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Political Leadership Changes and the Withdrawal from Military Coalition Operations, 1946–2001[1]

Ulrich Pilster
University of Essex

Tobias Böhmelt
ETH Zurich and University of Essex

AND

Atsushi Tago
Kobe University

Several studies have claimed that changes in the political leadership of a country affect foreign policy decision making. The following paper systematically tests this in the context of states' participation in military coalition operations. By building on previous theoretical models, the authors argue that new leaders may differ from their predecessors in that the former (i) have dissimilar preferences with regard to the involvement in military interventions, (ii) evaluate relevant information differently, and (iii) are less likely to be entrapped in intervention policies. Ultimately, the net effect of these factors should make it more likely that political leadership turnovers are associated with premature withdrawals from ongoing military coalitions. The theory is tested by quantitative analyses of newly collected data on military coalition operations in 1946–2001 and a qualitative case study. The authors find strong and robust support for their argument.

Keywords: military coalitions, military interventions, political leaders, leadership turnover, troop withdrawal

After the Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar lost the parliamentary elections in March 2004, the successor, José Zapatero, fulfilled his campaign promise less than two months after the electoral victory and brought home the 1,300 Spanish soldiers who had been fighting in Iraq. Likewise, French President Nikolas Sarkozy lost the elections against the socialist François Hollande in May 2012. Immediately afterward, Hollande announced the beginning of the withdrawal of the French combat troops from Afghanistan for July 2012. This process

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was completed in November 2012, about two years ahead of the planned transition of the security responsibility to the Afghan government.

This anecdotal evidence points to the impact of political leadership turnover[2] on foreign policy decision making in general and on the reliability of states' commitments to military coalition operations in particular. Surprisingly, however, while there is a growing literature on the origins and conduct of such multilateral military interventions (Tago 2005, 2007, 2009; Kreps 2011; Morey 2011; Pilster 2011; Tierney 2011; Vucetic 2011), the scholarly literature lacks systematic theorizing and empirical evidence that may improve our understanding of how leadership turnover is in fact related to early withdrawals from military coalitions.

In order to contribute to addressing this limitation, we thoroughly test whether changes in a country's political leadership make it more likely that it will prematurely withdraw from an ongoing military coalition operation, that is, an operation that has not (yet) been officially terminated. To this end, we extend Stanley's (2009; see also Stanley and Sawyer 2009) theoretical framework and argue that new political leaders are likely to differ from their predecessors in at least three aspects. First, new leaders may have preferences about military interventions that differ from the interests of the previous incumbent. Second, new leaders could evaluate information, which is relevant for military operations and their success, differently. Third, new leaders may be less entrapped in ongoing military intervention policies stemming from domestic constituencies or foreign allies. Ultimately, political leadership turnover is likely to induce lower political costs arising out of defection and different evaluations of the net benefits, which a country can derive from military coalition operations. This increases the risk that countries withdraw their troops from coalition operations before they terminate officially (see also Stanley 2009; Stanley and Sawyer 2009; Croco 2011).

This theoretical argument and our corresponding empirical analysis may have important policy implications and could not only increase our knowledge about military coalition operations, but also security commitments in general. For example, knowing the factors that drive a premature withdrawal from military operations helps policymakers in assessing their allies' degree of reliability (see, for example, Leeds 2003; Gartzke and Gleditsch 2004). Besides, the existent research largely ignores leadership changes during wartime and, more generally, during states' participation in any kind of military operation. Despite recent advancements in this respect (for example, Stanley 2009; Stanley and Sawyer 2009; see also Croco 2011), many issues such as the actual underlying mechanisms remain unaddressed. Our research seeks to contribute to this by examining the impact of executive leadership change during military coalition operations on the defection from those interventions. Finally, our empirical work adds to previous studies by introducing newly compiled data on leadership changes and all military coalitions for 1946–2001, and by explicitly taking into account that changes in the political leadership are unlikely to be a randomly selected set. Next to standard parametric models and a case study, we therefore employ matching techniques for the empirical test of our theory.

The article proceeds as follows. The next section provides an overview of the relevant literature. This allows us to clarify the contribution of our research more carefully. Afterward, we outline a theoretical framework that seeks to explain the likely impact of political leadership turnovers on the risk of premature withdrawals from military coalition operations. By employing data on all military coalition operations between 1946 and 2001, we then test our

[2]We use the terms "leadership change" and "leadership turnover" interchangeably. However, the terms "(premature) withdrawal/defection" and "termination" with regard to military coalition operations are different.

argument via a multi-methods approach, that is, a quantitative parametric analysis, non-parametric matching techniques, and a most similar design case study. We conclude with a discussion of our findings and the implications of our research.

Leadership Changes, Conflict Behavior, and Security Commitments

Two streams in the literature are particularly relevant for our research: first, studies on the influence of leader changes on nations' conflict behavior and, secondly, the work examining the effects of leadership turnovers on the reliability of security commitments.

With regard to the first stream, there are multiple qualitative studies that highlight the importance of changes in a country's political leadership for the continuation or termination of military interventions. Downs (1992:294ff), for instance, argues that a protracted intervention only ends after the leadership, which initiated it in the first place, has been replaced. He supports his claim by outlining this mechanism for campaigns in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Angola, and Sri Lanka. Similarly, Vertzberger (1998) demonstrates with case studies of the United States in Vietnam and Israel in Lebanon that substantial changes in military intervention policies are usually preceded by turnovers of the relevant decision makers. Finally, Bennett (1999) emphasizes the importance of leadership successions for the Soviet propensity to resort to military interventions, while Stanley (2009) shows how executive turnover contributed to the end of the Korean War.

Quantitative evidence also supports these studies' findings. For example, Croco (2011) argues that culpable leaders, that is, leaders who preside over the beginning of a war are likely to continue fighting in the face of hardship, since the domestic audience will punish them in the case of defeat. Furthermore, Goemans (2000) shows that a nondemocratic leader might particularly fear displeasing the domestic audience, because punishment could involve repercussions that go beyond being "simply" removed from office. Chiozza and Choi (2003) find that newly inaugurated democratic leaders are more likely than "old" political leaders to apply peaceful conflict management techniques in territorial disputes. Likewise, McGillivray and Stam (2004) present evidence that leadership changes influence the duration of economic sanctions. This finding, however, only pertains to nondemocratic states. Moreover, Stanley and Sawyer (2009) demonstrate that political leadership turnovers increased the likelihood of interstate war termination between 1816 and 2006. The authors suggest that new leaders are less likely than their predecessors to be affected by informational biases and are less entrapped in existing policies. Similarly, according to Koch and Sullivan (2010), changes in the ruling party increase the likelihood that a democratic major power will withdraw from its military interventions short of victory. Finally, Flores (2012) theoretically argues and empirically finds that leader changes in autocratic systems are more likely than leader transitions in democratic states to bring interstate wars to an end (see also Jones and Olken 2009).

With regard to the second stream in the literature, studies on the reliability of security commitments also increasingly consider political leadership changes. Gartzke and Gleditsch (2004:781) demonstrate that regular leadership turnovers make democratic commitments in the form of military alliances less reliable. Essentially, administrations deciding whether to honor a commitment or not might feel less bound by commitments that were established by their predecessors. Furthermore, Leeds, Mattes, and Vogel (2009) examine the impact of changes in leadership and winning coalitions on the reliability of alliance commitments. Using a sample of bilateral alliances between 1919 and 1989, these scholars do not obtain evidence for an effect of changes in democratic winning

coalitions or executive turnovers, however. That being said, Leeds et al. (2009) find that changes in winning coalitions governing nondemocratic states increase the risk of abrogating alliances. Finally, Tago (2009) investigates the withdrawals from the "coalition of the willing" in Iraq for 2003–2006. While it does not seem that leadership turnover per se makes defections more likely, Tago's (2009) results emphasize that countries were more likely to end their commitments in election months.

Against this background, our research seeks to make a twofold contribution. First, we intend to add to the literature that examines how political leadership changes affect foreign policies. We do so by further developing existing theoretical arguments (Stanley 2009; Stanley and Sawyer 2009) and testing the corresponding theoretical framework for the case of military coalition operations. Second, we also want to broaden the empirical range of the debate concerning the reliability of security commitments (for example, Leeds 2003; Gartzke and Gleditsch 2004; Pilster 2011). So far, the vast majority of research in this domain focuses on the performance of alliances in interstate wars—a topic of possibly declining policy relevance, primarily because these kinds of conflict have substantially decreased in frequency since World War II (Buhaug, Gates, Hegre, and Strand 2007). Moreover, recent policy debates focused on the behavior of states participating in rather than leading coalition operations.[3] However, existing studies and data sets often consider the behavior of the states leading multilateral interventions only (for example, Sullivan and Koch 2009; Koch and Sullivan 2010). Finally, the only existing study (Tago 2009) that directly examines the determinants of defections from military coalitions is not fully generalizable, since it investigates the behavior of democratic states in one single operation. In order to address this, we employ newly collected data on all military coalition interventions between 1946 and 2001. This enables us to broaden the empirical focus of the reliability debate as contributions to military coalition operations also constitute a "testing ground" for the reliability of security commitments.

Theoretical Framework: Do Leadership Changes Affect Withdrawals from Military Coalition Operations?

In general, a state should remain in a coalition operation as long as the net benefits from participation do persist. However, even if the circumstances change to a degree and the benefits decrease somewhat, a political leader may not necessarily decide to end the military deployment as this is costly. Costs arise, for example, because other members of a coalition might consider the withdrawal as a defection from existing commitments and, in turn, exert pressure on the potential defectors (Tago 2009:225f; see also Leeds et al. 2009:466). In light of this, we argue that three factors influence a political leader's cost-benefit analysis and can make it ultimately more likely that changes in the political leadership of a country induce a premature withdrawal from an ongoing military coalition operation. More specifically, our theoretical framework builds on and extends the work of Stanley (2009; see also Stanley and Sawyer 2009) by focusing on (i) leaders' preferences, (ii) leaders' available information, and (iii) leaders' levels of entrapment.

The Role of Preferences

Different political leaders tend to have diverse beliefs about military intervention strategies (Stanley and Sawyer 2009:657; see also Stanley 2009). These varying beliefs result in contrasting evaluations of the net benefits a state can derive

[3]See, for example, the debates on the Canadian, Dutch, and French withdrawals from the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

from participating in a military coalition. Thus, political leaders may highly differ in their preferences about a country's contribution to military coalition operations—and with regard to its withdrawal from these.

In more detail, different political leaders are likely to have dissimilar "operational codes" (George 1969; Walker and Schafer 2010) that are compartmentalized into schemata, which vary along specific issue domains. These domain-specific schemata encompass "philosophical beliefs" that may affect a political leader's diagnosis of, for example, her state's grand strategies. For example, political leaders could differ in whether they see foreign policy as essentially harmonious or conflictive, or in their identification of threats and their origins (Walker 1983:181ff; Saunders 2009:129ff). Consistent with these diagnostic propensities, leaders also have different "instrumental beliefs" that highlight appropriate strategies and tactics for achieving goals in military interventions (Bennett 1999:26ff). Therefore, political leaders who perceive threats as originating within political institutions of other states are likely to believe in transformative intervention strategies that aim at changing the target's domestic political setting. Conversely, the treatment of threats as the result of an anarchic international system may lead to military intervention strategies that aim at foreign policy restraint, that is, efforts to influence the external behavior of other states without altering their domestic institutions per se (Saunders 2009:123ff; see also Jentleson 1992:53f).

Against this background, we believe that different operational codes have implications for the cost-benefit calculus of leaders. First, different political leaders assess the general costs and benefits of a military intervention policy in different ways. State leaders who are more inclined toward a conflictive view of international affairs evaluate the use of military force more positively. Second, different operational codes are likely to result in different investments in military capabilities, making the implementation of certain types of military interventions more or less costly. Leaders who diagnose the internal organization of states as the source of threats focus on the enhancement and use of their military's counterinsurgency capacities. Leaders more inclined toward strategies of foreign policy restraint, on the other hand, tend to favor investments into their armies' conventional capabilities (Saunders 2009:137ff).

That being said, these philosophical and instrumental beliefs are stable and unlikely to change over the course of office of a political leader (Saunders 2009:131f).[4] Consequently, new intervention strategies based on alternative threat perceptions are more likely to be implemented when we see a change in a country's political leadership (Levy 1994:286; Bennett 1999:114ff). We therefore contend that leadership turnover is a necessary condition for changes in military intervention strategies and that changes in the political leadership are hence likely to be positively associated with a country's premature withdrawal from an ongoing military coalition operation.[5]

[4]An anonymous reviewer emphasized that this claim can be contested on empirical grounds, for example, as seen during US President George W. Bush's tenure. However, such a change seems to be the exception rather than the rule, and we tend to keep our argument that philosophical and instrumental beliefs—especially with regard to military (intervention) policies—are, in fact, stable. This claim is also in accordance with Renshon's (2008) study of Bush's operational code. While the traumatic experience of the 9/11 terrorist attacks did lead to some significant changes in Bush's philosophical beliefs about world politics, "Bush's overall operational code can still be described as relatively stable, with only three out of 10 indices experiencing a statistically significant change" (Renshon 2008:836). Moreover, Bush's instrumental beliefs about world politics remained virtually unchanged throughout his two terms in office.

[5]Concerning the direction of this change, it seems plausible to assume that the original decision to participate in a multilateral military intervention was in accordance with the original leader's philosophical and instrumental beliefs on military intervention strategies. Consequently, subsequent changes in the political leadership increase the probability that a leader will take over whose operational code is less in accordance with her country's participation in the coalition operation.

The Role of Information Evaluation

As stated, political leaders are likely to end their country's contribution to a military coalition if they become aware of reduced net benefits. Leaders who fail realizing this may refrain from withdrawing their troops, though. We argue that the way in which political leaders process information can explain this failure (Stanley 2009; Stanley and Sawyer 2009). First, different leaders could evaluate the very same information on military coalition operations in a diverse fashion. For example, some leaders may require less information for decision making, they display a low receptivity toward feedback, and they are more likely to reject alternatives. Others, on the contrary, demand a higher amount of information, are interested in negative feedback, and are more open toward alternative courses of action (Young and Schafer 1998:84ff; Bennett 1999:94f). Ultimately, a change in the political leadership is likely to go hand in hand with different modes of information processing, as there is substantial variation in the conceptual complexities of political leaders (Hermann 1980).

Second, a political leader might also be subject to motivated and unmotivated biases when processing information (see Jervis 2006:650ff; Levy 2003:263ff). This can induce leaders—who decided to participate in a military coalition operation in the first place—to persist on a failing course instead of re-evaluating their situation. On the one hand, political leaders avoid cognitive dissonances through modifying perceptions of incoming information. Leaders may, for instance, simply suppress information on how their country's participation fails in a military coalition operation to produce the desired benefits. Military intervention decisions are especially likely to cause dissonance-reducing patterns of information processing, since they entail high degrees of psychological commitment (see Jervis 1976:382ff, 2006:652; Vertzberger 1998:55f, 73f). On the other hand, concerning unmotivated biases, coalition campaigns require extensive military and political planning (Vertzberger 1998:49). Because of the high levels of uncertainty inherent to this process, leaders frequently rely on "rules of thumb," for example, representativeness, availability, or anchoring and adjustment heuristics (Bennett 1999:91ff), which trigger that leaders persist on a course in a military operation despite evidence for failure. New leaders who were not involved in the original participation decision are usually not subject to both types of bias.

These two mechanisms suggest that new leaders may evaluate information about the progress of a military intervention less positively than their predecessors and, as a result, perceive their country to receive lower benefits from the participation in a coalition operation. Thus, changes in leadership should be more conducive to the withdrawal from ongoing military coalition operations.

The Role of Entrapment

"Old" leaders—even if they might want to withdraw their troops from an ongoing operation—could also face the danger of entrapment by prohibitive costs, which are imposed by their own constituencies or foreign allies (Stanley 2009; Stanley and Sawyer 2009:657; Croco 2011). Thus, political leaders decide to continue participating in a military coalition even if the net benefits decrease—and a premature withdrawal becomes only possible with the change of the political leadership as such. First, there are usually interest groups and political factions at the domestic level that condition their support to a leader on their country's participation in a specific military coalition operation. On the one hand, these factions may be willing to sanction leaders because of a direct interest in their country's continued participation in such a coalition. Industrial sectors interested in certain foreign policies, bureaucratic groups implementing military

intervention decisions, or members of the winning coalition are all potential veto players (Vertzberger 1998:105ff; Bennett 1999:100f; Leeds et al. 2009:463f). On the other hand, leaders deciding to participate in a military coalition typically invest political capital to find support for their intervention policies. Dropping out of a multilateral effort may thus signal inconsistency, triggering disapproval even by those members of the winning coalition who originally opposed a military intervention in question (see Weeks 2008:40; Stanley 2009:55f).

Second, leaders who decided to participate in a military coalition operation in the first place might not only become entrapped by domestic constituents, but also by foreign allies (Stanley and Sawyer 2009:657f). Political leaders have reason to worry about the international consequences of a damaged reputation if they defect from a military coalition (see Gibler 2008). In addition, the domestic political survival of leaders might directly depend on foreign allies, giving the former incentives to present themselves as reliable partners that do not prematurely withdraw from military coalitions (see Belkin 2005:27f; Stanley and Sawyer 2009:657f). For example, Zairean dictator Mobutu could only secure his political survival via the assistance of and reliance on his French patrons (Kisangani 2000).

A change in the political leadership can overcome these dependencies, however. New leaders represent new constituencies with interests that may be different from those that supported a military intervention in the first place (see McGillivray and Stam 2004:160ff; Leeds et al. 2009:463ff; Croco 2011). Moreover, new leaders might also be forced to withdraw their troops due to domestic turmoil. The times of leadership change—especially in nondemocratic regimes—are frequently associated with instability, prompting leaders to withdraw their forces from coalition operations abroad to fend off potential challenges at home (Gelpi and Grieco 2001:800ff; see also Bueno De Mesquita et al. 2003:292ff). Finally, winning coalitions and foreign allies might be more tolerant toward political leaders terminating inherited commitments if these leaders did not invest their own political capital for the intervention decision, that is, decided to participate in a military coalition in the first place (Vertzberger 1998:51ff).

Hypothesis

Our theoretical framework argues that three factors make it more likely that a political leadership turnover leads to a premature withdrawal from an ongoing military coalition operation. First, new leaders may have preferences about military interventions that differ from the interests of the previous incumbent. Also, new leaders evaluate information, which is relevant for military operations and their success, differently. Third, new political leaders may be less entrapped in ongoing military intervention policies stemming from domestic constituencies or foreign allies.

Note that leadership change does not deterministically induce that any of the three factors applies, however.[6] New leaders are not uniformly more likely, for example, to evaluate information differently. Nevertheless, leadership turnover should signal that one, two, or all of the presented factors do operate. In some cases, the three mechanisms can simultaneously work together to increase the likelihood that a new political leader will decide to withdraw in a premature fashion. However, in other cases, one of the mechanisms on its own might play the crucial role to lead to defection from a coalition. What the theoretical framework (Stanley 2009; Stanley and Sawyer 2009) suggests is that the observed net effect of a leadership turnover is likely to cause an early withdrawal from military

[6]We return to this issue in the conclusion.

coalitions. We therefore seek to test the following hypothesis: *A change in the political leadership of a country increases the risk of its premature withdrawal from an ongoing military coalition.*

Research Design

Data

Building on the International Military Interventions (IMI) data (Pearson and Baumann 1993; Pickering and Kisangani 2009), we compiled a new data set on all state participations in military coalition interventions between 1946 and 2001.[7] For our purposes, we considered a military intervention from the IMI data if a coalition in its entirety entailed an incursion into a target country that was comprised of more than 1,000 soldiers and if the coalition's mission either consisted of intimidation or combat. This restricts our data to cases with significant numbers of combat-ready soldiers and, as a result, ensures the homogeneity of our analyzed observations. We then coded those selected cases (i) as unilateral if only one country intervened and (ii) as military coalition operations if the troops of two or more countries conducted combined operations, that is, if they fought together. Due to these criteria, we obtained 199 interventions in total between 1946 and 2001, with 156 unilateral interventions and 43 military operations that were conducted by a coalition of states.

We then focused on the 43 coalition operations, which we disaggregated along participants so that our unit of analysis constitutes a single participating country of a military operation. To this end, in a first step, we classified countries of a military coalition as "lead states" or "(simple) coalition participants."[8] Criteria for the identification of lead states, that is, states that have the leading role in a given coalition, are the presence and number of troops supplied at the onset of an operation, command and control arrangements, the average number of troops supplied over the course of an operation, and the duration of a country's contribution.[9] Lead states were then excluded from our analysis in order to preserve a homogenous sample.[10]

In a second step, we applied a number of thresholds to code countries as actual coalition troop contributors, with the ultimate purpose to exclude those states whose troop contributions were below these thresholds.[11] This treatment excludes, for example, cases where lead states merely use minor troop contributions from other states to legitimize their interventions toward domestic and international audiences (see Kreps 2009). In total, our final cross-section data consist of 143 different troop contributions to military coalition operations by 62 different states.

[7]Additional explanations for the data compilation are given in the Appendix.

[8]The distinction between lead states and coalition participants has also been made by Sullivan and Koch (2009) whose coding of coalition interventions focuses on the state constituting "the primary motivating and contributing force" of a multilateral operation.

[9]Lead states do not necessarily have to be major powers: Only 20 of the 43 coalition operations in our sample were led by major powers as defined by the Correlates of War project (Singer 1988). Conversely, our sample also contains 21 instances of major powers making troop contributions to a multilateral military intervention without leading the coalition.

[10]Including lead states would lead to a sample violating assumptions of unit homogeneity, as lead states have a motivation in "getting the job done" that differs from regular coalition participants. Unlike regular coalition participants, lead states are willing to bear the additional diplomatic and military costs of building and commanding a coalition. Within the cost-benefit model that guides our theoretical framework, this implies that the political executives in lead states expect significantly higher benefits and/or lower costs.

[11]These thresholds are listed in the Appendix.

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable codes if a country prematurely withdraws from an ongoing military coalition operation. More specifically, we first gathered information on when and how states ended their contribution for each of the 143 different troop contributions to military coalition operations. On the one hand, we generally considered a country having *terminated* its contribution once the overall coalition troops' direction or mission changes or once all coalition troops have departed from the intervention's target country. On the other hand, we treat a state as having *defected* from a military coalition if it (i) withdrew early or (ii) changed the intervention's direction or the mission of the troops it contributed before the lead state did so,[12] while historical evidence had to point to related disagreements between the lead state and the coalition participant.[13]

While early withdrawals pertaining to individual country troop pull-outs before the coalition operation in its entirety officially ended are a relatively straightforward concept, defections through changes in the intervention's direction and troops' mission may merit further explanation. We include these special cases of defection, since we believe that the definition of early withdrawals from a coalition operation should go beyond the "conventional" definitions of troop withdrawals. An example of a state defecting by unilaterally changing its troops' mission is given by France's contribution to the ISAF coalition in Afghanistan. While France left some residual forces in theater, these troops have explicitly been ordered to refrain from combat at a time when the coalition's lead state, the United States, as well as other coalition participants still pursue combat operations throughout the country actively.

Moreover, the idea of defection through changes in the intervention's direction includes instances when former allies start fighting. The rationale behind this is illustrated by Rwanda's participation in the Anti-Kabila Coalition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). While Rwanda did not withdraw its troops from or cease combat operations in the DRC (the target state of the intervention) in 1999, it still terminated its contribution to the Ugandan–Rwandan coalition by changing the intervention direction and initiating armed clashes with Ugandan forces.[14]

Against this background, our final dependent variable receives a value of 1 if a country *defected* from an ongoing military coalition according to our definitions and 0 otherwise. Overall, we classified 19 different troop contributions to military coalition operations that ended in such a way.

Explanatory Variables

Our core explanatory variable is a binary item measuring whether a country sees at least one change in the political leadership during its contribution to a

[12]We do not code coalition defections if they were ordered or welcomed by the lead state. The Soviet Union, for instance, ordered its coalition partners that participated in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 to withdraw in order to avoid potential difficulties with their allies' troop morale.

[13]According to our definition, the end of a country's troop contribution to a coalition can coincide with overall war termination. However, premature withdrawals from coalitions are supposed to take place before the lead state terminates the military intervention. This is mirrored by our data, since the defection of coalition members temporally pre-dates the termination of the overall military intervention by the lead state in 18 of the 19 cases of defection. The only exception is Rwanda's participation in the Anti-Kabila Coalition. This, however, is a result of the coding rules: August 7, 1999, was the first reported armed clash between Ugandan and Rwandan troops in Congo. Afterward, consequently, both countries are coded as having started a new unilateral intervention.

[14]Empirically, however, only two out of 19 defections pertain to ceasefires and one defection out of 19 constitutes a case of "switching sides." Excluding these cases from our analysis does not affect the substance of our findings.

military coalition operation (1) or not (0).[15] We also coded a country as having experienced a leadership turnover if the change was announced before the actual withdrawal from a military coalition.[16] We obtained the information on political leadership turnovers from the Archigos data (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009). Our data comprise such changes for 33 cases.[17]

Furthermore, we control for other variables pertaining to three clusters that may also affect the net benefits from participating in coalition operations as well as the potential costs resulting from defection. First, we consider variables on the characteristics of coalition participants. Generally, democratic leaders face higher costs for reneging on commitments (for example, Leeds 2003). By using the Polity IV data (Marshall and Jaggers 2004), we coded coalition participants as democratic if they had a combined polity score of +6 or higher in the onset year of a military coalition operation. We also include a binary variable that scores the value of 1 if a country held national-level elections during its participation, since the benefits of a defection from a military operation frequently exceed the costs during election times (Tago 2009). We take the election data from Regan, Frank, and Clark (2009) as well as Goeman's extension of the Archigos data (Goemans et al. 2009). Third, we additionally take into account that the effects of leadership changes and elections might vary by regime type. We therefore interact these two variables with the democracy item.[18] Finally, we control for states' capabilities as measured by the Correlates of War National Material Capabilities Index (Singer 1988). More powerful states are less reliable actors, because they usually face less severe consequences in case of defecting from a coalition participation (Leeds 2003:813ff).

Second, we include three variables that measure interventions' characteristics. On the one hand, biased military interventions either support or oppose a target country's government in a conflict and are associated with more "direct" benefits. However, interventions, which are neutral toward the target state's government, "are deployed to cease or mitigate the ongoing conflict rather than taking the government's or opposition groups' side for victory" (Peksen 2012:560) and have less tangible benefits (Regan 2002:112ff). While a state's benefits from empowering its allies and weakening its opponents in a conflict are more obvious, conflict resolution may have the paradox effect of strengthening political forces which are potentially unfriendly to the intervening states. We, thus, incorporate a binary variable measuring whether a country's participation in a military coalition was neutral (1) or not (0). We expect this variable to be positively

[15]If not stated otherwise, the data for these variables have been taken from the IMI data.

[16]Canada's participation in UNITAF/UNOSOM II for 1992–1993 is the only case that is affected by this rule. Canada ceased operations in Somalia on June 15, 1993, but Kim Campbell did not officially succeed Brian Mulroney as the Canadian Prime Minister until June 25, 1993. Campbell, however, had already been designated as Mulroney's successor on March 14, 1993.

[17]One might object to our approach that incorporating *how* leadership change occurred, for example, a conservative government takes over from a liberal one, would lead to even more accurate predictions about the withdrawal from ongoing military coalitions. However, the lack of data prevents us from doing so. In more detail, we are confronted with an "empty-cells problem" as there are only two cases in our data where a democratic country experienced a change in the winning coalition and then withdrew from a coalition operation: Italy/MNF in Lebanon saw a shift to the left (August 04, 1983: Christian Democrats are followed by a Socialist-led coalition government) and Ireland/UNFICYP in Cyprus experienced a shift toward the right (March 14, 1973: Fianna Fail is followed by Fine Gael).

[18]With regard to the interaction term comprising leadership change and democracy, note that this approach also allows for a more accurate test of the entrapment argument—at least at the domestic level. The level of domestic entrapment is mainly determined by the size of a country's winning coalition, which is highly correlated with a country's level of democracy (Bueno De Mesquita et al. 2003). This also makes sense from a theoretical perspective, since democratic institutions facilitate removing a political leader (Croco 2011:463). The following conditional effect of leader change on the risk of withdrawing from military coalitions is then captured by including the multiplicative term of leadership change and democracy.

related to defections from military coalition operations.[19] Moreover, when a military coalition intervenes into a country's domestic dispute, this intervention usually enjoys less legitimacy and therefore coalition participants face lower costs from a possible withdrawal (Tago 2007:186ff). The definitions and data for this and the previous variable were taken from the IMI data. Finally, we consider a count item on the number of coalition members, since larger coalitions are likely to reduce the individual costs of withdrawal (Bennett and Stam 1996).

Third, there are variables on the geostrategic importance of a military coalition operation and items on a country's specific contribution to such interventions. Geographic distance is a crucial predictor for states' willingness to militarily assist other countries (Russett and Nincic 1976). Hence, we include the logged capital-to-capital distances between (i) a coalition participant and the target state as well as (ii) a coalition participant and the lead state of an intervention. We expect both variables to be positively signed. In addition, the costs stemming from participating in a military coalition operation should arguably be positively related to defections (Goemans 2000). Some audiences, however, might view costs as investments to be redeemed, which implies a negative correlation between costs and defections (Sullivan 2008a,b). In order to control for this possibility, we take variables measuring (i) the duration of a contribution, (ii) the maximum number of troops contributed by a coalition participant, and (iii) whether an intervention's mission consisted of combat or intimidation (see Regan 2002:105f; Eichenberg 2006).[20]

Quantitative Parametric Analysis: Logistic Regression Models

We test our theoretical argument via a multi-methods approach. Our first step here constitutes logistic regression models that are summarized in Table 1. The first model only incorporates the variable for political leadership turnover while controlling for two other institutional characteristics of coalition participants, that is, regime type and elections. Model 2 adds the capability variable and controls for the characteristics of a military intervention. The third model considers in addition variables on the geostrategic importance of a coalition operation and variables describing the nature of a country's specific contribution to the intervention, while Model 4 constitutes our full model with the two interaction terms. We cluster the standard errors on individual multilateral efforts for capturing possible intra-group error correlations.

Table 1 highlights that the parametric analysis finds strong and robust support for our hypothesis, since *Leader Change* is positively signed and statistically significant—regardless of the model specification we employ. More substantially, the models without the interaction terms reveal that the likelihood of a premature withdrawal from a coalition operation increases on average by 10.21% if countries actually see a political leadership turnover. In other words, the risk that countries defect from ongoing military coalition operations does indeed increase if we observe a change in the political leadership.

We also obtain interesting findings with regard to the control variables.[21] First and as expected, states are significantly more likely to defect from neutral interventions and from military coalition operations that intervene into other states' domestic disputes. When moving from the minimum toward the maximum of *Neutrality* and *Domestic Dispute*, the likelihood that a state withdraws from a coalition increases on average by 23.83% and 46.87%, respectively. Table 1 also

[19]Prominent examples of coalition interventions coded as neutral in our sample include the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and the "Opération des Nations Unies au Congo."

[20]The descriptive statistics for all variables are summarized in the Appendix.

[21]We only discuss those controls that reveal a consistently significant impact.

TABLE 1. Withdrawing from Military Coalition Operations, 1946–2001

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*
Leader Change	0.906 (0.541)*	1.303 (0.464)***	1.561 (0.641)**	1.855 (1.000)*
Democracy	−0.925 (0.635)	−1.011 (0.709)	−2.127 (0.914)**	−5.017 (1.939)***
Leader Change*Democracy				−1.359 (1.606)
Election	−0.123 (0.600)	−0.482 (0.474)	0.062 (0.571)	−0.991 (0.598)*
Democracy*Election				4.756 (1.670)***
Capabilities		7.191 (6.157)	3.541 (9.015)	5.948 (6.003)
Neutrality		2.257 (1.072)**	3.154 (1.459)**	3.749 (1.922)**
Domestic Dispute		3.564 (1.664)**	4.171 (1.853)**	5.003 (2.493)**
No. Coalition Members		0.052 (0.119)	−0.019 (0.105)	0.013 (0.109)
Distance Target State			0.345 (0.149)**	0.465 (0.219)**
Distance Lead State			−0.427 (0.164)***	−0.600 (0.256)**
Duration			−0.001 (0.000)**	−0.001 (0.000)**
Troops			1.312 (0.761)*	1.676 (1.106)
Combat			1.520 (1.012)	1.479 (1.108)
Constant	−1.701 (0.487)***	−4.029 (1.841)**	−6.800 (3.176)**	−7.469 (4.216)*
Observations	143	143	143	143
Log Pseudo-Likelihood	−54.12	−42.87	−33.58	−30.32
Wald χ^2	5.12	22.32***	27.82***	24.19**

Notes. Table entries are coefficients; standard errors clustered on individual coalition efforts in parentheses.
*Significant at 10%; **significant at 5%; ***significant at 1% (two-tailed).

demonstrates that states are more likely to drop out of an ongoing operation with an increasing distance to the target state of an intervention. Surprisingly, however, coalition participants that are geographically closer to the lead state of a military operation are more likely to withdraw. A potential explanation for this might stem from the development of more intense interest conflicts between geographically close coalition participants and lead states. For example, Rwanda and Uganda jointly intervened into Congo to overthrow the government of Laurent–Désiré Kabila in August 1998. However, a military conflict over the support for different factions of the main Congolese rebel group broke out between the two interveners one year afterward. This was the result of the security and economic interests both countries had in expanding their individual zones of influence in Eastern Congo. Finally, countries are also less likely to defect from a military coalition operation the longer they already participated.

In order to interpret the interaction terms in Model 4, we calculated simulated predicted probabilities for the various scenarios of *Leader Change*, *Democracy*, and *Election*. Table 2 presents our findings of which three seem particularly interesting. First, changes in the political leadership approximately double the risk of a defection regardless if we examine (non) democracies or take into account elections. Essentially, this mirrors our results from Models 1–3 above, as the effect of political leadership turnover remains substantial and consistent under all scenarios.

Second, democratic states are *ceteris paribus* less likely to defect from coalition operations than nondemocratic regimes, which is also indicated by the significant coefficient estimate for the democracy variable in Model 4. However, the magnitude of this effect is strongly conditioned by whether states hold elections in the course of a coalition operation or not. On the one hand, if a democratic regime sees at least one election while participating in a military coalition operation, the risk of that country withdrawing its troops from the intervention increases by the factor three. This finding supports Tago's (2009) argument on the strategic position taking of democratic leaders, who tend to break international commitments in times of elections for achieving policy congruence with their electorates. An interesting example of this is offered by the Australian participation in UNITAF/UNOSOM II in Somalia between December 1992 and May 1993. Here, the Australian Labor government under Paul Keating insisted on the early withdrawal of the Australian troops. This position was adopted to neutralize potential opposition attacks on this military intervention well before the Australian national parliamentary elections in March 1993. On the other hand, elections in nondemocratic states seem to have the opposite effect. When nondemocratic regimes participate in a coalition operation and have at least one election during that time, they become less likely to defect from an intervention. We explain this result by the incentive of nondemocratic states to hold elections: to gain support—either at the domestic or international level—against possible threats to their rule (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). Due to the fact that this incentive mirrors the reasons why nondemocracies reliably contribute to multilat-

Table 2. Interaction Effects of Democracy, Election, and Leader Change

	Democracy		*No Democracy*	
	Leader Change	*No Leader Change*	*Leader Change*	*No Leader Change*
Election	0.051	0.025	0.062	0.028
No Election	0.016	0.008	0.131	0.059

(*Note.* Table entries are simulated predicted probabilities that are calculated while holding all other variables at their median values.)

eral military efforts, we obtain the somewhat surprising effect of elections on the premature withdrawal from coalition operations for these kinds of regimes. In order to illustrate this, consider the Zairian participation in a French-led intervention in Chad between July 1983 and November 1984. Zaire made a substantial troop contribution and only withdrew its forces after the French had ceased operations anyway. Moreover, Zaire also held presidential elections in July 1984. We believe that both circumstances contributed to the outcome that Zairean dictator Mobutu secured his political survival as he secured French support against internal challenges such as rebellions and likewise strengthened his domestic legitimacy by holding relatively free elections (see Kisangani 2000).

In sum, these findings indicate that the higher reliability often attributed to democratic commitments largely disappears (but not completely), once we compare democratic states in electoral periods with nondemocratic regimes holding elections. This result is also mirrored by recent work on signaling in interstate disputes, which shows that the credibility of threats issued by "electoral authoritarian" states only differs from democracies marginally (Kinne and Marinov 2013).

Quantitative Non-Parametric Analysis: Matching

Against the background of our parametric analysis, note that political leadership turnovers are unlikely to be a randomly selected set. Potential strategies for dealing with non-random assignments and issues of causal inference in quantitative analyses either pertain to an instrumental variable approach or the use of selection estimators. However, Gilligan and Sergenti (2008) demonstrate that these purely parametric strategies rely on unverifiable modeling assumptions or are generally unable to deal with the influence of other existent covariates.

Matching is a more effective solution in this regard. It is "a methodology for reducing bias due to observed covariates in observational studies for causal effects" (Rubin and Thomas 1996:249), that is, it corrects for the non-random assignment and controls for the existence of confounding factors (Ho et al. 2007; Morgan and Winship 2007). Matching pre-processes the data to form quasi-experimental contrasts by sampling a subset of comparable cases from the overall pool of observations. The observations contained in this subset "match up" each other as closely as possible, that is, the differences due to the confounding factors are reduced to a minimum and should be virtually non-existent. The only—and actually crucial—exception is that these "most similar" cases differ in whether they received the treatment (political leadership turnover) or not (no political leadership turnover). Based on this, our inferences are more accurate, since any differences between the two sets (treatment vs control group) are then solely attributed to the treatment (see Gilligan and Sergenti 2008).

We employ genetic one-to-one matching with replacement (Sekhon 2007; Diamond and Sekhon 2013), that is, we obtain a matched sample of 66 observations due to the fact that our original data identified 33 different troop contributions to military coalition operations from states that experienced a change in the political leadership.[22] We used eight variables to match observations from the treatment group with those from the control group: *Democracy*, *Election*, *Neutrality*, *Domestic Dispute*, *Distance Target State*, *Distance Lead State*, *No. of Coalition Members*, and *Troops*. This set of variables proved to be optimal with regard to the overall achieved balance for the matched sample. We refrained from matching on all explanatory variables due to two reasons. First, this would not avoid matched samples with still significant imbalances. Second, in the words of Ho et al. (2007:216f):

[22]The Appendix lists these cases in detail.

> The theoretical literature emphasizes that including variables only weakly related to treatment assignments usually reduces bias more than it will increase variance, and so most believe that all available control variables should always be included. However, the theoretical literature has focused primarily on the case where the pool of potential control units is considerably larger than the set of treated units. Some researchers seem to have incorrectly generalized this advice to all datasets. If, as is often the case, the pool of potential control units is not much larger than the pool of treated units, then always including all available control variables is bad advice. Instead, the familiar econometric rules apply about the trade-off between the bias of excluding relevant variables and the inefficiency of including irrelevant ones: researchers should not include every pre-treatment covariate available.

Hence, our approach corresponds to the general genetic algorithm used by Sekhon (2007:12ff), which, in technical terms, maximizes the smallest *p*-value for *t*-tests in each iteration of the matching procedure and, thus, maximizes the balance between treatment and control groups.

Before and after the matching, we assessed the degree of this balance for the explanatory items. Figure 1 depicts our findings via two common balance statistics: The left panel shows the standardized bias, while values within [−0.25; 0.25] indicate that a variable is well balanced (Ho et al. 2007:220); for the second panel, we report the *p*-values of *t*-tests (0.10 as threshold level) in order to identify whether real differences between the treatment and the control group do persist or not (Diamond and Sekhon 2013:20ff). Figure 1 highlights that the distribution of most explanatory variables significantly differs between the treated and the control group before we matched observations. After the matching, however, our sample displays a substantially improved balance to the extent that we can hardly distinguish between observations in either group and the only real difference between observations actually is the treatment: All standardized biases range within [0.25; −0.25] and the *p*-values for the *t*-tests are all well above the value of 0.1.

Based on the matching, Ho et al. (2007:211f) suggest using the same parametric estimator with the same set of controls for the matched data that one would have employed in the first place, that is, before the matching. Due to the use of

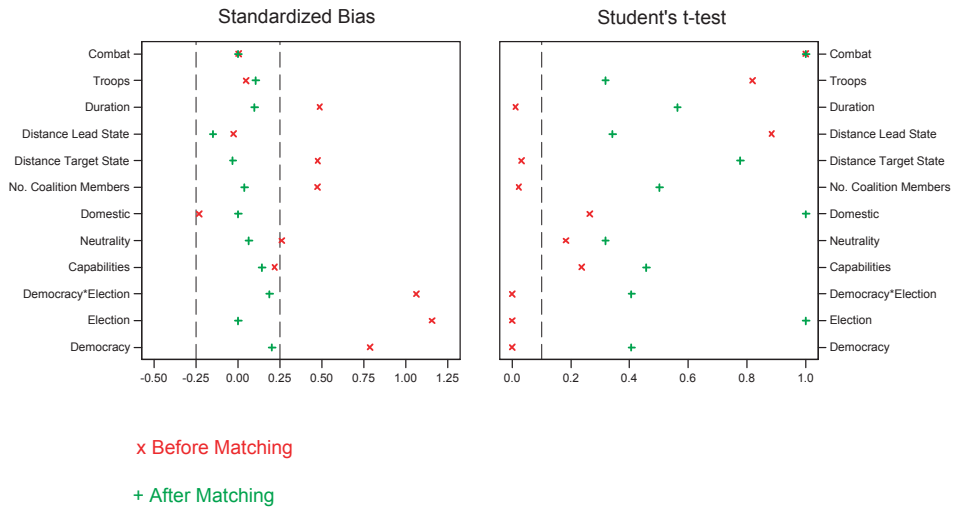

FIG 1. Sample Balance—Before and After Matching. *Note.* Vertical dashed lines pertain to the interval [−0.25; 0.25] for the standardized bias and the threshold value of 0.10 for the Student's *t*-test.

TABLE 3. Withdrawing from Military Coalition Operations—Matched Sample

	Model 5 (Based on Model 1)	*Model 6 (Based on Model 2)*	*Model 7 (Based on Model 3)*
Coefficient Estimate	1.480 (0.636)**	1.682 (0.899)*	4.240 (1.261)***
First Difference	0.281	0.185	0.110
Observations	66	66	66
Log Pseudo-Likelihood	−19.11	−15.54	−7.25
Wald χ^2	16.61***	33.48***	40.40***

Notes. Table entries are coefficients for *Leader Change* or first differences; standard errors of coefficient estimates clustered on individual coalition efforts in parentheses; control variables included but not reported; first differences calculated for a change from "no leadership turnover" to "leadership turnover" while holding all other variables at median values.
*Significant at 10%; **significant at 5%; ***significant at 1% (two-tailed).

the matched sample, however, the importance of the functional form that is characteristic for any parametric estimator is significantly lowered, specification assumptions matter less, and the reliability of the results is more strongly given.[23] Table 3 summarizes our findings using the matched sample for re-estimating the first two models and a reduced version of Model 3 from Table 1. The results provide further support for our hypothesis. The variable capturing changes in a coalition participant's political leadership remains significant at conventional levels—even after removing the differences between the treatment and the control group. The effect of leadership turnover is even stronger than in Table 1, that is, we obtain simulated first differences ranging in [0.11; 0.28]. This mirrors the claim of Gilligan and Sergenti (2008) that purely parametric analyses might underestimate the actual effect of variables if we do not correct for non-random assignments.

Qualitative Analysis: Most Similar Design Case Study of South Korea and Australia in South Vietnam, 1965–1973

Finally, we conducted one most similar design case study as a last empirical test. For selecting this case, we first chose seven observations that display variation in the dependent variable in the matched sample of the 33 pairs of cases. Out of these seven observations, we dropped cases where a leader turnover was accompanied by a change in the winning coalition and then selected the pair of the South Korean and Australian contributions to the US-led military coalition in South Vietnam in order to illustrate more thoroughly how differences in preferences between leaders can affect coalition behavior. Due to this procedure, we obtained a pair of cases with a most similar design (Gerring 2008:668f; Fearon and Laitin 2008).

In a first step, we discuss the similarities of our control covariates for the South Korean and Australian contributions in order to ensure the most similar design (see Gerring 2008:668f; Fearon and Laitin 2008). This mission was a non-neutral intervention with the purpose of supporting South Vietnam, while the differences in the domestic institutions between the two participants were relatively minor. Although South Korea was not a democracy during its participation in the military coalition (1965–1973), the "Third Republic of South Korea," which lasted until 1972, saw relatively free and open national elections. Opposition parties were represented and had possibilities to voice their dissent. More-

[23]The confounding factors are only included for addressing any remaining imbalances, but an interpretation is not possible. Due to the low level of degrees of freedom in Model 7, we dropped *No. Coalition Members* and *Combat*, however, because both variables do not have statistical significance in any model of Table 1.

over, South Korea and Australia were largely similar in their military–industrial capabilities and both states were fighting in a target state, which we consider as being part of their home region due to the geographic distance between Vietnam and South Korean and Australia, respectively. Furthermore, South Korea and Australia supported the United States during that mission—a geographically remote lead state that was nevertheless essential for either security. Finally, both South Korea and Australia fought in that coalition for more than six years, made substantial troop contributions of more than 5,000 troops each, and suffered from severe casualties in the course of combat operations.[24]

Against this background, a major difference between South Korea and Australia constitutes the political leadership. South Korea—unlike Australia—did not experience a political leadership turnover during the course of the military operation: Park Chung-hee remained in power (1961–1979) during the entire period of his country's participation in the Vietnam War.

More specifically with regard to our outlined mechanisms, Park's operational code viewed international relations in Asia as an essentially conflictive endeavor marked by the permanent Chinese and Soviet attempts to instigate local communist challenges. He therefore wanted to save South Vietnam from Communist infiltration in order to ensure the survival of his own state (Yi 2002:646ff; Levin and Han 2002:16ff). As a result, Park decided to uphold the South Korean contribution in Vietnam—despite rising casualty rates, increasing resistance from his domestic political opposition, and a worsening relationship with North Korea—and even complied with the American request to leave its remaining 37,000 troops in South Vietnam until the United States ceased operations in March 1973 (Lee 1973:96).[25]

Australia, on the other hand, was governed by four different prime ministers during the participation in the Vietnam War, that is, Robert Gordon Menzies (1949–1966), Harold Edward Holt (1966–1967), John Grey Gorton (1968–1971), and William McMahon (1971–1972). Although all four executive leaders belonged to the Liberal Party and, thereby, represented the same winning coalition, they differed substantially in their operational codes. The grand strategic beliefs of Menzies and Holt were based on the idea of a "forward defense" containing communist aggression. According to these leaders, multilateral transformative military interventions such as in Vietnam were supposed to help countries' domestic political institutions facing local communist challenges, hence neutralizing threats before they could reach Australian territory (Van der Kroef 1969:214f). However, the successor of Holt, John Gorton, questioned the reliability of Australia's allies and did not consider Australia's capabilities to be sufficiently strong for a forward-defense strategy. Instead, Gorton preferred Australian-based forces that focused on restraining other nations' foreign policies through deterring a conventional military attack (Van der Kroef 1969:316). Consequently, the decisive leadership change—as it should follow from this case study—is the one from Holt to Gorton as Gorton was in favor of a termination of the Australian military commitment. In fact, Gorton announced the gradual withdrawal of all Australian troops in December 1969. The following two years were marked by negotiations between Australia and the United States on the proceedings of the Australian withdrawal, before Gorton's successor McMahon

[24]However, the South Korean contribution was substantially larger as its troop contingent comprised more than 50,000 soldiers at its peak (Australia: 7,672). Also, South Korea incurred about 4,687 killed soldiers (Australia: 519).

[25]South Korea also derived substantial economic benefits from its participation, for example, foreign earnings provided by the United States and an increased role in South Vietnam's economy. Australia's economic benefits were substantially lower. Arguably, this might have been another factor making South Korea the more reliable ally. However, historical evidence indicates that this aid was only granted, because the United States expected South Korea to be the less reliable partner anyway (Tago 2008:6f).

eventually ordered the last Australian troops to cease combat operations in November 1971 (Larsen and Collins 1985:101ff).

Conclusion

This article has argued that a change in the political leadership makes it more likely that a country withdraws from ongoing military coalition operations. New leaders frequently have different preferences about military interventions, evaluate information differently, and are less likely to be entrapped in intervention policies stemming from domestic constituencies or foreign allies. We found strong and robust empirical support for our claim by using newly collected data on military coalition operations between 1946 and 2001 and by testing the hypothesis via a multi-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

Our theoretical framework and especially the corresponding empirical results may make several contributions. First, this paper adds to the growing literature on the effects of political leadership changes on foreign security policies, such as war initiation and continuation (for example, Stanley 2009; Stanley and Sawyer 2009; Croco 2011). Second, our research bears relevance for the literature on states' security commitments (Gartzke and Gleditsch 2004; see Pilster 2011). For example, we analyzed participations in various kinds of military coalitions by a more diverse set of states, which generalizes Tago's study (2009) on the withdrawals from the coalition in Iraq between 2003 and 2006. We also add to the debate on whether and when democracies are the more reliable allies (for example, Leeds et al. 2009). Specifically, our findings show a more nuanced picture than simply attributing higher reliability to democratic commitments. Overall, democratic states may be (slightly) less likely to defect from ongoing military coalition operations. However, the "democratic advantage" largely disappears as soon as we compare democratic states in electoral periods with nondemocratic regimes holding elections. Similarly, the fact that democratic political systems are more likely to experience leadership changes further affects the reliability of democratic commitments negatively.

Our study might also have important policy implications by helping us to assess the degree of reliability of coalition participants. In the case of the ISAF, for example, France already withdrew basically all of its troops by the end of 2012—well before the "official" end of the ISAF scheduled for 2014. Judging from this study's results, upcoming leader changes and elections will increase the risk of additional withdrawals. These patterns are also likely to apply to other military coalition operations worldwide, such as the French-led intervention in Mali.

Finally, many issues for research remain and we outline a few avenues for further work. For instance, we treated a military intervention, which a given state may be contributing to, essentially as a static event, thus excluding conflict dynamics. However, leadership changes in allied states and defections from an intervening coalition, for example, could both be more likely to occur if the coalition is losing or at least not winning the intervention in question. Similarly, it might be of interest to examine not only defections, but also major escalations of countries' involvements in military coalition operations and how changes in political leaders relate to them.[26] In other words, disaggregating interventions and examining the dynamics therein might give us an even more accurate picture than it was possible in this study. We also did not fully differentiate between different forms of leader removal out of office. Some leader changes occur because the previous leader died of natural causes or due to an accident. However, these types of change may not necessarily be the same as a change that was the result of

[26]We thank the anonymous reviewers for this suggestion.

a coup or an election. Similarly, our interactive term between *Leader Change* and *Democracy* distinguishes to some extent between the very different backgrounds and types of leaders, but more accurate ways for doing this might exist. Also, more nuanced hypotheses, like the change of the government from a right-wing government to left-wing government would lead to a higher chance of premature withdrawal of the troops, could be empirically tested. However, this should be studied once we confirm that leadership changes generally lead to troops' departure from a coalition—to which we sought to contribute with this research. Hence, our theory and core findings apply in general, but we agree with Croco (2011:459) in that future research may address leadership turnovers in a more disaggregated, that is, clear-cut fashion for answering why some leaders do not decide to withdraw from military coalitions, whereas others choose to defect early.

Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:
Appendix S1. Participations in military coalition operations, 1946–2001.
Appendix S2. List of treated and matched observations.
Appendix S3. Further explanation of data compilation efforts.
Appendix S4. Descriptive statistics.
Appendix S5. Robustness.

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