Sending Credible Signals:
NATO's Role in Stabilizing Balkan Conflicts

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By

Erik Yesson

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1. Introduction.

Under what conditions can NATO members restore stability to regions torn apart by war and internal conflict? When is military force necessary to do so? This paper explains how the NATO allies stabilized internal conflicts in post-cold war Europe.

This study probes focues on NATO's security role in the Balkans after 1992. The Balkans generated successive waves of instability after the cold war. NATO members exerted considerable diplomatic and military pressure to quell conflict in the region. Today southeastern Europe is largely stable. Yet NATO members did not achieve these results easily or quickly. NATO's successive Balkan operations represent an uneven and puzzling record of success. NATO states emerged from the cold war stronger than ever. But state and non-state actors routinely defied threats issued by alliance members seeking to impose stability on a turbulent region.

This was seen most vividly during the civil war in Bosnia-Hercegovina, when on several occasions NATO members threatened military action only to see Bosnian Serb authorities continue their attacks. In October 1998 NATO military threats did pressure Yugoslav President Slobodan Miloševic into permitting a peace monitoring force, led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to enter Kosovo. But when conflict erupted in the province only months later, NATO members made even more transparent threats that failed to move the Yugoslav president. While NATO states ultimately silenced the guns in both Bosnia and Kosovo, the question remains: Under what conditions will threats issued by NATO members lead to enforceable and stable peace settlements in out-of-area conflicts?

This study uses bargaining theory to explain the divergent outcomes achieved by NATO states as they pursued coercive diplomacy in the Balkans. It argues that resolving out-of-area conflict depends on both the preferences of parties to internal disputes and the nature

of the threats NATO states employ. The paper links together preferences and threats to provide a consistent explanation across all the cases in which NATO states sought impose their will. In the most intractable Balkan conflicts, NATO restored stability only after the allies used military force and threatened the domestic political base of stronger parties that blocked an agreement.

This study unfolds in five major sections. Part one briefly summarizes the empirical and theoretical literature on NATO's involvement in Balkans and identifies the key puzzles that remain. Part two outlines the research design and methodology employed. Part three discusses relevant theoretical models and formulates competing explanatory hypotheses that can unravel the puzzle of NATO's uneven success in the Balkans. Part four draws comparisons across seven Balkan cases to specify the conditions under which NATO states were able to send credible signals and put an end to internal conflicts. The fifth section offers a brief summary of the research and explores the policy implications of the findings.

2. Understanding Conflict and Cooperation in the Balkans

Research on post-cold war Balkan conflicts falls into three distinct categories. One is an empirical literature detailing the evolution of Balkan conflicts and the international response to them.[1] Studies in this genre offer detailed case histories of specific Balkan conflicts and examine the surrounding the international community's efforts to bring those wars to an end.

The second category comprises an analytic literature that employs theoretical and conceptual constructs to explain important aspects of Balkan crises.[2] This literature addresses puzzles about the political effects of tactical air power, intra-alliance bargaining, and war termination, among others.

A third category of work uses Balkan crises as part of a comparative case methodology to test broader hypotheses about international conflict.[3] These studies focus more on testing international relations theories rather than explaining concrete cases. They include post-cold war Balkan conflict in a sample of cases drawn from other time periods and regions to test propositions about democracy and intervention, coercive diplomacy, and the effectiveness of coercive air power.

This study breaks new ground by using theory to explain an important puzzle that cuts across all post-cold war conflicts in southeastern Europe. Unlike the second group of studies, the scope of case selection is comprehensive rather than focused on one or two cases. But unlike the third category of work cited above, this paper does not seek to test generalizations about international interactions beyond the Balkan context. The focus remains explaining concrete empirical puzzles about how NATO used coercive diplomacy in southeastern Europe.

3. Research Questions, Empirical Cases, and Methodology

Why has an alliance of strong democratic states achieved uneven results when seeking to reestablish stability in out-of-area conflicts? Why did NATO members need to use force to achieve stability in some cases but not others? Why was force initially ineffective in both Bosnia and Kosovo? The performance of NATO states in the Balkans is puzzling for three primary reasons.

First, NATO members emerged from the cold war stronger than ever. The economic and military capabilities of NATO states, particularly those of the United States, have been unmatched in Europe and elsewhere for the entire post-cold war period. Yet NATO members had difficulty imposing their collective will on much weaker actors in Balkans. The balance of power between NATO members, individually and collectively, presents a logical starting for explaining these cases. One can operationalize the balance of power in different ways. A useful approach calculates the balance of military capabilities by creating an average based on number of troops, aggregate military expenditure, and military expenditure per soldier.[4] On this reading, NATO states consistently had massive military superiority over the actors it targeted in out-of-area operations. Despite these advantages across the entire range of the cases considered here, NATO members experienced varying degrees of success when issuing diplomatic signals designed to quell internal conflict. Relative power and the balance of forces on their own, therefore, cannot explain the variation in outcomes exhibited in these cases.

Second, even when NATO states used military force, they did not always achieve their strategic goals. NATO forces began using military against Bosnian Serb targets in 1994 while simultaneously seeking a negotiated settlement to the war in Bosnia. Periodic military strikes between April 1994 and July 1995 had no effect in promoting a settlement.

Finally, NATO's involvement in the Balkans is interesting because alliance members were by and large not distracted by other crises. The successive Balkan crises emerged in

a ten-year period between two critical events: the 1991 Persian Gulf War and the 11 September 2001 terror attacks on the United States. The United States dealt with a crisis on the Korean Peninsula in 1994 and another in Iraq in 1998 (with Great Britain). But the Balkans remained the focus of the Euro-Atlantic alliance for much of that decade. Thus NATO members could and did focus their attention on the Balkans during this period. Nonetheless, alliance states found that promoting stability in southeastern Europe posed significant challenges.

2.1 Case Identification

This study explains outcomes as processes rather than discrete events. The successive crises in the Balkans played out over several years. To this point, none of the Balkan conflicts have relapsed into war. Yet scholars must resist the temptation to trace back from these stable end points and identify the origins peace. As noted below, selecting on the dependent variable distorts the analysis and does not offer a sound method for probing underlying causation.

The starting point for case selection centers on major threat announcements and military strikes by NATO members. This study parses out cases from the announcement of threats issued by NATO members. Cases are end dated when a stable settlement emerges. If NATO members escalate from verbal threats to military action, a new case is dated from the first military strikes to the emergence of a settlement. The Bosnia and Kosovo crises are thus divided into two cases: one dating from NATO members issuing verbal warnings and the other from the onset of NATO military strikes. Using these criteria, this study isolates seven cases involving NATO and internal war in the Balkans.

- Bosnia, August 1993 – February 1994
- Bosnia, April 1994 - November 1995
- Kosovo, December 1992 – March 1999
- Kosovo, March 1999 - June 1999

- Presevo Valley, February 2000 - May 2001
- Macedonia, March 2001 - October 2001
- Serbia-Montenegro, April 1999 - March 2002

These criteria exclude some post-cold war Balkan conflicts. The war between Yugoslavia and Slovenia is one. A second is the war between the Republic of Croatia and Yugoslavia during 1991 and 1992. This conflict is not included in the sample for two reasons. First, NATO members decided against leveling threats against Belgrade when Yugoslav army (VJ) forces attacked Croatia in 1991. NATO military officials drew up contingency plans to rebuff Serb attacks against Croatian cities like Vukovar and Dubrovnik.[5] But NATO officials never issued verbal warnings during the war. The United Nations (UN) took the lead instead. UN negotiators hammered out a cease-fire in January 1992, which Croatian forces broke one year later. Decision-making by NATO members, therefore, does not fulfill the first case-selection criterion. In this respect, the policy of NATO members on the war was not unlike its approach to other conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic region. In Chechyna, Nagorno-Karabakh, Moldova, and elsewhere, NATO members simply refrained from issuing threats and intervening in internal conflicts.

Second, formal conflict between Republic of Croatia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) came to an end when VJ forces withdrew from Croatian territory at the end of 1992. The continued fighting between Croatian regulars and Serb paramilitaries of the Republika Srpska Krajina (RSK) after 1992 is not considered here as an independent case. This conflict became part of the all-out war involving Muslims, Serbs, and Croats in Bosnia that broke out in mid-1992. Thus conflict between Croatia and Serb paramilitaries does not form an independent case in the sample considered by this study.

2.2 Controlling for Endogeneity and Selection Bias

One might argue that these case selection criteria leave open the door for endogeneity. Did NATO members simply select themselves into crises that were relative easy to resolve?[6] This is not the case. As shown below, the NATO allies did not only intervene in the most tractable conflicts. In some instances NATO states announced threats and took military action without succeeding in enforcing a settlement on warring parties. Had they chosen only unproblematic conflicts they would have avoided both Bosnia and Kosovo.

Another important problem that can confound analysis is selecting cases on the dependent rather than independent variable. This paper eschews this practice by only including cases in which NATO issued verbal threats, *regardless of whether active military combat breaks out*. The paper does not select on the dependent variable by focusing on conflicts as outcomes. Cases selection is tied directly to the issuing of warnings and threats. Thus the negotiations between Serbia and Montenegro on the future of the Yugoslav federation are included in the case sample even though the two sides never engaged in a shooting war.

4. Bargaining Theory

This study argues that both actor choice models and structural models are necessary to explain the empirical puzzles posed by NATO intervention in the Balkans. Explaining processes and outcomes exhibited by these cases requires understanding both the nature and dynamics of the forces linking together the actors involved. It also requires understanding the objectives and preferences of the actors themselves. Clarifying the systemic constraints on state choice and the goals that motivate state choice provides a full account of the outcomes considered.[7] To this end, this study draws on bargaining theory and a model of state preference formation.

The bargaining theory derives from agent-based rational choice modeling. This body of theory focuses on two systemic or interactive elements, information and credible commitments, to explain variations and commonalities across different cases.

4.1 Bargaining Theory and War

Bargaining theory offers a unified approach to modeling how states employ threats and promises in pre-war, inter-war, and war-termination phases of international crises.[8] The principal insight of bargaining theory is that states know that war will impose substantial costs on both winners and losers. Both parties thus have a strong incentive to reach *ex ante* bargains to avert war's *ex post* costs.[9] Explaining the incidence of war requires pinpointing the mechanisms that prevent parties from reaching *ex ante* settlements. The literature focuses on three possible causes: *commitment problems, private information and the incentive to misrepresent*, and *issue divisibility*. States may not reach settlements short of war because they cannot make credible commitments to hold to an agreement. If one side expects the other will cheat, war may take the place of a hypothetical settlement. If states cannot reveal the true nature of their military capabilities or will to fight and each believes the other is bluffing, bargaining toward an *ex ante* bargain may break down and war may occur. Finally, if states cannot determine how to share or divide up an issue, they may fight instead of reaching an *ex ante* bargain.

War is a rare event in international relations.[10] It seldom happens because states recognize the risks and work hard to avert them. When war does break out, it is almost always the product of deliberate state choice.[11] Only a fraction of international crises has escalated to war.[12] This is prima facie evidence that in most cases states can overcome the three obstacles noted above and negotiate settlements short of war.

Bargaining theory is a good candidate for helping explain the Balkans cases. Of particular value is bargaining theory's emphasis on the problem of information and incentives to misrepresent. In three of the Balkan cases, NATO members issued verbal warnings that ultimately led to peaceful settlements. But in two others the alliance escalated verbal warnings to military strikes. The use of verbal and military signals to achieve foreign policy objectives suggests that NATO members had variable success in conveying their collective resolve to end internal conflict in the Balkans.

Signaling is intrinsically linked to the making of threats and promises. Bargaining theory suggests that verbal signals must entail costs for the sender if they are to appear credible to those receiving them. Actors can employ a variety of techniques to make announcements costly. The objective is to show that anyone with less resolve would not accept such costs. The literature isolates four methods that actors can use to render verbal announcements costly and thereby credibly convey underlying resolve.[13]

One method imposes *political* costs. Leaders can sign alliance treaties and deploy troops on foreign soil. This approach raises the specter of domestic political institutions that punish leaders if they prove to be bluffing. A growing literature assesses whether democratic states are more effective at signaling that they mean what they say and will stick to the commitments they make. The intuition is that democratic leaders incur costs and render signals credible through "audience costs."[14] Foreign pronouncements are more costly for democratic leaders to make. If shown to be bluffing, they leave themselves vulnerable to charges they undermined the nation's prestige and committed themselves to a failed foreign policy. This could mean losing their job at the next

election. Some evidence does show that democracies are more effective than other regimes in signaling that their threats and promises are credible.[15]

Political costs formed the basis of United States deterrence policy toward the Soviet Union during the cold war. Soviet leaders knew that any American president failing to uphold the nation's alliance commitments would suffer severe punishment at the ballot box. The large US troop deployment to Europe told Soviet leaders NATO's Article 5 commitment was no idle threat. Moscow had to take the commitment seriously given the political costs that US leaders would incur if they proved to be bluffing.

A second type of cost involves mobilizing or deploying troops in a *crisis*. Leaders create costs for themselves by engaging in what Schelling calls "the threat that leaves something to chance."[16] Taking demonstrable military actions short of war increases the likelihood that war will occur. By increasing the probability of war, such brinksmanship exposes leaders to the costs of war.

Third, states can engage *reputations* that are costly to form. States can repeatedly pursue the same policy under similar circumstances across time and space. Reputation building supports verbal signals by creating an intrinsic cost if a state does not follow past form and carry through on a threat or commitment. Failure to do will mean diminishing or losing a reputation that was costly to build in the first place.[17]

Finally, states may launch *limited military strikes* to prove that they are willing to bear the costs of a wider war if the target does not take verbal warnings seriously. Bargaining theory explains why states might deliberately choose to use force once verbal signals prove ineffective. The combination of verbal threats and associated cost-generating mechanisms do not exhaust the gamut of signaling options in the bargaining theory. Leaders may bear the "costs and risks of limited military engagements" to add weight to their diplomatic signaling; in other words they may "employ war itself as a costly signal.[18]

Most wars have not been characterized by demands for "unconditional surrender." Diplomatic bargaining continues even after the first shots have been fired.[19] Exceptions have been the allied demands for unconditional surrender from Germany during the Second World War and the recent US-led war against Iraq. But even the recent US war in Afghanistan was not a "fight to the finish." During the war US covert operatives paid substantial sums to Taliban commanders to insure their forces defected from the battlefield.[20]

4.2 Bargaining Theory and Peace

Bargaining theory pinpoints how problems related to credible commitments, information asymmetries and incentives to misrepresent, and issue divisibility problems contribute to war. However bargaining theory also shows how states can design, build, and maintain institutions that overcome these problems.[21] This section traces how the institutional attributes of NATO contributed to the emergence and maintenance of peace in the Balkans.

International institutions are "sets of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other."[22] States create international institutions to overcome obstacles that prevent *ex ante* settlements when interests conflict. First, they increase information and transparency. Institutions increase the level of information about state preferences, strategies, and behaviors. Increased transparency attenuates problems related to information asymmetries and uncertainty given incentives to misrepresent. The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty illustrates how institutions increase information levels and thus promote cooperation in the military sphere.

Second, states construct institutions to help coordinate their actions and interests to overcome commitment problems. How can states reach stable bargains if they are uncertain if the other side will remain faithful to them? Institutions create enforcement mechanisms that increase the likelihood that actors will be sanctioned if do not abide by

rules to which they agreed. The World Trade Organization offers numerous examples. Finally, institutions overcome the problem of issue divisibility by helping states coordinate their interests. There are many ways to divide up disputed territory or political power. Institutions help states identify possible solutions to seemingly intractable problems coordinating around an acceptable compromise. Russia and EU members have tackled the problem of travel rights for Russian citizens in Kalliningrad, an enclave of Russian territory soon to be surrounded by EU states. They have developed an institutional arrangement that provides Kalliningrad residents with multiple-use visas.

The agreements settling the conflicts over Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and the Serbia-Montenegro federation agreement are institutions. They comprise rules that govern how power will be shared. But the enforcement and transparency mechanisms that make these institutions work derive from another institution, namely NATO.

Throughout the 1990s NATO members took very seriously concerns that their organization was losing its "credibility." This credibility problem derived from a series of interrelated events. The NATO states had prevailed in the cold war over the Soviet bloc. Alliance members interpreted this success to their collective commitment to democratic governance, defense of individual freedoms, and market economics. But the end of the cold war also unleashed a wave of ethnic conflict and violations of human rights. NATO leaders and publics alike began to discern a fundamental problem. How could the strength of the alliance rests on its commitment to democracy and freedom while the worst bout of ethnic cleansing since the Second World War was raging in southeastern Europe? In the midst of the Bosnian crisis NATO's secretary-general described the problem this way:

> A gap has …emerged between our vision of a new peaceful order in Europe and our appreciation of the price we must pay to bring it about. This gap not only produces instability, but it also undermines our democratic values and the credibility of the post-war institutions which have done so much to end the Cold War.[23]

NATO members, haltingly at first, began developing strategies and tools for intervening in internal conflicts. They issued verbal threats and launched limited military strikes in an effort to coerce parties to interethnic warfare in Bosnia to stop the shooting and accept a negotiated settlement.[24]

One scholar has likened NATO to an automobile. When visitors arrive by car, one does not announce that the automobile has arrived. The car is merely a vehicle transporting the visitors. In the same way, one should not conflate NATO for the states that comprise it. The members of the alliance conduct diplomacy and wage war, not the alliance.[25]

What difference does it make that those who played a dominant role in bringing stability to the Balkans were members of a military alliance called NATO? Why not simply describe and analyze the actions taken by specific states? NATO's institutional attributes help explain how settlements emerged and how they have been maintained. Information asymmetries and the incentive to misrepresent, commitment problems, and issue divisibility were all present in these cases.

The agreements settling the conflicts in Bosnia and Macedonia, for example, contained mechanisms designed to solve commitment and issue divisibility problems. The presence of NATO-led peacekeeping forces removed an important commitment problem. Fears that one party might renege on the Dayton Peace Accord were greatly reduced given the presence of foreign troops that would prevent the resurgence of paramilitary activities. Both accords also contained mechanisms for power sharing that overcame issue divisibility problems.

First, NATO was the only institutional entity that sufficient diplomatic stature to coordinate the activities of a diverse group of organizations and actors. NATO officials could work with other organizations like the United Nations and the OSCE at the level of high diplomacy and also provide lower-level coordination of military activities on the ground.[26] In addition to NATO's affinity in working with other international

organization, the alliance also had developed a high degree of credibility in working with third-party actors that played instrumental roles in returning the region to stability. Alliance members drew substantially on their collective credibility to gain the participation of third parties in diplomatic negotiations.[27] NATO members enlisted the assistance of Russia at both the Rambouillet talks and during the 1999 air campaign against Yugoslavia. The impact of Russian envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin's mission to Belgrade (with the EU's Martii Ahtisaari) on Yugoslavia's decision to withdraw from Kosovo remains a matter of controversy. But NATO's pre-existing relationship with Moscow (through mechanisms like the 1997 NATO-Russia Council) clearly facilitated the cooperation that made such a mission possible.[28] NATO states also worked closely with the UN, OSCE, and EU to broker the Ohrid agreement that yielded a stable settlement in Macedonia.

Second, NATO constituted the only organization that could simultaneously pursue high-level diplomacy and exercise military force. Since Clausewitz, it has been axiomatic that force and diplomacy are complementary tools. NATO's organizational structure allowed it conduct diplomacy and wage war simultaneously. This is capability is unique to NATO. The UN, EU (until recently), and OSCE lack a credible military component. One could argue that the United States essentially was a proxy for NATO at the both the military and diplomatic levels. Clearly the United States military and American diplomatic officials played the leading role, particularly in Bosnia and in Kosovo. However one should bear in mind that the American public predicated support for US intervention in the Balkans on working closely with European allies.[29] Thus NATO's organizational credibility was a strong pull on American policy makers and underwrote their efforts to use force and diplomacy to end Yugoslavia's wars.[30]

Third, only NATO had the organizational capacities to deploy and command peacekeeping forces to stabilize war-torn regions in the Balkans. In Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia NATO infrastructure supported peacekeeping forces composed of member states and non-members alike. Alliance members made a conscious effort after 1990 to retool NATO military structures in order to support out-of-area operations and facilitate

the participation of non-members in such operations.[31] The European Union has now taken NATO's Amber Fox stabilization role in Macedonia. But even this first-ever EU peacekeeping operation will continue to rely on support on NATO organizational support.

Thus NATO played a critical role in facilitating crisis diplomacy, in backing diplomacy with force, and keeping the peace after warring parties agreed to a settlements. As such, the alliance's institutional assets constitute a necessary cause of peace in the Balkans.[32] However these institutional factors are not sufficient to explain when verbal warnings are sufficient or when actually using military force as a signal is necessary to induce a settlement. Moreover, NATO's institutional attributes do not explain how much force is necessary to create the conditions for a stable settlement.

4.3 Applying the Bargaining Model to the Balkans

The involvement of NATO states in the Balkans largely conforms to the bargaining model. NATO members used verbal warnings and threats. If those verbal warning failed, they resorted to military action. At no point did NATO members demand the unconditional surrender of military forces and civilian authorities as punishment for opposing a settlement in Bosnia and Kosovo. The military action threatened by NATO states was designed to inflict sufficient punishment to coerce the parties into accepting a settlement. The limited nature of NATO military action supports the idea that alliance officials were employing war as a costly signal. In both Bosnia and Kosovo NATO states secured ceasefires and peacekeeping deployments without achieving anything approximating total victory on the battlefield. Palé and Belgrade absorbed these attacks and, although bloodied, retained significant military assets in their aftermath.

However given the variation in outcomes across the Balkan cases, bargaining theory cannot consistently explain NATO's mixed record of success and failure in stabilizing the region. Consider the following points.

First, NATO members are among the most democratic states in the world. Yet the audience costs imposed by domestic politics cannot explain why verbal warnings were effective in some cases but not others.[33] Between 1993 and 1995 most Americans supported a policy of using air strikes to counter Serbian threats to UN peacekeepers or safe areas.[34] But the US government did not consistently back verbal threats with military action.

Second, NATO members had deployed air forces to the region in support of a UN imposed no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Yet neither this military deployment nor the subsequent deployment of the NATO Rapid Reaction Force to Bosnia convinced the Bosnian Serbs to reach a settlement. The impact of reputation building is thus mixed.

Third, NATO's military intervention in Bosnia was a first for the alliance, so no previous reputation could support signaling by alliance members in that conflict. But the reputation for intervention that NATO states gained from Bosnia was not effective in coercing Belgrade short of actually using military force. However after Bosnia and Kosovo one could argue that NATO's reputation for intervention helped seal the diplomatic deals in the Presevo valley, Macedonia, and between Serbia and Montenegro.

5. Empirical Propositions

The fact that bargaining theory cannot account for divergent outcomes is neither controversial nor problematic. Abstract modeling always precedes formulating empirical hypotheses.[35] Armed with deductive theory, scholars can then begin specifying the conditions under which commitment and information problems are likely to apply. The key task is to identify hypotheses that explain: (1) the conditions under which verbal warnings and threats are sufficient to produce stable settlements; and (2) the conditions under which military strikes are necessary and will lead to a stable settlement. To be consistent, a common conceptual thread should link the two hypotheses. This paper argues that *political costs* at the domestic and international levels provide that conceptual nexus.

Figure 1 arrays the empirical cases against the type of pressure employed by NATO states and the preferences of the stronger military parties to internal conflicts. When the strongest parties to internal conflict prefer integration in European institutions, verbal warnings against the stronger party to the conflict are sufficient to achieve a settlement. The Presevo valley conflict in Serbia and the fighting between ethnic Albanians and the Macedonian government exemplify this path to stability. However when the stronger party to internal conflict does not envision a future in a wider Europe, NATO members must use military force in a manner that creates expectations of further escalation and the loss of domestic political authority for the stronger party. Such military actions signals the alliance's resolve to stronger parties to internal conflict that block progress toward a settlement. NATO states stabilized the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo in this manner

Figure 1

NATO Strategy and Out-of-Area Conflict:
The Quest for Stability

		TYPE OF PRESSURE EXERTED BY NATO STATES	
		Verbal Warnings	**Military Strikes**
PREFERENCES OF DOMINANT MILITARY PARTY TO INTERNAL CONFLICT	**Integration in European Institutions**	*Stable Outcomes*: ▪ Presevo Valley, February 2000 - May 2001 ▪ Macedonia, March 2001 - October 2001 ▪ Serbia-Montenegro, April 1999 - March 2002	N.A.
	Isolation from European Institutions	*Unstable Outcomes*: ▪ Bosnia, August 1993 - February 1994 ▪ Kosovo, December 1992 - March 1999	*Stable Outcomes*: ▪ Bosnia, April 1994 - November 1995 ▪ Kosovo, March 1999 - June 1999

Arraying the Balkan cases against these two variables provides a useful way of pinpointing the most critical questions regarding the efforts by NATO states to bring stability to southeastern Europe. This schematic helps clarify the necessary and sufficient conditions that produced stable settlements in the Balkans.

This study employs the comparative case method to develop empirical propositions that explain variation across outcomes.[36] The study compares cases to pinpoint the necessary and sufficient conditions that explain how NATO members have restored stability in the Balkans. The study arrays the cases against two broad variables: (1) the nature of threats issued by NATO states; and (2) the preferences of the dominant military parties to internal conflict whose policy NATO members sought to influence by making those threats. Sorting the cases in this manner is a necessary first step to pinpoint what the hard cases were and what relevant comparisons are required to explain variation across them.

5.1 Nature of NATO Pressure

The diplomacy of war forms a continuum from the absence of verbal military threats to all-out war. As noted, NATO states issued verbal warnings and took limited military action. Some verbal warnings specifically cited actions that alliance members would take if the target did not comply with NATO's demands. The threatened action was almost always punishment through air strikes. On other occasions NATO states left open the exact nature of the action they would take if targeted actors failed to comply. However the military strikes themselves were both a form of punishment and carried with them the threat to carry out additional military operations. NATO members carefully contemplated escalating their policy from verbal threats to military strikes. The distinction between verbal warning and military action therefore has real empirical significance.

5.2 Preferences of Dominant Military Actors Involved in Internal Conflict

Over the past decade the newly independent states of central and eastern Europe have faced a choice. They could pursue closer cooperation with and long-term integration in institutions like the EU, Council of Europe, NATO, and OSCE. While these institutions can function independently, they have increasingly, during the post-cold war era, forged closer ties through a series of bridging arrangements.[37] These states had a second option: they could also seek isolation from this web of overlapping institutions and organizations. Most have chosen the first path. However some leaders, both at the national and subnational levels, have sought to distance themselves from mainstream European institutions. Examples include Slovakia in the mid-1990s and Belarus.

Preferences in this model are driven by elites and domestic politics. Authoritarian leaders and political systems tend to seek isolation from European institutions. They prefer to seek local power and are prepared to wage war to advance their national and regional objectives. Elected leaders and democratic systems tend to seek integration with Europe. They prefer closer cooperation with European institutions for economic gain and ideological solidarity.

A preference for closer integration with Europe creates a risk averse when bargaining with states representing European institutions. Balkan leaders of this stripe will seek to avoid conflict of interests with representatives of European institutions. They will not wish to jeopardize their long-term future in Europe for local political gain.

Is it possible to establish the preferences of the actors involved independently of the outcomes observed? One could argue that the causal arrow ran the other war: ethnic conflict led to international sanctions which in turn led to isolation from European institutions. But this is not the case. National preferences can be isolated from the ethnic conflicts under investigation.

For example, Yugoslavia under Miloševic waged war in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. The Bosnia war came to an end in 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Accord. Some international sanctions on Yugoslavia were lifted to reward Miloševic for helping to end Bosnian conflict. But the international community maintained an "outer wall" of sanctions on Belgrade in an effort to encourage Miloševic to improve political conditions in Kosovo.[38] Open ethnic warfare (one of the outcomes tracked by this study) between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and FRY security forces did not break out until 1998. Yet the reason for that violence is clear: the ethnic policies pursued by the authoritarian government in Belgrade prior to 1998.

Miloševic faced a choice. He could change these policies and see sanctions lifted, allowing his country to form closer ties to mainstream European institutions. Or he could continue to pursue those policies in a cynical effort to bolster his political power at home. Miloševic preferred consolidating his personal power to integrating his country in Europe. These preferences were formed long before ethnic warfare broke out in Kosovo. Indeed, in 1997 the European Union offered Miloševic closer political and trade ties and support for reentering international institutions if he would accept third-party mediation in determining Kosovo's future political status. The Serb leader rejected the proposal.[39]

When Balkan actors prefer isolation from European institutions, they have a risk acceptant attitude when bargaining with representatives of European institutions. They will take greater risks to achieve and consolidate local power by resisting mediation efforts advanced by representatives of European institutions.

Combining the observations about the nature of NATO military pressure and the preferences of stronger parties to internal conflicts yields three testable propositions.

HYPOTHESIS 1**:** *Verbal warnings by NATO members are sufficient to produce a settlement when the stronger military party to a Balkan dispute prefers integration in European institutions.*

HYPOTHESIS 2**:** *Verbal warnings by NATO members are insufficient to produce a settlement when the stronger military party to a Balkan dispute prefers isolation from European institutions.*

COROLLARY 1**:** *Military action by NATO members is necessary to produce a settlement when the stronger military party to a Balkan dispute prefers isolation from European institutions.*

5.3 Military Strikes and Political Costs

Under what conditions will military strikes be perceived as credible signals? In other words, what factors produce a "tipping" or "breaking" point when actors targeted by military strikes accede to diplomatic demands? This question has long intrigued scholars studying war termination.[40] But earlier studies did not systematically investigate the problem by embedding it in a deductive framework like bargaining theory. This section explains how actors could render signals costly and create credibility where none had existed before.

Bargaining theory holds that once verbal communication fails states may launch military strikes to send credible diplomatic signals. Bargaining theory suggests that threats to wage war must be costly if they are to be perceived as credible. Once states cross the threshold from threat to military action, war imposes real costs on those sending military signals. Waging war requires sacrificing blood and treasure. But once the threat is carried out, it also impose costs on the targeted actor. The threat to the target does not drop out of the equation. Senders do not bomb their own cities to create costs. The combination of costs borne by the sender and those imposed on targets explains when a tipping point emerges.

As noted, the balance of power consistently favored NATO countries in the Balkan theater. Models that measure power as resources model cannot explain variations across the Balkan cases. But more nuanced propositions regarding the specific nature of

military strikes may be more useful. One interpretation of the theory suggests "offense" and "defense" variants of balance of power or "realist" theory. Offensive realism emphasizes the importance of territory and the risks and opportunities associated with taking and losing territory.[41] Offensive realism offers insights into the conditions under which military strikes can induce parties to accept peace terms. On this view, threats to launch a ground campaign designed to seize territory are more credible than threats to launch air strikes to punish noncompliance.

HYPOTHESIS 3**:** *NATO military action and credible threats to seize territory are necessary to produce a settlement when the stronger military party to a Balkan dispute prefers isolation from European institutions.*

Bargaining theory focuses on the relationship between military action and political costs. The sender uses military strikes to intensify pressure on the opponent's grip on political power. In contrast to offensive realist theory, military pressure need not threaten to seize territory but to shift the political balance in a way that undermines an actor's political control. The targeted leadership must calculate whether continued attacks could cause domestic actors—both supporters and opponents—to turn against the leadership and undermine that political control. The tipping point comes when leaders expect that potential political losses at home will exceed setbacks in conflicts with external actors.

HYPOTHESIS 4**:** *NATO military action that threatens the local political power of the stronger party to a Balkan dispute is necessary to produce a settlement when that actor prefers isolation from European institutions.*

This explanation is consistent with Hypothesis 1. Actors seeking integration with European institutions are willing to sacrifice local or regional power to gain the advantages of closer ties to Europe. However those seeking isolation from Europe will resist demands made by representatives of European institutions to claim or maintain local power. Hypothesis 4 demonstrates that coercing such actors requires using military force in a way that jeopardizes their local power.

HYPOTHESIS 5: *NATO's institutional attributes facilitate negotiated settlement by solving the commitment problems that arise in the wake of political settlements.*

Once an actor signals its resolve and impose costs on the target, why would the latter accept a negotiated settlement? Hypothesis 4 suggests that domestic political costs play a role. Targeted actors reach a tipping point when they are no longer willing to accept higher political costs. But why should they agree to a settlement? What prevents other parties from using the settlement to improve their militarily position, renege on the deal, and continue the conflict at a later date? NATO's institutional attributes explain why its members have been able to use military force and overcome commitment problems that could frustrate a negotiated settlement. NATO increases transparency and reassures parties that fear being exploited.

6. Case Comparisons

This section draws comparisons across cases to demonstrate how these hypotheses help explain the central puzzle: How could such a powerful alliance have such a hard time enforcing peace in the Balkans after the cold war?

6.1 Integration in European Institutions and Verbal Warnings

The northwest quadrant of Figure 1 comprises cases in which the most powerful parties to internal Balkan conflict sought integration in European institutions. Yugoslavia's preferences for closer ties to Europe changed dramatically after the September 2000 election and overthrow of President Slobodan Miloševic's authoritarian rule in early October. The elimination of the Miloševic regime and emergence of electoral democracy in both the Serbian and FRY political arenas entailed a shift in preferences. President Vojislav Kostunica and Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic immediately took action to pursue closer ties with European institutions.

Kostunica succeeded in joining the EU-led Balkan Stability Pact in October 2000, only three weeks after the Belgrade uprising. The same month, the EU lifted economic sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia since 1998. In November FRY officials attended the Zagreb Summit, which inaugurated the EU's Stabilization and Association Process for the western Balkan countries. In July 2001 EU and FRY officials held the first meeting of the Consultative Task Force which assesses reform efforts in the run up to opening negotiations for a Stabilization and Association Agreement. In November 2000 Yugoslavia rejoined both the OSCE and the United Nations. And in June 2001 Djindjic extradited Miloševic to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia also developed a strong preference for integration in European institutions. 1995 marked a watershed year for Macedonia. The country joined both OSCE and the Council of Europe and also singed up to NATO's

Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Macedonian officials publicly called for full membership in NATO in 1996. Macedonia military forces participated in PfP field exercises in subsequent years. In late 1998 the Macedonian government permitted NATO Rapid Reaction Force troops to deploy north of Skopje for purposes of extracting OSCE monitors from Kosovo. In April 1999, at the Washington Summit, NATO recognized Macedonia's status as an applicant and by having the country participate in the alliance's Membership Action Plan (MAP). After the Kosovo war NATO troops deployed near Tetovo to assist the resupply of the NATO-led Kosovo peacekeeping force (KFOR). Skopje formed close ties with the EU beginning in 1996, when Brussels include Macedonia in its Phare development program. Macedonia joined the Balkan Stability Pact in 1999. Relations with the EU culminated in April 2001 with the signing of a Stabilization and Association Agreement, the first such accord signed by the EU and a western Balkan country.

The preferences of Macedonian political elites and those of Yugoslav leaders after October 2000 constitute critical elements in the processes leading to political settlements in three key Balkan conflicts. The ethnic warfare in Serbia's Presevo valley and in Macedonia, together with the political conflict between Serbia and Montenegro, were resolved in part because the strongest military parties to these conflicts—the governments of Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Macedonia—sought integration within European institutions. Verbal warnings issued by NATO states took on greater significance because none of these governments wanted to harm their prospects for closer ties to Europe.

6.2.1 Presevo Valley

Conflict between ethnic Albanians and Yugoslav forces broke out after NATO's war for Kosovo. VJ and MUP units redeployed to southern Serbia after withdrawing from Kosovo. Eighty percent of the population in the municipal areas of Presevo, Bujanovac, and Medveda is ethnic Albanian. In late 1999 reports began filtering out of southern Serbia thatYugoslav forces were maltreating Albanian civilians in the Presevo valley. In January 2000 an Albanian paramilitary force calling itself the Liberation Army of

Presevo, Medvedja, and Buganovac, or UCPMB, emerged.[42] This fighting force, supported by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, began launching attacks on Serbian police stations and on Serbian civilians. Ethnic Serbs engaged in reprisal attacks causing some ethnic Albanians to flee from southern Serbia across the border into NATO-held Kosovo.[43]

The cycle of violence intensified in early 2000 as UCPMB rebels gained strength from arms shipments and new recruits flowing into Serbia from Kosovo. The UCPMB skillfully used the 5-kilometer Ground Safety Zone (GSZ) inside Serbia that NATO imposed on Yugoslavia as part of the ceasefire agreement ending the Kosovo war. Under the "Military-Technical Agreement" between NATO and Belgrade, only local Serb police, but not Yugoslav army or Ministry of Interior (MUP) troops, could enter this buffer. The Albanian rebels used the GSZ to infiltrate weapons and forces into Serbia and find refuge from attacks by VJ and MUP forces. UCPMB members in southern Serbia and in Kosovo believed that if they intensified attacks on Serbian forces, it would incite Serb retaliation against Albanian towns and villages. They hoped the resulting violence would draw in NATO forces, which would then expel Serbian forces from the region.[44]

NATO officials issued early warnings to both UCPMB forces and the Serbian government to halt the escalation of violence in the Presevo valley. In February 2000 Secretary-General Lord George Robertson said:

> There is clearly rising tension in the southern part of Serbia and large numbers of additional Yugoslav troops have moved into the area.... I would warn anybody who seeks to be provocative in that part of the world, on whatever side of the divide they may be, that again we will not tolerate action being taken. Clearly there are flashpoints in Kosovo and the surrounding areas. We monitor them on a daily basis and we take what robust and contingency action is required. [45]

Only days later the supreme allied commander Europe (SACEUR), General Wesley Clark, issued a broader warning. Referring to both the Presevo valley and Serbia's dispute with Montenegro, Clark declared that "NATO is like a ratchet: once it has locked on, it can only go one way, only get a tighter and tighter grip."[46]

The conflict in the Presevo valley escalated in late 2000. In November UCPMB extremists killed four Serb policemen in their most violent attack to date. In January the UCPMB managed to kill one VJ solider and wound several others. The VJ responded by using tanks and artillery to shell Albanian villages.[47]

However the political and diplomatic tide against conflict in the Presevo had already begun to turn once new FRY and Serbian governments took power. In December Secretary-General Robertson confirmed that he had been in contact with FRY President Kostunica regarding conflict in southern Serbia. Robertson noted that "the fact that the president of Yugoslavia writes to the Secretary General of NATO on a matter of common concern—an outbreak of violence in southern Serbia and the Presevo valley—is an indication of the fact that these problems in the future will be dealt with in a radically different way [than they were in the past]."[48] Kostunica indicated that he was willing to pursue a peaceful settlement to the conflict in southern Serbia. Serbia's co-interior minister, Stevan Nikvecic conceded in late 2000 that "the area was neglected, politically badly treated by the old regime."[49] The willingness of both FRY and Serbian officials to compromise and work toward a negotiated settlement placed them at odds with high-ranking VJ officers. These Miloševic loyalists saw force as the only solution to the violence in southern Serbia.[50]

NATO members saw an opening to work with the new Serbian government to resolve a conflict threatening to spread across into Kosovo and Macedonia. NATO officials invited Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Nebojša Covic and Yugoslav Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic to Brussels in February 2001. Covic outlined a plan under which NATO would permit VJ and MUP forces into the GSZ. While NATO did not commit to accepting the plan, Covic made it clear that Serbia would implement a series of reforms

in southern Serbia aimed at integrating ethnic Albanians into social and political institutions, enforcing civil rights, and promoting economic development.[51] At the end of February Robertson announced that NATO would begin allowing Serbian forces to reenter the buffer zone in small, phased steps. Yugoslav military forces began this process on 14 March.

The NATO secretary-general sent a special representative, Pieter Feith, to negotiate a series of confidence-building measures that could deescalate the violence in the Presevo valley. Feith, together with Sean Sullivan, political advisor to the KFOR commander, initiated a series of shuttle diplomacy missions throughout the spring of 2001. A member of the EU's Policy Planning Unit also participated.[52]

KFOR units put pressure on the UCPMB by interdicting weapons transported across the border from Kosovo. But fighting continued in May 2001 as UCPMB forces captured the Serb town of Oraovica and Serbian troops fought to retake it. More ethnic Albanians fled from southern Serbia into the relative calm of a NATO-controlled Kosovo. However ultimately NATO officials, working closely with FRY officials, fashioned both carrots and strikes to end the conflict. An amnesty administered by KFOR and VJ provided the carrot. Hundreds of UCPMB fighters laid down their weapons and surrendered to KFOR forces in Kosovo or to VJ forces in Serbia.[53] NATO gave prior notice that on 24 May it would permit Yugoslav forces to enter the remaining twenty percent of the GSZ. This was the stick. Stung by those deserting under the twin amnesty programs, UCPMB leaders and FRY officials signed an agreement brokered by Feith and Sullivan. Under the accord UCPMB fighting units agreed to disband by 31 May 2001.[54] In return FRY officials agreed to accelerate measures to integrate ethnic Albanians into political and administrative positions. The international community agreed to assist in the task. OSCE officials help train a multiethnic police force for predominantly Albanian towns and relief agencies assisted refugees returning from Kosovo whose homes had fallen into disrepair.[55]

Not all the Albanian extremists signed onto the accord. However they went along with it all the same. One hard-line rebel commander, ineligible for an amnesty from Serbia and wanted by KFOR for firing on peacekeepers, commented that "if it was just the Serbs, I could fight them, but I cannot fight against the NATO and the whole world."[56]

Two factors explain NATO's success in bringing stability to the Presevo valley. First, NATO states played an early and active role and expressed its concern through verbal warning to both sides. Alliance members made it clear that they would not tolerate an escalation of violence in southern Serbia. Second, consistent with Hypothesis 1, the stronger military party exercised restraint because it sought integration in European institutions. NATO members clearly specified that they did not want the violence to escalate and were in a position to back up their demands given the presence of NATO forces in Kosovo. After the revolution in Belgrade, FRY and Serbian government officials considered a negotiated settlement and cooperation with NATO officials the best possible solution to the conflict in southern Serbia. They understood that the tougher military measures advocated by VJ officers would lead to further escalation and would alienate NATO and other European institutions.

Given the restraint shown by Belgrade, NATO could then put pressure on the weaker side—the UCPMB—to force a settlement. The arms interdictions, amnesty program, and cooperation with FRY forces in opening the Ground Safety Zone ultimately combined to put sufficient pressure on the Albanian extremists. The result was a stable settlement. It was stable because NATO forces were on hand in Kosovo to monitor the agreement, as Hypothesis 5 suggests. NATO forces kept a close eye on the conduct of VJ and MUP units in the former GSZ. KFOR, underpinned by NATO institutional assets, created the transparency necessary to make the agreement work.

6.2.2 Macedonia

The intervention by NATO states in Macedonia differs from the Presevo valley case in several key respects. NATO representatives were already on the ground in Macedonia

when the conflict flared up. The allies provided direct military assistance to the Macedonian government, the stronger military party to the internal conflict. Instead they simultaneously assisted Skopje in putting military pressure on the Albanian rebels while working with EU and UN representatives to coax both parties to implement a ceasefire and move them toward the negotiating table. NATO officials issued warnings to the warring parties, but these signals were less pointed than those sent during the Presevo valley crisis.

By August 2001, at Ohrid, an agreement was made. NATO forces collected and destroyed 3,300 weapons as part of Operation Essential Harvest. But it was understood by all involved that while this was a credible number of weapons, it did not eliminate rebel stockpiles. NATO relied on Macedonia's interest in European integration to refrain from military escalation. In the meantime, NATO and EU officials exerted considerable political pressure on Skopje to implement political reforms that would help integrate the Albanian minority into social and political institutions and thereby satisfy the insurgents' stated political objectives.

A group itself the National Liberation Army (NLA) began organizing itself in late 2000. Fighting between the NLA and Macedonian government forces broke out in January 2001. The Albanian rebels attacked a police outpost in northwestern Macedonia, near the city of Tetovo. In February the NLA attacked the village of Tanusevci, high in the mountains along the border with Kosovo. The insurgents claimed to represent ethnic Albanians who make up between 30 and 35 percent of Macedonia's population. Some NLA rebels were KLA veterans who had traversed international borders to fight another day. But the NLA had popular support among Macedonian Albanians and drew most of its fighters from their ranks. Ethnic Albanians has long complained they were treated as second-class citizens. Many Macedonian Albanians felt politically disenfranchised and cut off from mainstream Macedonian society and institutions.

With onset of spring and better weather, the NLA accelerated its attacks. The group also publicly declared its objectives. The rebels announced they were fighting for the political

and social rights of Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority. They wanted the Slav majority to Albanians represented in police forces operating in predominantly Albanian areas and sought greater recognition for the Albanian language in the public sphere. Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski rejected the demands as political blackmail made at gunpoint. He declared Macedonia would only consider political reform once the rebel force had been defeated.[57]

In March the Albanian rebels gained a foothold above Tetovo and opened fire on a government fortress. The Macedonian military responded by sending troops into the mountains and launching artillery strikes. But the army was largely ill equipped to meet the NLA's challenge. Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski's government announced an official crackdown on the NLA. It subsequently purchased attack helicopters and aircraft from Ukraine. These aircraft, allegedly flown by Ukrainian and Yugoslav pilots, forced the rebels to flee into the Sar mountains and across the border into Kosovo. In the wake of these attacks, the United States pledged to accelerate delivery of $13.5 million in military aid already pledged to Skopje.[58]

In March 2001 the NATO nominated a high-ranking German career diplomat, Hans-Jörg Eiff, to head NATO's civilian liaison office. The allies also opened a military liaison office in Skopje.[59] Furthermore, NATO set up an intelligence unit that assisted Macedonian officials in their military campaign to put down the armed rebellion by Albanian extremists.[60] The United States was particularly active in supplying intelligence data to Skopje. It supplied the Macedonian government with reconnaissance imagery and other intelligence data on NLA operations.[61]

In late April Robertson officially responded to the attacks by NLA fighters on Macedonian security forces: "I condemn the cowardly acts of the extremists and my message is simple: the violence must end and their tactics will not be successful."[62] In early May his words were even stronger. He issued a stern warning to the rebels. Flying to Skopje with the EU high representative for common foreign and security

policy, Javier Solana, Roberstson declared that "we're not going to allow democratic institutions to be undermined by a bunch of murderers stuck in the mountains.'[63]

But the secretary general also urged moderation on the Macedonian government. He warned that the country was on the verge of civil war: "This is a time of real crisis. The message today to the government and all the people of this country is they must go back from the brink before further disaster."[64] Robertson took aim at a proposal floated by Prime Minister Georgievski requesting that parliament issue a formal declaration of war against the NLA. Passing such a bill would have entailed dissolving parliament and rule by decree. Robertson and Solana persuaded senior Macedonian officials that such a move would inflame conflict and could lead to uncontrolled escalation.[65] Georgievski called again for a formal declaration only weeks later but quickly backed down after intense international and domestic pressure.[66]

Fighting erupted around Kumanovo in mid May. The government issued an ultimatum demanding that rebel forces lay down their weapons by 15 May. After the deadline passed unheeded, Macedonian forces used helicopter gunships and artillery to pound rebel positions. The NATO secretary-general then pledged that the alliance would provide military assistance to Skopje and step up patrolling to interdict weapons and fighters filtering across the Kosovo-Macedonia border.[67]

With calls for a declaration of war silenced for the moment, elections in May produced a new government of national unity. In late May, it came to light that Imer Imeri and Arben Xhaferi, leading figures in the two main Albanian political parties (but not members of the unity government), had made contact with the NLA working through the senior OSCE representative operating in the country. Imeri and Xhaferi signed a deal with Ahmeti in Prizren to represent the NLA's interests in the political talks.[68] Macedonia Slav parties responded in anger and disbelief. NATO and EU officials immediately condemned the contacts with the rebels. But when the Prime Minister Georgievski declared that Imeri and Xharferi must renounce the agreement or see the national unity government fall, Javier Solana shuttled back to Skopje to prevent the

government from collapsing. Solana resolved the dispute by stressing to Georgievski and Trajkovski that negotiation process must continue because no viable alternatives were available.[69]

President Trajkovski then issued a peace plan on 1 June. Trajkovski issued this bid for peace after NATO and EU officials repeatedly urged Skopje to pursue a negotiated settlement.[70] The plan called for a compromise under which the Macedonian government would institute political reform in exchange for the NLA laying down its weapons. It proposed that NATO send a force into Macedonia to coordinate the disarmament of the NLA.[71] The coalition government, which included strong representation from Albanian parties, quickly accepted Trajkovski's peace plan.

But at this point peace efforts appeared deadlocked. The Macedonian government refused to negotiate directly with the NLA and insisted the rebels accept the political deal on offer. But NATO would not intervene to help disarm the rebels without a ceasefire. It appeared that peace efforts were caught in a vicious circle. With the Macedonian government unwilling to meet with NLA leaders face to face, they could only negotiate with members of Macedonian Albanian parties that had representation in the national unity government. The government forbade those officials from making contacts with the NLA. But without some input into the negotiation process, the NLA would be cut out of the talks altogether, leaving them little incentive to lay down their arms.

Action taken by NATO and other international officials effectively freed Macedonia from this Catch-22. A turning point in the conflict came on 14 June when Trajkovski formally requested that NATO assist in the demilitarization process. NATO responded on 20 June that it would provide assistance once all parties to the conflict agreed to a ceasefire and committed themselves to negotiate a political settlement.[72]

Meanwhile heavy fighting continued in June, particularly around the village of Aracinovo, only 10 kilometers from Skopje. International mediators from NATO and the EU operated at both the military and political levels. NATO and EU officials helped

broker a ceasefire by defusing the last two major military confrontations prior to Ohrid. US troops deployed in Macedonia in support of KFOR then escorted, but did not disarm, NLA rebels from Aracinovo to the north of the country.[73] Pieter Feith acted as an intermediary to broker the Aracinovo evacuation. This NATO operation caused a firestorm of protest among Macedonian Slavs who accused alliance officials helping the rebels escape so they could fight another day.

Feith, EU envoy François Leotard, and US envoy James Pardew brokered a formal ceasefire on 5 July. The NLA and Macedonian government signed separate documents with NATO officials in Prziren, Kosovo. However the negotiations broke down later that month. Macedonian Slav officials began to balk at reforms designed to augment the political and social rights of Macedonian Albanians. This led the rekindling of conflict around Tetovo. Robertson and Solana returned to Skopje to mediate and press for continued talks. Feith then negotiated another withdrawal of NLA from forces from around Tetovo in late July. The NATO special representative held a meeting with NLA political leader Ali Ahmeti.[74] The Macedonian government responded angrily, declaring that this was "open, public cooperation between international mediators and the rebels."[75]

But sustained fighting ultimately came to an end in Tetovo and helped pave the way for political talks that opened at Ohrid on 28 July. The negotiations involved representatives of the four main Macedonian political parties, President Trajkovski, and international mediators Leotard and Pardew. The negotiations were punctuated by several bouts of violence between NLA and Macedonian military forces.

The parties quickly reached an agreement on the use of Albanian language in local municipalities and in official business conducted by the central government.[76] They also agreed on opening the police forces to ethnic Albanians. However the negotiations stalled only days later over the disarmament of NLA fighters. The government insisted that the rebels disarm before any political agreement was signed. The NLA announced that it would disarm only gradually, as the political reforms were implemented into law. Feith arrived at Ohrid to assist in the negotiations. He and Eiff ultimately convinced the

Macedonian government to soften its stance on the timing of NLA disarmament by reassuring the Macedonian Slav parties that NATO would collect rebel weapons in a timely manner.[77] Drawing on his experience in the Presevo valley, Feith helped formulate the details of an amnesty program.[78]

The Ohrid accord was signed on 13 August.[79] Under the accord, parliamentary election would be held no later than 27 January 2002. The NLA signed a disarmament agreement with NATO the following day. NATO's Operation Essential Harvest began on 27 August and ended a month later. NATO members then deployed Task Force Fox (Operation Amber Fox) to Macedonia at the request of President Trajkovski. This 700-strong force deployed to insure the security of the OSCE monitors overseeing the ceasefire and implementation of the reforms in Albanian areas. Its original mandate was to expire after six months. But the North Atlantic Council (NAC) extended it every six months until 31 March 2003 when the EU's Operation Concordia replaced it. The deployment of Task Force Fox was crucial because the old animosities and much distrust remained after Ohrid. The NATO force provided sufficient reassurance that neither the NLA nor the government would take advantage of the settlement to take exploitative actions.

The Macedonia conflict hinged largely on the government's desire to participate in European institutions. NATO's verbal threats brought the country back from the brink because ultimately the government refrained from declaring all-out war on the rebels. The government exercised restraint, as predicted by Hypothesis 1, because the costs of escalation were too high. The country would suffer a severe setback on the road to closer ties with NATO and the EU. The government thus took very seriously the warnings issues by these organizations. At same time, consistent with Hypothesis 5, the presence of a NATO force on the ground, both to collect NLA weapons and reassure both parties afterward, was central to establishing stability.

6.1.3 Serbia-Montenegro

Europe's powers recognized Montenegro's independence at the Congress of Berlin 1878. But Montenegro was taken over Serbia at the close of the First World War. After the 1999 Kosovo war, threats by the Republic of Montenegro to withdraw from the Yugoslav Federation and regain its independence produced another crisis. However the overthrow of Milosevic and consequent shift in Yugoslav preferences regarding integration in Europe changed the nature of the crisis. Unlike the Presevo valley and Macedonia cases, open military conflict never broke out between Serbia and Montenegro. NATO states did issue threats to deter Milosevic from attempting a coup to dislodge the Montenegrin president. But once the new government came to power in Belgrade, Serbian and Montenegrin preferences on working with European institutions converged. In the absence of active combat on the ground, NATO states effectively ceded responsibility to the European Union for stabilizing the relationship between the two remaining republics in the Yugoslav federation.

Montenegro began slipping out of Belgrade's orbit in 1997 when Milo Djukanovic defeated Miloševic's handpicked candidate in the race for Montenegro's presidency. Djukanovic pursued the path of reform, greater political openness, and ethnic tolerance, a radical departure from the political practices governing Serbia. Miloševic attempted to use economic sanctions and other hardline tactics to bring Djunkanovic to heel. But the Montenegrin president was intent on pursuing his own course and moving closer to mainstream Europe. Western officials immediately began cultivating the Montenegrin leader. In 1998 the Clinton administration invited Djukanovic to Washington where we met with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Sandy Berger.[80]

The Kosovo war put Montenegro in a precarious position. Djunkanovic pursued a policy of neutrality during the conflict. The allies launched strikes on air bases and surface-to-air missile batteries in Montenegro during the conflict, including some near the capital, Podgorica. NATO aircraft also struck facilities at Bar, Yugoslavia's only strategic port

on the Adriatic.[81] While condemning NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia, Montenegro's president rejected Miloševic's ethnic policies in Kosovo and portrayed the republic as the FRY's lone bastion of democracy. During the conflict Djukanovic also provided sanctuary to Zoran Djindic, the Serb opposition leader who had fled Serbia to avoid arrest.

In late March Djukanovic recognized "a serious and genuine danger that even our state could disappear...in the violence."[82] In early April Miloševic replaced the popular commander of the VJ's 2nd Army stationed in Montenegro with a more loyal hardliner.[83] Several thousand Miloševic supporters also took to the streets in an apparent challenge to Djukanovic. NATO states viewed these developments with grave concern. They saw them as signals that Miloševic was planning to topple the Montenegrin president. A senior British Ministry of Defence official said that "we have evidence to show that he is preparing a coup against Montenegro. These moves must be recognized for what they are: a plot to dislodge an elected government."[84] NATO officials quickly warned Miloševic not to take action against Montenegro. Javier Solana, the NATO secretary-general, issued a stern warning backed by military threats. "Milosevic should know that if he decides to do something of that nature, he will be stopped. We have plans to stop him if he plans to take that direction," Solana said. When asked if NATO states were prepared to use force, Solana replied, "Yes, if they are preparing to go into Montenegro."[85] NATO foreign ministers meeting in Bonn reiterated the threat two days later. They warned of "the most serious consequences" if Belgrade moved against Montenegro and pledged "full support" for Djukanovic.[86]

NATO officials also warned the Miloševic regime against undermining Montenegro's government once the bombs stopped falling over Yugoslavia. In early July US officials indicated that the 2nd Army had grown from 10,000 troops at the onset of the war to approximately 40,000 by its end.[87] State Department and Pentagon officials also said VJ units had deployed around several Montenegrin cities.[88] On a visit to Sarajevo, Solana issued another explicit warning to Belgrade: "We have been saying from the very beginning that we will not tolerate any action in Montenegro, and we will continue to say

that, and to act if necessary." A spokesman for the US State Department was equally forceful: "Any move by Milosovic to undermine the legitimate administration of President Djukanovic or plans to destabilize Montenegro will be considered provocative, and dealt with appropriately."[89] Thus NATO members issued strong warnings to deter Belgrade from taking against Montenegro. However they also did not want Montenegro to secede from the Yugoslav federation. This action might have promoted the very invasion that NATO states sought to deter. It would also compromise efforts to prevent Kosovar Albanians from declaring independence.

But as the war came to an end Montenegrin officials increasingly talked of independence. They made it clear that either the Miloševic regime must go or Montenegrins, to pursue closer ties to Europe, must move toward independence.[90] Djukanovic proposed that Serbia and Montenegro discuss a new political relationship during a conference on the federation's future. Montenegrin officials sought their own currency, control of the armed forces stationed on Montenegrin territory, a customs union, open borders, and greater constitutional authority. Without agreement on a looser federation, Montenegrin officials said they had no choice but to hold a referendum on independence by year's end.[91]

Djukanovic moved ahead with plans to establish the German mark as the de facto national currency. With the talks on changing the balance of power in the federation having broken down in November 1999, the voices calling for a referendum on independence grew louder. That month the Montenegrin parliament began debating a new law under which the republic would assume control over all federal property, including the transportation system. This touched off a mini-crisis at the Podgorica airport in early December. After the law passed, Montenegrin officials were about to take over the airport when VJ troops seized it in a preemptive strike. Worried that this incident could touch off civil war, the NATO secretary-general issued another warning to Belgrade. Lord Robertson declared that

> the international community and Nato took action this year to stop Milosevic from conducting the kind of ethnic warfare that has marked and stained the last decade in what used to be Yugoslavia, and therefore we will continue to pay very keen attention to events in Montenegro. I hope Milosevic will recognise the firmness of resolve to make sure that the Balkans are not going to start the 21st century as another centre of instability.[92]

A standoff between VJ forces and Montenegrin police forces prevailed for a few days until Montenegro backpedaled on their claim to the airport. But in the aftermath of this crisis Miloševic began building a new elite force, the so-called 7th Battalion, drawn from the ranks of his political supporters in Montenegro. Montenegrin officials feared Miloševic would use this paramilitary group to intimidate, sow conflict, and ultimately spearhead a coup against Djukanovic.[93]

As 1999 came to a close, Montenegrin officials reiterated their intention to hold a referendum on independence. Yet, even when provoked, Montenegro never took steps to pursue a referendum. Three factors explain this caution. First, Podgorica had severe economic troubles and desperately needed economic assistance from the EU and other western countries. Djukanovic did not want to jeopardize that aid by committing to a referendum. Second, the Montenegrin president realized that even though he might win a referendum, support for independence would not be overwhelming. This increased the likelihood of civil war. Third, Djukanovic believed that a strategy of waiting was advantageous. As he put in May 2000, "Time works for us; it is on our side. We are aware that over the long term, we are sure winners in the war against Milosevic."[94]

This last calculation proved correct. With Miloševic deposed after the September elections, the federal and Serbian national governments took an entirely new approach to the question of Montenegro's future inside the federation. Serbian and Montenegrin preferences converged. Both sought integration in Europe. Consequently threats of war receded into the background. This was symbolized by Djukanovic's visit to Belgrade—

his first in two years—in December 2000 to attend a meeting of the FRY Supreme Defense Council. He proposed that the officers appointed by Miloševic to command federal forces in Montenegro be replaced and that the 7th Battalion be disbanded. Kostunica agreed to the requests.[95]

The change in leadership in Belgrade did not end the political conflict with Podgorica. It only eliminated the threat that FRY military forces might intervene. In the absence of military conflict or the threat that it would break out, NATO officials effectively stepped back and allowed the European Union to coordinate a political settlement. Javier Solana held intense negotiations during early 2002 toward reconstituting the Yugoslav federation. In March an agreement was reached under which a new state, Serbia and Montenegro, replaced the FRY. The two republics will share a common defense and foreign policy but will maintain separate economies, currencies, and customs services. Both republics will be free to organize referendums on independence after three years.

The Serbia-Montenegro case strongly reflects the prediction offered by Hypothesis 1. The shift in Serbia's preferences ruled out conflict between the two Yugoslav republics. Under these conditions, NATO did not need to intervene on the ground because neither side feared exploitation. This absolved NATO of a continuing role, and alliance member effectively turned the dispute over to the European Union.

6.2 Isolation from Europe and Verbal Warnings

The southwestern quadrant of Figure 1 captures cases in which the preferences of stronger actors do not coincide with European integration. Verbal threats will not be sufficient to stabilize internal conflicts under these conditions. In both Bosnia and Kosovo, the stronger parties to ethnic conflict defied verbal warnings and threats issued by NATO states.

6.2.1 Bosnia

NATO states issued their first warning during the Bosnian war in August 1993. By this point the Bosnian Serbs had seized seventy percent of Bosnia and had forced more than 1 million Bosnian Muslims to flee their homes. In May the UN had declared six Muslim areas in Bosnia "safe areas." In the succeeding months, Republika Srpska (RS) forces systematically set about attacking those enclaves, including the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and preventing humanitarian aid from reaching those safe areas. The alliance's August communiqué was explicit:

> The Allies regard the dire humanitarian situation in Bosnia- Herzegovina and particularly in Sarajevo, including repeated violations of cease-fires, as unacceptable. They warn the parties to the conflict of their determination to take effective action in support of UN Security Council decisions. Since 22 July the Alliance has been ready to provide protective air power in case of attack against UNPROFOR in the performance of its overall mandate, on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 836. The Alliance has now decided to make immediate preparations for undertaking, in the event that the strangulation of Sarajevo and other areas continues, including wide-scale interference with humanitarian assistance, stronger measures including air strikes against those responsible, Bosnian Serbs and others, in Bosnia-Herzegovina.[96]

The threat was clear. If Bosnian Serb and Croat forces continued to attack Muslim population centers and cut off relief assistance, NATO members were prepared to respond using force. For a time this threat caused Serb forces to slow the pace of, but not stop, attacks on the safe areas and the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo.[97] However by November 1993 Bosnian Serb forces were turning up the military pressure on the safe areas.[98]

The August threat therefore had failed to deter the Bosnian Serbs. Their political leaders did not fear air strikes by NATO states. In February 1994 a Serb artillery attack killed 68 people at a market in Sarajevo. The Serbs had continued to defy the August 1993 warning. NATO members then issued another verbal communication designed to warn off attacks on Sarajevo. This warning was far more specific. NATO states demanded

> the withdrawal, or regrouping and placing under UNPROFOR control, within ten days, of heavy weapons (including tanks, artillery pieces, mortars, multiple rocket launchers, missiles and anti-aircraft weapons) of the Bosnian Serb forces located in an area within 20 kilometres of the centre of Sarajevo, and excluding an area within two kilometres of the centre of Pale.[99]

This effort at coercive diplomacy came with a specific deadline and threatened specific military consequences. The Bosnian Serbs had ten days to comply or face "NATO air strikes." On 21 February NATO members declared their mission accomplished after Bosnian Serbs forces handed over their heavy weapons deployed within the exclusion zone.[100] On 22 February the allies sought to replicate their success at Goradze. NATO members demanded that Serbs forces immediately cease attacks on this safe area and remove heavy weapons from a 20-kilometer exclusion zone.[101] Once again, NATO declared victory. But alliance officials severely criticized UN officials for not approving further air strikes after Serb forces continued shelling Goradze.[102]

Yet within weeks Bosnian Serbs renewed the very attacks NATO states had proscribed. In March the Serbs shelled Goradze using the very weapons banned under NATO pronouncements.[103] The exclusion zone around Sarajevo lasted longer, but in August Serb forces renewed their shelling of the city.[104]

The failure of the August 1993 and February and April 1994 warnings led NATO members to retaliate using air power. On 10-11 April launched the first air strikes on Bosnian Serb forces at Goradze. NATO aircraft struck Serb and Croat forces the

following August, September, and November. The allies had moved beyond verbal communication and were beginning to using military strikes in an effort to send stronger signals about their resolve. As Hypothesis 2 suggests, the Bosnian Serbs, extremely isolated from European institutions, paid scant attention to NATO's verbal threats. The Palé government elevated continued ethnic cleansing above all other political goals.

6.2.2 Kosovo

NATO states issued verbal warnings against FRY misconduct in Kosovo many years before the 1999 NATO war for the Yugoslav province. In late December 1992 President George Bush sent Miloševic a letter warning that "in the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against the Serbs in Kosovo and in Serbia proper."[105] Secretary of State Warren Christopher reiterated the warning in 1993.[106] Judging the impact of these warnings is difficult because both Miloševic and the NATO allies became preoccupied by events elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia.

The chief US negotiator at the Dayton peace conference, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, repeated these warnings to Miloševic in face-to-face meetings after an agreement was signed.[107] Holbrooke had sought to include stipulations on Kosovo's political future at Dayton but gave up after the Yugoslav president put up strong resistance.

The Kosovo Liberation Army surfaced in 1996 after Miloševic's government revoked Kosovo's autonomous status, established de facto martial law in the province, and increasingly used brutal tactics against the ethnic Albanian majority. However until early 1998 the KLA maintained a low military profile, carrying out only sporadic and minor attacks on government and military installations. But in January 1998 the KLA stepped up its operations. Violence in the province escalated on 28 February when VJ and MUP forces swept through Albanian towns and villages, killing dozens of civilians and forcing large numbers to flee. Over the spring and early summer the KLA expanded its ranks

and its attacks. By July the rebels claimed to control 40 percent of Kosovo's territory. That month Yugoslav forces launched a new offensive. The attacks drove thousands of Kosovar Albanians from their homes and threatened to precipitate large-scale humanitarian crisis.

The Contact Group of Nations (Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, and the United States) was the first international body to take up challenge posed by the explosion of violence in Kosovo. The group met in early March and demanded that the Yugoslav government end military operations and open political talks with the Kosovar Albanian political leadership. By late April the Contact Group countries (excluding Russia) imposed economic sanctions on Belgrade to back up their demands. But they would not threaten military action if Miloševic failed to comply. [108] The United Nations Security Council also debated how to stabilize Kosovo. In September the Security Council passed Resolution 1199 calling on Belgrade to cease military operations in the province and remove military units engaged in repressing civilians, permit effective monitoring of the situation on the ground by international diplomatic missions, allow for the safe return of refugees, permit access to Kosovo for international relief agencies, and enter into political dialogue to resolve the conflict.[109] But the Security Council could not reach an agreement on backing these demands with the threat of force.

NATO members took up the cause and opted to send a strong military signal in support of international diplomacy. The allies had debated, studied, and negotiated for many months on how to best respond to the escalating violence in Kosovo.[110] But by late September the allies developed a consensus on strong action. They first issued an "ACTWARN" authorizing the supreme allied commander to request forces for possible use in an enforcement operation.[111] On 1 October US Secretary of Defense William Cohen told reporters that Yugoslavia faces a "credible military threat" if Belgrade did not soon comply with UN Reolution 1199. With the pressure mounting, Miloševic announced that he would withdrawing his forces from Kosovo. President Clinton sent his special Balkans envoy, Richard Holbrooke, to Belgrade to convey the specific actions Miloševic must take to fulfill UN demands.

The NATO allies approved a formal warning backed by the threat of military action on 13 October. They demanded that the FRY comply fully with UN Resolution 1199. And they enumerated specific consequences if Miloševic did not accept these terms: "the North Atlantic Council decided to issue activation orders - ACTORDs - for both limited air strikes and a phased air campaign in Yugoslavia, execution of which will begin in approximately 96 hours."[112]

That same day Holbrooke and Miloševic beat the deadline by announcing a broad political and military agreement.[113] Under the so-called Holbrooke Agreement, Belgrade would withdraw the forces it had deployed to Kosovo after February 1998, accept OSCE monitors, and overflights by NATO aircraft to verify compliance. The supreme allied commander, General Wesley Clark, and the chairman of NATO's Military Committee, General Klaus Naumann, traveled to the Yugoslav capital to reach an accord on the specific withdrawals that were required under the Holbrooke Agreement.[114] Once Miloševic withdrew most, but not all, of those units, NATO members extended their original deadline by ten days.[115] On 25 October, two days before NATO's ultimatum would expire, Clark and Naumann reached an agreement with FRY officials on the specific numbers of troops and units along with the terms of their redeployment.[116] NATO members then announced that the FRY was in "substantial compliance" with Resolution 1199. But the allies vowed to maintain the ACTORDs in a drive to "achieve full compliance." And they reiterated the threatened punishment: "If we see evidence of substantial noncompliance in the future with UNSC Resolution 1199, then we will be ready to use force."[117] Thus alliance members let the ultimatum pass but maintained the threat.

The verbal communication of such warnings and threats was, for a time, sufficient to stabilize the situation in Kosovo. By November the humanitarian crisis had abated greatly. NATO and OSCE representatives succeeded in negotiating a series of arrangements with FRY officials to monitor developments inside Kosovo. This included the deployment of an unarmed OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). The greater

transparency provided by this monitoring mission instilled a greater sense of security for Kosovar Albanians who had fled their homes to escape VJ and MUP attacks. They now had sufficient confidence to return to their homes or find shelter elsewhere before the coming of winter.[118] But substantial problems remained. The KLA took advantage of the VJ and MUP withdrawals to launch new attacks. NATO states had little leverage over the KLA, and this had serious consequences for the alliance's ability to maintain stability in the province.[119]

However the root of the problem lay in the preferences of the Yugoslav leadership. Miloševic's responsed to renewed KLA attacks by flagrantly violating UN Resolution 1199. He sent units previously banned from Kosovo back into the province. He also returned units to the field that he was obliged to keep garrisoned in Kosovo. But the mere fact that these forces violated the Holbrooke Agreement was not as important as the mission they carried out. Miloševic unleashed Serb forces into Kosovar Albanian communities to implement Operation Horseshoe. Under this plan, VJ and MUP forces would pursue a systematic campaign of terror to depopulate Kosovo of ethnic Albanians. As Serb forces killed, burned, and pillaged, the plan envisioned, Kosovar Albanians would flee into neighboring Albania and Macedonia. Without a friendly population to sustain the KLA, Miloševic believed he could stamp out the armed uprising.[120] He aimed at solving the Albanian problem by permanently expelling the Albanian population. Naumann has said in hindsight he recognizes that Miloševic hinted at this policy during the negotiations that he and Clark held with the Yugoslav president in October 1998.[121]

Like Georgevski in Macedonia, the Serb leader faced a choice in how to handle an Albanian uprising. Given his preferences for closer ties to Europe, the Macedonian leader exercised caution. He and his government refrained from declaring all-out war on the NLA. Miloševic's preferences were shaped by his authoritarian personality and political system and a nationalist ideology. Having already foregone the chance for closer ties to European institutions, the Yugoslav president opted to pursue his own final solution for the long-simmering Kosovo conflict.

As VJ and MUP forces intensified their attacks on ethnic Albanians in January 1999, NATO's verbal warnings clearly had failed. Alliance members opted to give diplomacy one last chance. They organized a peace conference at Rambouillet, France in February. Britain, France, and the United States organized the talks, inviting both Kosovar Albanian political leaders (including those from the KLA) and FRY representatives to attend.

The prelude to Rambouillet and the actual negotiations are complex and need not be retold here.[122] NATO members drew up the terms of an Interim Agreement and then presented it to both sides. The text contained four key provisions that made a clean break with the Holbrooke Agreement. First, Kosovo would become a self-governed autonomous province of Serbia. Second, all VJ and MUP forces would withdraw to Serbia proper. Third, a NATO-led peacekeeping force would enter Kosovo to provide security. Fourth, the agreement would remain in effect for three years after which an international conference would be convened to negotiate Kosovo's final status.[123]

FRY representatives considered the first, third, and fourth provisions as deal breakers. They swore never to tolerate foreign troops on FRY territory nor self-governance for Kosovo. And for them the fourth provision was simply a recipe for creating an independent Kosovo. By the end of the Rambouillet talks and the subsequent negotiations in Paris, deadlock had emerged. The Kosovar Albanian delegation had signed the Interim Agreement. The Serbs refused.

NATO officials, acting under the ACTORDs issued the previous October, then delivered their final warning to Miloševic in person. Holbrooke, Clark, and Christopher Hill, one of Holbrooke's negotiators, traveled to Belgrade on 22 March. The three told the president that air strikes will commence unless the FRY signs the Rambouillet Interim Agreement. The following day Holbrooke returned to meet with Miloševic alone. Holbrooke reiterated NATO's resolve to act on its threat:

> "You understand that if I leave here without an agreement today, bombing will start almost immediately." And he said, "Yes, I understand that." I said, "You understand it'll be swift, severe and sustained." And I used those three words very carefully, after consultations with the Pentagon. And he said, "You're a great country, a powerful country. You can do anything you want. We can't stop you." There was an air of resignation to him, and we sat alone in this big, empty palace, surrounded by these inherited Rembrandts and other art left over from earlier regimes. I said, "Yes, you understand. You're absolutely clear what will happen when we leave?" And he said, very quietly, "Yes. You'll bomb us."[124]

Why did Miloševic refuse NATO's demands and trigger war? Some suggest that he believed he could ride out the bombing, split the alliance, and cause the allies to retreat.[125] Others contend Miloševic may have thought that Russia would somehow intervene to end the attacks. Still others speculate that the Yugoslav president questioned NATO members' resolve and thought the attacks would only last a few days.

This study argues that understanding the failure of verbal threats hinges on Miloševic's preferences and the nature of signaling. The Yugoslav leader was willing to absorb military strikes as the price for keeping control over Kosovo. As Hypothesis 2 explains, leaders of states that resist integration in European institutions will pursue internal conflicts to consolidate domestic power. Miloševic had long fomented wars of ethnic nationalism to consolidate domestic power. Verbal threats did nothing to diminish that political power. To the contrary, they strengthened that power in the short by causing a "rally around the flag" effect. It was only at the point when the military strikes promised to undermine his domestic political power that Miloševic capitulated on Kosovo.

6.3 Isolation from European Institutions and Military Strikes

The southeast quadrant of Figure 1 captures cases in which NATO used force to intervene in Balkan conflicts. NATO members ultimately deemed that in both Bosnia and Kosovo military force was necessary to signal their resolve. However the use of force did not produce immediate results in either case. In each NATO members escalated their use of military force to break the will of the stronger military actors that stood in the way of comprehensive settlements to internal conflict.

The Bosnia and Kosovo cases involve dominant military actors that preferred isolation from European institutions. Case comparison demonstrates that NATO members achieved stable outcomes only after initiating or supporting sustained attacks that imposed domestic political costs on the stronger party to ethnic conflict. At the same time, the involvement of NATO as an institution explains how it was possible to achieve a stable settlement in the wake of those attacks.

6.3.1 Bosnia

A series of military operations unleashed in Croatia and Bosnia beginning in early August 1995 ultimately compelled the Bosnian Serb leadership to accept a negotiated settlement that it had long resisted. The Republika Srpska had rejected two previous peace plans. In April 1993 they refused to sign on to the EU/UN Vance-Owens peace plan. In July 1994 the Serbs likewise rejected the terms of a settlement proposed by the Contact Group. On this occasion Miloševic broke with Palé and cut off economic support for the Bosnian Serbs. But Belgrade continued to provide military assistance and sent high-level JNA officers to command RS forces.

On 4 August Croatian forces swept across the Krajina, a strip of Croatian territory held by RSK forces since 1993. Dubbed "Operation Storm," the Croats wiped out the Republika Srpska Krajina in matter of five days. As Serb paramilitary forces fled, the Croatian forces "liberated" 11,000 square kilometers of territory. This meant a large-

scale ethnic cleansing operation targeting Serb civilians. Burning and looting their way across the Krajina, they forced more than 180,000 ethnic Serbs onto the roads. Many found refuge in Serb-held Bosnia, in and around Banja Luka. Many thousands also fled into Serbia proper. More than 80,000 refugees flooded into Serbia during the first week after the Croatian attack.

The defeat of the Krajina Serbs and tide of refugees flowing into Serbia caused immediate political problems for Belgrade. On the nights of 7 and 8 August, 2,000 people participated in protests in Belgrade's Republic Square. The Serbian National Renewal Party and National Party organized the protests. Government authorities moved quickly to arrest leaders of these parties after the first night's demonstration.[126] On 7 August the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church accused the government of abandoning ethnic Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. While not mentioning Miloševic by name, Church leaders accused the "neo-communist" regime of complicity in the "genocide" of the Krajina Serbs. The synod declared that the government "is not up to its historic responsibilities." Church leaders urged that opposition unite to remove the Belgrade and form a "government of Pan-Serb confidence would be capable of saving the national honour."[127] This call sparked an even larger demonstration on 9 August. Protesters in Republic Square, chanting in unison, accused the government of treason for not helping rebuff the Croatian offensive in the Krajina.[128]

The refugee crisis placed Miloševic in a political bind. International economic sanctions had already ravaged the Yugoslav economy. The refugee influx threatened to send the economy crashing into free fall. The president could have sealed the borders to prevent refugees from entering Serbia. But this would have stoked the nationalist fires already raging against him.[129] Miloševic ultimately relieved some of the pressure by resettling Krajina Serbs in Vojvodina, Kosovo, and the Sandjak. Nationalist groups evicted ethnic Croats and Hungarians from their homes in Vojvodina and handed them over to Serb refugees from the Krajina.

But the pressure on Miloševic continued to mount. Operation Storm gave new impetus to Bosnian forces battling Serb paramilitaries around Bihac. Bosnian units broke through Serbian lines around this Muslim enclave. NATO members had already initiated a more aggressive campaign to protect Bihac, Zepa, and Sarajevo. On 1 August they threatened to use air strikes to counter any renewed attacks on these "safe areas."[130] Holbrooke then embarked on a diplomatic shuttle mission aimed at achieving a diplomatic settlement. He arrived in Belgrade on 17 August and told Milosevic that he would no longer negotiate with the Palé leadership.[131]

Motivated by Yugoslavia's economic problems, the pressure brought to bear by Serbian nationalists, and the renewed calls for a diplomatic solution by the West, the Yugoslav president decided to cut a deal with Palé. He brought the RS leadership to Belgrade on 26-27 August and, under the aegis of Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, reached an accord on forming a Serbian delegation for peace talks. The Belgrade Agreement allotted three seats on delegation to Palé (to be held by Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic, and Momcilo Krajisnik) and three to Yugoslavia.[132] However because the agreement gave the Yugoslav president the power to break a tie, Miloševic could effectively negotiate on behalf of Palé in any future peace talks. By nominating himself, Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic, and Montengro President Momir Bulatovic to fill Yugoslavia's seats on the delegation, Miloševic assured himself of a least a tie on any decision because Milutinovic and Bulatovic were under his direct control.[133] However Palé did receive some sweeteners in the deal. In a secret annex to the agreement, Miloševic agreed to secure minimal Bosnian Serb territorial demands, including contiguous territory for the Republika Srpska, a partitioned Sarajevo, a wider corridor connecting the RS and Serbia, and access to the Adriatic.[134]

Over the next month, the Belgrade Agreement would form the linchpin of a series of events that would lead to a settlement of the Bosnian war at Dayton, Ohio. NATO members and the Bosnian Muslim-Croat Confederation triggered this process in late August and early September. After Serb artillery attack on a Sarajevo market that killed dozens of civilians, NATO unleashed Operation Deliberate Force. Under a plan drawn

up by NATO military officials in late July and early August, NATO members agreed to launch far more extensive air strikes if RS forces violated the safe areas. On 30 August NATO members unleashed a series of air attacks on Bosnian Serb heavy weapons, air defenses, communications nodes, munitions depots, and bridges and roads that formed lines of communications for these forces.[135] The initial attacks lasted until 1 September when the UN requested a bombing pause. They resumed on 5 September and continued until 14 September except for temporary pauses caused by poor weather.

In the midst of the NATO air strikes, the Bosnian Muslim-Croat federation launched a coordinated offensive against Republika Srpska forces. What would become known as Operation Mistral 2 began on 8 September. Croatian forces drove east while the Bosnian Muslim army struck from the south, putting enormous pressure on key Serbia strongholds in western Bosnia. The combined offensive continued until 12 October and reduced Serb-controlled land in Bosnia from 70 to 50 percent. By mid-September Banja Luka, the largest Serb town in Bosnia-Hercegovina, was on the verge of collapse. The NATO air strikes played an important role in the success of the Muslim-Croat offensive. When the ground offensive began, the NATO air campaign pinned down RS forces in the east and prevented them from reinforcing their besieged comrades in the west.[136] While not directly intended, the synergistic effects of ground and air power were also no mere accident.[137] Air strikes had long been a central part of the US strategy to coerce the Serbs and force them to accept a negotiated settlement. American pressure lay behind NATO's decisions to escalate the air strikes that previously had been limited to "pinprick" strikes against isolated targets.[138] While NATO officials did not coordinate their attacks with ground units, the timing of the two operations meant that "NATO planes had in effect become the Croatian and Bosnian air force."[139]

Banja Luka's population had swelled as refugees from surrounding areas had fled the advancing armies. As the NATO air strikes and Muslim-Croat ground offensive, RS repeatedly appealed to Belgrade for military assistance. US officials grew concerned that the fall of Banja Luka would lead to a massive humanitarian crisis. Some 300,000 people would be forced to flee. Holbrooke exerted pressure on the Muslim-Croat federation not

to take the city. He secured a commitment to this end and announced it publicly on 19 September.[140]

However the threat to Banja Luka and the refugees that would surge into Serbia played a key role in the political settlement. Miloševic effectively had two choices. He could either intervene militarily to prevent Banja Luka from falling or cooperate to end the war. But NATO air strikes and the federation ground offensive boxed Miloševic in. He could not intervene because his forces would be vulnerable to NATO air strikes. But if Banja Luka fell, the resulting refugee crisis could cause a nationalist backlash and destabilize the regime. The Croatian offensive into the Krajina had already shown how refugees could trigger political unrest. The threat that Banja Luka would precipitate another refugee influx persisted despite Holbrooke's public assurances. The Bosnian Serbs could continue resisting demands for a ceasefire and prompt the federation to keep pressing toward Banja Luka. This is precisely what happened in October when Banja Luka appeared on the verge of collapse once again.[141]

In the end, Miloševic recognized that only NATO had the capacity to insure Banja Luka would not fall, that the refugees would not flood in, and that nationalist opposition would not challenge his authority on the very issue that brought him to power in the first place. NATO offered this solution through its commitment to deploy a peacekeeping force strong enough to insure that fighting would not break after a political settlement. This meant that Miloševic had to reach a settlement. The Belgrade Agreement gave him the tools that he needed to push a settlement through over any opposition that Palé might put up. The president had already gone a long way down this road on 8 September after the NATO bombing but before the Mistral 2 ground offensive. The Agreement on Basic Principles that Miloševic signed in Geneva contained some of the core features of the political settlement that all parties would sign at Dayton.

But it did not contain everything. Miluntinovic agreed to a further set of principles on 26 September in New York. Moreover, Miloševic would ultimately renege on the secret clauses to the Belgrade Agreement. He broke his pledge to seek a partitioned Sarajevo,

an expanded corridor linking Serbia and the Bosnian Serb republic, and access to the sea. The only promise he kept was guaranteeing territorial contiguity for the Republika Srpka.

Two critical factors produced a settlement in Bosnia. One was NATO's ability to exercise political pressure on Belgrade. As Hypothesis 4 suggests, the air strikes served as credible signal by threatening the Miloševic's political base. NATO strike aircraft worked in harmony with the Muslim-Croat federation ground offensive. However, contrary to offensive realist theory (Hypothesis 3), the threat to seize additional territory did not bring the war to an end. Rather, NATO's institutional capacities to prevent the seizure of territory after any agreement—namely the fall of Banja Luka—reassured Miloševic that reaching a settlement was in his interests. The parties could have reached an accord and reneged on it *ex post facto*. Miloševic would have resisted a settlement that left the Muslim-Croat forces in a better position to launch a coup de main on Banja Luka. But the Dayton Peace Accord was not open to such exploitation because it was enforceable. And it was enforceable because, consistent with Hypothesis 5, a NATO-led peacekeeping force prevented the parties from reneging on their commitments.

6.3.2 Kosovo

Yugoslavia's rejection of the Rambouillet draft settlement raises an intriguing question: Did Miloševic reject the agreement because he believed that relinquishing control over Kosovo would jeopardize his political authority? In other words, did Miloševic refuse NATO's peace terms and accept war so blithely because he believed that the loss of Kosovo would incite a rebellion against his rule? Some scholars have speculated that this indeed was the case.[142] Miloševic may very well have calculated that absorbing the air strikes first and only giving up Kosovo later, if he were forced to do so, was a more sound strategy than simply handing over Kosovo at Rambouillet.

Of course Miloševic ultimately did give up Kosovo and remained in power for more than a year afterward. This retrospective evidence casts doubt on, but does not invalidate, the claim that the Yugoslav president feared for his political life if he agreed to terms before

the bombing started. Nevertheless, the question remains: Why did Miloševic ultimately agree to a settlement? Why did he withdraw JNA and MUP forces from Kosovo and permit a NATO-led peacekeeping force to enter the province? Why did he not resist to the end? Why did he not force NATO members to launch a ground war to seize Kosovo? And even in that case, he might still have resisted and compelled NATO members to march all the way to Belgrade.

Yet he did not pursue this path. After 78 days of bombing he agreed to withdraw his troops and permit NATO forces to take control. Why? When asked to speculate on matter, General Wesley Clark responded: "You'll have to ask Milosevic, and he'll never tell you."[143] While this may be the case, this study presents comparative evidence that Miloševic caved into NATO pressure when the air strikes had begun to generate sufficient domestic opposition to the war and the regime. This section also shows that NATO members never seriously signaled that they were about to launch a ground invasion. Miloševic did not capitulate when he did because he feared the loss of territory, either in Kosovo or Serbia itself.

With the Miloševic regime refusing to accept the draft Rambouillet peace plan, NATO states activated their threatened air strikes. NATO launched Operation Allied Force on 24 March 1999. But like NATO bombing in Bosnia prior to Operation Deliberate Force, the initial strikes on Yugoslavia were limited. Assuming that Miloševic would cave after a few days, the allies did not target Belgrade and high-value targets in the first series of strikes. Alliance forces refrained from hitting the center of Belgrade until the eleventh day of the campaign. The alliance also did not attack the country's electrical grid until the beginning of May, a target included in "Phase III" of NATO's planned air campaign.[144]

Phase I of Operation Allied Force involved striking Yugoslavia air defenses. This phase ended on 27 March when the NAC authorized Phase II against security forces and their support facilities in Kosovo. Disagreement among the allies meant the NAC never formally agreed to attacks on Phase III targets, which included the political leadership,

economic infrastructure, highway and road networks, and bridges. The allies reached a compromise striking those targets in late April by giving the Secretary General the discretion to authorize those strikes.[145] In May NATO crossed the threshold from limited to robust military pressure on Yugoslavia. During the first month of the campaign NATO aircraft averaged approximately 92 strike sorties per day. This number increased to 250 during May. While the number of daily strikes remained quite low when compared to the 1991 Gulf War, NATO states had clearly intensified the attacks.

By early June Miloševic decided to relent. After the Ahtisaari-Chernomyrdin's mission to Belgrade, he accepted the terms formulated by G-8 nations. This led to the signing of the Military-Techical Agreement on 9 June specifying the transfer of Kosovo to NATO's control. Scholars have considered a number of reasons why, in addition to the air strikes, Miloševic decided to relinquish control over Kosovo. These factors include the realization that, contrary to earlier expectations, the bombing campaign would not fracture NATO politically; that Russia would no longer support the Serb cause and had in effect sided with NATO; that NATO was likely to launch a ground offensive either against Kosvo, Serbia, or both; that a further escalation of the air campaign would destroy Serbia's economy; and that domestic political unrest had reached unacceptable levels.[146] The case comparisons made by this study suggest that Miloševic because he believed that NATO would indeed escalate the air strikes and that the bombing would incite greater opposition to his rule.

Until the end of April, the public and most groups in the social and political spheres strongly supported the president's resistance to NATO's demands. But by early May things had changed dramatically. According to one survey, 71 percent of Yugoslavs reported suffering from shortages in specific goods.[147] While the political opinions of the respondents were not canvassed, this data in all likelihood went hand in hand with increasing popular anger with the regime.

At the end of May families of soldiers deployed to Kosovo began to stage series of antiwar protests. The demonstrations took place in the south-central Serbia towns of

Krusevac, Aleksandrovac, and Trstenik. As many as 500 reservists then deserted their posts in Kosovo and returned to their homes in Krusevac. They were joined by hundreds of other reservists given temporary leave to help calm the situation in their hometown. On 23 May between 1000 and 3000 people gathered in Krusevac to protest the return of the reservists to Kosovo. Protesters also gathered in Aleksandrovac, including uniformed reservists, and sought to march to Krusevac to join the demonstration. Government authorities forced them to turn back.[148]

Demonstrations also broke out in at least four other towns in south-central Serbia. In Cacak, 160 kilometers south of Belgrade, the mayor formed a "Citizens' Parliament" as a forum for local residents to express their opposition to the war. Police surrounded the mayor's house, but he had already gone into hiding. A group of 100 people belonging to the Citizens Parliament convened in any event and sent a letter to Miloševic demanding that he end the war.[149]

What was the impact of these protests on Belgrade's decision to accept the terms offered by Ahtisaari-Chernomyrdin on 3 June? Some predicted before this date that the demonstrations would ultimately compel the government to reach a settlement. Bratislav Grubacic, a Belgrade political commentator, reasoned that the protests were "less against the army, but more against local politicians. It will put serious pressure on President Milosevic and the army to find a settlement."[150] But the main opposition parties in Belgrade discounted these protests in the Serbian heartland. "We will not ask party members to come to the streets," said Ljiljana Lucic of the Democratic Party of Serbia. "It's irresponsible. There have been enough victims here already - and we want to avoid making more at all costs." An unnamed political analyst stated that the protests in south-central Serbia "will have no influence. These are three tiny towns. The only thing they will get from protesting is a greater police presence."[151]

The absence of large, organized protests in Belgrade, in contrast to the situation in 1995 after Serb refugees arrived from the Krajina, is not surprising. In 1999 Belgrade was under direct attack. The population was already war weary. The regime had imposed

stringent media censorship and shutdown opposition media outlets. The regime also was prepared to crack down hard on any overt expressions of dissent. Leaders of mainstream opposition parties suggested that widespread demonstrations against the regime would have to wait until after the war. Vuk Draškovic, leader of the Serbian Renwal Party, said that "we . . . are not [in] opposition to Serbia; we are fighting for Serbia. Today we are fighters against NATO. Tomorrow we will be fighting against Milosevic."[152]

Indeed, many believed that the escalation of air attacks—particularly the series of strikes on power plants during the first and third weeks of May that crippled water, electricity, and phone services in Belgrade—meant that Miloševic would soon capitulate. As one former government official said of Miloševic said at the end of May: "It's closer to the end than to the beginning of the end. He's not buying time."[153] The Yugoslav president faced two distinct problems by the end of May: the air strikes and growing political unrest. Clearly there was a cause and effect relationship. Therefore, Miloševic may have reasoned that his political opponents would pressure the regime whether or not the country was under attack, as Draškovic indicated. This placed a premium on ending the air strikes so he could concentrate on reigning in the forces that threatened his political base at home. As Predrag Simic, an advisor to Draškovic, put it, "Every single party is recalculating its positions and looking at the options. Milosevic knows that he will survive for the time being and is looking at what comes after the bombing."[154] The war had generated spontaneous protests in south-central Serbia. Miloševic knew the organized protests were forthcoming, with or without war. He decided to give up Kosovo to fend off the coming storm of political dissent.

A number of scholars and policy makers have argued that the threat of NATO ground offensive, not the aerial attacks and political protests, coerced Belgrade into releasing its grip on Kosovo.[155] However a recent study presents a sound and well-documented argument that NATO states had not reached a political consensus on the need for ground operations had not clearly signaled that they would pursue a land invasion, and were not prepared for such an invasion.[156]

The most significant flaw in the argument that a ground threat caused Miloševic to cave on Kosovo is that officials from NATO countries never articulated such a threat publicly. On 18 May President Clinton stated that "we have not and will not take any option off the table."[157] While British Prime Minister Tony Blair had been pushing the allies to make preparations for a ground offensive for over a month, only Washington could credibly signal that an invasion was impending given its dominant military role in the alliance. United States civilian and military officials gave Viktor Chernomyrdin "very explicit" warnings about an impending ground attack only days before his mission to Belgrade.[158] Just before Belgrade agreed to the G-8 demands the president's national security adviser, Sandy Berger, declared in a private meeting that the administration would pursue all options to win the war.[159] However this warning, issued in private, does not appear to be credible. If the administration were serious about making such a threat, it would have done in public, just as NATO officials had done in Bosnia.

Not all credible signals, however, need be verbalized. At the end of May NATO combat engineers began reinforcing the road connecting Albania to Kosovo. Simultaneously the Albanian army began supporting KLA forces with artillery strikes in an effort to secure supply routes into the Yugoslav province. Maj. General Vladimir Lazarevic, commander of the Yugoslav army's Pristina Corps, called it "the beginning of a new phase of aggression, the so-called land operation."[160] On 25 May NATO also authorized the deployment of nearly 30,000 additional troops to Macedonia. The alliance justified the increase as preparation for sending a peacekeeping force in Kosovo once a settlement had been reached.[161]

Belgrade might have interpreted both the road improvements and the troops deployment as definitive preparations for a ground war. But the Yugoslav leadership would also have recognized that a force of 50,000 troops was insufficient to invade Kosovo when most knowledgeable observers put the number at 175,000 or more.[162] Moreover, US officials and many other NATO-member states explicitly ruled out the possibility of a ground invasion. The verbal statements contradicting the preparations on the ground could only

have raised doubts in the minds of Serb leaders that the allies were serious about a land invasion.[163]

When compared to the warnings NATO states issued during the Bosnia conflict and before the Operation Allied Force began, the threats to launch a ground offensive in Kosovo were vague and not backed up by sufficient forces on the ground to make them credible. Miloševic might have been concerned that NATO states—either a coalition of the willing or the alliance as a whole—would send ground troops into Kosovo or Serbia. But that prospect was too distant to explain why the FRY leadership accepted the terms conveyed by Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari. The combination of air strikes as credible signals and the outbreak of domestic political protest—with the expectations that it would intensify—compelled Miloševic to concede. This evidence is consistent with the bargaining approach outlined in Hypothesis 4. On the other hand, the offensive realist proposition that coercion is likely to succeed when states face the loss of territory (Hypothesis 3) does not shed light on this case.

But even if one accepts that the proposition that air strikes and political threats to the regime caused Miloševic to withdraw from Kosovo, the entry of a NATO peacekeeping force into Kosovo poses a puzzle. Why did the FRY regime not anticipate that NATO states would use Kosovo as base from which it might launch attacks into Serbia proper? The regime had long warned that Kosovo was the first step in a plan aiming at taking control of Yugoslavia in its entirety. In a public address just prior to the first NATO air strikes, Miloševic painted a grim picture: "This has not been just a question of Kosovo, although Kosovo, too, is of immense importance to us. The freedom of our entire country is in question, and Kosovo would have only served as a door for foreign troops to get in and put in question precisely these greatest values of ours."[164]

One could argue that, since the FRY leadership relinquished control over Kosovo rather than fight to the bitter end, such statements were mere hyperbole designed to rally the nation. But there is another explanation. As suggested by Hypothesis 5, NATO's institutional capacities may have made giving up Kosovo easier to swallow. As an

alliance of democratic states, the alliance retained a high degree of credibility. The alliance has a unique capacity to make highly credible political commitments. Belgrade could be relatively confident that alliance would do no more than it promised: end the civil war in Kosovo and return the province to self-governance.

7. Conclusion

The Balkans posed serious challenges to those committed to a more peaceful and stable Europe. NATO emerged from the cold war stronger than ever. Yet alliance members encountered real difficulties in seeking to enforce peace and security in southeastern Europe. Clearly some the problems the allies faced were homegrown. The allies did not always summon the requisite will, unity, or resources necessary to quell Balkan conflicts.

But NATO states also found themselves deeply engaged in a complex bargaining process as they sought to impose peace on a turbulent region. They consistently sought to send credible signals in an effort to turn state and non-state actors back away from ethnic warfare. NATO's agenda after the cold war centered on developing a credible set of strategies and forces that would successfully enforce peace in the new Europe. NATO's Balkan interventions reflect a mixed record of success and failure. This study presents an analytic framework that can make sense on this complex story.

This study demonstrates that the ability of NATO states to stabilize out-of-area conflicts in Balkans hinged on both the preferences of the parties to those conflicts and the type of threats issued by alliance members. Using theoretical proposition derived from bargaining theory and cross-case comparisons of the major Balkan conflicts, the study reaches four principal conclusions. First, when the stronger party to internal conflict prefers integration in European institutions, then signals sent by NATO allies as verbal warnings will lead to a stable settlement. This is precisely what happened in the Presevo valley, Macedonia, and Serbia-Montenegro cases. When the stronger party seeks a closer relationship with Europe, it will refrain from escalating conflicts to the highest levels of force. This restraint creates opening for diplomacy and a negotiated settlement.

Second, when the stronger parties to internal conflict prefer isolation from European states, then military strikes are necessary to achieve a stable settlement. Actors that pursue internal conflict without concern for their future in Europe will take verbal signals with a grain of salt. They will only retreat and accept a negotiated settlement when military actions threaten their grip on domestic political power. The Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts both followed this pattern.

Third, NATO's institutional capacities played a critical role in both the more tractable cases in northwest corner of Figure 1 and less tractable cases in southeast corner. The alliance played an important role in ameliorating commitment problems that might otherwise have engendered backsliding on peace pledges. Just because parties agree to peace does not mean they will remain at peace. The alliance's high degree of institutional credibility averted exploitation and the reneging on commitments that plagued the pursuit of stable settlements throughout modern diplomatic history.

These findings have significant policy implications for an alliance that continues to evolve. In August 2003 NATO will move outside the Euro-Atlantic region for the first time by taking command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. NATO members have also decided to provide logistical and intelligence support for a Polish-led multinational peacekeeping force in Iraq. As of this writing, the allies continue to discuss whether NATO will formally participate in helping keep the peace in Iraq. NATO members are thus seeking to extend their collective credibility to stabilize conflicts beyond Europe.

This study suggests three important caveats as NATO moves outside the traditional Euro-Atlantic theater. First, NATO members must recognize that their ability to stability the world beyond Europe will depend first and foremost on whether actors see a future in a closer relationship with NATO and the European Union. Members of these organizations must continue to establish partnership programs and regional association agreements in North Africa, the Middle East, and south Asia. If these arrangements successfully pull

actors toward European institutions, then the challenge of intervention, if and when conflicts arise in these regions, will be far more manageable. This is the lesson of the cases clustered in the northwest quadrant of Figure 1.

Second, NATO states must augment their military capabilities to project power beyond Europe. The lessons of the Balkans reads in part that not all actors will want to be drawn into Europe's institutional orbit. If NATO members are serious about enforcing peace and security in far-flung regions, then the allies must have the military capacity to put turn up the domestic political heat on regimes and non-state actors that foment internal conflict. While the United States has this capacity, other alliance members must close the capabilities gap to insure they can send credible military signals. The alliance is establishing a Rapid Reaction Force, to be made deployable in 2004, that promises a more flexible force designed to intervene in fast-moving crises far from NATO territory.

Third, contrary to some analyses, NATO states need *not* develop new political mechanisms to ensure that the alliance can make effective and efficient decisions as the alliance expands to 25 members. The task of diplomatic signaling requires clear and precise statements of intent backed by the credible threat of military force. An alliance comprised of democratic states will necessarily have internal debates and disputes over policy and strategy.

However the cases compared here show that the failure of signaling did not originate in the failure of alliance institutions. Despite internal divisions over Bosnia and Kosovo, NATO officials did issue clear warning and threats. The Bosnian Serbs may have perceived that domestic politics constrained alliance members rather than furnishing information about their collective will to impose stability on the region. But ultimately facing down these ethnic nationalists also required putting pressure on Belgrade. After the Croats invaded the Krajina, the Belgrade Agreement and air and ground offensive in Bosnia induced Miloševic to turn on his allies and betray their interests at Dayton.

There is also no question that NATO members employed a lowest common denominator approach during the Kosovo campaign. This process bid down the intensity of the opening air strikes against Yugoslavia. It was difficult for the allies to signal their resolve because they rules out the use of ground forces and bombed from an altitude that insured ground fire could not down allied aircraft. Allied states creatively avoided domestic audience costs. Those contributing directly to the air attacks had a great deal of support from the public and opposition politicians. Meanwhile states whose publics and political opposition rejected the air campaign—Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Czech Republic, for example—did not participate directly in offensive military operations against Yugoslavia, sparing them from public rebuke. But these difficulties were surmountable within NATO's existing political institutions. In the end air strikes far less punishing than those launched on Iraq in 1991 imposed sufficient political costs on Belgrade to force a settlement.

NATO is a "consensus-making machine." This means that the allies will make compromises. While the allies should be prepared for hard bargaining and internal debate—inevitable in any democratic alliance—they need not overhaul their alliance to pursue out-of-area peace and security operations. Current structures allow for building a consensus and sending credible signals. The reality is simply that some out-of-area operations are harder than others. In the future, intra-alliance debate on out-of-area interventions will likely focus on the degree of difficulty such operations pose. Answers to that question will inform first-order decision making on whether to intervene in the first place.

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Notes

[1] See Woodward 1995; Glenny 1996, 1997; Gow 1997; Holbrooke 1998; Judah 1998, 1999; Daalder 2000; Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000; Clark 2001.

[2] See Cigar 1996; Beale 1997; Papayoanou 1997; Byman and Waxman 2000; Jakobsen 2000; Posen 2000; Hosmer 2001; Lambeth 2001; Crawford 2001/2002; Forage 2002; Stigler 2002/03.

[3] See Auerswald 1999, 2000; Jakobsen 1998; Pape 1996.

[4] See Rousseau et al. 1996.

[5] See Daalder 1996, 64.

[6] Reiter and Stamm 2002 argue democratic states have consistently selected themselves into foreign policy crises that maximize their chances of winning.

[7] For a deductive argument that actor choice and systemic models are both required to explain any international outcome, see Morrow 1988.

[8] See Reiter 2003.

[9] See Fearon 1995.

[10] King and Zeng 2001.

[11] Reiter and Stamm 2002.

[12] Rousseau et al. 1996.

[13] The three types are based on Fearon 1995, 396-7.

[14] See Fearon 1996; Schultz 1998, 2001b; Smith 1998.

[15] See Gaubatz 1996; Martin 2000; Schultz 2001a.

[16] Schelling 1960, chap. 8.

[17] On reputation and signaling, see Alt et al. 1988.

[18] Fearon 1995, 397, 400.

[19] See Reiter 2003, 30.

[20] Woodward 2002.

[21] For an overview of the literature, see Martin and Simmons 1998.

[22] Mearsheimer 1994/95, 8.

[23] Wörner 1993.

[24] See Jakobsen 2000.

[25] See Zelikow 1997.

[26] See McCalla 1996 on NATO's institutional interface with other international organizations.

[27] See Wallander 2000 on the expansion of NATO's diplomatic and political assets.

[28] Russia suspended formal relations with NATO in the Council during the war but returned shortly thereafter.

[29] See Sobel 1998 253.

[30] Holbrooke 1998 argues that President Clinton decided for intervening decisively in Bosnia in mid-1995 largely to preserve NATO's cohesion.

[31] See Yost 1998.

[32] On NATO's institutional assets, see Wallander 2000.

[33] Schultz 1999 explains how in principle democracy can help leaders send credible signals and constrain them.

[34] Sobel 1998, 253-4.

[35] See Fearon 1995, 410.

[36] See Ragin 1989.

[37] On bridging across European institutions, see Yesson 2001.

[38] See Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, 10.

[39] See Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, 25.

[40] For example, see Kecskemeti 1958; Iklé 1971; Pillar 1983.

[41] Mearsheimer 2001.

[42] See Steele 2000.

[43] See Smith 2000.

[44] See Naegle 2000; Steele 2000.

[45] Robertson, 21 February 2000, cited in Moore 2000. See also Evans 2000.

[46] Clark cited in Fitchett 2000.

[47] See Steele 2001a.

[48] Robertson cited in Naegle 2000b.

[49] Nikvecic cited in Hammer 2000.

[50] See Steele 2001a.

[51] Robertson 2001a.

[52] For a review of NATO's diplomatic involvement, see Carp 2002.

[53] See Hamilton 2001a.

[54] See Hamilton 2001b.

[55] See Carp 2002.

[56] Muhamet Xhemajli cited in Gall 2001a.

[57] See Moore 2001.

[58] See Sipress 2001.

[59] See Robertson 2001b.

[60] See Agence France Presse 2001a.

[61] See Smith 2001.

[62] Robertson 2001c.

[63] Robertson cited in Jennings 2001.

[64] Robertson cited in Jennings 2001.

[65] See Ward 2001.

[66] See Gall 2001b, 2001c.

[67] See Agence France Presse 2001b.

[68] Drozdiak 2001.

[69] See Clark 2001.

[70] See Gec 2001b.

[71] See Gec 2001a.

[72] See North Atlantic Council 2001.

[73] See Scarborough and Sammon 2001.

[74] See Agence France Presse 2001c.

[75] Antonio Milosoko, Macedonian government spokesman, cited in Steele 2001b.

[76] See Finn 2001.

[77] See Williams 2001; Savic 2001.

[78] See Mironski 2001.

[79] For the full text, see President of the Republic of Macedonia 2001.

[80] See Harden 1999.

[81] See Done 1999.

[82] Djukanovic cited in Di Giovanni 1999.

[83] See Di Giovanni 1999.

[84] Edgar Buckley cited in Vick 1999.

[85] Solana cited in Reuters 1999.

[86] Joint statement by NATO foreign ministers cited in Deutsche Presse-Agentur 1999.

[87] See Schweid 1999.

[88] See Priest and Mufson 1999.

[89] Solana and State Department Spokesman James Foley cited in Randall and McIntyre 1999.

[90] See Dobbs 1999.

[91] See Thorpe 1999.

[92] Robertson cited in Pringle 1999.

[93] See Racin 2000; Crawshaw 2000.

[94] Djukanovic cited in Swardson 2000.

[95] See Agence France Presse 2000.

[96] Wörner 1993.

[97] See Gow 1997, chap.

[98] See Block 1993.

[99] North Atlantic Council 1994a.

[100] See Wörner 1994.

[101] See North Atlantic Council 1994b.

[102] See Randal 1994.

[103] See Silber and Robinson 1994.

[104] See Sudetic 1994.

[105] Bush cited in Binder 1992.

[106] See Christopher 1993.

[107] See Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, 10.

[108] See Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, chap. 2.

[109] See United Nations Security Council 1998.

[110] See Clark 2001, chaps. 4-6.

[111] See Solana 1998a.

[112] Solana 1998b.

[113] For the text, see "Serbian Government Endorses Accord Reached by President Milosevic, Belgrade, 13 October 1998" reprinted in Weller 1999, 279.

[114] See Myers 1998; Clark 2001.

[115] See Shea 1998.

[116] See "Record of NATO-Serbia/FRY Meeting in Belgrade, October 25, 1998" reprinted in Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, 256-258.

[117] Solana 1998c.

[118] See Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, 49.

[119] On this problem, see Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, 57-59; Crawford 2001/2002.

[120] For background on Operation Horseshoe, see Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, 297 note 139.

[121] See Naumann 2000.

[122] For a good summary, see Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, chap. 3.

[123] See United States Department of State 1998 for the Rambouillet treaty text.

[124] Holbrooke 2000.

[125] See Posen 2000, for example.

[126] See British Broadcasting Company 1995.

[127] Cited in Dragovic 1995. See also Associated Press Worldstream 1995.

[128] See Spolar, 1995; Stojanovic 1995.

[129] Rohde 1995.

[130] See Claes 1995.

[131] See Holbrooke 1998, 5.

[132] For the text of the agreement, see Tanjug 1995.

[133] See Daalder 2000, 228-9.

[134] On the secret annex, see Silber and Litte 1997, 380, note 3.

[135] For overviews of the Deliberate Force air campaign, see Beale 1997; Ripley 1999; Conversino 2000.

[136] See Daalder 2000, 135, note 47.

[137] Forage 2002 notes that NATO commanders and US negotiators like Holbrooke operated independently. This, he argues, casts doubt on the claim that the NATO air strikes were designed to further the goal of a comprehensive settlement rather than merely to coerce the Bosnian Serbs into withdrawing their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo.

[138] The US exerted pressure on the allies to escalate future air strikes at the London conference in July 1995. See Robins, Ricks, and Nelson 1995.

[139] Danner 1998.

[140] See Daalder 2000, 125.

[141] See Pomfret 1995.

[142] See Hosmer 2001, chap. 2.

[143] Cited in Ignatieff 1999, 31.

[144] For an overview of the Deliberate Force air campaign, see Lambeth 2001, chap. 3.

[145] See Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000, 118.

[146] For a summary of these positions, see Posen 2000; Hosmer 2001, chap. 5; Stigler 2002/03.

[147] See Hosmer 2001, 53.

[148] These details are drawn from Hosmer 2001, 57-59.

[149] See Hilsum 1999.

[150] Cited in Hilsum 1999.

[151] Cited in Brown 1999.

[152] Cited in Bennett and Coll 1999.

[153] Cited in Bennett and Coll 1999.

[154] Cited in Bennett and Coll 1999.

[155] See, among others, Byman and Waxman 2000, 7; Clark 2001, 425; Lambeth 2001, 76.

[156] See Stigler 2002/03.

[157] Cited in Seelye 1999.

[158] See McManus 2000.

[159] For an accounts of the meeting, see Erlanger 1999; Priest 1999.

[160] Cited in Priest 1999.

[161] See Gordon 1999.

[162] See Stigler 2002/03, 142-4.

[163] See Stigler 2002/03, 132-6, 144-8.

[164] Cited in Posen 2000, 49.