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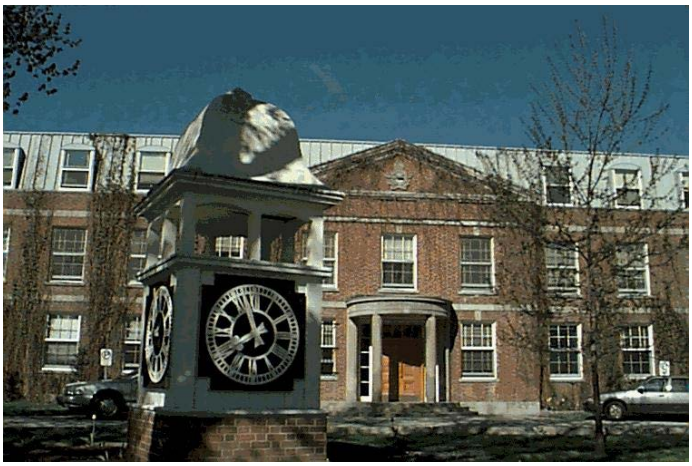

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS: OBAMA'S DOCTRINE AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN INTERVENTION

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JCSP 40

Exercise *Solo Flight*

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Introduction

> *[America] goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all.*
>
> - John Quincy Adams, *July 4, 1821*[1]

Despite President[2] Adams' assertion above, the United States (US) does from time to time go "abroad in search of monsters to destroy," and has increasingly intervened in foreign conflicts since the end of the Cold War, particularly since the egregious events of September 11, 2001. Interventions in Iraq-Kuwait (1990), Somalia (1992), Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995), Kosovo (1998), Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), and Libya (2011) stand testament to the US's willingness to employ military power in support of her interests when required.[3] Since being "deprive[d] of an enemy"[4] at the end of the Cold War, many of the US's interventions served mainly to maintain US prestige and dominance in a new (and short-lived) unipolar world.[5] Following a failed attempt at US restraint in international relations by President George H.W. Bush (Senior) after the First Gulf War, and the subsequent administration of President Bill Clinton, President George W. Bush

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[1] Notable Quotes, "John Quincy Adams Quotes," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.notable-quotes.com/a/adams_john_quincy.html

[2] Secretary of State Adams at the time of the quote.

[3] Karin von Hippel, *Democracy by Force: US Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Aljazeera, "Interactive: US Interventions post-Cold War," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2013/09/201395758918848.html; Global Research, "From the Post Cold War to the Post 9/11 Era," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.globalresearch.ca/from-the-post-cold-war-to-the-post-9-11-era-did-9-11-really-change-everything/26553

[4] Tudor A. Onea, *US Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era*: *Restraint versus Assertiveness from George H.W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1.

[5] *Ibid*., 27-37.

(Junior) was steadfast in his pursuit of US assertiveness in international relations.[6] This assertiveness and quest for prestige culminated in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.[7]

When elected president in 2009, Barack Obama immediately attempted to distance himself, and his administration, from the increasingly unpopular foreign relations policies of his predecessor.[8] "Reset" was the buzzword for the nascent Obama Doctrine, as the administration attempted a return to the model of restraint characterized by the Bush Senior and Clinton eras.[9] Some, however, felt the new policy lacked cohesiveness, and accused the president of "leading from behind."[10] President Obama's new policy on foreign relations would first be put to the test in Libya. In answer to his detractors, his speech of February 23rd, 2011 spoke to the administration's *core principles* towards the new US restraint in international relations; principles that would guide their approach to the Arab Spring uprisings, including that of Libya.[11] Fareed Zakaria, in an article for CNN, described these *core principles* as four *conditions for success*, broadly divided between legitimacy and support, that the Obama administration hoped would lead the US into a new era of foreign policy, and ensure the success of future US armed interventions.[12] Is Obama's Doctrine, based on these four *conditions for success*, the

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[6] *Ibid*., 39-120.

[7] *Ibid.*, 148.

[8] *Ibid.*, 149.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] CNN World, "A New Era in US Foreign Policy," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/23/a-new-era-in-u-s-foreign-policy/

[11] The White House, "President Obama on the Situation in Libya," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/02/23/president-obama-situation-libya#transcript

[12] CNN World, "A New Era in US Foreign Policy," http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/23/a-new-era-in-u-s-foreign-policy/

answer to US foreign relation woes, and the prescription to successful interventions?

This essay will argue that, while there is a strong correlation between the Obama Doctrine's *core principles* of support and legitimacy, these principles alone are not enough to ensure success in future US armed interventions. In order to demonstrate this point, it will first introduce the four *conditions for success,* outlined in the Obama Doctrine, of regional and international legitimacy, and local and international support. It will then propose a methodology to gauge success in armed intervention based on four criteria; cost in lives, cost in treasure, time required, and outcome. Finally, it will use three case studies (Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003, and Libya 2011) to measure the strength of correlation between the *conditions for success* laid out in the Obama Doctrine, and the perceived success or failure of the intervention based on the four criteria above.

Conditions for Success

In order to assess the effectiveness of the Obama Doctrine it is first necessary to have a firm understanding of its constituent parts. Based steadfastly on a liberal internationalist view, the Obama Doctrine's *core principles* can be categorized as broadly falling within two spheres; legitimacy and support. Zakaria further divided these principles into four *conditions for success* that, while specific to the Libya situation in his article, can be generalized to apply to any armed intervention as regional legitimacy, international legitimacy, local support, and international support.[13] Let us now investigate each in turn.

The first *core principle* of the Obama Doctrine is legitimacy which, as a *condition for success*, can be further subdivided into regional and international legitimacy. Chiyuki

[13] *Ibid.*

Aoi, professor of International Politics at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo, argues that legitimacy is key to armed interventions including both stability and counterinsurgency operations.[14] Indeed, legitimacy is seen as a cornerstone to an armed intervention's success by many, including politicians, academics, and journalists.[15] In armed interventions, legitimacy is the extent to which the action taken (intervention) can be reasonably justified within the framework used to take the action, in this case at either the regional or international level.[16] States may receive legitimacy for their actions through a number of mechanisms. At the international level, one of the prime mechanisms for legitimacy comes from the United Nations (UN) through the use of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), which may be used to authorize the use of armed force within the framework of the UN Charter.[17] Other methods of legitimation include public statements or diplomatic exchanges; even silent acquiescence helps legitimize actions at both the regional and international level.[18] Conversely, states whose actions cannot be reconciled within the appropriate framework lose legitimacy. Legitimacy can also be impacted negatively at the regional level through lack of local consent; if the local population do not view the intervention as legitimate, it can have serious repercussions on

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[14] Chiyuki Aoi, *Legitimacy and the Use of Armed Force: Stability Missions in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1, 216.

[15] Chiyuki Aoi, *Legitimacy and the Use of Armed Force*, 1; George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2010), 246; Joel H. Westra, *International Law and the Use of Armed Force: The UN Charter and the Major Powers* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 41; CNN World, "A New Era in US Foreign Policy," http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/23/a-new-era-in-u-s-foreign-policy/

[16] Joel H. Westra, *International Law and the Use of Armed Force*, 42.

[17] *Ibid*., 43.

[18] *Ibid*., 42-43.

the general view of the action's legitimacy.[19]

In addition to legitimacy, the Obama Doctrine outlines the need for both local and international support prior to engaging in armed interventions.[20] Zakaria describes two types of support; local support or "indigenous capacity," and international support in the form of genuine burden sharing.[21] The first type, "indigenous capacity," manifests in the form of local, armed personnel that are willing to participate, fight, and die if required, in support of the armed intervention. It may be composed of armed militias, political factions, or even a popular uprising amongst the indigenous inhabitants. Key to this idea of "indigenous capacity" in supporting an armed intervention is that it exists in some form, and is effective and cohesive, prior to the intervention; for local support, hope is not a course of action. The Obama Doctrine also highlights the importance of international support in the form of genuine burden sharing between states in order to ensure the success of armed interventions.[22] International support may come in the form of bilateral agreements or partnerships, existing military alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), ad hoc multinational forces, or large multinational UN sponsored

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[19] Chiyuki Aoi, *Legitimacy and the Use of Armed Force*, 7; Joel H. Westra, *International Law and the Use of Armed Force*, 42-43.

[20] CNN World, "A New Era in US Foreign Policy," http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/23/a-new-era-in-u-s-foreign-policy/ ; The White House, "President Obama on the Situation in Libya," http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/02/23/president-obama-situation-libya#transcript

[21] CNN World, "A New Era in US Foreign Policy," http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/23/a-new-era-in-u-s-foreign-policy/

[22] *Ibid.*; The White House, "President Obama on the Situation in Libya," http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/02/23/president-obama-situation-libya#transcript

deployments.[23] For support, both local and international, more is better; the greater number of states in a coalition, and the more numerous the assets deployed, the more genuine the burden sharing.

How to Gauge Success?

Prior to assessing the validity of these four *conditions for success*, it is crucial to define what constitutes "success" in armed intervention. Success or failure in armed intervention is far from a binary outcome; countless factors interact to decide whether any single intervention is a success or failure, and even then only from a defined point of view. Nevertheless, this essay will propose four overarching criteria that most significantly impact how an intervention is viewed. These criteria are; cost in lives, cost in treasure, time required, and outcome.

From a western democratic point of view, the first criteria, cost in lives, is fairly self-explanatory; the fewer lives lost, or casualties sustained, the more successful the intervention. No country, and certainly no liberal democracy, is immune to the "CNN effect" of seeing their service men and women killed or maimed on television.[24] This applies not only to the intervener's troops, but also to those of allied nations, and the local civilian population.[25] Even the enemy's casualty rates may become a factor if out of proportion with the conflict as a whole. Overall, casualties must be minimized on all

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[23] Bastian Giegerich, "NATO and Interorganizational Cooperation," in *NATO Beyond 9/11: The Transformation of the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. Ellen Hallams, Luca Ratti, and Benjamin Zyla, 300 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[24] Matthew A. Baum and Tim J. Groeling, *War Stories: The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1-16.

[25] Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (London: Yale University Press, 2011), 172.

fronts for an intervention to be considered a success.

The second criteria for judging success, cost in treasure, is also relatively self-explanatory. Armed interventions should be executed as efficiently as possible in order to minimize the financial cost of the conflict. Not only are monetary resources limited, but any resources used to fund an intervention that are above and beyond the normal operating expenditures of the armed force must de facto be absorbed by the state. This diverts resources from other priorities (healthcare for example), and will eventually impact the public's perception of the intervention.[26] By minimizing costs, an intervention can better maintain popular support, and ensure its legacy as a success.

Time required as a criteria is more difficult to categorize. While it is well recognized that long interventions are less palatable to the public,[27] the actual mechanism at work is less well understood. Although the number or seriousness of wars engaged in do not, via so called war weariness, affect a state's proclivity to engage in armed interventions, they do affect the way in which the public views these interventions.[28] Not only is there a loss of interest, attention, and support as the armed intervention drags on, but the multiplicative effects on the criteria of costs in blood and treasure outlined above must be taken into account. For time required, shorter is better.

Finally, the outcome achieved is of utmost importance. Whether the desired outcome of the intervention was achieved (or perceived to be achieved) or not, greatly affects its perceived success or failure. The outcome may include protection of civilians,

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[26] Matthew A. Baum and Tim J. Groeling, *War Stories*, 192-193.

[27] The Washington Post, "Endless War, a Recipe for Four-Star Arrogance," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/25/AR2010062502160 html

[28] Jack S. Levy and T. Clifton Morgan, "The War-Weariness Hypothesis: An Empirical Test," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://fas-polisci.rutgers.edu/levy/1986%20War-Weariness%20Hypothesis.pdf

regime change, or military dominance amongst others. This desired outcome may also include secondary and/or tertiary effects, depending on the intervening state's desire. Key to achieving this outcome is the requirement for a specific desired end state. Although it may be desirable to leave the desired outcome of an intervention open ended in order to allow for flexibility, the lack of a specific end state will greatly undermine the intervention's ability to be viewed as a success.

Let us now investigate the correlation between the Obama Doctrine's *conditions for success* against the criteria of a successful armed intervention using three case studies; Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya.

Case Study: Afghanistan 2001

The first case study used to assess the validity of President Obama's *conditions for success* is Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Launched immediately following the heinous attacks of September 11th, 2001, OEF benefitted from a large amount of international legitimacy from the start.[29] Not only was the US reacting to an armed attack on two of its cities (New York and Washington), but the UN Security Council unanimously passed UNSCR 1386 in December 2001, supporting US actions in Afghanistan, authorizing the formation of the International Security assistance Force (ISAF), and formalizing several additional resolutions for Afghanistan.[30] UNSCR 1386 not only demonstrated widespread support for the US's actions, it also ensured that those same actions retained their legitimacy, so long as they

[29] George W. Bush, *Decision Points*, 183.

[30] Refworld, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=3c4e94571c ; United Nations, "Press Release SC/7248," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/sc7248.doc htm

stayed within the framework of the UN Charter. OEF could also claim a high degree of regional legitimacy both within Afghanistan, where a large percentage of the populace were dissatisfied with the Taliban regime, and also with its neighbours; both Pakistan and Iran were supportive, with the Iranians going so far as to allow the use of their territory and airspace for Search and Rescue (SAR) missions.[31] This is not to imply that legitimacy for OEF was universally acclaimed. As pointed out by Noam Chomsky in his book *Hegemony or Survival*, there were some who would have preferred further attempts at diplomacy, but even he admitted that only the most pacifist of views could argue against this just war.[32]

While there was little burden sharing by international partners at the start of OEF,[33] with the legitimacy provided by UNSCR 1386, international support would soon arrive. By 2003, ISAF included some 5000 international troops from 28 countries, a significant number considering that US troop levels at the time came to approximately 10,000.[34] These forces constituted a significant effort by the international community to share the burden of the Afghanistan intervention. The force itself started as a large multinational UN deployment, but in 2003 was transferred to NATO command in order to overcome some of the problems associated with ad hoc commands. This was the first deployment by NATO outside the European theatre, and marked an important evolution

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[31] TIME, "Is Libya a New Model of US Intervention or an Afghanistan Do-Over?" last accessed 10 May 2014, http://world.time.com/2011/08/31/is-libya-a-new-model-of-u-s-intervention-or-an-afghanistan-do-over/

[32] Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Holt Paperback, 2003), 199.

[33] TIME, "Is Libya a New Model of US Intervention," http://world.time.com/2011/08/31/is-libya-a-new-model-of-u-s-intervention-or-an-afghanistan-do-over/

[34] *Ibid.*

of its mandate.[35] However, as the mission in Afghanistan dragged on, the support provided by ISAF would diminish as various contributing nations placed increasingly inflexible caveats on the use of their forces.[36]

Local support for OEF was also strong. The Northern Alliance (NA) had been fighting the Taliban regime for over five years (since 1995),[37] and had been allying itself with the US, through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) since at least 1999.[38] The NA represented a strong, cohesive ally for US operations on the ground, and plans were quickly drawn up to take advantage of this "indigenous capacity." CIA teams were immediately dispatched in order to arm, fund, and join the NA in Afghanistan, effectively putting the CIA in the lead.[39] At the outset of hostilities in 2001, the US put this local support to good use; providing direct air and Special Operations Forces (SOF) support to the NA forces as they bore the brunt of the fighting versus the Taliban regime.[40]

Now we turn to the criteria of a successful armed intervention. In terms of costs in blood (lives) and treasure, OEF was relatively costly (although not as costly as some, as we'll see below). While the initial losses were low (only 70 US troops lost in 2001-2002),

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[35] Tim Bird, "Perennial Dilemmas: NATO's Post-9/11 Afghanistan Crisis," in *NATO Beyond 9/11: The Transformation of the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. Ellen Hallams, Luca Ratti, and Benjamin Zyla, 118-139 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[36] *Ibid*.

[37] TIME, "Is Libya a New Model of US Intervention," http://world.time.com/2011/08/31/is-libya-a-new-model-of-u-s-intervention-or-an-afghanistan-do-over/

[38] John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back: The US at War in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 32.

[39] *Ibid*., 34.

[40] *Ibid*., 52.

they would escalate significantly as the intervention went on.[41] Casualties in Afghanistan quickly mounted, and by 2014 a total of 3,439 allied troops, including 2,319 Americans, had been killed in theatre.[42] The vast majority of these casualties occurring after the US pivot towards the war in Iraq.[43] In addition to these military deaths, an estimated 18,000 to 20,000 Afghan civilians have been killed since the start of hostilities.[44] These large numbers of dead undermine the legacy of OEF as a successful intervention. The intervention was also very expensive financially for the US and her allies. The US alone is estimated to have spent over $500 billion to finance the intervention.[45] These large expenditures have not gone unnoticed in the US media.[46]

The cost in lives and treasure associated with OEF can be at least partially attributed to the great length of the conflict. Often described as America's longest war, the intervention in Afghanistan has lasted just over 13 years. [47] Oddly, the initial objectives of the campaign were quickly achieved; once the air campaign started on October 7th, 2001,[48] the US supported NA forces were able to defeat the Taliban an al-Qaeda conventional opposition in short order, capturing the Afghan capital of Kabul by

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[41] SIPRI, "Military Expenditures," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2012/04 ; Hy Rothstein, "America's Longest War," in *Afghan Endgames*, ed. Hy Rothstein and John Arquilla, 60 (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2012); Icasualties, "Operation Enduring Freedom," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://icasualties.org/oef/

[42] Icasualties, "Operation Enduring Freedom," http://icasualties.org/oef/

[43] *Ibid*.

[44] Costs of War, "Afghanistan: 18,000-20,000 Civilians Killed," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://costsofwar.org/article/afghan-civilians

[45] CNN World, "A New Era in US Foreign Policy," http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/23/a-new-era-in-u-s-foreign-policy/

[46] Matthew A. Baum and Tim J. Groeling, *War Stories,* 175-178.

[47] Hy Rothstein, "America's Longest War," 59.

[48] John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad*, 39.

November 14th, 2001.[49] With this in mind, why did the war in Afghanistan drag on for so long? The primary cause was the open ended nature of the Bush administration's strategic vision. The strategy for Afghanistan had three pillars: remove the Taliban regime, deny al-Qaeda sanctuary, and help democratic government emerge in Afghanistan.[50] While the first two would be quickly achieved in consort with their NA and international allies, the nation building hinted at in the third pillar would take years. Indeed, from the beginning, General Tommy Franks (Commander Central Command, and responsible for planning OEF) had described OEF's final phase, Phase IV, as security and stability operations; what he termed an "indefinite task."[51] The length of time required to achieve this difficult outcome would be further delayed by the US's entry into the war on Iraq in 2003.

As can be seen from the Afghanistan case study above, setting the *conditions for success* does not necessarily guarantee an overwhelmingly successful armed intervention. While OEF conformed to President Obama's *conditions for success*, and was at least initially successful in achieving the first two pillars of the Bush administration's strategy, the time required due to the open ended nature of the desired outcome, coupled with concurrent wars, had the effect of undermining the overall success of the intervention. As previously stated however, success or failure in armed intervention is not a binary outcome, and OEF's mediocre success would soon shine when compared to the debacle of Iraq.

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[49] *Ibid*., 58.

[50] *Ibid*., 35.

[51] *Ibid*., 36.

Case Study: Iraq 2003

The second case study this essay will investigate is that of the 2003 intervention in Iraq; Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Unlike its OEF predecessor, OIFs legitimacy was challenged from the start. While US and United Kingdom (UK) officials argued that existing UNSCRs served to legitimize the intervention in Iraq, many have argued that this was not the case. Specifically, the US and UK contended that UNSCRs 660 and 678, related to the 1991 Gulf War and subsequent ceasefire, and UNSCR 1441 related to ongoing inspections of the Iraqi weapons programs, had already authorized the intervention.[52] Critics of the intervention were quick to challenge these assertions, arguing that an additional, new UNSCR (which the US and UK attempted, but failed to obtain) would have been necessary to add international legitimacy to OIF.[53] This point of view was supported by UN Secretary General Koffi Anan, who in a September 16th, 2004, interview was quoted as saying "I have indicated it was not in conformity with the UN charter from our point of view, from the charter point of view, it was illegal" when pressed on his view of the Iraqi invasion.[54] A lack of regional legitimacy also plagued OIF. While the Iranian regime's lack of support was not unexpected, the intervention's regional legitimacy was dealt a severe blow when Turkey, a key US ally in the region, also refused to support OIF.[55] Indeed, Michael M. O'Brien, the former Senior Director for

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[52] CRS Issue Brief for Congress, "Iraq-US Confrontation," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/9043.pdf

[53] *Ibid*.; World Press Review, "The United Nations, International Law, and the War in Iraq," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.worldpress.org/specials/iraq/

[54] BBC, "Iraq War Illegal, Says Annan," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3661134.stm ; The Guardian, "Iraq War was Illegal and Breached UN Charter, Says Annan," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/16/iraq.iraq

[55] George W. Bush, *Decision Points*, 250.

Administration in the Office of Homeland Security, in his book *America's Failure in Iraq*, contends that while the assault on Afghanistan in 2001 was justified, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was neither moral, justified nor good.[56]

Legitimacy was not the only shortfall with regards to the *conditions for success* suffered by OIF, lack of support also hampered operations. As described above, the Turkish government refused to allow US troops to use its territory for either overflights or basing, significantly impeding US operations.[57] Also, while the Bush administration had managed to cobble together a "coalition of the willing" numbering some 40 nations, the lack of support it received from some of the Major Powers and key allies was noteworthy.[58] France, Germany, and Russia all opposed the Iraqi intervention.[59] OIF didn't just lack international support to provide burden sharing, it also failed to secure a credible "indigenous capacity" as required by the Obama Doctrine. Despite ethnic unrest, and a vocal Kurdish minority in the northern reaches of Iraq, there was simply no cohesive internal element to take the fight to the regime, leaving the US and her few allies to carry the entire burden of war. Clearly OIF fell well short of meeting the *conditions for success* outlined by President Obama, but how did this affect the overall success, or failure of the intervention?

In order to assess the success, or failure, of OIF, let us return to the criteria for success. In terms of the cost in lives and treasure, the figures above for OEF pale in

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[56] Michael M. O'Brien, *America's Failure in Iraq: Intervention to Withdrawal 1991-2010* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2011), 388.

[57] George W. Bush, *Decision Points*, 250.

[58] *Ibid.,* 245.

[59] *Ibid.*

comparison to those of OIF in Iraq.[60] Despite the intervention in Iraq being considerably (approximately four years) shorter than that of Afghanistan, its price tag was 2-3 times higher. Estimates put the total cost of the Iraqi intervention at $804 billion – $1.5 trillion.[61] This is equal to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Australia.[62] The recession of 2008, which occurred during the intervention, added to the negative public opinion generated by these extreme expenditures. Even more damaging to the intervention was the cost in lives.[63] By December 2011, 4,485 American military personnel had been killed, and 31,921 injured in Iraq.[64] As well, estimates of US civilian and contractor deaths exceeded 2,000.[65] Both of these numbers pale in comparison to the Iraqi casualties. Iraqi casualties have been estimated at 100,000 – 150,000 dead.[66] A Washington Post article reported on a study that estimated the total death toll (including secondary and tertiary effects) of the Iraq War could be as high as 655,000.[67]

The cost in blood and treasure had been very high, at least when compared to Afghanistan, but what about the other criteria of success? While OIF was a shorter intervention than OEF, with US involvement ending December 18th, 2011, it was still

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[60] SIPRI, "Military Expenditures," http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2012/04

[61] Ronald Wright, *What is America?* (United States: Vintage Canada, 2008), 329; John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad*, 250.

[62] United Nations, "Current GDP," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/dnltransfer.asp?fID=2

[63] Uih Ran Lee, "US Military Casualties in Iraq and Public Opinion" (study, University of London, 2011).

[64] John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad*, 250.

[65] *Ibid*.

[66] *Ibid*.; Michael M. O'Brien, *America's Failure in Iraq*, 388.

[67] Michael M. O'Brien, *America's Failure in Iraq,* 389.

measured in years (nearly a decade of conflict), a long engagement by any standard.[68] Of more concern was the final outcome of the intervention. Unlike Afghanistan, the motives for going to Iraq were confused, and the desired end state elusive. Somewhere between regime change, the hunt for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), and building a democratic Iraq, the desired outcome did not lend itself to success. Although Secretary of State Colin Powell's eloquent address to the UN on the danger of Iraqi WMD development was persuasive, as days, weeks, and months went by post invasion with no sign of WMDs, OIF continued to lose credibility.[69] As the insurgency took root, and the US and her allies were unable to maintain stability within Iraq, OIF looked increasingly like a failure to the American public.

The failures of the Iraq intervention tend to lend credibility to the Obama Doctrine. OIF conformed to few of the *conditions for success* outlined by President Obama, and when it did, only weakly. Failing to secure legitimacy and support at both the local and international levels, one would expect Iraq to be viewed as a failure in armed interventions. Based on the criteria of success outlined above, this is certainly the case. Only in time required did OIF meet or exceed OEFs successes, and arguably the time required in Afghanistan was due in part to the Iraq intervention. The outcomes in Afghanistan and Iraq, were comparable when measured against the desired end state, but in terms of lives lost and treasure spent, OIF was much worse than OEF. In the words of Secretary of State Colin Powell, "if you break it, you own it."[70] The US had certainly broken Iraq.

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[68] John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad*, 250.

[69] George W. Bush, *Decision Points*, 245-270.

[70] The Atlantic, "A Conversation with Colin Powell," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/04/a-conversation-with-colin-powell/305873/

Case Study: Libya 2011

Finally we return to Libya, the intervention that acted as the test bed for the Obama Doctrine. As the intervention chosen by President Obama to highlight the *core principles* of his new foreign policy, one would expect that it would adhere to all four of the *conditions for success*. The Libyan intervention stands as a prime example of both international and regional legitimacy. Within weeks of the start of the uprising, the UN would act, passing two resolutions on the Libya situation in February and March 2011.[71] The first, UNSCR 1970, which referred the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court (ICC), passed unanimously; a significant point as the only previous UNSCR relating to the ICC had seen four members of the UNSC (including China and the US) abstain.[72] Subsequently, UNSCR 1973, which invoked the UN's responsibility to protect and established a No-Fly Zone over Libya, was passed.[73] UNSCR 1973 authorized the use of "all necessary measures" to protect Libyan civilians.[74] The Libyan intervention also enjoyed legitimation at the regional level. Shortly after the start of the uprisings, both the Arab League and African Union (organizations in which Libya was a member) requested that the US intervene in Libya in order to protect civilian lives.[75] This,

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[71] Carrie Booth Walling, *All Necessary Measures: The United Nations and Humanitarian Intervention* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 214; Aidan Hehir, "Introduction: Libya and the Responsibility to Protect," in *Libya: The Responsibility to Protect and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention*, ed. Aidan Hehir and Robert Murray, 1 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[72] Carrie Booth Walling, *All Necessary Measures*, 214.

[73] *Ibid*.; Aidan Hehir, "Introduction: Libya," 1.

[74] Carrie Booth Walling, *All Necessary Measures*, 214.

[75] Cirian Burke, *An Equitable Framework for Humanitarian Intervention* (Portland: Hart Publishing, 2013), 335; CNN World, "A New Era in US Foreign Policy," http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/23/a-new-era-in-u-s-foreign-policy/ ; Aidan Hehir, "Introduction: Libya," 5.

coupled with the further support of neighbouring states and the European Union (EU), provided an unprecedented level of regional legitimacy.[76] This is not to imply that the intervention was wholly without controversy, but rather that its legal basis was uncontroversial.[77]

The Libyan uprising also enjoyed significant local and international support. Local support, the "indigenous capacity" required to take up arms and fight was already present and mobilized in the form of a popular uprising that included both civilians and ex-military members amongst its ranks.[78] These indigenous rebels carried out the bulk of the fighting in Libya, although they required heavy support from NATO air forces.[79] President Obama had made clear his intent not to deploy significant ground forces in Libya, and therefore the responsibility to succeed fell squarely on the rebels.[80] They would, however, continue to benefit from significant international support. Shortly after the start of the intervention in March, NATO took over duties enforcing both the No-Fly Zone and arms embargo under the auspices of Operation Unified Protector (OUP).[81] Using air and naval assets from 17 nations, led by France and the UK, with the US taking a "back seat" after the initial assault, NATO skillfully managed the remainder of the

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[76] Cirian Burke, *An Equitable Framework*, 335.

[77] *Ibid*.

[78] Alan J. Kuperman, "NATO's Intervention in Libya: A Humanitarian Success?" in *Libya: The Responsibility to Protect and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention*, ed. Aidan Hehir and Robert Murray, 191 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[79] *Ibid*., 197-198.

[80] The White House, "President Obama on the Situation in Libya," http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/02/23/president-obama-situation-libya#transcript

[81] Cirian Burke, *An Equitable Framework*, 334.

intervention, thereby demonstrating a genuine level of burden sharing.[82] As can be seen, the Libyan intervention followed the Obama Doctrine's *conditions for success* to a tee. A model of both regional and international legitimacy, it enjoyed support in the form of both "indigenous capacity" and international alliances; but was the intervention a success?

Returning once again to our criteria for success, it quickly becomes evident that the Libyan intervention compares favourably to those in Afghanistan and Iraq. In terms of cost in lives and treasure, the Libyan uprising was relatively cheap. While initial estimates fluctuated wildly (some being as high as 30,000 dead), more recent numbers place the death toll in Libya between 8,000 and 10,000.[83] Of these, very few were related directly to the intervention (the vast majority being directly attributable to clashes between rebel and loyalist forces), and the NATO military forces supporting the intervention suffered no casualties attributable to the conflict.[84] In comparison to the other two case studies, the Libyan intervention was also very cheap in terms of financial cost. The entire operation is estimated to have cost only about $1 billion, or less than 1/10th of 1% of the combined cost of the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq.[85]

The intervention in Libya was also relatively short, with limited time required to achieve the coalition's aims. From the start of the intervention in March 2011, NATO forces supported UNSCR 1973 for a total of 36 weeks prior to the end of hostilities.[86] Again, US and coalition armed forces quickly achieved their military goals, in this case

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[82] Cirian Burke, *An Equitable Framework*, 334.

[83] Alan J. Kuperman, "NATO's Intervention in Libya," 206.

[84] *Ibid*., 206.

[85] CNN World, "A New Era in US Foreign Policy," http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/23/a-new-era-in-u-s-foreign-policy/

[86] Alan J. Kuperman, "NATO's Intervention in Libya," 206.

establishing a No-Fly Zone and naval blockade, with the majority of the 36 weeks being attributed to the clashes between rebel and loyalist forces. The outcome of the intervention can also be seen as a success. NATO had identified, based on the applicable UN resolutions, three tasks; establishment of a No-Fly Zone, enforcement of an arms embargo, and defence of civilians under attack by government forces.[87] Over the course of the following 36 weeks, NATO was successful in achieving each of these aims. Despite these seeming successes in achieving the desired end state, there are those that contend that NATO's aims were not the only goal of the Libyan intervention; that regime change was also intended.[88] One such critic is Alan Kuperman, a professor at the University of Texas. Kuperman argues that the conventional wisdom may be incorrect; that Libya was not a "model" of intervention. He contends that the conflict in Libya may have been prolonged and in some ways incited by the prospect of NATO intervention.[89] While this may be true, the fact remains that, based on the criteria of success, and in comparison to the Afghanistan and Iraq interventions, Libya can be classified as the "most" successful of the three case study interventions.

As shown above, the Libyan intervention provides a compelling argument in support of the four *conditions for success* associated with the Obama Doctrine. Following the *conditions for success* closely, the Libyan intervention achieved a high level of success. By ensuring regional and international legitimacy, supported by both local and international forces, this intervention successfully minimized costs in blood and treasure,

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[87] Jeffrey H. Michaels, "A Model Intervention? Reflections on NATO's Libya Success," in *NATO Beyond 9/11: The Transformation of the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. Ellen Hallams, Luca Ratti, and Benjamin Zyla, 203 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[88] Alan J. Kuperman, "NATO's Intervention in Libya," 207.

[89] *Ibid*., 206-208.

while quickly achieving the desired outcome.

Conclusion

> *It is useless to win battles if the cause for which we fight these battles is lost. It is useless to win a war unless it stays won.*
>
> - Franklin D. Roosevelt, *October 12, 1942*[90]

This essay has demonstrated that, while there is a strong correlation between the Obama Doctrine's *core principles* of support and legitimacy, these principles alone are not enough to ensure success in future US armed interventions. In order to prove this point, it first introduced the four *conditions for success,* outlined in the Obama Doctrine, of regional and international legitimacy, and local and international support. It then proposed a methodology to gauge success in armed intervention based on four criteria; cost in lives, cost in treasure, time required, and outcome. Finally, it used three case studies (Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003, and Libya 2011) to measure the strength of correlation between the *conditions for success* laid out in the Obama Doctrine, and the perceived success or failure of the intervention based on the four criteria above. In examining these case studies, the strong correlation between the *conditions for success*, and the intervention's perceived success or failure, was evident. However, and perhaps more importantly, it is also clear that these conditions alone do not guarantee success. As shown in our examination of the Afghanistan intervention, even a mission that starts on the right track (well aligned with the *conditions for success*), can be easily derailed through the lack of clear objectives and end states.

Nevertheless, the Obama Doctrine's *core principles* are valid, and should be

[90] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin D. Roosevelt," last accessed 10 May 2014, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16178

followed in the future if ever again the US goes “abroad in search of monsters to destroy.” Although previously seen as “leading from behind,” it now seems clear that President Obama’s policy “reset” in international relations is sound, and can be effectively used to guide US policy into the future. Additionally, the US should continue to study the effects of desired end states and attainable outcomes, in order to best position itself for success in future armed interventions. Only by fully understanding the differing outcomes of the Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya interventions can the US fully prepare itself for future conflicts. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the effect of an intervention’s desired outcome, for although the US may be able to easily achieve its military aims, and win the war, we must heed President Roosevelt’s advice, and ensure that it stays won.

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