporary NATO cease-fire to facilitate peace negotiations.[64]

The Green Party leadership had a strong interest in not defecting from the government; the party could have a much greater influence on German policies in Kosovo and other important

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Britain, with 67% approval, and France, with 62% approval, polled higher public support than Germany. "Der Krieg," *Die Zeit* (June 2, 1999), 10.

[62] James Kittfield, "Victory in Kosovo may be Through Berlin," *National Journal* (May 1, 1999), 1180.

[63] *Time International* (April 19, 1999).

party issues, such as nuclear energy and immigration, if they were within the government rather than in opposition. As a spokesperson for the national party leadership advised the delegates during the debate, the party should not "play Russian roulette" with the coalition.[65] But to keep the challenge from the anti-war faction in check, the party had to draw a firm line between air strikes with negotiations and a ground invasion. As a Green Party leader explained, "If we left the coalition, the policy wouldn't change and we'd have no influence whatsoever on government policies…But there are limits to what you can accept in any coalition."[66] In the face of such vigorous party opposition to air strikes alone, anything beyond the current strategy was politically untenable. The Greens also knew that they would lose ground in eastern Germany to the ex-communist PDS party if the government approved of the use of ground troops. In eastern Germany only 40% of the public supported the air campaign, compared to 64% in western Germany. The PDS, which was the most vocal party in opposition to the Kosovo war, stood to gain Green Party voters in the east, thereby undercutting the Greens recent surge in electoral strength and its role in the government. This was another reason for the Green leadership to resist the use of ground troops.[67]

In order to prevent the Greens from bolting the coalition, Chancellor Schroeder knew that he had to prevent NATO from escalating the conflict. His political options were further restricted by the opposition CDU's unwillingness to form a "grand coalition" if the Social Democrat-Green government fell. The CDU had expressed its preference for calling new elections rather than joining the Schroeder government.[68] Therefore, at each crucial step

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[64] "A Green Light for German Foreign Minister," *Time International* (May 24, 1999), 31.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Andrew Nagorski, "Spoiling for a Fight," *Newsweek International* (April 26, 1999), 28.
[67] "The War Divides," *The Economist* (April 24, 1999), 50; "Joschka Fischer: a Sterner Shade of Green," *The Economist* (May 15, 1999), 54.
[68] The War Divides," *The Economist*.

Schroeder's main priority was to beat back any pressure from within the alliance for the use of ground troops. This included the British position from early in the conflict, and America's apparent moves toward planning for the use of ground troops at the end of May and the beginning of June. The first major challenge for the German government came a month after the bombing campaign began, during the April 1999 NATO summit meeting in Washington. British Foreign Minister Robin Cook had visited the White House before the summit in an effort to convince the Clinton administration that the alliance must begin to consider the ground force option. During the summit itself, Prime Minister Blair repeatedly announced, "all options are always kept under review."[69] The unflagging objection of Chancellor Schroeder, and America's fear that Germany would publicly break with NATO over Kosovo policy if ground forces became a serious agenda item, marginalized any serious discussion of escalation. During the summit, Schroeder proclaimed decisively, "The debate on ground forces is no longer on the table."[70] In a press conference President Clinton backed up this statement by disavowing any consideration of escalation, pointedly noting that the current air campaign is what "has the unity of the alliance."[71] Chancellor Schroeder, in a joint news conference with President Clinton on May 6, drove home the point that they both agreed, "there is no reason whatsoever to now think about a change in the NATO strategy…"[72]

Near the end of May, however, after eight weeks of apparently unsuccessful bombing, Germany faced ominous signs that the ground force option was being taken seriously, specifically by the United States. On May 18, President Clinton made his announcement that all

[69] *Time* (May 3, 1999), 56.
[70] James Kittfield, "Victory in Kosovo May be Through Berlin."
[71] Transcript of president's news conference, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (May 3, 1999): 705-707. In a "stormy discussion of ground troops between Clinton and Blair" the president insisted that the ground troop option not be broached during the Washington summit. Clark, *Waging Modern War,* 268.
[72] Transcript in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 947.

options for Kosovo are open, while Great Britain continued to argue that NATO must consider the use of ground troops to achieve its objectives. In unmistakably blunt language, Chancellor Schroeder not only declared that Germany opposed changing alliance strategy, but that Germany would actually veto any use of ground forces, preventing NATO from taking this step. This was in reaction to the clear signs that his coalition would collapse if NATO escalated. On May 19, at a news conference at NATO headquarters, Schroeder proclaimed that the "Federal Government…rejects the sending of ground troops, that is the German position, the German position supported unanimously by the members of the German Parliament." He stressed that this position "is also the present position of NATO, that is to say the strategy of an Alliance can only be changed if all the parties involved agree on it, so I trust that NATO strategy is not going to be changed…I am against any change of NATO strategy."[73] In a further testy exchange with a reporter, Schroeder refused to discuss whether Germany was willing to then risk losing the war because of its position against sending ground troops. The United States took the threat of a German veto so seriously that as it began examining the ground force option more closely, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger noted that the United States might have to invade Kosovo outside the institutional framework of NATO. In a June 2, 1999 memo to the president, Berger said, "a consensus in NATO is valuable. But it is not a sine qua non. We want to move within NATO, but it can't prevent us from moving."[74]

The United States

Like Germany, the United States began the Kosovo war with a firm position against the use of ground troops. In a televised speech on March 24, the first day of the bombing, President

[73] Text available in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 986-87. See also Eric Schmitt, "Germany's Leader Pledges to Block Combat on Ground," *New York Times* (May 20, 1999), A1; Roger Cohen, "Schroeder's Blunt 'No' to Ground Troops in Kosovo Reflects Depths of German Sensitivities," *New York Times* (May 20, 1999).
[74] Quoted in Daalder and O'Hanlon, "*Winning Ugly*, 160.

Clinton declared, "I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war."[75] The Clinton administration took the same position the previous fall as Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Ambassador to the UN, was negotiating the "October agreement" with the Milosevic regime. NATO officials hoped this agreement would be the basis for a cease-fire in the Kosovo civil conflict and for the withdrawal of Serbian military forces from the province. During the negotiations the American government decided that there would be no NATO troops deployed in Kosovo to enforce the agreement. The American government even made an effort to prevent the North Atlantic Council, the political decision making body within NATO, from merely discussing ground troops as enforcers of the October agreement.[76] In an apparent shift in the U.S. position just before the NATO summit in April 1999, Clinton declared that it "is a wise and prudent course" for NATO Secretary General Javier Solana to "revise and update" NATO's assessment of the forces required to enter Kosovo with or without Serbian acquiescence. Immediately, however, he denied that NATO was actually planning to use ground troops in Kosovo.[77] On May 18, nearly two months into the war and in the face of mounting criticism over the administration's declared position against ground troops, Clinton again seemed to signal a shift in the American position when he announced, "we have not and will not take any option off the table."[78] Finally, in a meeting on June 2, Clinton's top national security officials concluded that if victory

[75] Secretary of State Madeleine Albright confirmed this position during an interview on the CBS program *Face the Nation* on March 28, when asked for her reaction to the British plan for a protective force in Kosovo. "President Clinton has said that we have no intention of sending in ground forces. Our only intention has been and plan has been to send in forces in a peaceful climate, and that is if there is a peace agreement. So we have no intention of sending in ground forces….of any kind." Text in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 755.
[76] Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 52-54.
[77] Transcript of joint news conference with President Clinton and NATO Secretary General Solana, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (May 3, 1999): 705-707.
[78] James Kittfield, *National Journal* (May 22, 1999), 1404. For full text of the president's answer, see Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 982.

depended on a ground assault, the time had come to present a plan for the president's approval.[79] As noted above, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger argued that victory in Kosovo was more important than keeping the alliance together over this issue. America was going to win "in or outside NATO."[80] While the Clinton administration finally accepted the need for ground troops, General Clark notes, "every measure of escalation was excruciatingly weighed."[81]

Maintaining alliance unity was certainly one reason for America's reluctance to give the ground force option serious consideration. Until the beginning of June 1999, the United States would not consider crossing the political threshold that was likely to rupture alliance consensus on the Kosovo war. But there is abundant evidence to suggest that the Clinton administration saw the deployment of ground forces to the area as crossing a risky political threshold on the domestic front as well. President Clinton was not the least vulnerable to being removed from office over this issue like Chancellor Schroeder was, particularly since he was in his second and final term in office. Yet he did have to worry about losing control of the decision-making agenda. He would not pay the ultimate political price if he pursued escalation, but he would have to contend with congressional involvement in Kosovo policy and the uncertainty that would bring. As a result, he was ultimately willing to move toward the ground force option, yet only after it appeared that not using ground troops would lead to a terrible foreign policy failure. The costs of this failure for American and NATO prestige and Clinton's own political legacy were considered intolerable, and it was worth running the risks associated with losing some agenda control to Congress to prevail in this conflict.

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[79] Steven Erlanger, "NATO Was Closer to Ground War than is Widely Realized," *New York Times* (November 11, 1999), 5.
[80] Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 160.
[81] Clark, *Waging Modern War*, xxiv.

The administration first demonstrated its sensitivity to the domestic political threshold over ground forces in October 1998, when it refused to consider the use of NATO troops for enforcement of the "October agreement." Secretary of Defense Cohen bluntly admitted to the Senate Armed Services Committee that the administration took this position specifically because officials feared that Congress would reject the option, and it would probably never make it out of committee.[82] U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke was instructed specifically not to pursue a large ground force presence in the agreement, which might necessitate a NATO presence.[83] The president even refused to allow U.S. forces to participate in the "extraction force" in Macedonia, which was responsible for rescuing the unarmed peace "verifiers" sent to Kosovo to monitor the October agreement.[84] General Clark also received a "signal of prevailing attitudes in Congress" against the use of NATO troops in Kosovo during a visit from a congressional delegation in September 1998.[85] Similarly, during the Rambouillet negotiations over Kosovo, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright repeatedly stressed that if U.S. troops were to play a role enforcing a political settlement it would only be in a "permissive environment."[86]

During the war, the domestic political threshold between supporting air power and resisting ground troops was clear in both public opinion and congressional sentiment, which the administration recognized explicitly. According to one official involved in the crisis, "The administration was operating on the assumption ground troops would raise this to a new level,

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[82] "U.S. Policy Regarding Kosovo." Senate Committee on Armed Services, 106 Cong., 1 Session, April 15, 1999. General Clark also notes that Secretary Cohen was "firmly against U.S. troops in Kosovo for peacekeeping, because Congress would have been extremely skeptical and it would become an immediate and divisive issue in November elections." Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 137-38.

[83] Daalder and O'Hanlan, *Winning Ugly*, 53. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright confirmed that U.S. troops would take no role during a press conference at NATO headquarters on October 8, 1998. See Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 286.

[84] Michael Hirsh and John Barry, "How We Stumbled into War," *Newsweek* (April 12, 1999), 38.

[85] Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 129.

and we hadn't prepared [the] public for that…"[87] Polling data during the war showed that the air campaign alone had failed to capture the public's attention; two months into the war only 8% of Americans surveyed in a Gallup poll identified Kosovo as the United States' most significant problem (compared to 37% during the Gulf War of 1991).[88] As long as public attention remained low, the administration could pursue the conflict without the possible ramifications of a disapproving electorate. However, even if the president initiated a ground offensive, any subsequent increase in public attention and a negative turn in opinion alone could not directly affect the president's prosecution of the war or his political future. The president had already faced the American electorate for the second and last time in 1996. Yet the administration feared that escalation would spark a national debate over the war and embolden members of Congress who would feel more confident in challenging the president's policy.[89] "As the air campaign got underway," notes General Clark in his memoirs, "political considerations came to dominate Washington."[90] It was not public opinion primarily, but the prospects of congressional intervention, which would cause the administration the most political difficulty. For example, Clark asserts, when the president ruled out ground troops in his televised speech at the beginning of the bombing campaign, it was a statement thought "necessary to undercut Congressional opposition."[91] According to Clark, "Had the Administration opted for a ground campaign, then almost certainly there would have been criticism of the plan, its costs, and risks. An authorization vote in Congress would have been demanded, a hurdle whose risks were probably

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[86] See remarks on January 29, 1999, quoted in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 475. President Clinton supported this position in remarks during a trip to Guatemala on March 11, 1999. See *The Kosovo Conflict*, 613.
[87] Daalder and O'Hanlan, *Winning Ugly*, 97.
[88] William Powers, "The Perils of Disengagement," *National Journal* (June 12, 1999), 1604.
[89] Gaubatz notes that negative public opinion rarely has a direct effect on the president between elections, but that it frequently bolsters opposition in Congress that can produce a constraining effect on the use of force. Gaubatz, *Elections and War*, chap. 3.
[90] Ibid., 440, 306.

not fully appreciated in Europe."[92] The administration even feared that Congress might cut off funds for the Kosovo operation unless the president ruled out ground forces completely.[93] Ultimately, the uncertainty over what Congress would do with the question of escalation put the administration in a difficult position. The best way to avoid a public debate and a negative reaction from Congress was to keep the prosecution of the war below the ground war threshold.

The strongest evidence that there was a political threshold between air power and a ground invasion comes from Congress itself. This is most significant in the American context because Congress, unlike public opinion, has the institutional leverage to have a direct impact on the president's ability to prosecute the war. By a vote of 58 to 41, the Senate authorized air strikes the day before the war began.[94] While a majority within the Senate approved of this option, members of both parties, in both houses of Congress, demanded that the president seek congressional approval before escalating the conflict with ground forces. According to Democratic members of Congress, during a meeting with a large bipartisan delegation on April 29, the president promised to meet this demand. Senator Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) noted that the president "made it clear that he would not seek ground troops without giving the Congress the time to pass a resolution authorizing these ground troops…. I consider that a major concession."[95] Senator Durbin, who was ready to introduce a bill that would require a

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[91] Richard Cobbold, "Interview with General Wesley K. Clark," *RUSI Journal* (December 2001).
[92] Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 427-28.
[93] Daalder and O'Hanlan, *Winning Ugly*, 97.
[94] Helen Dewar, "Kosovo Policy Further Strains Relations Between Clinton, Hill," *The Washington Post* (March 27, 1999), A5.
[95] Eliza Newlin Carney, "At Last Congress Enters the War Zone," *National Journal* (May 1, 1999), 1174. Not all members of Congress were reluctant to support a ground assault, of course. Senators Richard Lugar (R-IN.) and John McCain (R-AZ) were vocal critics of the president's unwillingness to consider escalation of the conflict. On April 1, Sen. Lugar published a blistering editorial in *The Washington Post* attacking the administration's unwillingness to consider using ground troops. Sen. McCain's most vivid remarks on this issue are found in the text of Senate debate from May 3-4, 1999 on a McCain sponsored resolution authorizing "all necessary means" to accomplish allied objectives in Kosovo. The resolution was defeated.

congressional vote on ground troops, put this measure on hold because he believed Clinton would follow through on this promise.

In the House of Representatives the political threshold between air power and ground troops was dramatically illustrated in votes on four different resolutions taken on April 29. Each of these resolutions was pushed by Representative Tom Campbell (R-Ca.), who argued that Congress has a constitutional obligation to weigh in on decisions to use military force of this nature.[96] Of the four votes, the two most extreme measures were defeated. By a vote of 2 to 427 the House defeated a full declaration of war against Yugoslavia. Then the House turned down a measure calling for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region. Notably, over 30% of the House actually approved of an immediate withdrawal (139 in favor, 290 in opposition). The most telling votes came on resolutions to support the air campaign and to require the president to seek congressional approval before introducing ground forces. The vote on air strikes deadlocked at 213 to 213. But when the question of ground troops was introduced, the votes shifted to 249 to 180 in favor of requiring the president to seek congressional approval before escalating the conflict. While the air campaign did not generate majority support in favor or in opposition, the ground force option was clearly a step that a majority of the House (57%) wanted to have a role in.[97] As noted above, this was a position shared by a large number of Senate Republicans and Democrats as well.

While the likely outcome of any congressional vote on the use of ground troops is unclear and was never actually tested, a congressional vote on this step would clearly present a political risk to the president. If air strikes alone could not muster a majority in the House, it is doubtful that the more dangerous ground force option could. More importantly, the president had a strong

[96] Pat Towell, "Congress to Enter Kosovo Debate," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* (April 10, 1999), 849.

interest in avoiding the uncertainty of a congressional vote in the first place. The safer political option was to keep the use of force below the ground troops threshold, thereby avoiding the domestic challenges to his policy that would be produced if the threshold were crossed. It was only when the administration realized it risked losing the war altogether that the president was willing to accept the political risks of escalation.

Great Britain

From the beginning of NATO's deliberations over what should be done about the roiling civil conflict in Kosovo, Great Britain was a persistent advocate of the use of force. In fact, at no time in the months preceding the war or during the air campaign itself did Britain demonstrate even a hint of reluctance to employ military force. As early as June 1998, a full nine months before NATO's war against Serbia began, Great Britain was the first and only NATO member to suggest this option. By August 1998, the British cabinet agreed to play a major role in any NATO action, to include the deployment of a large ground force.[98] During the war, Great Britain routinely set itself apart as the only NATO member ready and willing to support a ground assault to achieve the alliance's objectives. Some British observers of the Blair government even worried that Great Britain was isolating itself within NATO by pushing so adamantly, and so publicly, for a ground assault.[99]

In early April, just two weeks into the war, General Clark briefed Prime Minister Blair on the disposition of Serbian forces in Kosovo, the on-going expulsion of Kosovar Albanians, and

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[97] Alison Mitchell, "In 2 Votes, House Challenges President over Kosovo," *New York Times* (April 29, 1999), A1; see also "Roll-Call Vote on Ground Troops," *New York Times* (April 30, 1999).
[98] Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 35, 54.
[99] For example, see Andrew Stephen, "An Allergic Reaction to a Ground War," *New Statesman* (May 24, 1999), 14. The fear of being isolated within NATO helps account for a softening of Britain's public position on this question after discussion of a ground offensive was negated during the Washington summit. For example, see remarks by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook on May 20, 1999 during a press conference: "There is no rift between the United States and the United Kingdom. We are absolutely together. We both share the objectives in this." Text in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 999-1000.

the effects of the air campaign then underway. The briefing cemented Blair's strong support for an invasion of Kosovo.[100] According to Clark, the "British were leaning hard to push ahead for planning the ground option. The Prime Minister was determined to do all required to win."[101] On April 21, two days before the NATO summit, Blair flew to Washington to meet with Clinton administration officials and press the case for a ground assault.[102] During the summit, the American and German governments refused to put the ground assault option on the official agenda. Nevertheless, the British delegation lobbied other participants on the pressing need to begin planning for an "invasion without consent" from the Milosevic regime, and for softening up the battlefield for the introduction of ground troops in a "nonpermissive environment." Despite these efforts, the final summit communiqué never mentioned the possibility of an invasion of Kosovo; it focused instead on NATO unity around the current air strategy.[103] On May 20, while doubts over the air campaign's effectiveness mounted, British Foreign Minister Robin Cook flew to Washington to again lobby for escalating the conflict, but he failed to move the Clinton administration further down the road toward this option. On May 27, Defense Ministers from the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy met in Cologne, Germany, and the British again made the strongest arguments in favor of an invasion, pledging 54,000 soldiers for the offensive. The Blair government backed up this pledge by

[100] Daalder and O'Hanlan, *Winning Ugly*, 132.
[101] Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 264, 261.
[102] Ibid., 137.
[103] French Foreign Minister Jospin provided a blunt description of the British effort during a press conference on May 21: "Already at the NATO summit in Washington, the British were advocating the preparation of a ground offensive, while saying that they hoped it wouldn't need to come to that. But at the summit the 19 countries of the Alliance decided to persevere with their present strategy. They didn't decide on a ground offensive." Text in Auerswald and Auerswald, *The Kosovo Conflict*, 1003. See also, "Planners Study a Ground War," *Time* (May 3, 1999), 56.

acknowledging that 30,000 letters had already been prepared calling up reservists to support the assault.[104]

During the long debate over NATO's strategy in Kosovo, the United States and Germany may have viewed Great Britain, at best, as a gadfly, at worst, as an unsettling partner whose persistence held the potential to upset alliance unity on the air campaign. Yet Britain was the only alliance member to support the growing ranks of critics who argued that ground force was the only option suitable for achieving the objectives NATO had agreed on for the Kosovo war. Despite the greater military risks entailed in a ground assault, the Blair government never hesitated to champion this option. An important reason for Prime Minister Blair's willingness to run large military risks was his insulation from the kinds of political risks faced by his counterparts in Germany and the United States. Blair did enjoy higher public support for the intervention in general (75%) and the ground assault option in particular (66%) than both Schroeder and Clinton.[105] But like the other alliance leaders, the government could not guarantee that public support would remain high once the ground offensive began to produce British casualties. Even if public support dropped dramatically in Great Britain, Blair still would enjoy much greater political freedom than either Schroeder or Clinton. Blair's Labor Party held a 179 seat majority in the 659 member House of Commons, providing him with sustainable protection from the opposition Conservative Party should its members try to restrict the use of ground troops in any way.[106] And because Blair was in the middle of his allowable five-year term in office, the Labor Party had over two years to rebuild public support before having to call parliamentary elections. Blair's ultimate confidence in the success of a NATO ground assault

[104] Daalder and O'Hanlan, *Winning Ugly*, 157. See also Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 330.
[105] "NATO Members are Standing Firm on Kosovo, but some Cracks have begun to Appear," *Time International* (April 19, 1999), 37.
[106] Peter Kellner, "Blair's Balkan Edge," *New York Times*; Daalder and O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly*, 132.

produced confidence that when the public went to the polls it would no longer be focusing on the British casualties that might be incurred to achieve this success. As a result, Blair felt free to press for an escalation of the Kosovo conflict and even fight on the ground without the risk of losing office or control of the policy agenda.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this article has been to apply insights from the democratic peace literature to NATO's recent experience with war making in Kosovo and to draw implications for NATO's future security role. It is obvious that the democratic character of the NATO allies did not prevent consensus on the use of military force to achieve its objectives. NATO waged an intense air campaign that inflicted thousands of casualties on Serbian military forces and destroyed a wide range of targets supporting the Serbian economic and military infrastructure. NATO persisted in this air campaign even when mounting civilian casualties from NATO attacks and the bombing of the Chinese embassy tested allied unity and popular tolerance for the war in Europe and the United States.

Despite NATO's ability to politically sustain the air war, this article has highlighted two important dimensions of democratic politics that had a crucial impact on NATO operations. The first dimension is the concept of a political threshold that distinguishes among different degrees or types of military force, based on the level of risk involved or the level or type of violence inflicted on the adversary, both military and civilian. In objective terms, using ground troops in Kosovo significantly raised the risks of allied casualties compared to air power alone. But the political effects of this threshold are most important for explaining NATO's strategic choices during the war. As weeks of bombing passed with no apparent effects on the Milosevic regime, as NATO leaders faced increasing criticism for not considering the strategic rationale for using

ground troops, and as the clear contrast between the escalated use of air power and the intensifying ethnic cleansing crisis on the ground became an uncomfortable and glaring reality, the alliance as a whole never took serious action to implement this step. This reluctance to use ground troops was firmly rooted in the anticipated domestic political consequences of escalation for the Clinton administration in the United States and the Schroeder government in Germany. As long as these leaders could keep the use of force below the ground troops threshold, they would reduce their vulnerability to domestic opposition. In the end, as a consequence of Germany's anticipated veto of escalation, the use of ground troops in this conflict likely would have been pursued outside the formal NATO structure. This clearly would have dealt a terrible blow to NATO solidarity and its future viability.

The second dimension of democratic politics and military force highlighted in this article is the importance of institutional variation among different types of democratic regimes. While all democratic leaders are accountable to an electorate, must periodically stand for election, and contend with legislative opposition, their vulnerability to being removed from office or losing control of policy making will differ dramatically depending on the institutional character of each democratic state. As General Clark noted from his vantage point at NATO headquarters, "in all allied countries Kosovo was a domestic political issue, but from different angles."[107] Prime Minister Blair of Great Britain was the most thoroughly insulated politically of the three leaders discussed in this study. He was in no danger of being removed from office by members of his own party, and his Labor government was supported by such a large majority in parliament that he never feared interference in Kosovo policy from the legislature. As a result, he had tremendous freedom to argue for a ground assault and weather the risks that would have been produced had NATO initiated this option. President Clinton could not be removed from office

over Kosovo, so his decision-making was free from concerns over his own political future. He did have to worry about congressional activism, however, that could potentially place serious restraints on how he managed this foreign policy problem. As a result, he had a strong interest in keeping the war below the ground assault threshold to keep Congress relatively quiescent on Kosovo. This helps explain his reluctance to use ground forces until it appeared that NATO risked losing the war unless it escalated. Chancellor Schroeder of Germany was the most vulnerable political leader of the three. Escalation would not only stimulate legislative opposition that would greatly complicate Germany's relationship with other NATO members as they worked through the Kosovo problem, Schroeder also faced the very real prospects of losing power if his coalition government collapsed over the issue. As a result, Schroeder was a persistent critic of using ground forces, going so far as to declare that Germany would veto any effort to pursue this option.[108]

This argument on the effects of democratic institutional variation on allied war making is not limited to NATO operations. It applies equally to the European Union. Ironically, the Kosovo conflict has had the effect of reinvigorating the European effort to forge a "common foreign and security policy" that would provide the EU with the capability to conduct security operations without the United States and the entire NATO structure.[109] According to the German

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[107] Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 427-28.

[108] The logic of institutional constraints in this crisis is the most convincing in the cases of the United States and Germany. However, it is necessary to recognize that the Kosovo conflict provides an imperfect test of the logic presented here for the British government. This case would provide a better test of the argument if Prime Minister Blair faced strong parliamentary opposition and negative public opinion yet advocated hawkish policies nonetheless, insulated by the institutional arrangement of the British political system. Likewise, it would have been a stronger test of the German system if Chancellor Schroeder personally was a strong and vocal supporter of escalation to a ground invasion, but was forced to withhold German support in NATO because of domestic politics. Despite these drawbacks in case selection, the Kosovo war is the only case we have for testing various arguments about NATO war-making with substantial empirical evidence. The argument about institutional variation and the domestic politics of NATO military operations still provides a valuable basis for thinking about NATO's future military role.

[109] Elizabeth Pond, "Kosovo: Catalyst for Europe," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 4 (autumn 1999), 77; Reginald Dale, "The Search for a Common Foreign Policy," *Europe* (July-August 1999): 25-29. For more details on Europe's efforts to institutionalize a Common Foreign and Security Policy over the past five years, see Michael

weekly *Der Spiegel*, "[A]fter ten weeks of war in Yugoslavia, one thing has become clear across Europe: the hegemony of the U.S. and NATO is limited as a model for the future."[110] In any discussion of a European defense identity, most are quick to point out that NATO remains the cornerstone of European security, so European initiatives must not undermine the institutional integrity and military capabilities of NATO. It is also clear, however, that European states want options for security initiatives that do not depend on the United States. As the EU pursues this goal by building appropriate institutions and military capabilities, NATO's experience in Kosovo suggests that the link between domestic politics and the institutional characteristics of its individual members will have a far-reaching impact on the potential of this EU project as well.

Alexander Rupp, "The Institutional Structure of the Common Foreign and Security Policy After Amsterdam," *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol. 2, no. 1 (March 1999).

[110] Quoted in Jeffrey Gedmin, "Continental Drift: A Europe United in Spirit Against the United States," *The New Republic* (June 28, 1999), 23; see also Walter Schilling, "Changing Course in the New Germany," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 3 (summer 1999): 135-143.