

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AT NATO: AN ASSESSMENT OF JAAP DE HOOP SCHEFFER'S LEADERSHIP OF THE ALLIANCE

***Ryan C. Hendrickson, Associate Professor of Political Science,
Eastern Illinois University***

By many standards, NATO stands today at a political crossroads. Although analysts disagree over the depth of the transatlantic political rift at NATO--largely stemming from differences over Operation Iraqi Freedom--it is clear that NATO's collective goal of achieving political consensus remains challenging at this time.¹ Under such difficult "systemic" political conditions, NATO's current Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer is charged with leading the alliance, whose job it is to promote transatlantic consensus. In previous eras of transatlantic discord, NATO's former secretaries general have either implicitly understood or quickly discovered that their political influence among the allies is often quite limited. Those secretaries general who attempted to independently steer the alliance in directions they sought best have found their job(s) frustrating, and even worse, were marginalized politically within the alliance.²

This paper provides the first assessment of Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's leadership at NATO, who became Secretary General on 5 January, 2004. In focusing on two areas of recent NATO engagement during his leadership tenure, Iraq and Sudan, the paper examines how de Hoop Scheffer chose to steer the alliance through public diplomacy as secretary general. Although NATO's secretaries general have historically exercised

¹ Sean Kay, "What Went Wrong with NATO," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 18, 1 (2005): 69-83; Allan W. Dowd, "A Different Course? America and Europe in the 21st Century," *Parameters* 34, 3 (2004), 61-74.

² These limitations were most evident during the leadership tenure of Paul Henri-Spaak, who served from 1956 to 1961, who independently attempted to steer NATO in policy directions he thought best. See Robert S. Jordan with Michael W. Bloome, *Political Leadership at NATO: A Study in Multinational Diplomacy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979).

much of their influence in the corridors of NATO headquarters or in closed sessions of the North Atlantic Council [NATO's principal decision-making body] it is also clear that NATO's previous secretaries general used different public leadership approaches during their leadership tenures. Moreover, de Hoop Scheffer noted in his inaugural address as secretary general: "Public diplomacy will be key to our reputation both inside and outside the alliance."³ Thus, this paper offers an initial assessment of de Hoop Scheffer's leadership, and also potentially provides some comparative analytical value to the previous literature on leadership at NATO. In addition, given NATO's currently divisive internal political circumstances, it seems especially salient to examine how Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer has attempted to promote consensus and cooperation, if at all, though his public diplomacy in leading the alliance during such challenging times.

The paper begins with a brief overview of the office of NATO's secretary general and a summary of the previous literature on NATO's civilian political leader. It follows with a short discussion of the methodology used. Two cases studies of de Hoop Scheffer's public diplomacy efforts on NATO's military training mission in Iraq and its military assistance to African Union peacekeepers for Darfur, Sudan will serve as the data for this initial assessment. The findings provide some evidence that de Hoop Scheffer has provided streaks of independent leadership at NATO, yet with regard to these two issues he has generally exercised great caution in attempting to steer the alliance through public diplomacy.

³ Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, "Press Statement by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer," (January 5, 2004) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s04015a.htm>

Previous Research on NATO's Leadership

The office of NATO's secretary general was created on 4 April, 1952, on the third anniversary of NATO's existence. Lord Hastings Ismay, NATO's first secretary general, was charged with creating the necessary and much needed organizational infrastructure to enhance cooperation among the allies. The secretary general has no official "vote" within the alliance, but rather oversees NATO headquarters in Brussels, chairs NATO summit meetings and all sessions of the North Atlantic Council (NAC)—NATO's principal decision-making body. The NAC consists of Ambassadors, or permanent representatives, from all of NATO's members.⁴

As in all decisions made at NATO, the secretary general is chosen among the allies when consensus is reached for a particular candidate. This decision often involves diplomatic bargaining and name-floating of candidates among the allies before an individual is found to be acceptable. This civilian leadership position has always been held by a European member of the alliance, in part, because NATO's "military" leader has always been an American General—the supreme allied commander, Europe (SACEUR). The SACEUR's position was created in 1950, and was first occupied by U.S. General Dwight Eisenhower. For much of the cold war, the de facto leadership of the alliance was provided by the SACEUR.⁵

Among the previous ten secretaries general, the public diplomacy and leadership approaches of these individuals varied considerably. Initially, the allies had real reservations in empowering the secretary general, and preferred that Lord Ismay focus

⁴ Robert S. Jordan, *The NATO International Staff/Secretariat 1952-1957: A Study in International Administration* (London, Oxford University Press, 1967).

on internal organizational reform alone. Not until the final year of his leadership tenure, in 1955, did Ismay officially chair NAC meetings. Throughout his entire leadership he refrained from providing public leadership of the alliance.⁶

In contrast, Ismay's successor, Belgian Paul Henri-Spaak, viewed his office as an independent force for reform, who attempted to steer the alliance in policy directions he personally thought best. While Henri-Spaak is viewed by historians as a talented orator, he quickly found himself on NATO's political margins, clearly unable to implement the policy changes he sought. Henri-Spaak, as well his successor, Dirk Stikker, were also dwarfed by the talented SACEUR at the time, General Lauris Norstad, who was politically aggressive and skilled diplomatically in providing guidance to the alliance, especially in the area of public diplomacy.⁷

NATO's fourth secretary general, Manlio Brosio, who is recognized as a well-skilled consensus builder, also generally refrained from an active public leadership role of the alliance. Brosio much preferred quiet, back-room negotiations among the allies and well written memorandum that could reflect shared consensus, even if the policy was somewhat ambiguous and allowed for multiple interpretations. In one of his last meetings with the press as Secretary General, Brosio noted, "In diplomacy novelty is a less desirable quality than patience."⁸

One secretary general that stands out for his interest in public diplomacy and his frequent meetings with the international media is Joseph Luns, who served at NATO

⁵ Robert Hunter, *Security in Europe* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1972): 61; Robert S. Jordan, ed. *Generals in International Politics: NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1987); Robert S. Jordan, *Norstad: Cold War Supreme Allied Commander* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

⁶ Jordan, *Political Leadership in NATO*, 23-54.

⁷ Ibid and Jordan, *Norstad*.

⁸ Quoted in Jordan, *Political Leadership in NATO*, 176. See also Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Manlio Borgia: Cold War Consensus Builder," *NATO Review* (Spring, 2005).

from 1971 to 1984. Luns is unique from his predecessors in his love for press conferences and his open meetings with journalists. Despite his occasional absence of understanding in the policy nuances being addressed among the allies, Luns relished in the public leadership and ceremonial aspects of his secretary generalship.⁹ At the same time, Luns is not identified, at least in current literature on NATO, with necessarily being unusually effective as a public diplomat for the allies.¹⁰

In contrast, Luns' successor, Lord Peter Carrington, who served from 1984 to 1988, is remembered for being an effective consensus builder when necessary, but also for his own dislike of the position he held. At the ceremony when he turned over the leadership to German Defense Minister, Manfred Wörner, Carrington noted to the incoming leader, "Now it's up to you to bore yourself for the next four years, Manfred."¹¹

On public leadership of the alliance, Carrington stated:

I have been Secretary General long enough to know that making speeches is part of the job, and I try not to complain too much about that. But I do occasionally look back with a tinge of envy at the much greater rhetorical scope allowed to Foreign Ministers. They can roam the world in search of fresh subjects to address, while I must stick to my last: venturing not in the forbidden lands that lie out of area [the area described in the North Atlantic Treaty], and trespassing not in fields that are for other organizations to till.¹²

Thus, the cold war secretaries general mostly found themselves limited in their public diplomacy, or often did not even attempt to lead the alliance through such means.

⁹ Author interview with former U.S. State Department official, Stanton Burnett (31 May, 2005).

¹⁰ It is striking how little has been written on Joseph Luns, especially given his long tenure at NATO. What has been written, to date, does not suggest an especially influential Secretary General. See Alexander M. Haig Jr. with Charles McCarry, *Inner Circles: How America Changed the World: A Memoir* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 1992), 523-4.

¹¹ Quoted in Michael Rühle, 'Preface: Manfred Wörner's Legacy and NATO,' in Anton Bebler, ed., *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Communist States* (Westport, CT: Praeger), note 10, p. x. On Carrington's successes, see David M. Abshire, *Preventing World War III: A Realistic Grand Strategy* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988).

¹² Quoted in Hans Mouritzen, *The International Civil Service: A Study of Bureaucracy: International Organizations* (Aldershot, England: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1990), 111. On his effectiveness, see David M. Abshire, *Preventing World War III* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).

Among the post cold war secretaries general, Manfred Wörner and George Robertson stand out as leaders who used the public forum aggressively to advance alliance interests. Yet even though Wörner had wide respect across the alliance and a previously well-established political career in West Germany, his public efforts to shift the allies' positions on Bosnia generally failed—despite his frequent and direct calls for assertive action against the Bosnian Serbs.¹³ In addition, George Robertson spoke often about the need for the allies to improve their military capabilities, and succeeded at the Prague Summit in November 2002 in getting the allies to make promises for new military spending goals. Yet in 2005 it is clear that the promises made at Prague for military transformation and increased spending levels across the alliance have not been enacted.¹⁴

In contrast to Wörner and Robertson, Willy Claes and Javier Solana largely refrained from public leadership of the alliance. Claes was damaged politically due to his association with a bribery scandal stemming from his previous political career in Belgian politics, and thus resisted a public leadership role during his brief, thirteen month leadership tenure. Although he did play a critical role for NATO during Operation Deliberate Force, NATO's first sustained military campaign on the Bosnian Serbs, his influence in leading the alliance through public diplomacy was marginal at best.¹⁵ Similar to Brosio, Solana was quite effective in leading the alliance during the Kosovo crisis, as well as at the Madrid Summit in 1997 when NATO agreed to expand the

¹³ Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Leadership at NATO: Secretary General Manfred Woerner and the Crisis in Bosnia," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 27, 3 (2004), 508-27.

¹⁴ Michael Thurston, "NATO Chief Blasts Allies Over Spending Shortfalls," *Agence France Presse* (June 9, 2005) in lexis-nexis, world news, Europe. On Robertson's frequent public efforts to promote military capabilities, among his many references in his speeches, see "NATO After September 11," January 31, 2002, NATO, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020131a.htm>; "NATO's Future," February 3, 2002, NATO, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020203a.htm>.

alliance. Yet in both cases, Solana did so behind-the-scenes or within the NAC. Solana's style was to capitalize on his political contacts and relationships among allied leaders; he chose to refrain from any sort of "bully pulpit" leadership tactics as secretary general.¹⁶

In sum, the record of public leadership of NATO's secretary general after the cold war suggests real leadership limitations on what can be accomplished through public diplomacy. Even though previous secretaries general have found various diplomatic tactics to shape alliance decisions, such leadership examples have largely been exercised outside of the public view. Thus, the previous literature on NATO's secretary general would suggest that de Hoop Scheffer's ability to influence alliance consensus through public diplomacy would be similarly constrained, that is, if he even chose to use the public forum to advance alliance interests.

Methodology

To assess the current secretary general's public leadership, twenty-eight of Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's public speeches and major addresses were examined in order to determine the extent to which he sought to steer the alliance [in any direction] on NATO's roles in Iraq and Sudan.¹⁷ These issues, NATO's military training activities in Iraq and the alliance's support of the African Union's peace promotion operation in Darfur, Sudan were chosen for case study analyses because both instances involve

¹⁵ Ryan C. Hendrickson, "NATO's Secretary General and the Use of Force: Willy Claes and the Air Strikes in Bosnia," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, 1 (2004): 95-117.

¹⁶ Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for A New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); 243-7; Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Secretary General Javier Solana and the Crisis in Kosovo," *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 5, 3 (2002): 240-57.

¹⁷ See Appendix 1 for a listing of the speeches examined for this research.

occasions when the alliance found consensus for action during Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's leadership tenure. Both operations were also agreed upon under controversial conditions, and arguably constitute the most important operational roles *initiated* during de Hoop Scheffer's leadership. Each case will address NATO's actual role in Iraq and Sudan, the important political dynamics that shaped the debate around each NATO decision to become involved in each case, and de Hoop's public statements regarding each operation. De Hoop Scheffer has spoken forcefully on NATO's role in Afghanistan, and did so from the beginning of his leadership, but this operation was initiated under previous secretary general George Robertson, and thus was not chosen for assessment in this analysis. This methodological decision is not to imply that de Hoop Scheffer's public leadership on Afghanistan is irrelevant, but rather that for the purposes of this research, the focus will be only upon Iraq and Sudan.

The time frame for these speeches was from his initial speech as Secretary General on 5 January 2004 to 23 June, 2005, which covers the times when these operations were initiated. The speeches selected for analysis include the majority of secretary general's speeches listed on the NATO website that were made at policy think tanks or research institutes, where ostensibly de Hoop Scheffer would be most likely to address broader strategic questions regarding the alliance. In addition, in an effort to identify any occasion when de Hoop Scheffer may have generated media attention for his public statements on Iraq and Sudan through other speeches or ad hoc press conferences or interviews, a lexis-nexis search was conducted in order to provide a more comprehensive coverage of his public leadership.¹⁸

¹⁸ The lexis-nexis search included a search of news in the "world" section, EUROPE.

As demonstrated above, it is often within closed-door NAC sessions or in private meetings with NATO ambassadors or other senior foreign leaders where the secretary general may be able to exercise his greatest influence. The secretary general's relationship with the SACEUR has also been an important facet of leadership at NATO that is not assessed in this study.¹⁹ In this respect, this approach provides only a partial assessment of de Hoop's Scheffer diplomatic record as secretary general. Yet the evidence is also clear that there are no set patterns in terms of how a secretary general determined to lead the alliance, as some have chosen to lead through public means to promote alliance consensus. In addition, as noted above, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated in his first address as secretary general that he would use public diplomacy to advance NATO's interests, which makes him a ripe leader for an assessment of this kind. Moreover, no published research exists on de Hoop Scheffer's leadership of NATO to date. For these reasons, coupled with the NATO's currently precarious political condition and remaining political wounds after Operation Iraqi Freedom, an analysis of de Hoop Scheffer's diplomacy seems merited, which will perhaps provide some insight on the secretary general's ability to bridge the transatlantic gap, and on his ability and/or interest in steering the alliance through public diplomacy.

Iraq

Case Background

In many respects, Operation Iraqi Freedom has shaped the political conditions surrounding much of Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's leadership at NATO. The deep and

¹⁹ Jordan's seminal work on NATO's cold war secretaries general devotes much attention to leadership of the NAC, as well as the relationship with the SACEUR. See Jordan, *Political Leadership in NATO*.

intense transatlantic differences over the United States' military decision to remove Saddam Hussein and his Baathist party from office produced one of the most divisive periods in alliance history, generating some historians to conclude that NATO faces a critical crossroads on whether it will be able to mend these differences, or face irrelevancy in the future.²⁰

Yet despite intra-alliance differences, during de Hoop Scheffer's tenure there has been some policy consensus within the alliance for action on Iraq. NATO agreed in principle on 28 June, 2004 at NATO's Istanbul summit, to provide training assistance to Iraqi security forces.²¹ This general agreement was amended one month later on 30 July, 2004, when the North Atlantic Council agreed to send an advance team of approximately 45 NATO officers to Iraq, led by Dutch Major General Carel Hilderink, to begin the training of Iraqi forces and to provide additional recommendations to the NAC by 15 September 2004 on how the alliance may further assist the Iraqi military. This original deployment began on 7 August, 2004.²²

NATO's next major decision occurred on 22 September, 2004, when the NAC accepted some of the recommendations provided by the advance team, which called for an eventual expansion of the mission to approximately 300 NATO military advisors, and identified American Lt. General David H. Petraeus as the commander of the NATO training force in Iraq.²³ These agreements were then codified by NATO military

²⁰ Lawrence S. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); for an especially critical assessment, see Steven E. Meyer, "Carcass of Dead Policies: The Irrelevance of NATO," *Parameters* 33, 4 (2003-2004): 83-97.

²¹ NATO Press Release (2004) 098, "Statement on Iraq: Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Istanbul on 28 June 2004," (28 June, 2004) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-098e.htm>

²² NATO Press Release (2004) 115, "Statement by the Secretary General of NATO on NATO Assistance to Iraq," (30 July, 2004) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-115e.htm>

²³ Kieth B. Richburg, "NATO to Dispatch Additional Military Trainers to Iraq," *Washington Post* (23 September, 2004), A21.

authorities in November 2004, when additional rules of engagement for NATO forces were agreed to. An additional agreement among NATO's Foreign Ministers in December 2004 then authorized the SACEUR to begin the expanded mission, who then issued the activation order for the mission on 16 December, 2004. The mission was in progress by February 2005, and graduated its first group of students on 25 July, 2005.²⁴

As is evident, the consensus building process for action evolved over a number of months, which was a reflection of considerable policy differences within the alliance over NATO's appropriate role in Iraq. After Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States first pushed for NATO assistance in Iraq in early June 2004 at a Group of 8 meeting held in Sea Island, Georgia. At the meeting, the Bush administration called for NATO to assist in the training of Iraqi security forces. When the proposal was introduced, French President Jacques Chirac countered immediately that NATO had no role in Iraq, yet also quickly amended his position by stating that the alliance would consider NATO assistance if specifically requested by Iraqi leaders.²⁵

Similar to the controversial lead-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, when Turkey invoked NATO's Article 4 at NATO headquarters, U.S.-French differences shaped most of the political debate over the newly proposed NATO mission in Iraq. The Istanbul summit agreement that came at the end of June 2004 was noteworthy, in that the alliance agreed to assist Iraqi security forces, but was also noteworthy for its ambiguity and absence of clear military guidance on how such a mission would be implemented. The NATO communiqué written at the summit was purposely left vague,

²⁴ "NATO's Assistance to Iraq," at <http://www.nato.int/issues/iraq-assistance/decision.html>

²⁵ Richard W. Stevenson and David E. Sanger, "Bush Presses for NATO Training Role in Iraq," *International Herald Tribune* (12 June, 2004): 3.

indicating the de facto absence of consensus for precisely how such a mission would operate in Iraq.²⁶

As discussion proceeded in Brussels, ongoing debate continued over which country or entity would provide the mission's operational command. Throughout the rest of the summer 2004, France stood firmly against American leadership. One journalistic report suggests that de Hoop Scheffer was critical in offering the eventual policy compromise, which postponed critical operation and logistical decisions, and allowed a small contingent of NATO forces from the Netherlands to begin their deployment and report back to the NAC on further recommendations.²⁷ In addition, before the final agreement was reached to expand the mission to approximately 300 NATO military advisors, France and Belgium expressed concerns over the financing and military scope of the operation. Germany and Spain stated similar reservations. Eventually, another compromise was reached, which allowed for the mission to be funded mostly, although not exclusively, by contributor countries. An agreement was also made that prohibited the appearance of any "offensive" operations on behalf of the alliance. France also eventually dropped its initial opposition to American command of the mission.²⁸

In short, the political dynamics in play regarding the NATO Training Mission-Iraq were quite similar to intra-alliance debate in January and February 2003, when NATO debated the necessity to defend Turkey under NATO's Article 4, which pitted the United States against Belgium, France, and Germany. Similarly, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer faced

²⁶ Joshua Chaffin and Judy Dempsey, "Bush Close to Winning NATO Deal on Iraq Security Forces," *Financial Times* (28 June, 2004): 4; Eric Schmitt and Susan Sachs, "NATO Agrees to Help Train Iraqi Forces," *New York Times* (29 June, 2004): A12.

²⁷ Leon Bruneau, "Compromise Proposed on NATO Deadlock over Iraq Training," *Agence France Presse* (30 July 2004) in lexis-nexis, world news Europe.

²⁸ Daniel Dombey, "NATO Set for Deal on Iraq Military Training," *Financial Times* (21 September, 2004), 3; Craig S. Smith, "NATO to Send Military Officers to Run Training Program in Iraq," *New York Times* (23 September, 2004), A14.

a deeply divided alliance on the question of Iraq in 2004, whose intra-alliance wounds were quickly re-opened after his installation as secretary general with the call for NATO's presence in Iraq. Over time, however, consensus for action--albeit in a limited capacity--was reached.

De Hoop Scheffer's Public Leadership on Iraq

When Jaap de Hoop Scheffer first met with the press as secretary general, it was Afghanistan that he repeatedly emphasized as his "number one concern." Moreover, in less than a month in office, de Hoop Scheffer began to publicly challenge the allies to provide more assistance to Afghanistan, which clearly was an indication of de Hoop Scheffer's willingness to push the allies openly to accept a wider mission and role in Afghanistan.²⁹ This diplomatic tactic was much different as compared to previous secretaries general, including Javier Solana and Willy Claes, when they first entered office.³⁰

De Hoop Scheffer's willingness to press the allies, however, arguably reached a crescendo in his first major address in the United States in a speech at the National Defense University on 29 January, 2004. Contrary to the Bush administration's portrayal of the peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan, de Hoop Scheffer suggested that the mission was failing: that "We cannot afford to fail" and that "We must do more." In turning to the issue of Iraq for the first time as secretary general, he also noted that "his second priority is to ensure that NATO is prepared, if called upon, to play a greater role

²⁹ Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, "Press Statement by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer," (5 January, 2004) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040105a.htm>

³⁰ Ryan C. Hendrickson, *Diplomacy and War at NATO: The Secretaries General and Military Action After the Cold War* (Columbia, MO, 2006).

in Iraq.” Such a suggestion was quite bold given that the alliance had less than one year earlier experienced what U.S. ambassador to NATO R. Nicholas Burns characterized as “a crisis of credibility” over its internal debate over how to approach Iraq.³¹ With a bit of diplomatic nuance and without identifying the actual reasons for American unilateralism, de Hoop Scheffer also warned against, “the dangerous illusion that the US can, and should, go it alone when it comes to security. Iraq should demonstrate the impossibility of that approach. Pushing the US down a unilateralist road serves no one’s interest.”³²

While it seems highly unlikely that the secretary general would have proposed NATO action in Iraq without consultation with the Bush administration, it is clear that the de Hoop Scheffer sought a role as a policy entrepreneur by publicly attempting to shape alliance debate. Moreover, it also seems evidence that de Hoop Scheffer initially demonstrated at least a streak of independence, who was willing to, at minimum, tacitly criticize American foreign policy in Afghanistan and Iraq. Even if de Hoop Scheffer had consulted with Bush administration officials prior to his speech, it seems very unlikely that they would have approved of the eventual content of his remarks, which suggested that the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq were failing.

De Hoop Scheffer’s request for NATO action in Iraq was followed with a similar proposal in an op-ed essay that he published in the *International Herald Tribune* on 30 January, 2004, in which he reiterated, “If the allies were to decide that they wish for NATO to do more, it can and it will.”³³ His appeal for alliance action was reiterated in two addresses in February 2004, in which he maintained on Iraq that “NATO cannot

³¹ Quoted in Thomas Fuller, “3 Block NATO Aid For Turks on Iraq,” *International Herald Tribune* (February 11, 2003), 1.

³² “Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the National Defense University,” (29 January, 2004) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040129a.htm>

³³ Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, “A Bruised Alliance Marches On,” *International Herald Tribune* (30 January, 2004), 6.

abdicate from its responsibilities.”³⁴ Such a view suggests that NATO should not only be ready to act, as he had suggested previously, but that the alliance had a duty to be engaged. Again, it is noteworthy that the issue of Iraq was not NATO’s agenda in Brussels at the time, or that the United States was not publicly pushing for NATO action.

De Hoop Scheffer’s only other clear public effort to shape NATO’s views on Iraq over the next months in 2004 came in the immediate days before NATO’s Istanbul summit in late June 2004. In turning again to the *International Herald Tribune*, the secretary general wrote that “the entire international community has a profound interest in ensuring that the new Iraq find its feet. The price of failure is simply too high.”³⁵ The secretary general’s comments came after the Bush administration had similarly launched its proposal for NATO support at the G8 Summit. At this time, his comments now at least officially squared with the general direction of U.S. foreign policy prior to the Istanbul summit, where the alliance succeeded in finding general, although non-specified consensus for alliance action in Iraq.

After the summit’s conclusion, however, de Hoop Scheffer almost immediately lashed out at the United States for not being “engaged” in the alliance, and for the American-held view that the military mission determines the kind of coalition of forces that an operation needs. De Hoop Scheffer retorted that such a view would lead to NATO’s destruction. He added that the current course of the military missions in

³⁴ Quoted in “Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Munich Security Conference,” (7 February 2004) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040207a.htm> . Nearly identical language was used at his address at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in “Speech by NATO Secretary General, Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” (12 February 2004) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040212a.htm> .

³⁵ Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, “Looking to Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond; NATO Summit,” *International Herald Tribune* (22 June, 2004), 8.

Afghanistan and Iraq were set to fail without additional support.³⁶ Such aggressive criticisms of the United States were not reiterated again, but these remarks are unique for a secretary general given the United States' long-standing de facto leadership of the alliance and the need for the secretary general to have American backing to successfully exercise leadership.³⁷ Thus, his comments again suggest a degree of independence from the United States and his public frustration with American leadership of NATO.

After Istanbul, when the alliance began to debate precisely how NATO could implement its proposed training mission, de Hoop Scheffer retreated from public policy guidance or public leadership on Iraq. Throughout the rest of July until after President Bush's election in November 2004, de Hoop Scheffer generally kept Iraq off his speaking agenda. While he did note the general consensus reached on Iraq at the Istanbul summit, for example in speeches made in the Kyrgyz Republic on 10 October, 2004, and in an address at the Clingendael Institute in the Netherlands on 2 November, 2004, he avoided any specific discussions of Iraq, as well as the controversies that pervaded the alliance at the time. Not until consensus had been reached in November and after George W. Bush's reelection did the secretary general raise the issue again. After months of near silence on the issue, his comments regarding Iraq and the alliance's role in addressing Iraq came in the secretary general's meeting with the newly re-elected American president on 11 November, 2004. Now, in comments critical of the European allies, de Hoop Scheffer noted that it was Europe's responsibility to bridge the transatlantic gap, and that it "is everyone's obligation that we get Iraq right." In short, de

³⁶ Quoted in Elaine Sciolino, "NATO Chief Says Iraq and Afghanistan Are Doomed Without World Cooperation," *New York Times* (3 July, 2004), A8.

Hoop Scheffer called upon the Europeans to move closer to the American view on fighting terrorism.³⁸

In sum, the findings on de Hoop Scheffer's record of public diplomacy on Iraq suggest some initial willingness to steer the allies toward eventual engagement in Iraq, as well as direct criticism of the United States. His criticism of the Bush administration was not on substantive policy grounds, given that de Hoop Scheffer almost immediately supported NATO intervention into Iraq, but rather on American diplomacy vis-à-vis the NATO allies, which he viewed as unilateral, if not ambivalent toward the alliance as an institution. Such direct criticism of the United States is rare for a secretary general, and in recent times compares only with Manfred Wörner's criticism of the Clinton administration in 1993 during the war in Bosnia.³⁹ To some extent, his critical comments of the United States after the Istanbul summit made in an interview, arguably suggest an act of frustration, rather than a public strategy to promote alliance consensus. At the same time, his rather infrequent comments on Iraq, especially from early July to November 2004, suggest a very conservative public leadership role on the issue. While it is clear that he supported NATO's intervention, once the alliance became internally engaged on just how to assist in Iraq, he was unwilling to become a central, sustained voice in advocating for a new alliance mission.

Thus, his public record on the issue, despite his initial promise to exercise public diplomacy on behalf of the alliance, proved to be quite sporadic on Iraq. Although he clearly favored NATO intervention, his record suggests a secretary general who was quite strategic in determining when and how he chose to utilize public leadership means

³⁷ Hendrickson, "Leadership at NATO."

³⁸ Quoted in Warren Hoge, "NATO's Chief Backs U.S. Views on Terrorism," *New York Times* (12 November, 2004), A6.

to shape alliance consensus. The secretary general may have played a more assertive role in the NAC or perhaps quietly within NATO corridors with the ambassadors in alliance discussions on Iraq, but when the issue was in play inside the alliance, it seems clear that public diplomacy was not the means he chose to advance alliance consensus on this issue.

Sudan

Case Background

NATO's agreement on 8 June, 2005 to assist the African Union (AU) in the deployment of AU peacekeepers to Sudan represents NATO's first military mission, apart from military training exercises, into Africa. The agreement called for NATO to assist in the airlift of AU troops to the Darfur region, and for NATO to contribute a small number of logistics experts to an AU mission headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where the airlift will be orchestrated. This agreement was preceded by a formal written request by the AU leader Alpha Oumar Konaré on 26 April, 2005 for NATO to provide logistical assistance to their peacekeeping mission. Konaré then visited NATO on 17 May, 2005 to again request assistance from the alliance. The North Atlantic Council followed with an agreement on 24 May to provide military support through a number of potential but undetermined options, which was followed on 26 May, with a speech by de Hoop Scheffer, in which the secretary general noted that the alliance was ready to assist the African Union. These proposals were codified and then discussed at NATO's defense ministers' meeting on 8 June, 2005 when de Hoop Scheffer announced that NATO would also assist in some training of AU peacekeepers, and help to improve the

³⁹ Hendrickson, "Leadership at NATO."

functioning of the AU staff headquarters. NATO's efforts were also coordinated with the European Union, who was similarly airlifting troops to the region. By early August, 2005, NATO had assisted in the airlift of approximately 2,000 AU forces to Darfur.

NATO's discussion of Darfur essentially remained off of the alliance's agenda until Konare's visit in mid-April, 2005, when press reports identified that NATO was considering action. These reports indicated that a debate existed among the allies about whether NATO should be involved in Darfur. French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier noted that NATO should not get into the business of providing military advice to the AU mission in Darfur. Moreover, for more than a year the relationship between NATO and the EU had grown increasingly complicated due to Turkey's unwillingness to allow NATO-EU joint talks due to Turkish differences with the European Union. To complicate matters, then German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder proposed in February 2005 that NATO should not be the only forum for discussing major strategic interests of its members, but rather that the European Union should assume a more prominent place among the European allies.⁴⁰ Thus, political differences among the allies captured much of the political milieu in Brussels.

At the United Nations and elsewhere, debate also existed over whether the crisis in Sudan actually qualified as "genocide." On 9 September, 2004 U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell used the term "genocide" to characterize the conditions in Darfur, which was later echoed by U.S. President George W. Bush.⁴¹ Their remarks, however, did not result in an orchestrated international response. Rather, debate existed at the

⁴⁰ Judy Dempsey, "Berlin Tries to Break EU-NATO Deadlock," *International Herald Tribune* (22 April, 2005), 3.

⁴¹ Colin Powell, "Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," (9 September, 2004) at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/36042.htm> and George W. Bush, "President Speaks to the United Nations General Assembly," (21 September, 2004) at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/09/2004092-3.htm>

United Nations over whether the International Criminal Court would be allowed to enter Darfur to investigate alleged war crimes taking place. Much of this deliberation existed between the United States, who opposed the ICC's creation, and France, who is an ardent supporter of the court.⁴² In short, the international response to Darfur was stalled due to a host of political differences among the allies, both within and external to NATO.

De Hoop Scheffer's Public Leadership on Sudan

Similar to de Hoop Scheffer's handling of Iraq, the secretary general's response to Darfur was one of caution and tentativeness, with two notable exceptions. On 9 September, 2004, the same day that Secretary Powell called Sudan a genocide, de Hoop Scheffer similarly mentioned Sudan by suggesting near the end of a speech in Helsinki that NATO and the European Union should find ways that "might usefully complement each other....that we have to think creatively how we can work together. For example, by giving logistic or other assistance to the African Union, if it would ask."⁴³ In addition, in his comments to the press on 3 February, 2005, de Hoop Scheffer again noted that NATO may be able to assist in Darfur, but only under conditions in which both the African Union and the United Nations directly asked NATO for its assistance. His comments were quite guarded on what NATO was actually capable and willing to do: "But I think that, quite honestly, we should leave it to the Africans and the African Union to find a way of solving this indeed tragic and horrendous conflict."⁴⁴

⁴² Warren Hoge, "France Asking U.N. to Refer Darfur to International Court," *New York Times* (24 March, 2004), A3.

⁴³ "Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer," (9 September, 2004) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040909a.htm>

⁴⁴ Quoted in *Agence France Presse*, "NATO Could Intervene in Darfur Conflict, Secretary General Says," (3 February, 2005) in lexis-nexis, world news search, Europe.

In both of these examples, it is noteworthy that de Hoop Scheffer discussed the possibility of NATO's role in Darfur before the issue had formally reached the alliance in April 2005. His reference to Darfur in September 2004 is especially noteworthy, as it again suggests some degree of leadership in attempting to steer NATO toward Darfur, but within the context of cooperating with the EU. Yet his suggestion in September 2004 contrasts to his more tentative proposal for NATO assistance in February 2005, in which he noted the very specific conditions in which NATO would be willing to assist, emphasizing that NATO would certainly not consider playing a lead role in ending the crisis.

Besides these two public references, it is significant how seldom the problems in Sudan appear in de Hoop Scheffer's speeches or public references. With the exception of his reference to Sudan in February 2005, from September 2004 to May 2005 the problems in Darfur do not surface on his public speaking agenda. In four major addresses in March and April 2004, de Hoop Scheffer spoke at the NATO Defense College in Rome, as well as in New Zealand, Australia and Japan. In none of these speeches did he raise the issue of Darfur. In addition, once the alliance began to consider action in Darfur, De Hoop Scheffer became exceptionally cautious on the issue, that is, until he actually traveled to Africa to deliver the news that NATO would assist the African Union in some capacity. For example, at an address in St. Gallen, Switzerland on 19 May, 2005, only one week before de Hoop Scheffer traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for his meeting with Konaré, Sudan was not even mentioned in his speech. Similarly, in a speech made in Brussels at security conference on 24 May, 2004, only two days before his address in Africa and on the same day that the NAC had

agreed to potential military steps to aid Sudan, the secretary general again made no reference to Sudan. Once in Ethiopia, however, de Hoop Scheffer noted that “after exploratory contacts with the AU,” NATO had identified three areas in which NATO and the AU could work together, with EU cooperation.⁴⁵ On 31 May, in perhaps his most passionate appeal for NATO assistance to Sudan, he stated: “The logic of engagement in supporting the African Union is clear: Thousands of people are dying every month in Darfur. We, the world community, cannot turn a blind eye to this tragedy. If NATO can help in improving the situation, it must do so.”⁴⁶

De Hoop Scheffer’s appeal for NATO engagement, however, must be weighted against his comments made in an interview on 1 June: “The bottom line is and the red line we should not cross is that this is a mission run by the African Union, and NATO is doing nothing else than answering a request by the African Union for logistical support...you say NATO troops on the ground; that will not happen...”⁴⁷ Finally, in his one major address delivered in late June 2005, after NATO had recently agreed to help the AU, de Hoop Scheffer mentioned Sudan only after he touched upon all other major issues that NATO was engaged in, and in doing so, only briefly mentioned NATO’s new role in Sudan.⁴⁸

In sum, most of the evidence suggests that Jaap de Hoop Scheffer provided quite cautious public leadership on the issue of Sudan. On the two major exceptions when he suggested the prospects of a NATO intervention into Darfur, his remarks

⁴⁵ “Speech by the Secretary General at the Pledging Conference for the AU Mission in the Sudan,” (26 May, 2005) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050526a.htm>

⁴⁶ “A Transforming Alliance: Speech by the NATO Secretary General at the University of Ljubljana,” (31 May, 2005) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050531b.htm>

⁴⁷ National Public Radio, interview transcript, “Jaap de Hoop Scheffer Discusses Current NATO Missions,” (1 June, 2005) in lexis-nexis, transcripts.

appeared to generate little response among the allies. Otherwise, de Hoop Scheffer rarely mentioned Darfur. Once the discussions began at NATO headquarters for some sort of military assistance [after President Konaré's visit], the secretary general likewise remained extremely guarded, ostensibly in an effort to wait for the creation of some political consensus. His first suggestion of a NATO role in Sudan in September 2004, however, does suggest considerable political foresight, in that he recognized quite early that NATO's activities would likely need to be done in conjunction with the European Union, which was the eventual result in June 2005. Yet with regard to his public diplomacy, de Hoop Scheffer cannot be considered a public champion for NATO intervention in Darfur, at least through his public diplomacy. Perhaps within the NAC or in closed door sessions among alliance leaders de Hoop Scheffer may have been more aggressive with the alliance, but such an argument cannot be made for his public diplomacy with regard to Darfur.

Conclusion

These two case studies demonstrate the limited public leadership role exercised and attempted by NATO's current secretary general regarding NATO's engagement in Iraq and Sudan. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer occasionally used public diplomacy to float policy proposals for the alliance to consider, and infrequently provided quite direct criticisms of the Bush administration. Otherwise the secretary general cannot be considered a consistent *public* advocate for extensive and sustained NATO operations in either of these two states. While there is some indication that he personally favored

⁴⁸ "Speech by Secretary General at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg," (23 June, 2005) at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050623b.htm>

such operations, given his early backing of the proposals that eventually became policy, he still chose to take few public, diplomatic risks in pushing for serious NATO engagement. De Hoop Scheffer approached Iraq and Sudan quite similarly, by initially calling for NATO engagement, but in both cases then publicly retreated on these issues until consensus was reached.

This paper has at least two important analytical limitations. First, much of de Hoop Scheffer's policy attention has been devoted to the success of the International Stabilization Force in Afghanistan, where he has been a consistent advocate for increasing NATO's military presence. In this regard, the paper does not provide a comprehensive assessment of his public diplomacy. Secondly, this assessment provides only a partial examination of his leadership at NATO, given that the secretary general, especially during the post cold war era, has been found to exercise influence in the NAC and through other non-public means in Brussels.

At the same time, these findings offer the first analytical treatment of NATO's secretary general at a time when the alliance faces ongoing inner turmoil regarding its appropriate role in transatlantic security. In the cases examined here, de Hoop Scheffer generally chose not to publicly challenge the allies to change policy course, except in rare circumstances as demonstrated after the Istanbul summit or early in his tenure as secretary general at the National Defense University. NATO eventually found consensus for action in these two cases, which largely reflected the general policy proposals that de Hoop Scheffer provided initially, but it seems clear that de Hoop Scheffer focused on other, non-public means and forums to advance his policy interests and build transatlantic consensus. In addition, these findings have additional relevance

for assessing de Hoop Scheffer, given that Iraq and Sudan are arguably two of NATO's most important achievements during his leadership tenure. Both accomplishments provided very limited commitments from the allies, and came after divisive debates within the alliance. Although NATO managed to find consensus, the limited degree of cooperation and eventual engagement in both operations suggests the ongoing difficulties within the alliance, and that de Hoop Scheffer continues to face tremendous political obstacles in his role in building consensus among the allies. Although de Hoop Scheffer initially indicated high hopes for the role of public diplomacy at NATO, this examination finds otherwise, which generally square with the experiences of most previous secretaries general of NATO.

Appendix 1: Selected Speeches by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

“Press Statement by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at NATO Headquarters. 5 January, 2004.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the National Defense University,” at Washington D.C. 29 January, 2004.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Munich Security Conference,” at Munich, Germany. 7 February 2004.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General, Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at London, United Kingdom. 12 February 2004.

“Commitment, Capabilities, Consultation: Putting Transatlantic Unity in Practice, Speech by NATO Secretary General, Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Brussels. 17 February 2004.

“Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Afghanistan Conference,” at Berlin. 31 March 2004.

“Statement by the Secretary General of NATO on NATO assistance to Iraq,” during a Press Release, NATO Headquarters. 30 July 2004.

“NATO after the Istanbul Summit, speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Netherlands Atlantic Association,” at The Hague, Netherlands. 5 July 2004.

“NATO’s Agenda Post-Istanbul, speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the Manfred-Wörner-Circle. 12 July 2004.

“NATO after Istanbul, speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at Helsinki, Finland. 9 September 2004.

“Speech by the NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer during his visit to the Kyrgyz Republic,” Krygyz Republic. 19 October, 2004.

“Global NATO? Remarks by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the Clingehdael Institute. 29 October, 2004.

“The Future of the Transatlantic Security Partnership, speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the “Welt am Sonntag Forum” in Berlin. 8 November 2004.

“The Future of the Transatlantic Security Community, speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the Economic Faculty Association Rotterdam (EFR).

17 November 2004.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the French Institute of International Relations,” in Paris, France. 22 November 2004.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the 50th Anniversary General Assembly of the Atlantic Treaty Association in Rome, Italy. 1 December 2004.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the SFOR Transfer of Authority Ceremony,” at Sarajevo. 2 December 2004.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the World Affairs Council in Amman, Jordan. 13 January 2005.

“A Transforming Alliance, speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the Cambridge Union Society in Cambridge. 2 February 2005.

“Speech by Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, NATO Secretary General at the ICI Seminar,” at NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. 18 March 2005.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at Victoria University Institute of Policy Studies, and New Zealand Institute of International Affairs in Wellington, New Zealand. 31 March 2005.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the Australian Defence College in Canberra, Australia. 1 April 2005.

“Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at Tokyo, Japan. 4 April 2005.

“Liberty as a Security Policy Challenge, speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the 35th ISC Symposium,” at St. Gallen, Switzerland. 19 May 2005.

“Reinventing NATO – Does the Alliance Reflect the Changing Nature of Transatlantic Security? Keynote Address by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer,” at the “New Defence Agenda” Conference in Brussels. 24 May 2005.

“Speech by the Secretary General at the Pledging Conference for the AU Mission in the Sudan,” at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 26 May 2005.

“A Transforming Alliance, speech by NATO Secretary General at the University of Ljubljana,” at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. 31 May 2005.

“Speech by Secretary General at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg,” at Strasbourg.
23 June 2005.