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of NATO's Resolute Support Mission in
Afghanistan**

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This paper studies the discursive construction of peace during the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Based on the argument that the mission in Afghanistan had a biased peace discourse, which was not based on the reduction of violence and the promotion of peace. Through a post-structuralist approach, it explores how the discourse was composed according to the Basic Paradigms of Peace. Where according to Peace Research, peace was considered the absence of violence, with the general purpose of building peace by peaceful means.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

“But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought”

— Orwell, 1984

Throughout history, defining peace has not been easy for scholars and politicians; a full explanation of what peace is and how it could be gained has been one of the most difficult challenges of all times (Bonisch, 1981). During the last century, the study of peace has grown exponentially, focusing on analysing forms of prevention and solving conflicts in nonviolent or nonmilitary ways. Peace Research has evolved as an interdisciplinary field in response to more traditional approaches to security that centres on more classical schools of thought and consider using violent means as tools to solve conflicts. It has become a normative and analytical discipline with a broad spectrum of definitions (Boulding, 1978), considering peace as the absence of violence, and focused on the transformation of conflicts to build peace by peaceful means (Barash and Webel, 2022).

In the contemporary era, peace has become a nominal, under-theorized goal (Millar, 2020). In recent years the vast majority of interventionist cases have failed to achieve anything close to peace, leading to fragile outcomes (Paris, 1997). This tendency of interventionists to lead over conflicts has led to an area of ambivalence in the understanding of peace, questioning the assumptions of these actors and criticising its ability to intercede to build peace (Millar, 2020).

The case of Afghanistan has been no exception; the conflict has demonstrated a similar pattern of such word- fixation. The mission of NATO in Afghanistan began as an act of retaliation and retribution against the Taliban harbouring al-Qaeda (Miklaucic, 2022). Initially, NATO went into Afghanistan as a multilateral peace operation under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). It was the largest operation ever deployed and the first mission of NATO outside Europe. ISAF was authorised by the United Nations (UN) Security Council as a multinational ad hoc operation focused on helping the Afghan Interim Authority. Its initial objective was to “enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country and develop new Afghan security forces to ensure Afghanistan would never again become a safe haven for terrorists” (NATO,2014).

However, over the years, the mission shifted into a moral burden of state-building (Miklaucic, 2022). In 2014, NATO opened a follow-operation and created the Resolute Support Mission (RSM). In agreement with the Afghan government and UN resolution 2139. NATO’s RSM was portrayed as a peaceful mission (SIPRI, 2021). That began as

part of the Transformation Decade, where Afghanistan was projected for whole entire leadership and ownership of its national affairs (Miranda, 2015). Its main difference from ISAF was its quality of non-combat operation, intending to create the conditions whereby the Afghan government could exercise its authority throughout the country and build the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (NATO, 2021b). Their initiatives were focused on a range of political and military efforts, from training combatants to humanitarian development projects, intending to create a solid, strong, and stable government capable of guaranteeing peace and stability (NATO, 2021b).

The Resolute Support Mission was the last operation of NATO in Afghanistan and one of the most intriguing ones. It portrayed an image of integration and inclusiveness and followed a discourse not against threats but for values such as cooperation, democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, security, and lasting peace (Kuus, 2009). However, its use of practices such as occupation and stabilisation (Miklaucic, 2022) exemplified a reconfiguration of how the peace discourse had been modified (Kuss, 2009).

This thesis sustains that the mission in Afghanistan had a biased peace discourse, which was not based on reducing violence and promoting peace. Therefore, this work will study the discursive construction of peace during NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Aiming to identify how the discourse was composed according to the basic paradigms of Peace Research. Where peace was considered the absence of violence, with the general purpose of fostering peace.

In this regard, the objectives of the study will be:

- To notice the presence of the different dimensions of peace and violence, pairing the discourse over six areas: direct peace, direct violence, structural peace, structural violence, cultural peace, and cultural violence.
- To distinguish the intention of the discourse to foster peace

Design of the Study

To conduct the study, two questions have been set:

1. What dimensions of peace and violence predominated in NATO's discourse?
2. To what extent did NATO's RSM discourse intend to foster positive peace?

According to the research questions, the project will be divided into two phases. The first phase will explore the essential meaning of peace as the absence of violence through the classification of the discourse in the six areas: direct violence (1), structural

violence (2), cultural violence (3), direct peace (4), structural peace (5), and cultural peace (6). And the second phase will have the purpose of exploring the goal of peace to eradicate violence through the application of the concepts of positive peace and negative peace. For both phases, a comparative framework of "Systematization II of Peace and Conflict Studies" will be used to synthesise the basic paradigms and classify a wide range of examples. With the use of this table, the discourses will be organised in two columns, one for peace through Direct Peace (DP), Structural Peace (SP), and Cultural Peace (CP); and one for violence through Direct Violence (DV), Structural Violence (SV) and Cultural Violence (CV).

To analyse the NATO peace discourse, the classification table will be recreated in the data analysis software: Atlas. ti, to examine the content with consistency and rigour in the analytical procedures. Here the sample for this study will be the Official Texts and the NATO News of the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, limited to a total of 53 documents published during 2015- 2021 by the NATO official channel. To conduct the discourse analysis, all the classifications of peace and violence will be translated into codes. These codes will be paired with the parts of the discourse that reflect its main idea. Then the codes will be counted based on the repetitions that they had over the discourse, and they will be arranged over the different dimensions of peace and violence. Afterwards, a system of signs will be applied to the different areas, and an analysis with the purpose of determining of the discourse fostered peace or violence will take place.

Overview of the study

This study will be divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 presents the literature review, beginning with an introduction to Peace Studies, poststructuralism, and the construction of biased peace. Chapter 3 engages with the war in Afghanistan during the Resolute Support Mission. Chapter 4 reviews the methodological framework, commencing with the methods used in the project and the reasoning for their selection. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the data analysis. Chapter 6 discusses the results with the relations between the case study and Peace Research. And finally, Chapter 7 gives a conclusion to the study.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This work aims to explore the discursive construction of peace during NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. The present chapter outlines the theoretical basis for this research. It begins with an introduction to Peace Studies, then it explores poststructuralism, the construction of biased peace, and later it continues with the liberal peace model.

The Architecture of Peace

Peace Research has a two-side structure, one for peace and one for violence, where the rules that apply to one side apply to the other. Both are based on three main statements: "Violence of any kind breeds violence of any kind, peace of any kind breeds peace of any kind, and positive peace is the best protection against violence" (Galtung, 1996, p.32). Therefore, central to Peace Research is the conception of negative and positive peace. Negative peace is the partial absence of violence, which aims to end violence, but does not lead to a positive condition (Galtung, 1996). And Positive peace is the absence of all forms of violence, aiming for the integration of the community, often referred to as an area of social justice and reconciliation (Galtung, 1969). The main relevance of negative and positive terms is their use to understand the aims of an action, where the absence of one form of violence does not lead to a positive condition or a form of peace, at difference with positive peace, where the lack of all forms of violence, where a sense of social justice can be reached, with a more egalitarian distribution of power and resources (Galtung, 1969).

From this perspective, Positive peace is considered an ongoing condition that requires attentive maintenance to keep it sustained. It is not an end goal but a dynamic of social constructs with the purpose of transforming the conflicts into more sustainable, peaceful relations. It can also be seen through a more holistic vision, where people choose to work together to generate conditions of free violence (Lederach, 1997). Positive Peace is one of the goals of Peace Research, aiming for the deconstruction of structures, institutions, and relationships that cause conflict while building structures, situations, and relations, that support peace (Galtung, 1990). Therefore, to comprehend peace is precisely to understand all the areas that conform the Basic Paradigms of Peace Research: direct violence, direct peace, structural violence, structural peace, cultural violence and cultural peace.

Edifices of Violence

For the areas related to violence, it is essential to have a clear notion of its definition. According to Galtung, Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realisations are below their potential realisations” (Galtung, 1969, p.168). In other words, violence is whatever causes people to be less well off than they otherwise could be (Vorobej, 2008). It is the difference between the potential level of realisation and the actual development (Galtung, 1969). Violence can be categorised into three dimensions: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence (Galtung, 1978). These three forms are interrelated, where one form of violence can lead to another. They are commonly referred to as the Triangle of Violence, where the three of them act as the source of each other and its form of legitimation (Galtung, 1978).-

Direct Violence (DV) It is the type of violence easier to note, having a clear actor committing it. It can be understood as the acts where the means of realisation are directly destroyed or harmed by a clear actor, as it may be the case of war, where the example of killing or hurting a person puts its actual somatic realisation, below its potential somatic realization. It is a form of violence that can be expressed in multiple ways; some of the most common are: physical violence, where the humans are hurt somatically to the point of killing; psychological violence, when humans are hurt mentally through practices of threats, lies, brainwashing and indoctrination; perceptual violence, where the mind is influenced by punishment or a reward; violence through the destruction of visible things very dear to people, like monuments or religious centres; violence through the display of physical means of violence, situations where nobody is physically being hurt, but there is still a present threat of violence; etcetera (Galtung, 1969).

Structural Violence (SV) is also known as indirect violence (Galtung, 1977). It is a form of violence where there is no visible actor that commits the acts so that the consequences of it lack a subject to blame (Galtung, 1969). This type of violence is mainly observed when the resources are withheld or monopolised by a group so that “the actual level falls below the potential level of realisation, and the whole system has violence present” (Galtung, 1969: 168). It is a form of violence invisible to the naked eye that exists in continuous forms in the social structures. It can be expressed in many ways of political repression, social injustice, and inequality; such as ecocide, pathologies against the mind, patriarchy, racism, classism, trade imperialism, cultural imperialism,

and the establishment of a history and future based on exploitation and repression (Galtung, 1996).

Finally, Cultural Violence (CV) is the type of violence related to the aspects of the culture that can be used to justify or legitimise direct or structural violence (Galtung, 1990). It can motivate actors to commit direct violence or to ignore structural violence. It has the quality of being intended or unintended and the ability to make direct and structural violence look or feel right (Galtung: 1996). Its primary tool for action is a psychological mechanism of internalisation, where direct or structural violence can be seen as acceptable in society. Through the use of culture, violence can fixate the way of seeing exploitation and repression as normal, natural, or unnoticeable (Galtung, 1990). Its strategies change the moral colour of an act from wrong to right or alter reality by presenting violent acts as acceptable. Its use results in systems of oppression, where a common response is counter-violence (Schneider, 1971). Like the other two types of violence, it has a wide area of action as the use of democracy and human rights to change the morale, the implementation of a singular ideology, patterns of sexism or/and racism, the use of patriotic or patriarchic language, western perceptions of dominance, schools of militarisation, war journalism, etc. Its main characteristic is that it imposes cultural practices as tools to diminish the potential level of realisation (Galtung, 1969).

Edifices of Peace

According to the parameters of peace and violence, if peace is the absence of violence, then peace measurements should be inversely proportionable to those in violence (Naidu, 1986). Therefore, peace can also be classified into three main dimensions: direct, structural, and cultural peace; these three areas are mutually interdependent, with the ability to foster each other and act as the resource and the legitimation medium for the other two (Galtung, 1990).

Direct Peace (DP) is the type of peace where there is a clear actor committing actions that address to encourage all the basic needs: survival, well-being, identity, and freedom needs (Galtung, 1996). It can be thought of as the verbal and physical kindness good to the body in terms of mind and spirit of Self and Other where its main actions foster wellness through mutual aid and cooperation, intra/inter-personal growth, nonviolent liberation, alternative defence, peace movements, cultural liberation and history and future of peace (Galtung, 1996).

Structural Peace (SP) is considered the absence of structural violence. It is a type of peace that focuses on substituting exploitation with freedom for repression and equity.

It aims to reinforce “dialogue instead of penetration, integration instead of segmentation, solidarity instead of fragmentation, and participation instead of marginalisation” (Galtung, 1996, p.32). Its more common practices are development, parity, equity, peace regions, governance, cultural coexistence and sustainability (Galtung, 1996).

Finally, Cultural Peace (CP) is the type of peace with the ability to substitute the legitimation of violence for the legitimation of peace, building a peaceful culture without any form of repression. It refers to a culture's aspects that justify and legitimise direct and structural peace (Galtung, 1990). Cultural peace can be seen in many expressions patterns of immanent religion, a culture of good law based on democracy and human rights; a particularist, pluralist ideology; expressions of humanist, non-speciest language and art, logics of Daoist, Buddhist cultures, peace education, peace research and peace journalism (Galtung, 1996). If multiple aspects of that kind are found in a culture, thus the term can be achieved (Galtung, 1990).

Biased peace

The inclusion of violence into the analysis of Peace Research has sparked the debate in areas of International Relations (IR), where an orientation of realpolitik is more dominant. The main concern is that the observation of violence in its three dimensions allows to discern versions of political peace that are not committed to reducing violence and promoting peace (Barash and Webel, 2022). This form of biased governance has exposed a problem in the conceptualisation of peace, falling into either universal and/or idealistic forms of subjectivity (Richmond, 2005).

In recent years, Peace Studies have criticized the conflict resolution procedures, peacebuilding initiatives, and security strategies of the major international organisations (Mateos and Rodríguez, 2021). Here poststructuralism has been a suitable tool to establish that all foreign policies are a type of discourse that contains the actor's specific interpretation of an international setting (Baumann, 2022). The use of this theory has become a key to understanding the course of peace in global situations, where the States and other international organisations formulate what is in their “interest” through their discourses, allowing them to justify moves such as interventions, deployments, and peacekeeping missions (Weldes, 1996).

To understand how these biased versions of peace have been structured, it is necessary to understand the main concepts of poststructuralism. The theory of poststructuralism emerged in 1960 as a response to the more traditionalist approaches to International Relations (IR) as Realism or Liberalism. It focuses on studying the world

from a different perspective: interpretations. Poststructuralists consider that the world is mediated by the interpretations of it, coinciding that the knowledge of the world is not objective and that the truth of it depends on how subjectively it is perceived or constructed (Newman, 2005). These interpretations are made through language and expressed in the form of discourses, where language can be seen as the medium between action and function. A mobile that people can use to construct their versions of the social world (Elliot, 1996).

To understand how interpretations of the world are created, this theory has used the principle of the hermeneutical circle. A view where all the interpretations of the world are considered as “open”. In the sense that its meaning can vary depending on the interpreter’s culture, epoch, experience, history, knowledge, and time. This circle proposes that there is no such thing as a “final interpretation” (Gadamer, 2013). Allowing reinterpretation to be always an option for the hermeneutic circle where concepts can be formed and re-formed in such a manner that their meaning is integrated within the situations (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2004).

In this sense, poststructuralists have developed a list of conceptual settings in relation. First, they establish that language is a system of differences (1). They believe that things do not have a meaning by themselves; it is given to things on a subjective matter (Baumann, 2022). Then, they agree on an “inherently unstable” signification (2), arguing that the things, or symbols, can vary their meaning, being considered subjects of motion and transformation (Derrida, 1978). Afterwards, they propose that the discourses fix their meaning around a given structure (3); suggesting that discourses behave around a network of signification, creating relationships of sameness and difference (Derrida, 1978). And finally, they imply that there is no final interpretation of the world (4), and there is no God-given meaning necessary to attach; referring that things are always open to new forms of conceptualisation. An idea known as contingency (Foucault, 1977).

As a result of these ground rules, the object of study for poststructuralism are discourses, concrete representations of texts that act as discursive units, and depositories with the capability to store complex social meanings (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2004). To analyse discourses, the method focuses on examining the discursive units, emphasising the language, and analysing the formulations that give meaning to the discourse (Locke, 2004). Its main objective is to explore the relationships of the discursive practice in terms of social and cultural structures (Fairclough, 2003). Focusing on understanding the structures of the verbal and textual interactions that play a role in these modes of reproduction. Where the ability of writing (coding text in a graphic form)

and reading (decoding the writing) play an active role, these interpretations are seen as psychological because they take place in the decoder's head, and the meaning of the texts relies on the individual's ability to decode and have the necessary background information (Van Dijk, 1993).

Literacy, therefore, is a set of socially constructed practices where the readers and writers are bounded as members of a group, creating a path where texts can be read differently and generate different content depending on the context (Locke, 2004). According to poststructuralism, peace is a political practice because the language constructs it, and all its meanings are subjective (Hansen, 2006). The symbols that define peace stand for other something else than themselves and aim to stimulate a particular response, using political participants to provoke a desired answer (Burnier, 1994). Resulting in a discourse related to a linguistic institution with rules, players, speakers, audience, aims, and moves (Biletzki, 2008).

This subjectivity has been one of the major challenges for peace in settings of international affairs. Peace has become an expression that is rarely theorised, in which its use refers more to an ideal than a goal to an end. For policymakers and politicians, peace has often been presupposed and mistaken as vague (Richmond, 2005). In this regard, poststructuralism has criticised the "taken for granted" attitude of Realism and Liberalism, where the main problem has been that the states and international actors in charge of the production and reproduction of foreign policy are the ones who recur to the word peace at its convenience (Bauman, 2022).

Therefore, the great risk of subjective speeches is that defining a peaceful culture may cause a temptation to institutionalise the culture of the ones that proposed it, making it obligatory the imposition of it (Galtung, 1990). Here one of the main exemplars of the XXI century is liberal peace, a dominant discourse based on a model liberal democracy through the implementation of political, social, and economic initiatives through military intervention. Liberal peace is a political discourse that responds to western tradition, based on the notion of building a stable government for durable peace. It presents peace as an ideal that could be reached through forms of governance and intervention. Where its main actors are states and institutionalized members of the international community that provide cultural, economic, political, and social development to the hosts that negotiate its intervention, this militarized model of peace has created multiple debates, inquiring about the use of violence to promote peace (Richmond, 2005). Questioning the tendency of interventionists to solve conflicts via militarisation and its ability to end violence (Millar, 2020).

Chapter 3. The Case of Afghanistan

This work aims to explore the discursive construction of peace during NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. The present chapter describes the conflict in the area with the aim of providing the reader with a complete image of the evolution of the mission through the years. To facilitate its comprehension, it has been divided into four parts: the birth of the mission, the initial phase, the expanding phase, and the resolution phase.

The birth of the mission

In 2001, NATO condemned the attacks of September 11th against the United States, describing them as intolerable aggression against democracy and looking for support from the international community to fight against terrorism (NATO, 2001). Initially, NATO entered Afghanistan as a multilateral peace operation under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). It was the largest operation ever deployed and the first operation of NATO outside Europe. ISAF was authorised by the United Nations (UN) Security Council as a multinational ad hoc operation focused on helping the Afghan Interim Authority. In 2003 it obtained the permission of the Afghan Transitional Authority to take full command of the mission and expand from Kabul to the rest of Afghanistan (SIPRI, 2021). Its initial objective was to “enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country and develop new Afghan security forces to ensure Afghanistan would never again become a haven for terrorists” (NATO,2014). It was a mission that, over the years, focused on growing its efforts in fighting the insurgency and increasing its troops to a reaching point of 130 000 (SIPRI, 2021).

However, in 2014, NATO opened a follow-operation and created the Resolute Support Mission (RSM). This mission was portrayed as a peaceful operation, accepted by the Afghan government and UN resolution 2139 (SIPRI, 2021). RSM began as part of the Transformation Decade, where Afghanistan was expected to become a state with top leadership and ownership of its national affairs (Miranda, 2015). Its main difference from ISAF was its quality of non-combat operations to create the conditions whereby the Afghan government could exercise its authority throughout the country and build the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (NATO, 2021b). Its initiatives were focused on a range of political and military efforts, from training combatants to humanitarian development projects, intending to create a solid and stable government capable of guaranteeing peace and stability (NATO, 2021b). The RMS was operated within the framework established by the Status of Forces and Bilateral Security

Agreements SOFA and BSA. In agreement with the United Nations Security Council under Resolution 2189 (Hellmich, 2016), where instead of a combat role, the RSM was a Train, Advice, and Assist mission (TAA), focused on security force assistance in four areas: Ministry advising and capacity development (1), Aviation advising (2), Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) advising (3), and operational-level advising (4) to train and support the ASSF (DoD, 2020).

The initial phase: 2015-2016

The initial phase of the Resolute Support Mission began in a volatile country, challenged by insurgent forces, terrorists, and criminals (Miranda, 2015). In 2015, the country was ruled by an authoritarian administration under President Ashraf Ghani, with high corruption levels and a lack of economic development and fair conditions. The country's government had high levels of repression and violence, and the civil and military divisions had been facing intense movements with high desertion rates (Cordesman, 2015).

In this first phase, NATO requested 12 000 troops to stabilise the country through a two-year strategy (SIGAR, 2015). Causing with the deployment of the forces, a more destabilised country, registering historical levels of attrition and casualties for the fighting forces as well as the civilian population (SIGAR, 2015). And forcing the insurgent forces to act with more violence. Here, the Taliban, a significant group in the area, renewed its discourse to target the “foreign occupiers” (Miranda, 2015), pointing most of the attacks to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the Afghan government officials, the Afghan facilities, and NATO forces (SIGAR, 2015).

During RSM's second year, NATO continued reassuring that the mission was a train, advice, and assist mission intended to help the ANSF and maintain a security operation for the government of Kabul. That year, a point of debate was the duration of the operation. Even if the mission had been set as a two-year plan, due to the fragile situation in Afghanistan, there were speculations on the need to maintain the troops in the area to ensure security. During the Brussels, Washington and Kabul conferences, NATO ministers debated the possibility of extending and upgrading the mission. Here, a decisive point was the Obama administration, which already had a vis-à-vis security assistance over Afghanistan (Hellmich, 2016). Which caused that during the Warsaw summit, NATO members followed up the position of the United States and reiterated that their ultimate goal was “to prevent Afghanistan from never again becoming a haven for terrorists, and Afghanistan to be able to sustain its security, governance, and

development” (Hellmich, 2016 p. 3). This resulted in an increase in the number of troops numbers and the proposal of a more extensive deployment in the upcoming years (Hellmich, 2016).

Due to NATO “terrorist” labelling during its public discourses, groups such as the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and all the sub-cells that operated under the Islamic State (ISIL) flag had measures of counteraction and increased the high levels of violence in the area (SIGAR, 2016). In consequence, 2016 was notably distinctive for the insurgent attacks, particularly during the first quarter, when the Taliban declared its new offensive “Operation Omari” (SIGAR, 2016a). Where even if the government of Afghanistan had already renewed its interests in a peace process, setting a meeting the year before, the status of the negotiations between the Taliban and the government was stagnant, lacking of commitment from the Taliban to participate in direct talks (UN, 2015a). Instead, the Taliban had decided to display territorial claims to pursue the control of several districts simultaneously (DoD, 2020). At the end of the year, 65% of the territory was under governmental control, 8.8% was under insurgent rule, and the rest, 25.6%, were considered at risk (SIGAR, 2016a).

The expanding phase: 2017-2019

In continuation, the second phase of the mission took place when the mission got extended and upgraded. In 2017, the situation in Afghanistan had been classified as a “stalemate” (Hellmich, 2017). With effective and violent operations from the Taliban, any real progress to discuss peace was impossible at this stage. The stalemate between the government and the opposition had set a division over the territory. The insurgent forces had gained control of the rural areas while the urban centres were still under governmental control. At this point, there was still a balance of forces favouring the government of Kabul, and the ANDSF was still optimistic about defending against the insurgency and the terrorist groups (Hellmich, 2017).

Due to the unstable environment, NATO decided to modify the RSM mandate, giving the international forces a much greater ability to support the ANDSF at its operational level. In June 2017, it was decided that RMS would go beyond the year, with the same goals of preventing Afghanistan from becoming a place of terrorist forces and exporting violence and instability. To achieve such goals, the Afghan defence and security forces' funding was set until 2020. In this manner, the mission will continue operating with a more conditions-based framework instead of a calendar-driven approach, implicitly recognising the declining security over the country at that moment

(Hellmich, 2017). Therefore, after NATO's meeting, it was announced that fifteen member states would increase their forces in the conflict in Afghanistan (Agence Europe, 2017). And the RSM would now have the power to deploy RSM expeditionary advisory teams, providing immediate on-site and situationally appropriate support to the Afghan forces (DoD, 2020).

Over this phase, the violence in Afghanistan was mainly conducted by the insurgent forces, the ANDSF, and NATO. Under the Trump administration, the US had a substantial impact on the field through its new strategy, "Afghanistan and South Asia Policy". Its cleartransparent evident participation became part of the burden sharing in the Alliance, aiming to construct a stable country that will "never again become a place for international terrorism" (Hellmich, 2018). This new approach made the Taliban retaliate even more, with the central supposition that it could be forced into negotiating a political settlement by subduing them on the battlefield (IISS, 2017).

In consequence of the retaliatory actions of the Taliban, NATO decided to increase its financial and personal contributions. The Defence Ministers increased the number of troops from 13,000 to 16,000 (NATO, 2017). Focusing more on areas of intelligence, surveillance, a reconnaissance artillery system, aerial fire, and logistical support (US DoD, 2017). This decision on the mission impacted the actions of the Taliban once again, taking control of seventy per cent of the territory and fifty per cent of the population (BBC, 2018).

The resolute phase: 2020-2021

The last phase began when President Ashraf Ghani decided to begin peace talks with the Taliban under the same position as the US (Yildiz, 2022). Here the RMS had already tried to stabilise the area by supporting the ANDSF. However, those efforts had been diminished by the high levels of corruption, the persistence of insurgent-led violence, the dependent economy on the influx of foreign aid, and the lack of a clear agenda from the Allies and partners (CFR, 2021). In 2021, the United States and the Taliban decided to sign the Doha agreements. Even though NATO lacked of meaningful discussions and negotiations over these peace processes (Yildiz, 2022).

The Biden administration was the one in charge of finishing the situation, allowing the withdrawal of the American forces by April 2021(NATO, 2021c). As a consequence, the NATO defence ministers followed the decision to start withdrawing NATO forces from the 1st of May and accepting to be out of the country by September 2021 (Yildiz, 2022). With the Taliban having the support from the United States, the Afghan

government (which had all this time been supported by NATO) increased its efforts to fight the Taliban, conducting mass killings against the Taliban's advance across the country (Boot, 2021). With the fight over the rule of the country, Kabul collapsed on August 15th, and the situation deteriorated even more; the instability of the area led to a humanitarian crisis where NATO forces executed a large-scale evacuation of over 120,000 foreign nationals and authorised Afghan citizens—being one of the largest evacuations in history (Yildiz, 2022).

Chapter 4. Methodology

This work explores the discursive construction of peace during NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. It aims to identify how the discourse was composed according to the basic paradigms of Peace Research, where peace is considered the absence of violence, with the general purpose of fostering peace. The present chapter describes the methods used in the project and the reasoning for their selection. It is divided into two sections. First, it explains the reasoning for the design of the study, and afterwards, it outlines the steps followed for the data analysis.

Research design

To explore this topic, it was assumed that NATO's discourse during the Resolute Support Mission could be approached from a qualitative research model guided by the theory of poststructuralism. The theory of poststructuralism was chosen for its quality of considering interpretations as units of analysis. This theory proposes that knowledge of the world is based on interpretations of language (Newman, 2005). Therefore, language is a system of differences in which things do not have a meaning by themselves but is assigned subjectively (Baumann, 2022). In this way, symbols can vary in their meaning, changing according to perception (Derrida, 1978). Resulting in the fact that there is no stable interpretation of things, but rather that their definitions are always open to new forms of conceptualisation (Foucault 1977).

In this way, for poststructuralism, all discourses are subjective and impossible to consider objective knowledge (Bevir, 2004). The meaning of objects adheres to the definition that their discourse gives them, being it temporary, incorrigible, and legitimate (Milne, 2019). In this case, for peace discourses, the meaning of peace is fixed around a closed structure (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 11). Where the author of the discourse

subjectively defines what peace means, leading to negative actions and relativism (Iglesias, 2019).

With this approach, the present work was able to consider that the interpretations of peace were subjective social practices (Shapiro, 1991) where the meaning of peace was assumed according to events, beliefs or values with which the author of the discourse aligned (Edelman, 1991), in this way, poststructuralism allowed NATO's definition of peace to be considered subjective and fixed around its own discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

However, as this thesis argued that the peace discourse in Afghanistan was biased, and did not aim for the reduction of violence, or the promotion of peace. An argument was needed to make it possible to have a frame of reference to compare the meaning. In this sense, the position of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) provided a valid solution. Where it was explained that objects have two meanings: one as being (*esse*) and the other as an entity (*ens*). Allowing the objects to have two meanings, one historical and capable of changing according to the discourse, and another fixed in relation to what it is not (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). In this way, peace can be seen as the product of a particular and subjective discourse, but it also as a definition outside of any discursive exercise. At this regard, Laclau and Mouffe clarified that the point of comparison of a subjective discourse is normally found in the institution that studies the field (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Therefore, according to the argument of Iglesias (2019), peace is defined by the institution that investigates it since it is the one that establishes the norms or values for its study (Iglesias, 2019). Making possible the exploration of NATO peace discourses through a framework of Peace Research, the institution that focuses on determining and analysing the conditions that foster, endanger and impede peace (Bönisch, 1981).

Once it was theoretically possible to make use of a comparative model, this paper decided to choose a comparison framework that would be fundamental to the field of Peace Research. Here, the basic paradigms of Peace Research were chosen, a series of models by which it is possible to understand peace as the absence of violence. These paradigms are ordered in three dimensions: direct, structural, and cultural, where each dimension contains two areas: one of peace and another of violence. This proposal is the product of Galtung's work, a researcher who laid the foundation for Peace Research, presenting a distinctive lexicon, a clear methodology, and a normative lexicon according to the rubrics of scientific research (Lawler, 2019).

Therefore, as this thesis aimed to identify how the discourse was composed according to the basic paradigms of Peace Research, two main questions were asked:

1. What dimensions of peace and violence predominated in NATO's discourse?
2. To what extent did NATO's RSM discourse intend to foster positive peace?

According to the research questions, the project was divided into two phases. The first was focused on exploring the essential meaning of peace as the absence of violence through the classification of the discourse in the six areas: direct violence (1), structural violence (2), cultural violence (3), direct peace (4), structural peace (5), and cultural peace (6). And the second phase was focused on exploring the goal of peace to eradicate violence through the application of the concepts of positive peace and negative peace.

For both phases, it was decided to use the comparative table of "Systematization II of Peace and Conflict Studies", due to its ability to synthesize the basic paradigms and provide a wide range of examples. This table was organised in two columns, one for peace through Direct Peace (DP), Structural Peace (SP), and Cultural Peace (CP); and one for violence through Direct Violence (DV), Structural Violence (SV) and Cultural Violence (CV).

Figure 1. Table of Systematization of Peace and Conflict Studies (Galtung, 1996, p. 33).

<i>Direct violence (DV)</i>	<i>Direct (positive) peace (DP)</i>
N: 'survival of the fittest'	N: 'mutual aid and cooperation'
P: violence to Self, suicide	P: intra-, inter-personal growth
S: violence across fault-lines	S: nonviolent liberation
W: war geography; genocide	W: peace movements; alternative defense
C: culturocide	C: cultural liberation
T: history and future of violence, war	T: history and future of peace
<i>Structural violence (SV)</i>	<i>Structural (positive) peace (SP)</i>
N: ecocide	N: non-homocentric eco-peace
P: psychopathologies	P: intra-, inter-personal peace
S: patriarchy, racism, class	S: development, parity, equity
W: imperialism, trade	W: peace regions; governance, UN
C: cultural imperialism	C: cultural coexistence
T: history and future of exploitation and repression	T: sustainability of the above
<i>Cultural violence (CV)</i>	<i>Cultural (positive) peace (CP)</i>
Religion: transcendent	Religion: immanent
Law: democracy, human rights	Law: democracy, human rights
Ideology: universalist, singularist	Ideology: particularist, pluralist
Language: sexist, racist	Language: humanist/non-speciesist
Art: patriotic, patriarchic	Art: humanist/non-speciesist
Science I: Western logic?	Science I: Daoist? Buddhist?
Science II: to destroy life	Science II: to enhance life
Cosmology: Occident I? Sinic? Nipponic?	Cosmology: Occident II? Indic? Buddhist?
School: militarization	School: peace education
University: militarization	University: peace study and research
Media: war-violence journalism	Media: peace journalism

To carry out the analysis of the NATO peace discourse, it was decided to recreate this classification table in a data analysis software: Atlas. ti. With the aim of examining the content with consistency and rigor. In this way, each example of the different areas of peace and violence was translated into a code that could be applied to the discourse in case that it reflected the idea of it.

Therefore, to choose the data, it was stated that according to poststructuralism, all foreign policy is a type of discourse that contains the specific interpretation of an actor (Bauman, 2022). Therefore, the sample was chosen from the NATO Library (North Atlantic Treaty Organization Library), where the selected texts were the Official Texts and the NATO News of the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, limited to a total of 53 documents published during 2015-2021 (See Annex 1).

Procedures of the analysis

This work was framed under two main questions:

1. Which dimensions of peace and violence were more present in NATO's RSM peace discourse?
2. To what extent did NATO's RSM discourse aim to foster positive peace?

To answer those questions, the process was divided into two parts. One to explore the essential meaning of peace as the absence of violence through the classification of the discourse in the six areas: direct violence (1), structural violence (2), cultural violence (3), direct peace (4), structural peace (5), and cultural peace (6). And another one focused on exploring the goal of peace to eradicate violence through the application of the concepts of positive peace and negative peace.

First phase

Therefore, the stages for the first part of the analysis were as follows:

1. The first stage to conduct the project was to establish a standard procedure for performing the analysis. For this, all the sentences of the discourses were considered as declarative units, that belonged to NATO's discourse during the Resolute Support Mission. In which the analysis would use a zero-sum game logic, where if peace and violence are opposites, the absence of one is the presence of the other. So, that all sentences would have to have only one orientation towards promoting peace, or towards promoting violence.

2. The second stage was to recreate the systematisation table of peace and conflict studies in the Atlas.ti data analysis software. Organizing the codes of peace and violence according to the Galtung table. For this framework, 54 Codes were created among 22 Code Groups. To facilitate the coding phase, to each dimension of peace and violence was given a different colour: blue for codes of Direct Peace, red for the codes of Direct Violence, turquoise for the codes of Structural Positive Peace, pink for the codes of Structural Violence, light green for the codes of Cultural Peace, and purple for the codes Cultural Violence.
3. The third stage was to set the rules to catalogue the sentences according to the logic of peace theory. Here three rules were created:
 - As direct, structural, and cultural dimensions of peace and violence are correlated. Each sentence should have at least three codes, one for the Direct area (DV/DP), one for the Structural area (SV/SP), and one for the Cultural area (CV/CP).

Figure 2. Example of a sentence



- As peace and violence are opposites, the presence of one is the absence of the other. Thus, only one code of the same space could be assigned.
 - As many forms of peace and violence can be found in a single discursive unit. The assignation of Codes is not limited, allowing a sentence to have more than three codes, even if they belong to different sides of peace and violence.
4. The fourth stage was to upload the data, read through all the sentences and organise those representations through the computer data analysis software. Where each quotation was classified, giving it a direct, structural and cultural dimension. To organize the data, two main questions were asked to each sentence: What does this sentence signify? Where can it be collocated over the mapping?
 5. The fifth stage was to organise the coded data. To do this, the results of the content analysis were classified by their use of concepts and downloaded to the excel platform to be analyzed.

6. The sixth stage was to count the number of repetitions that each of the 53 codes had. Establishing that the number of repetitions would be considered its total amount of presence in the speech.
7. The seventh stage was to sum the number of repetitions from each code into the dimension to that they belonged. Being this number, the total amount of presence that each dimension had.
8. The eighth stage was to obtain the percentages of each di and code, considering that the total value of the speech had been the total number of repetitions of all the codes (2906).
9. The ninth stage was to order the results of the percentages and create comparative diagrams for a better understanding of the results.
10. The tenth stage was to analyze which had been the areas with the greatest presence in the discourse, in order to arrive at an answer regarding the first question.

Second phase

Once all the discourses were classified into areas of peace and violence, the second phase of the content analysis focused on the question: Was the discourse intended to foster positive peace? To answer it, the study focused on classifying three variables: positive peace, negative peace, and general violence.

11. The eleventh stage was to return to the Atlas. ti program and create three codes: Positive Peace, Negative Peace, and General Violence. To classify these codes in the discourse, it would be assumed that each sentence could only have one orientation toward peace or violence.
12. The twelfth stage was to assign only one of the codes to each of the sentences according to the orientation of the sentence. To know its orientation, a formula of signs was adapted. This formula gave each code a symbol. For areas of violence, a negative symbol was adapted and for areas of peace a positive symbol. Therefore, the codes under DV, SV, and CV were assigned a negative sign (-) since they do not help to foster peace. And the signs DP, CP, and SP, were assigned a positive code (+) because they seek to promote a better society.

Figure 3. Table of Signs for the dimensions of peace and violence

Area	Dimension	Sign
Peace	Direct Peace	(+)
	Structural Peace	(+)
	Cultural Peace	(+)
Violence	Direct Violence	(-)
	Structural Violence	(-)
	Cultural Violence	(-)

13. The thirteenth stage was to add the symbols of each sentence according to the sign formula. Here a simple sum equation was applied to each sentence previously classified. Where the result indicated its aim towards fostering peace through dimensions of peace (positive peace), foster peace through dimensions of violence (negative peace), or foster violence by dimensions of violence (general violence).

Figure 4. Table of Signs for Positive Peace, Negative Peace, and General Violence

Code	Aim	Logic of signs
Positive Peace	Foster peace by dimensions of peace	$(+) + (+) = (+)$
Negative Peace	Foster peace by dimensions of violence	$(-) + (+) = (-)$ $(+) + (-) = (-)$
General Violence	Foster violence by dimensions of violence	$(-) + (-) = (-)$

14. The fourteenth stage was to organize the coded data. To do this, the results of the content analysis were downloaded to the excel platform to be analysed. Here the codes that had been used to classify a sentence were ordered according to their code.

15. The fifteenth stage was to count the number of repetitions that each of the three codes have had. Setting the number of repetitions as the amount of presence that it had in the discourse

16. The sixteenth stage was to obtain the percentages of each code, taking into account that the total value of the speech had been the total number of sentences (615).
17. The seventeenth stage was to order the results of the percentages and create comparative diagrams for a better understanding of the results.
18. The eighteenth stage was to analyse what had been the spaces with the greatest presence in the discourse, in order to arrive at an answer regarding the second question.

Limitations of the Study

During the classification of the data, this study realized that one of the methodological limitations of the project was that despite using an objective comparison framework, the classification of the data was still attributed to the logical background of the researcher, which also had cultural and structural patterns inherent in its nature. Therefore, the results presented below only provide a partial view of how the NATO peace discourse was structured during the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

Chapter 5. Findings

This thesis focused on the peace discourse of NATO during the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. It aimed to identify how the discourse was composed according to the basic paradigms of Peace Research, where peace was considered the absence of violence, with the general purpose of fostering peace. The present chapter outlines the results and analysis of the data selected from the analysis, which answers the research question and justifies the conclusion.

This study was guided by two main research questions:

- What dimensions of peace and violence predominated in NATO's discourse?
- Did NATO's RMS discourse succeed in fostering positive peace?

To answer these questions, two pre-analysis stages were conducted. One with the purpose of determining the presence of the different dimensions of peace and violence in the discourses, classifying the sentences over six categories: Direct Violence, Structural Violence, Cultural Violence, Direct Peace, Structural Peace and Cultural Peace. And another one with the purpose of determining the intention of the mission to eradicate violence, classifying the sentences into three categories: Positive Peace, Negative Peace, and General Violence.

Results of the first stage

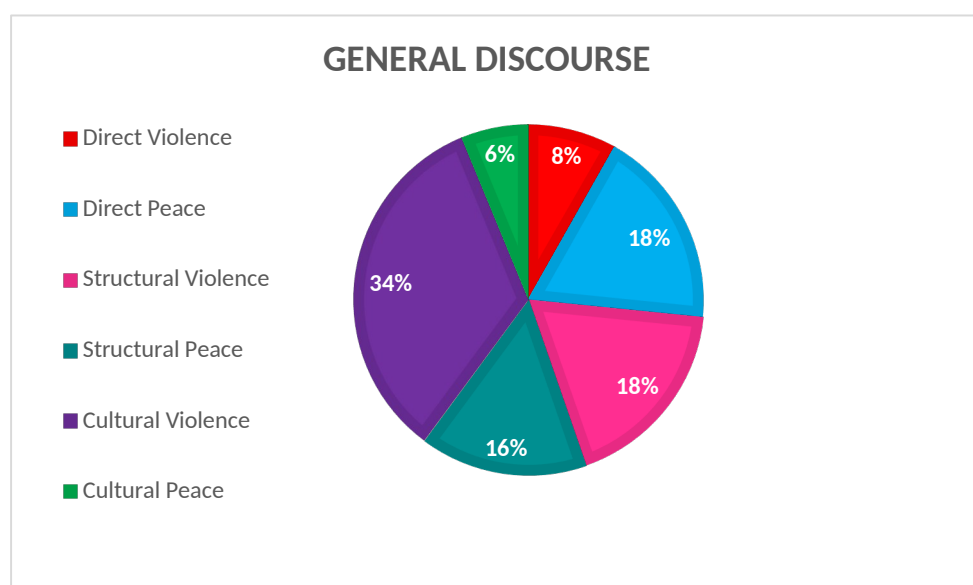
The results of the first phase deconstructed the 53 documents selected from the archive of the NATO library into 615 quotations. All quotations were considered declarative units that belonged to the overall peace discourse of NATO during the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. To pair the quotations with the codes two main questions were asked: What does this sentence signify? Where can it be located over the representations? As a result, the codes were applied a total of 2906 times, mapping all the quotations in three dimensions: direct, cultural, and structural. In this sense, it was found that in the entire peace discourse, Direct Violence had a general presence of 8%, Direct Peace 18%, Structural Violence 18%, Structural Peace 15%, Cultural Violence 33%, and Cultural Peace 6%.

The outcomes of the analysis were as follows:

Figure 5. Number of coded quotations through the different dimensions

	Coded quotations	Percentage of the General Discourse
Direct Violence	238	8.1%
Direct Peace	535	18.4%
Structural Violence	525	18.0%
Structural Peace	450	15.4%
Cultural Violence	977	33.6%
Cultural Peace	181	6.2%
Total	2906	100%

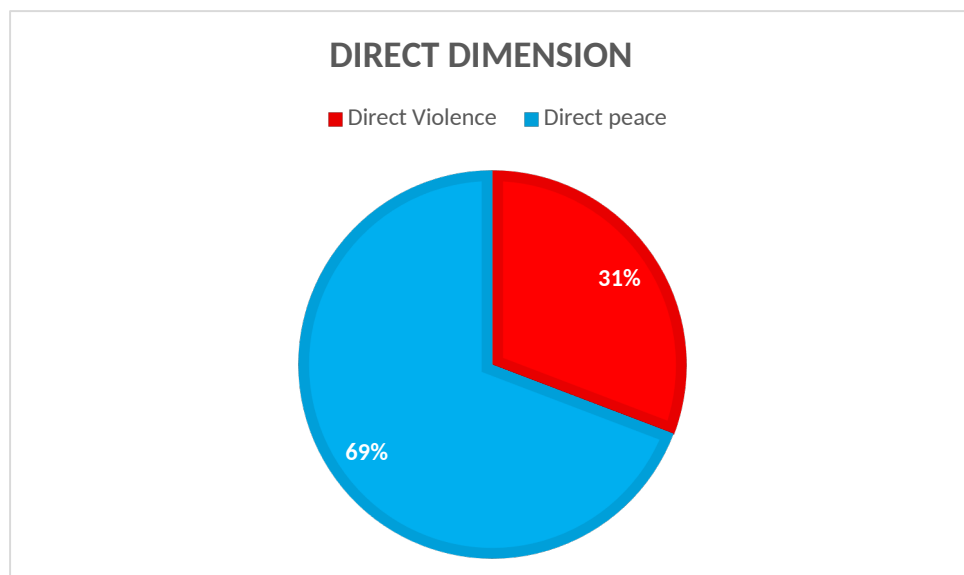
Figure 6. The composition of NATO's RSM peace discourse



Direct Dimension

The direct dimension referred to the dimension of Peace Research where the actions had a visible actor. It was composed of two opposite sides Direct Violence and Direct Peace. According to the results, the direct dimension was comprised by 31% of Direct Violence and 69% of Direct Peace.

Chart. The composition of the Direct Dimension in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Direct Violence

Direct Violence was defined as the expressions that relate to the violence where the means of realization are directly destroyed or harmed by an actor. This dimension was composed of six codes: Survival of the fittest, Violence to self, Violence across fault lines, War geography, Genocide, Culturocide, and History and future of war. The results for Direct Violence showed that it was coded a total amount of 238 times. This indicates that in 238 times, different forms of Direct Violence were present in the peace discourse. The following table provides the rationale for these results.

Figure 7. Number of coded quotations in Direct Violence

Direct Violence	Coded quotations	Percentage in DV	Percentage in PD
Survival of the fittest	54	22.69	1.86
Violence to self, suicide	0	0.00	0.00
Violence across fault lines	50	21.01	1.72
War Geography	82	34.45	2.82
Genocide	0	0.00	0.00
Culturocide	0	0.00	0.00
History and future of war	52	21.85	1.79
TOTAL	238	100	8.19

Accordingly, the next chart shows the codes of Direct Violence with more presence in the discourse. The codes that matched more quotations were War Geography (82), Survival of the fittest (54), History and future of violence (52), and Violence across fault lines (50).

Figure 8. Codes of Direct Violence from higher to lesser presence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



From the codes with more presence:

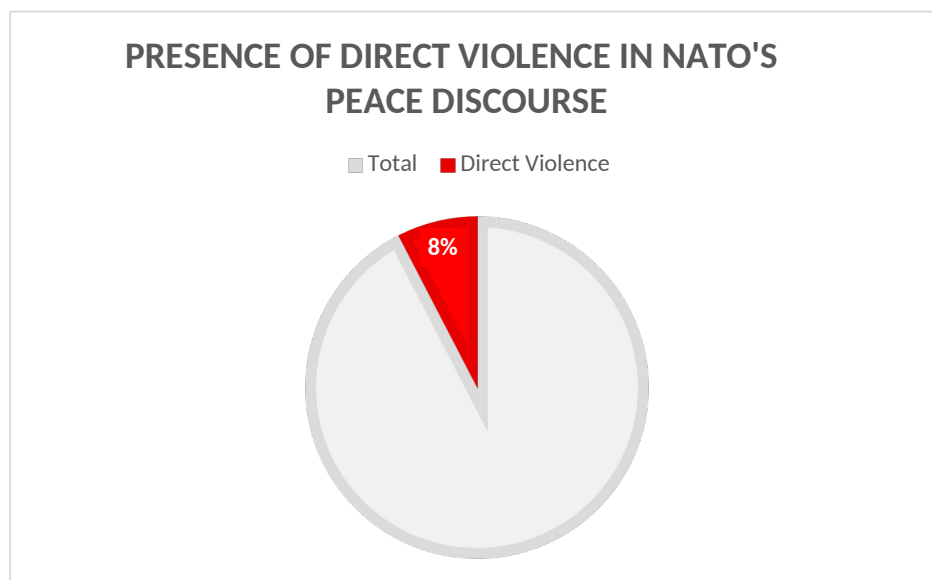
- The code War geography was a classification that referred to the expressions of violence committed in the geographical areas, as it may be the conflict in the field. With 82 matches, its main subjects of reference were the support to the Afghan army and security forces, the security of the state through partner countries, the deployment of troops in the area, the mission of the RSM and NATO in Afghanistan, and the fight against local and international terrorism in the construction of a “safe haven”.
- The code Survival of the Fittest was a classification that referred to the expressions that referred to the Darwinian theory where the most fittest are the ones that survive. With 54 quotations coded, its more recurrent subjects were expressions towards the fight against terrorism, the improvement and the capability of the Afghan Security Forces, the protection of the country, the attacks of the Taliban, and the combat operations.
- The code History and future of Violence was a classification that referred to the expressions related to the continuation of the war. Its main subjects were expressions towards the creation of a stable and secure Afghanistan, NATO's continued engagement over the years, NATO's largest mission, the fight against terrorism, and the importance of the military presence.
- The code Violence across fault lines, was a classification that referred to the expressions of war that takes place between two groups. Its more recurrent subjects were the expressions against international terrorism, the Taliban

offensive, the Islamic State and ISIL affiliates, and the support of NATO for competent, trained, and professional Afghan Security Forces.

Overall the peace discourse of NATO's RSM, Direct Violence had a presence of 8%.

Where the code War geography had 2.8% of representation, Survival of the fittest had 1.8 %, History and future of war had 1.8 % and Violence across fault lines had 1.7 %.

Figure 9. Presence of Direct Violence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Direct Peace

Under the same dimension, Direct Peace was defined as the expressions that relate to the foster of wellness and encourage the quality of better life conditions. This dimension was composed by seven codes: Mutual aid and cooperation, Intra-interpersonal growth, Non-violent liberation, Peace movements, Alternate defense, Cultural liberation, and History and future of peace. The results for Direct peace showed that it was coded 535 times over all the peace discourse of NATO's Resolute Mission in Afghanistan. The following table provides the rationale for the result.

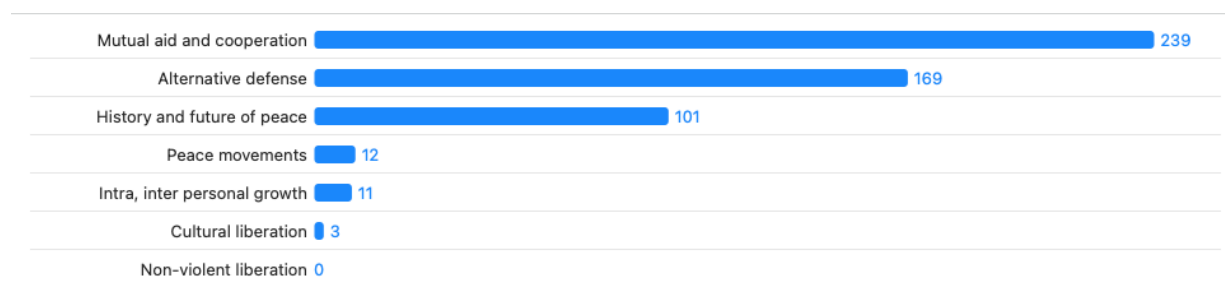
Figure 10. Number of coded quotations in Direct Peace

Direct peace	Coded quotations	Percentage in DP	Percentage in the PD
Mutual aid and cooperation	239	44.67	8.22
Intra-, interpersonal growth	11	2.06	0.38

Non violent liberation	0	0.00	0.00
Peace movements	12	2.24	0.41
Alternative defense	169	31.59	5.82
Cultural liberation	3	0.56	0.10
History and future of peace	101	18.88	3.48
TOTAL	535	100	18.41

Correspondingly, the following chart shows the codes of Direct Peace with more presence in the discourse. The codes that matched more quotations were Mutual aid and cooperation (239), Alternative defense (169), and History and future of peace (101). The areas with lower presence were Peace movements (12) and Intra-interpersonal growth (11), and Cultural liberation (3).

Figure 11. Codes of Direct Peace from higher to lesser presence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



From the codes with more presence:

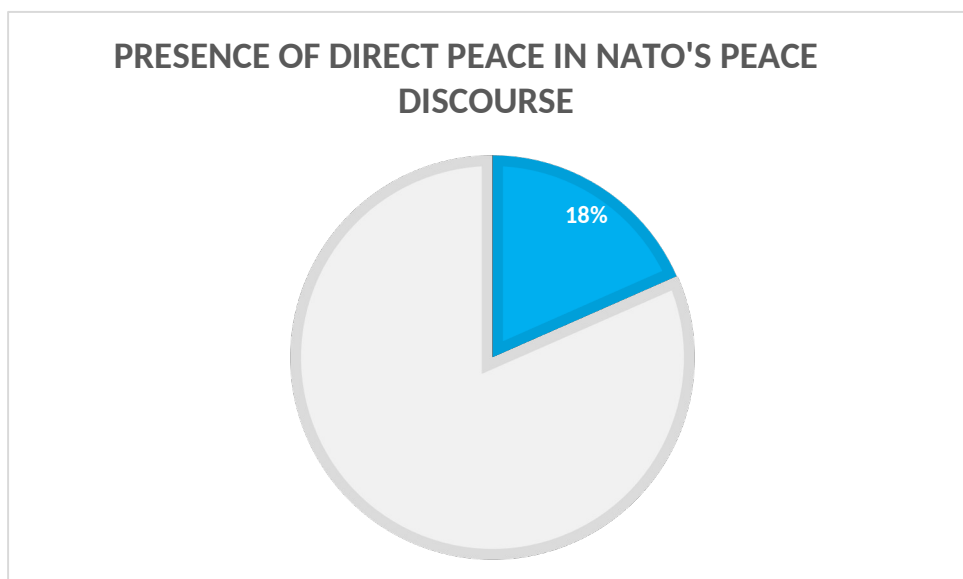
- The code Mutual Aid and Cooperation was a classification that referred to the expressions of cooperation, under a mutual understanding. With 239 matches, its main subjects of reference were the construction of a secure and stable Afghanistan, NATO's support to the Afghan government, the commitment of the international community to support Afghanistan, the partnership of NATO members and partner countries, and the financial contributions of the International community for the promotion of security.
- The code Alternative defense was a classification that referred to the expressions opposite to combat, as it was the case of the mission. With 169 matches, its main subjects of reference were the quality of NATO to advise and assist, the aims of

developing a peace process, the support for a reconciliation process, and its commitment to train the Afghan Forces.

- The code History and future of Peace defense was a classification that referred to the expressions that aimed to foster positive peace over time. With 101 codes, its main subjects of reference were the creation of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, the construction of a long-term security, the support of an inclusive peace process, and the aim for economic and social development.

Accordingly in all the peace discourse of NATO's RSM, Direct Peace had a presence of 18%. Where the code Mutual aid and cooperation had 8.3% of representation, Alternative defence had 5.9%, History and future of peace had 3.2%, Peace movements had 0.4%, Intra-interpersonal growth had 0.3%, and Cultural liberation had 0.1%.

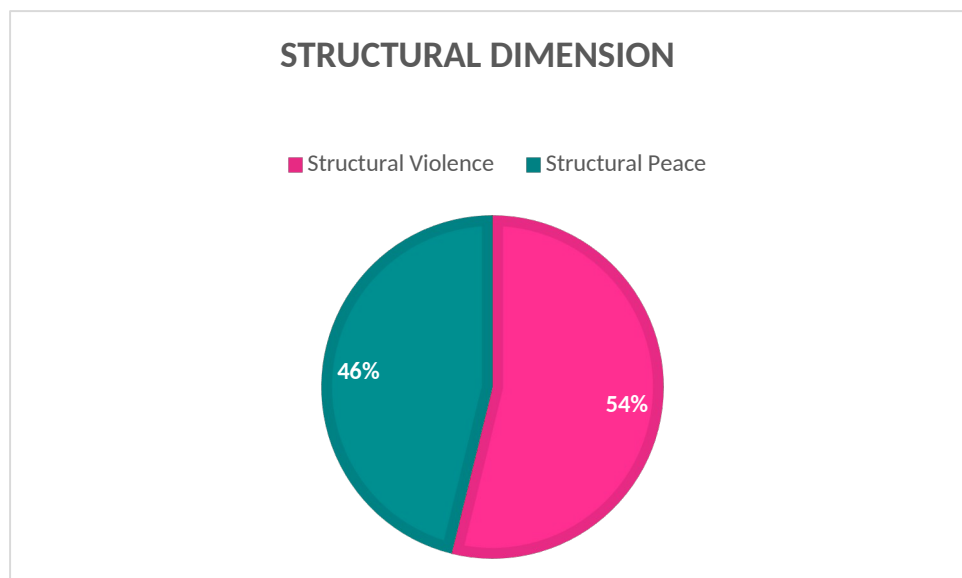
Figure 12. Presence of Direct Violence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Structural dimension

The structural dimension referred to the dimension of Peace Research where the violence or the peace has become part of social structures invisible to the naked eye. It was composed by two opposite sides Structural Violence and Structural Peace. According to the results, the structural dimension was constituted by 54% of Structural Violence and 46% of Structural Peace.

Figure 13. The composition of the Structural Dimension in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Structural Violence

On this dimension, Structural Violence was defined as the expressions that related to the indirect violence. A type of violence where the resources are withheld or monopolized by a group to diminish the life quality of the society. This dimension was composed by eight codes: Ecocide, Psychopathologies, Patriarchy, Racism, Class, Imperialism (trade), Cultural Imperialism, and History and future of exploitation and repression. The results for Structural Violence showed that it was coded a total amount of 525 times. The following table provides the rationale for the result.

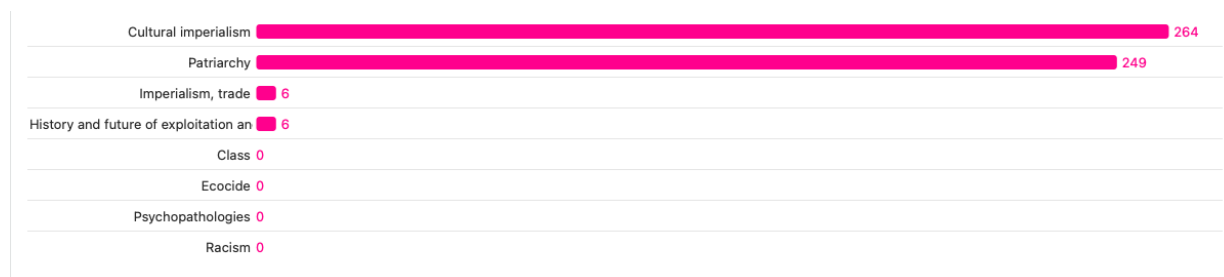
Figure 14. Number of coded quotations in Structural Violence

Structural Violence	Coded quotations	Percentage of Structural Violence	Percentage of the General Discourse
Ecocide	0	0.0%	0.0%
Psychopathologies	0	0.0%	0.0%
Patriarchy	249	47.4%	8.5%
Racism	0	0.0%	0.0%
Class	0	0.0%	0.0%
Imperialism, trade	6	1.1%	0.2%
Cultural imperialism	264	50.2%	9.0%

History and future of exploitation and repression	6	1.1%	0.2%
TOTAL	525	100%	18.0%

Consistently, the following chart shows the codes of Structural Violence with more presence in the discourse. The codes that matched more quotations were Cultural Imperialism (264), Patriarchy (249), History and future of exploitation and repression (6), and Imperialism, trade (6).

Figure 15. Codes of Structural Violence from higher to lesser presence in NATO's RSM discourse



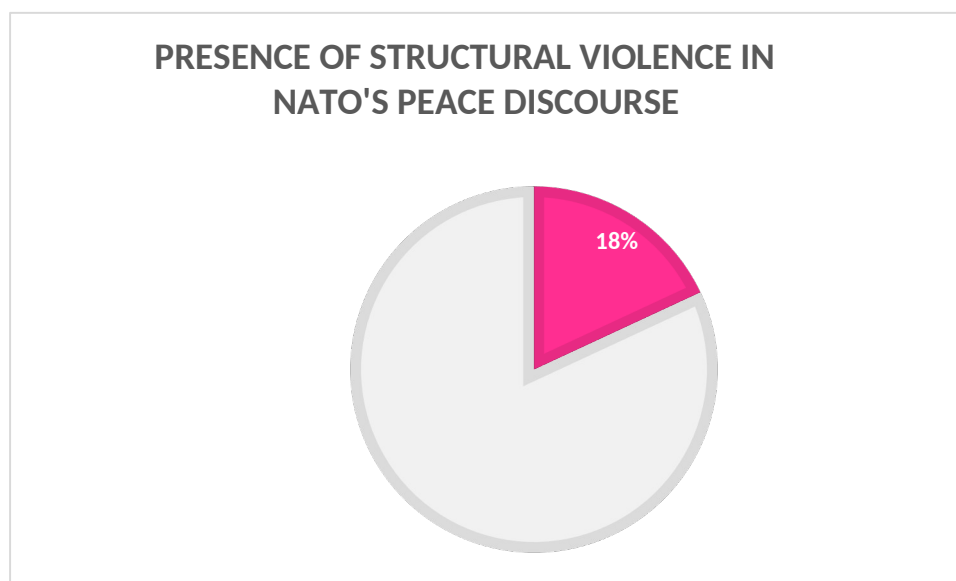
From the codes with more presence:

- The code Cultural imperialism was a classification that referred to the expressions of domination from one culture to another. With 264 matches, its main subjects of reference were NATO's posture to support the Afghan defence forces, the aid of the international community to foster security in Afghanistan, and the responsibility of the Western to fight against terrorism.
- The code Patriarchy was a classification that referred to the expressions of men dominance at an institutionalized level. With 249 matches, its main subjects of reference were the purpose of the RSM to train, advice and assist the Afghan Security Forces, the political relations with the government of Ashraf Ghani, the reunions between the NATO Members and Ministers of the National Security Defense.
- The code Imperialist (trade) was a classification that referred to the expressions on the economic systems of domination. With 6 matches, its main subject of reference was the increase of foreign aid to support the Security defence.

- Lastly the code History and future of exploitation was a classification that referred to the expressions related to the continuation of the conflict. With 249 matches, its main subject of reference was related to the war against terrorism.

In all the discourse, Structural Violence had a presence of 18%. Where the code Cultural imperialism had 9%, Patriarchy had 8.5%, Imperialism, trade had 0.2%, and History and future of exploitation and repression had 0.2%.

Figure 16. Presence of Structural Violence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Structural Peace

On the other side, Structural Peace was defined as the expressions that related to the absence of structural violence. This dimension was composed by seven codes: Non-homocentric eco-peace, Intra-, inter-personal peace, Development, parity, equity, Peace regions, Governance UN, and Cultural coexistence. The results for Structural Peace showed that it was coded a total amount of 450 times. The following table provides the reasoning of the result.

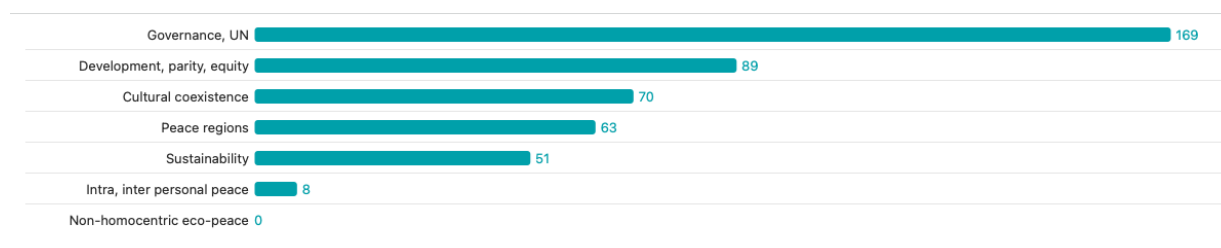
Figure 17. Number of coded quotations in Structural Peace

Structural Peace	Coded quotations	Percentage of Structural Peace	Percentage of the General Discourse
Non- homocentric eco-peace	0	0.0%	0.0%

Intra, inter personal peace	8	1.7%	0.2%
Development, parity, equity	89	19.7%	3.0%
Peace regions	63	14.0%	2.1%
Governance UN	169	37.5%	5.8%
Cultural coexistence	70	15.5%	2.4%
Sustainability	51	11.3%	1.7%
TOTAL	450	100%	15.4%

For Structural Peace, the following chart shows the codes of Structural Peace with more presence in the discourse. The codes that matched more quotations were Governance, UN (169), Development, parity, equity (89), Cultural coexistence (70), Peace regions (63) and Sustainability (51).

Figure 18. Codes of Structural Peace from higher to lesser presence in NATO's RSM discourse



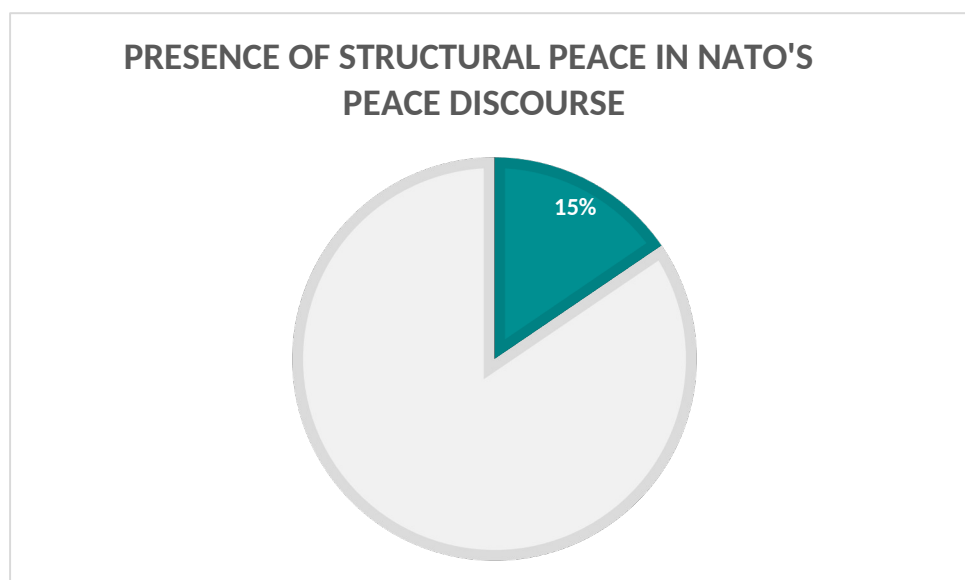
From the codes with more presence:

- The code Governance UN was a classification that referred to the expressions that fostered the good governance in concordance to positive peace. With 169 matches, its main subjects of reference were related to the Afghan stability, the peace process, the political reconciliation, and the support of the international community.
- The code Development, parity, equity was a classification that referred to the expressions that aimed for more equal relations and better practices in the promotion of peace. With 89 matches, its main subjects were the Afghan development, the stabilization of the security environment, the Afghan led peace process, and the political peace and reconciliation issues.

- The code Cultural coexistence was a classification that referred to the expressions that preserved all the cultures without imposition. With 70 matches, its main subjects of reference were a comprehensive and lasting peace process, an inclusive peace agreement, inclusive negotiations, and the Afghan reconciliation.
- The code Peace regions was a classification that referred to the expressions that aimed for peace and conflict solving. With 63 matches, its main subjects of reference were a secure and stable Afghanistan, lasting peace in the area, a comprehensive peace agreement, and a stable and secure environment.
- The code Sustainability was a classification that referred to the expressions that supported the peace along time. With 51 matches, its main subjects of reference were related to the prosperity of Afghanistan, a peace process, support by the international community and a sustainable environment.

Through all NATO's RSM peace discourse, Structural Peace had a presence of 15%. Where the code Governance, UN had 5.8%, Development, parity, equity had 3%, Cultural coexistence had 2.4%, Peace regions had 2.1%, Sustainability had 1.7% and Intra interpersonal peace has 0.2%.

Figure 19. Presence of Structural Violence in NATO's RSM peace discourse

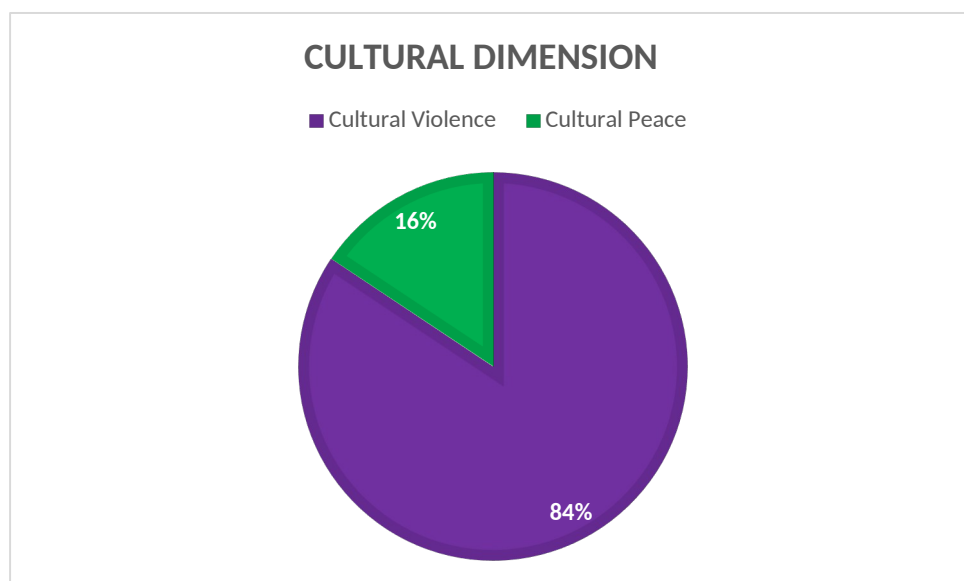


Cultural dimension

The cultural dimension referred to the dimension of Peace Research where the aspects of a culture that serve to justify and legitimize direct and structural peace or violence. It was conformed by two opposite dimensions Cultural Violence and Cultural Peace.

According to the results, the direct dimension was composed by 84% Cultural Violence and 16% of Cultural Peace.

Figure 20. The composition of the Cultural Dimension in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Cultural Violence

The dimension of Cultural Violence was defined as the type of violence related to the aspects of the culture that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence. It was confirmed by 10 codes, Transcendent; Democracy, human rights; Universalist, singularist; Racist, sexist; Patriotic, patriarchic; Western logic; To destroy life; Occident I, Sinic, Nipponic; Militarization; and War, violence journalism. The results from Cultural Violence showed that it was coded in 977 occasions. The following table provides the reasonings behind it.

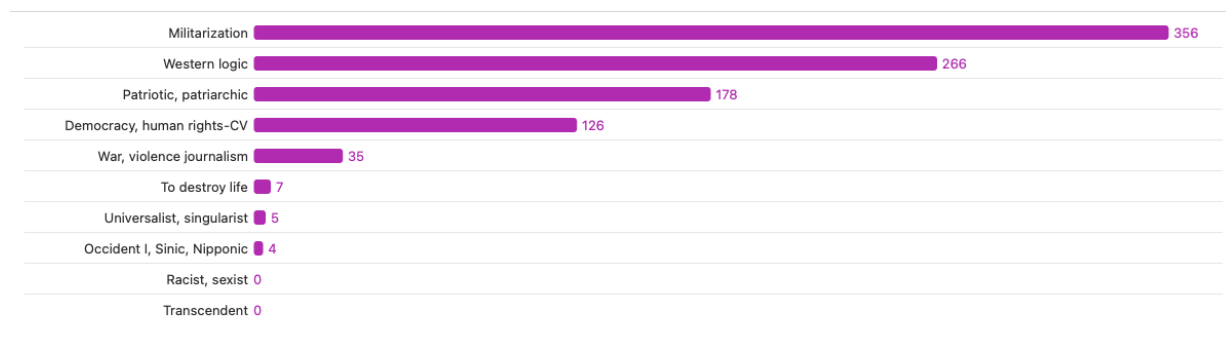
Figure 21. Number of coded quotations in Cultural Violence

Cultural Violence	Coded quotations	Percentage of Cultural Violence	Percentage of the General Discourse
Transcendent	0	0.00	0.00
Democracy, human rights-CV	126	12.90	4.34
Universalist, singularist	5	0.51	0.17
Racist, sexist	0	0.00	0.00

Patriotic, patriarchic	178	18.22	6.13
Western Logic	266	27.23	9.15
To destroy life	7	0.72	0.24
Occident I, Sinic, Nipponic	4	0.41	0.14
Militarization	356	36.44	12.25
War, violence journalism	35	3.58	1.20
TOTAL	977	100	33.62

The following chart shows the codes of Cultural Violence with more presence in the discourse. The codes with more matching quotations were Militarization (356), Western logic (266), Patriotic, patriarchic (178), and Democracy and Human Rights (126). And the areas with lesser presence were War, violence journalism (35), To destroy life (7), Universalist singularist (6), and Occident I, Sinic, Nipponic (4).

Figure 22. Codes of Cultural Violence from higher to lesser presence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



From the codes with more presence:

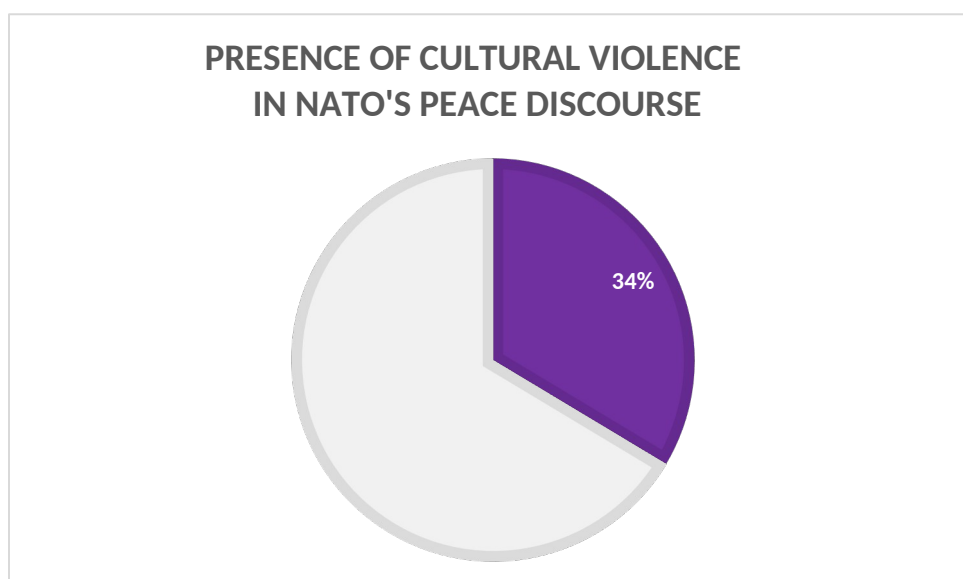
- The code Militarization was a classification that referred to the expressions of a military culture towards deployment, and intervention. With 356 matches, its main subjects of reference were the Afghanistan security, NATO's presence in the field, NATO's continuation of the mission, the support of the Afghan National Security Forces, and the TAA of the Afghan Security Forces.
- The code Western logic was a classification that referred to the expressions of the western cultural logic that aimed to foster violence. With 266 matches, its main subjects of reference were the creation of a stable and secure Afghanistan, the support to the Afghan Government, the commitment of the international

community with Afghanistan, the Western fight against terrorism, and the targeting of Taliban attacks.

- The code Patriotic, patriarchic was a classification that referred to the expressions of a culture related with a vertical structure, of male dominance and nationalism. With 178 matches, its main subjects of reference were the lasting of Afghanistan security, the mission of NATO in Afghanistan, and NATO's mission to fight terrorism and stabilize the country.
- The code Democracy, human rights was a classification that referred to the expressions of democracy and human rights to legitimize direct or structural violence. With 126 matches, its main subjects of reference were NATO's mission to ensure security, the support to the National defence and security forces, the security responsibility, and the deployment of forces to secure the country.
- Finally, the code War, violence journalism was a classification that referred to the expressions of a culture based on the divulgation of war and conflict. With 35 matches, its main subjects of reference were the fight against terrorism, the violence produced by the Taliban, the Taliban attacks, the security threats, and the fight against Afghanistan being a safe haven for terrorism.

Over all the peace discourse of NATO's RSM, Cultural Violence had a presence of 34%. Where the code Militarization had 12.2%, Western logic had 9.1% , Patriotic patriarchic had 6.1%, Democracy, human rights had 4.3%, War, violence journalism had 1.2%, To destroy life had 0.2%, Universalist, singularist had 0.1%, and Occident I, Sinic, Nipponic had 0.1%.

Figure 23. Presence of Cultural Violence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Cultural Peace

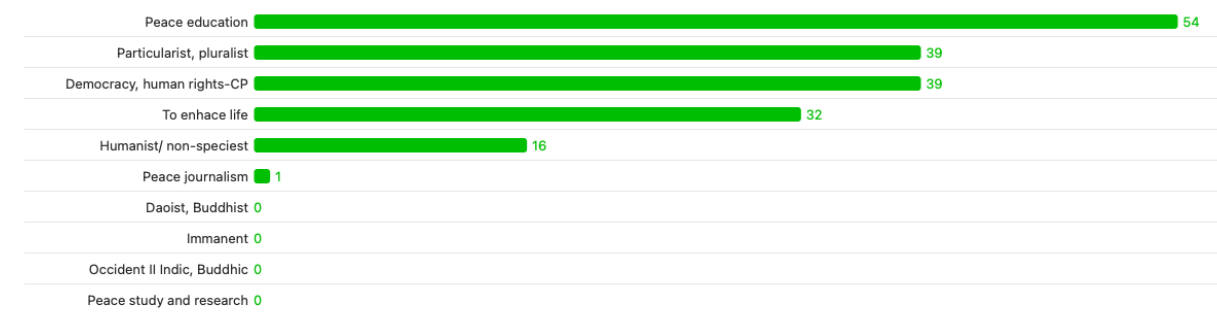
In contrary, the category of Cultural peace was defined as the expressions that referred to aspects of a culture that serve to justify and legitimize direct and structural peace. It was conformed by 10 codes: Immanent; Democracy, human rights; Particularist, pluralist; Humanist/ non-speciest; Daoist, Buddhist; To enhance life; Occident II Indic, Buddhist; Peace education; Peace study and research; and Peace journalism. The results for the category of Cultural Peace showed that it was coded a total of 181. The following table provides the rationale for the result.

Figure 24. Number of coded quotations in Cultural Peace

Cultural Peace	Coded quotations	Percentage of Cultural Peace	Percentage of the General Discourse
Immanent	0	0.0%	0.0%
Democracy, human rights-CP	39	21.5%	1.3%
Particularist, pluralist	39	21.5%	1.3%
Humanist/ non-speciest	16	8.8%	0.5%
Daoist, Buddhist	0	0.0%	0.0%
To enhance life	32	17.6%	1.1%
Occident II Indic, Buddhist	0	0.0%	0.0%
Peace education	54	29.8%	1.8%
Peace study and research	0	0.0%	0.0%
Peace journalism	1	0.5%	0.0%
TOTAL	181	100%	6.2%

For Cultural peace the following chart shows the codes with more presence in the discourse. The ones with more matching quotations were Peace education (54), Particularist, pluralist (39), Democracy, human rights (39), and To enhance life (32). Here, two of the areas with lesser presence were Humanist/non speciest (16), and Peace journalism (1).

Figure 25. Codes of Cultural Peace from higher to lesser presence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



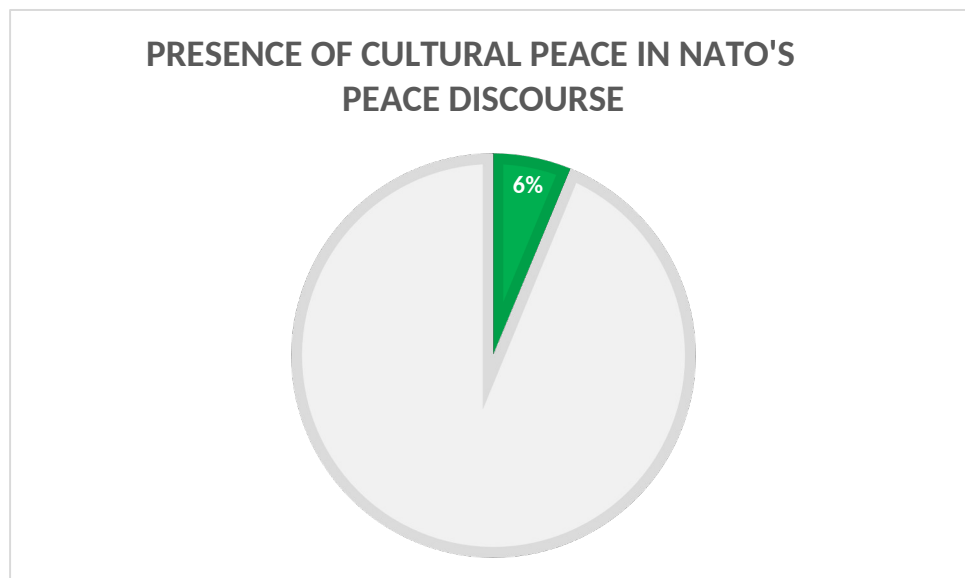
From the codes with more presence:

- The code Peace education was a classification that referred to the expressions of culture to enhance peace. With 54 matches, its main subjects of reference were a comprehensive and lasting peace, the support for a comprehensive peace agreement, and a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.
- The code Particularist pluralist was a classification that referred to the expressions of the culture to be inclusive. With 39 matches, its main subjects of reference were an Afghan led peace process, a comprehensive lasting peace, an inclusive peace agreement, and the promotion of a wider international community.
- The code Democracy, human rights Peace education was a classification that referred to the expressions of the culture to promote democracy and human rights for the construction of peace. With 39 matches, its main subjects of reference were the peace process, a comprehensive and lasting peace, an inclusive agreement, and a stable security environment.
- The code To enhance life, was a classification that referred to the expressions that fostered the lives of the well beings. With 32 matches, its main subjects of reference were the prosperity of Afghanistan, the Afghan security forces, the support of NATO, and a sustainable peace.
- The code Humanist/ non-speciest was a classification that referred to the expressions of culture with an inclusive vision. With 16 matches, its main subjects of reference were the covid-19 pandemic, the increase of test centers, and the inclusive medical care to reduce the spread.

Through all the peace discourse of NATO's RSM, Cultural Peace had a presence of 6%. Where the code Peace education had 1.8%, Particularist, pluralist had 1.3%,

Democracy, human rights had 1.3%, To enhance life had 1.1%, Humanist/non-speciest had 0.5%, and Peace journalism had 1.8%.

Figure 26. Presence of Cultural Peace in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Peace and Violence

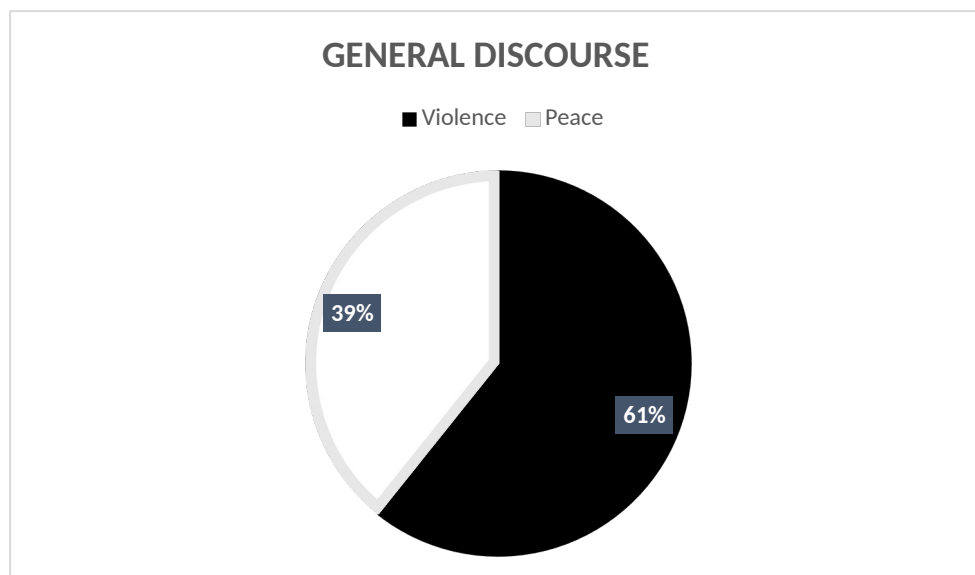
Over all the discourse, the results from peace and violence showed that the areas of peace (DP, SP, CP) were coded a total of 1740 occasions, and the areas of peace were coded a total of 1127 times. The following table provides the reasonings behind it.

Figure 27. Number of coded quotations in terms of Violence and Peace

Coded quotations	
Total Discourse	2906
Violence	1740
Peace	1127

Through all the peace discourse of NATO's RSM, Violence had 61% where Cultural Violence had 34%, Structural Violence had 18%, and Direct Peace had 8%. And Peace had a presence of 39%, where Direct Peace had 18%, Structural Peace had 15%, and Cultural Peace had 6%.

Figure 28. Presence of Violence and Peace in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Results of the second stage

The second stage of the analysis had the purpose of exploring the aim of the peace discourse to eradicate violence. This area classified the results from the first phase into three codes: Positive Peace, Negative Peace, and General Violence. To assign these codes it was assumed that every sentence could only have one aim: foster violence or foster peace, according to the three basic principles of peace: “Violence of any kind, breeds violence of any kind, peace of any kind breeds peace of any kind, and positive peace is the best protection against violence” (Galtung, 1996, p.32).

Therefore, to catalogue the sentences, the subsequent definitions were followed:

Positive peace was the area where the expressions aimed to transform the conflict toward a more sustainable or peaceful state (Galtung, 1996).

Negative Peace was the area where the expressions aimed to end violence, but not leading to a positive condition (Galtung, 1996).

General violence: was the area where the expressions of negative or positive peace could not be found.

According to Galtung’s theorems, a framework was set accordingly:

Figure 29. Logics of Positive Peace, Negative Peace and General Violence

Theorem	System of signs	Logics	Result

“Peace of any kind breeds peace of any kind”	$(+) + (+) = (+)$	If all the signs are positive, the result is positive	Positive Peace
“Violence of any kind, breeds violence of any kind”	$(-) + (-) = (-)$	If all the signs are negative, the result is negative	General Violence
“Violence of any kind cannot breed peace of any kind”	$(-) \neq (+) = (-)$	If the signs are different, the result is negative	Negative Peace

As each sentence could only have one aim of peace or violence, according to the meaning of peace where peace is the absence of violence. A system of signs was adapted from the theory to classify the six codes previously used to catalogue the quotations. Therefore, to each code it was given a positive or negative sign:

Figure 30. Signs assigned to the dimensions of peace and violence

Area	Dimension	Sign
Peace	Direct Peace	(+)
	Structural Peace	(+)
	Cultural Peace	(+)
Violence	Direct Violence	(-)
	Structural Violence	(-)
	Cultural Violence	(-)

To assign the codes to the sentences a simple sum equation was applied to each sentence, where the result indicated its aim orientation towards fostering peace through dimensions of peace (positive peace), aim to foster peace through dimensions of violence and peace (negative peace), and aim to foster violence by dimensions of violence (general violence).

Figure 31. Logics of Positive Peace, Negative Peace and General Violence

Code	Aim	Logic of signs
Positive Peace	Foster peace by dimensions of peace	$(+) + (+) = (+)$
Negative Peace	Foster peace by dimensions of violence and peace	$(-) + (+) = (-)$ $(+) + (-) = (-)$
General Violence	Foster violence by dimensions of violence and peace	$(-) + (-) = (-)$

As a result, the codes that had been applied to the quotations were summarized into a final positive or negative sign. This sign represented the aim of the quotation (sentence) to foster peace, violence, or lead to a partial absence of violence. From the 615 sentences that were classified as data, the outcomes were set accordingly: Positive peace matched 70 sentences, Negative peace matched 454, and General Violence matched 91.

Figure 31. Number of coded quotations in Positive Peace, Negative Peace and General Violence

	Positive Peace	Negative Peace	General Violence
Number of quotations	70	454	91
Percentage of the discourse	11.3%	73.8%	14.7%

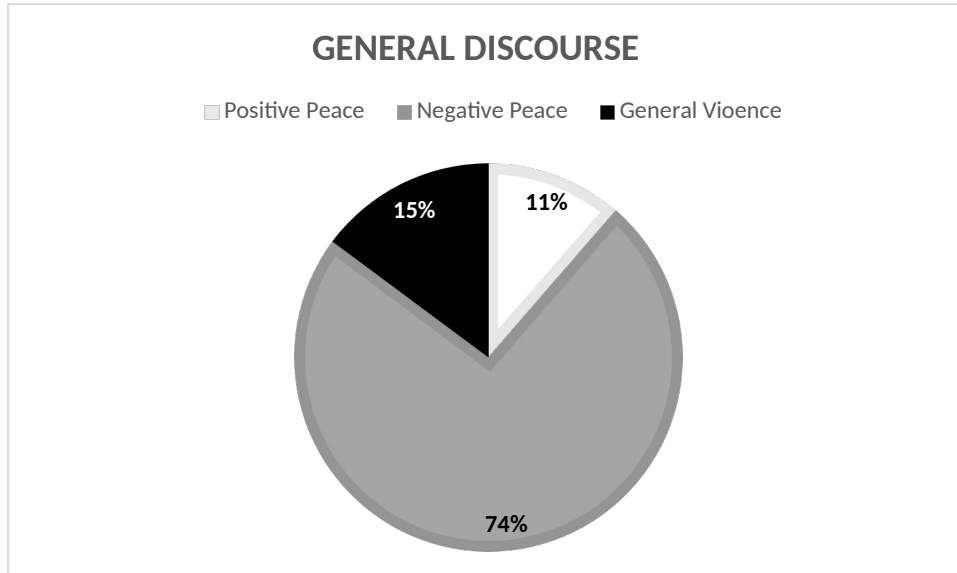
The following charts shows the codes presence in the peace discourse of NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

Figure 32. Codes of Positive Peace, Negative Peace and General Violence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



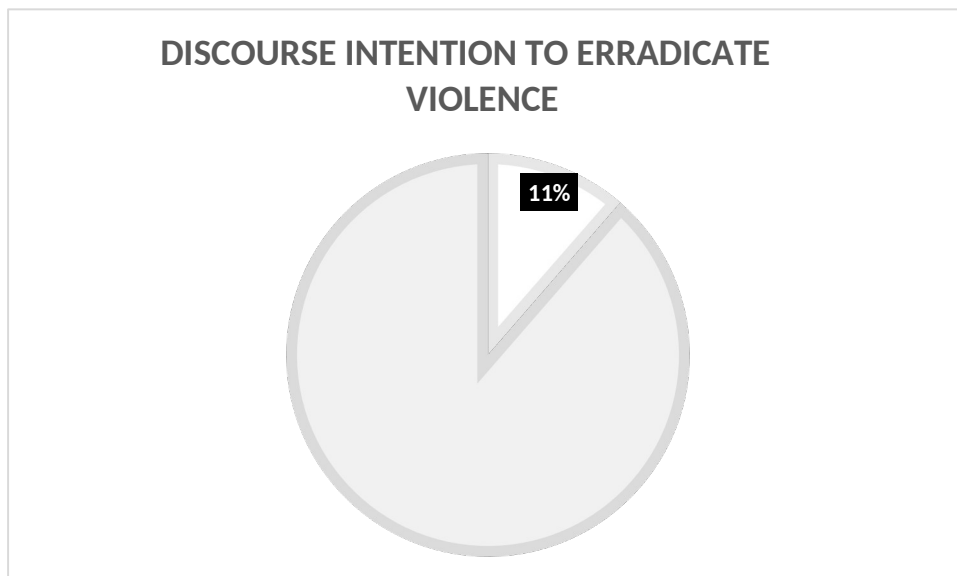
Through all the peace discourse of NATO's RSM, Positive Peace had 11% of presence, Negative Peace had 74% and General Violence had 15%.

Figure 33. Presence of Positive Peace, Negative Peace and General Violence in NATO's RSM peace discourse



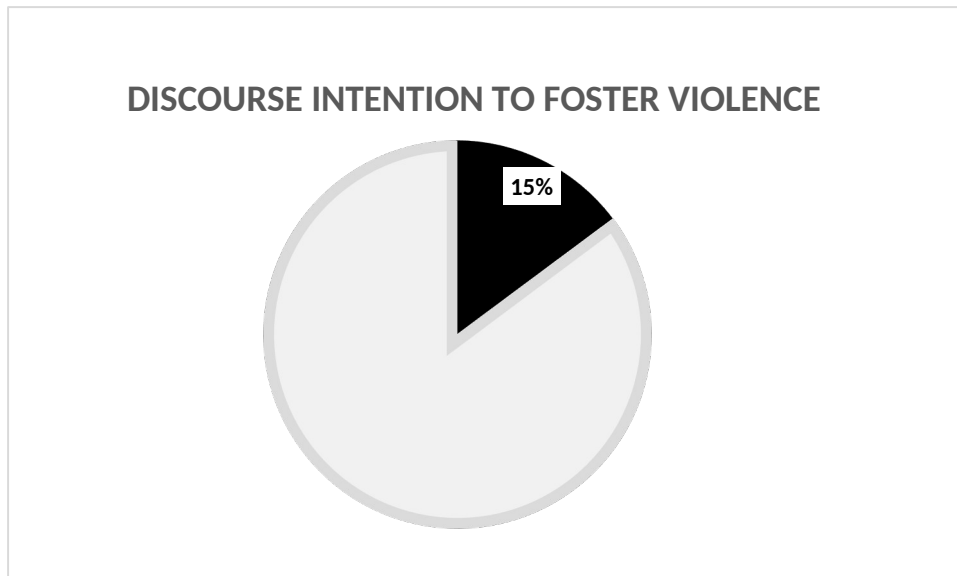
According to the results, only 11% of the discourse aimed to eradicate the violence.

Figure 34. NATO's RSM discursive intention to eradicate violence



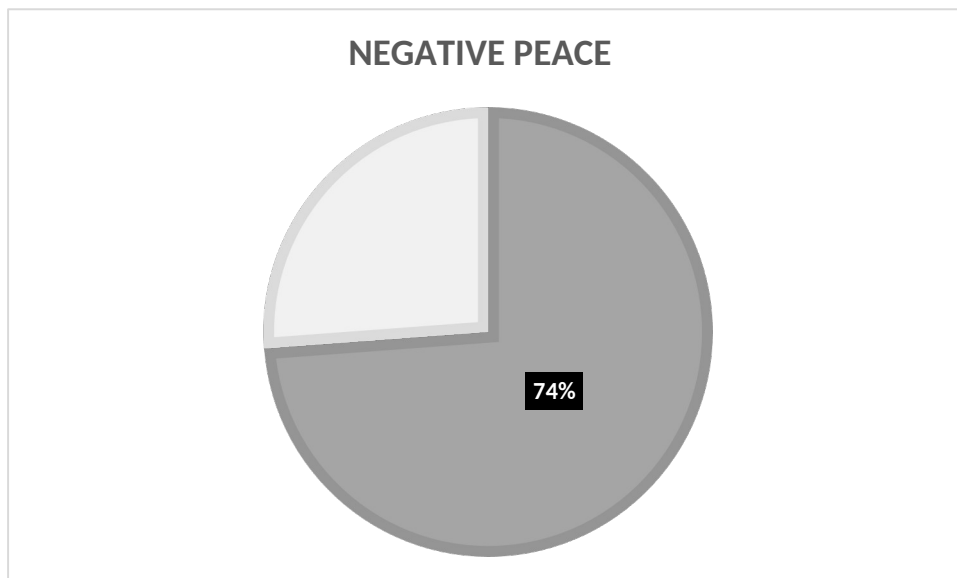
In the same manner, only 15% of the discourse aimed to foster violence

Figure 35. NATO's RSM discursive intention to foster violence



And in accordance, 74% of the discourse aimed to end violence, through both resources of peace and violence

Figure 36. Presence of Negative Peace in NATO's RSM peace discourse



Chapter 6. Discussion

This thesis focused on the peace discourse of NATO during the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. It aimed to identify how the discourse was composed according to the basic paradigms of Peace Research, where peace is considered the absence of violence, with the general purpose of fostering peace. This work was guided by two main research questions:

-What dimensions of peace and violence predominated in NATO's discourse?

-To what extent did NATO's RSM discourse intend to foster positive peace?

This study used a poststructuralist approach of discourse analysis, through a comparative model using Galtung's basic paradigms of peace and violence as a guiding framework. Sustaining that the Resolute Support Mission had a biased peace discourse, which was not based on reducing violence and promoting peace. Consequently, this chapter discusses the results reviewed in Chapter 5.

Key findings

The analysis of this study was divided into two main phases. One to identify the dimensions of peace and violence with more presence in the peace discourse. In order to understand how the discourse of NATO was structured. And another one, to notice to what extent did the discourse intended to foster positive peace, aiming to perceive the level of commitment of NATO to eradicate violence.

Therefore, for the first area of identification of dimensions with more presence in the discourse, the results suggested that the dimension with the highest presence was Cultural Violence. A type of violence that referred to the socially accepted expressions that made possible the other two types of violence: direct and structural. Where it was implied that NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on cultural patterns of militarization, the Western community, patriarchal and patriotic hierarchies, and democracy and human rights.

The second dimension with the greatest presence was Direct Peace. Seen as the expressions of a type of peace that focused on promoting well-being. According to the results it was implied that part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was built from actions that promoted peace such as mutual aid and cooperation, alternative defence, and the construction of a future of peace.

The third area with the greatest presence was Structural Violence. Expressed as a type of violence that was reproduced in the structure of a society and present when

the level of achievement of a community was below the optimal, causing the entire system to have violence. According to the results, it was suggested that part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was built from social structures that promote violence, such as cultural imperialism, patriarchy, imperialism and history and future of exploitation.

The fourth area with the greatest presence was Structural Peace. Seen as the expressions of a type of peace that tried to counteract the impact of Structural Violence in the community. Based on the correction of social patterns that have been diverted to produce violence, seeking to provide society with an optimal standard of living. According to the results, it was suggested that part of NATO's discourse was built from social structures that promoted peace, such as: governance, development, parity, equity, cultural coexistence, peace between regions, sustainability, interpersonal peace and intrapersonal peace.

The fifth area with the greatest presence was Direct Violence. Expressed as a type of violence where the level of achievement of a group (or person) was reduced by a clear actor so that they were below the optimum. According to the results, it was suggested that part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was built from actions that promote geographic warfare, survival actions for the most suitable, violence against other groups and the history and future of violence.

Finally, the area with the minimum presence was Cultural Peace. Seen as the expressions of a type of peace that aimed for the conservation of peace through time and tried to build a culture in which the other two types of peace could be legitimised. According to the results, it was suggested that part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on cultural patterns of peace education, a particularist and pluralist logic, democracy and human rights, humanist and non-speciest and in favor of life.

First question: What dimensions of peace and violence predominated in NATO's discourse?

Cultural Violence

The results suggested that the dimension with the highest presence was cultural violence. A type of violence referred to the socially accepted expressions that made possible the other two types of violence: direct and structural. The way of expressing this dimension of violence was through cultural patterns of militarization, the Western community, patriarchal and patriotic hierarchies, and democracy and human rights.

According to the subject of Militarization, it was suggested that many of the expressions referred to a military culture towards deployment and intervention. Since its

main use of concepts were the security of Afghanistan, NATO presence on the ground, the continuation of the NATO mission, the support of the Afghan National Security Forces and the TAA of the Afghan Security Forces. The results proposed that much of the peace discourse was based on the quality of the mission to assist the Afghan government through the training of the Afghan National Security Forces. A military area that did not contribute to peace of any kind.

Similarly in the subject of Western logic, it was suggested that its expressions were part of a western culture that sought to stimulate violence. Since their more recurrent concepts were the creation of a stable and secure Afghanistan, the support to the Afghan Government, the commitment of the international community with Afghanistan, the Western fight against terrorism, and the targeting of Taliban attacks. The results proposed that many of the peace discourse was based on the Western logic, under the main argument of interceding in Afghanistan to protect the area from terrorism. The presence of this subject suggests that the peace discourse was based on a influenced western logic that contributed to a state of insecurity by seeking to eradicate terrorist and insurgent forces. Which was also a source of violence in the area.

For the subjects of patriotism and patriarchy, it was suggested that the expressions referred to the expressions of a culture related to a vertical structure, with male domination and patriotism. Since the main use of concepts for this subject were the lasting of Afghanistan security, the mission of NATO in Afghanistan, and NATO's mission to fight terrorism and stabilize the country. The results proposed that many of NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on a hierarchical culture, with a superior and inferior group. In this sense, the hierarchical decision-making of NATO, in which the ministers were the ones who designated the course of the operation and its extension, was positioned at a higher level than that the Afghan government, with the aim of cooperating and contributing to the security of Afghanistan. However, due to the vertical figure, it was not possible to conceive that the Afghan administration had the same level of authority as NATO. Therefore, the presence of this subject suggests that NATO's hierarchical decision-making, and its discourse labeling regional actors, responded to factors that fostered violence and instability in the area.

Lastly, in the subject of democracy and human rights, it was suggested that the expressions referred to a culture related to the use of democracy and human rights to legitimize direct or structural violence. Since its main topics of reference were NATO's mission to ensure security, the support to the National defense and security forces, the security responsibility, and the deployment of forces to secure the country. The results

proposed that much of the peace discourse was based on the use of human rights and democracy as motives in favor of the deployment of forces in Afghanistan.

With a high presence of Cultural Violence, it was suggested that a significant part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was founded on cultural patterns that allowed more explicit variants of violence.

Direct Peace

In the same manner, the results suggested that the second dimension with the highest presence was Direct Peace. A type of peace related to the expressions that foster wellness and encourage the quality of better life conditions. The way of expressing this type of peace was through forms of mutual aid and cooperation, alternative defence, and history and future of peace.

According to the expressions on mutual aid and cooperation, it was suggested that these referred to the expressions of cooperation under a mutual understanding. Since their main use of subjects were the construction of a secure and stable Afghanistan, NATO's support to the Afghan government, the commitment of the international community to support Afghanistan, the partnership of NATO members and partner countries, and the financial contributions of the international community for the promotion of security. The results proposed that many of NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on the image of cooperation and help, in agreement with the government of Afghanistan, the international community and the United Nations. This category reflected the actions that sought to help the government of Afghanistan to build a stable and secure country. Although such help and cooperation was based on the development and efficiency of a common area of militarisation. Therefore, the presence of Mutual aid and cooperation allows to see how actions of cooperation were classified as part of the area of peace but responded to the presence of a culture of violence.

Similarly, in the subject of alternative defence, it was suggested that the expressions related to the actions opposite to combat, as it was the case of the mission. Since its main topics of reference were the quality of NATO to advise and assist, the aims of developing a peace process, the support for a reconciliation process, and its commitment to train the Afghan Forces. The results proposed that many of NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on the image of a peaceful, non-combat operation accepted by the Afghan government and the UN resolution 2139. Where the mission was portrayed as non-combat, but with the purpose of training the Afghan defense forces in a military way. Therefore, the presence of this category allows to see how the image of a non-combat mission was translated as a peaceful operation, leaving aside the fact

that this mission continued to belong to a culture of militarizationmilitarisation, which legitimizedlegitimised structural violence.

Finally in the subject of history and future of peace, it was suggested that these expressions referred to the aim of fostering positive peace over time. Since its main topics of reference were the creation of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, the construction of a long-term security, the support of an inclusive peace process, and the aim for economic and social development. The results proposed that many of NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on NATO's commitment to stabilise Afghanistan. Having as a result, the entire expansion phase of the mission, where over the years, the mission had continued to justify its stay in the country due to the unstable conditions that Afghanistan faced. In this way, the decisions that were made annually to increase the number of troops, the financing, or the presence of the mission, were portrayed as actions in favour of peace. However, due to the presence of the violent culture in the discourse, these actions did not contribute to stability as they already referred to militarisation and defence.

Structural Violence

In the same way, the results suggested that the third dimension with the highest presence was Structural Violence. A type of violence related to the expressions that reproduce violence in the structure of a society and is usually present when the level of achievement of a community is below optimal, causing the entire system to have violence. The way of expressing this type of violence was through forms of cultural imperialism, patriarchy, imperialism and history and future of exploitation.

According to the subject of cultural imperialism, it was suggested that many of its expressions referred to the domination from one culture to another. Since its main topics of reference were NATO's posture to support the Afghan defense forces, the aid of the international community to foster security in Afghanistan, and the responsibility of the Western to fight against terrorism. The results proposed that many of NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on an imperialist culture. Where NATO used the argument of security for the deployment of forces in Afghanistan to step one culture above the other. Therefore, the presence of this category advises an imperialist culture that contributed to the presence of a military training mission, in which third parties, like the Afghan forces, supported the fight against terrorism and insurgency.

Similarly, in the concept of patriarchy, it was suggested that these expressions referred to the men dominance at an institutionalised level. Since its main topics of

reference were the purpose of the RSM to train, advice and assist the Afghan Security Forces, the political relations with the government of Ashraf Ghani, the meetings between the NATO Members and Ministers of the National Security Defense. The results proposed that many of NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on patriarchal structures, which came from cultural violence. Under this structure, NATO's discourse was presented as a form of superior help. The Afghan government needed Western aid to counter the advances of the Taliban and other insurgent groups. In this way, NATO's discourse also used a Western logic to justify its military actions. The presence of this category makes possible to observe the vertical structure of the peace discourse, in which the support of one group over another caused the Afghan government to be seen as the legitimate actor for the government, ruling out the rest of the insurgent actors as possible candidates.

Lastly, in the concept of History and the future of exploitation and war, it was suggested that these expressions were related to the continuation of the conflict. Since its main topics referenced the war against terrorism, the results suggested that a large part of NATO'S RSM peace discourse was based on a structure that legitimised the actions of cultural and direct violence. The results suggested that the peace discourse focused on combating terrorism and training the Afghan forces to defend the nation from insurgent groups. Therefore, the presence of this category allowed to see how the cycle of violence between the ANDSF, and insurgent groups was based on different areas of direct violence.

Second question: To what extent did NATO's RSM discourse aim to foster positive peace?

For this question, the results suggested that only 11% of the peace discourse aimed to create conditions of peace. This number was the percentage of actions that created peace by peaceful means. In other words, they were peaceful actions, with structures directed towards peace and a culture of peace. Which indicates that even if there was a strong presence of Direct Peace in the discourse, many of these actions did not aim to contribute to the peace in the region, since they were based on patterns of structural and cultural violence.

On the other side, only 15% of the discourse promoted violence through dimensions that belonged entirely to violence. Better said, only 15% of the expressions belonged to violent purposes, under direct, structural, and cultural violence. This indicates that for the most part, NATO's RMS peace discourse did not have many

actions of direct violence, but rather, the violence they generated in the area was the product of cultural and structural dimensions of violence.

And finally, for the grey area of the negative peace, the results suggested that it had a presence of 74%, which implies that 70% of the peace discourse contained a mixture of positive and negative dimensions. Proposing that that this mixture could be one of the reasons for the prolongation of the instability in the area.

To conclude, the results for this question suggested that even if the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan was portrayed as a peace operation, one of its minor interests was to create areas that fostered peace by peaceful means. During the six years of deployment of forces, NATO's actions aligned to peace had the possibility to generate a peaceful outlook however due to its internal structural and cultural violence, the situation in Afghanistan was only capable of fostering situations of instability, as its main aim was not the construction of a structure, or culture of peace.

Chapter 7. Conclusions

Problem or research

This study focused on the peace discourse of NATO during the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. In order to understand how it was composed according to the basic paradigms of Peace Studies, where peace was considered the absence of violence, with the general purpose of eradicating violence. This chapter summarises the central arguments, and the main findings and establishes the importance of the work and the main points.

This thesis began with the observation that peace was a complicated area to define, that its meaning was often misunderstood, leading to scenarios that encourage violence instead of seeking the preservation of peace. To explain this diversity of meanings, this work was helped by the theory of poststructuralism, which considered that the meanings of the world were the product of interpretation (Newman, 2005). Here the discourses were considered the main object of study, described as units of discourse with the ability to store meaning (Bondarouk and Ruel, 2004). This theory established that all meanings were subjective (Baumann, 2022), and that they had the ability to change according to their discourse, making possible the relativity of meanings (Derrida, 1978).

Therefore, it was possible to consider that there were discourses that have moved away from the purpose of peace to eradicate violence and have biased the meaning of peace. Giving as a result, discourses that responded to political questions rather than being committed to eradicating the conflict. According to poststructuralism, discourses were the product of a social and political area in which meanings are assumed according to the values, events, thought, and values to which their author aligns (Edelman, 1967).

For the case of NATO, during the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. The discourse followed a similar pattern of word fixation. The conflict in Afghanistan lasted more than two decades in the search of peace, where one of its greatest contributors was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Originally, NATO went into Afghanistan as a response to the events of September 11th, 2001, in agreement with Article 5 of Collective Defense of the Washington Treaty (NATO, 2021a). Its immediate discourse condemned the attacks of 9/11 against the United States, describing them as intolerable aggression against democracy, and pursuing support from the international community to fight against terrorism (NATO, 2001). The impact of this initial action developed a discourse with the ability to justify the war in Afghanistan through a

“mobilisation of universally good categories as civilization, democracy, human rights, development, and reconstruction” (Hansen, 2017, p.10). Shifting from territorial defence to an open concept of global security that worked through narratives of stability and peace (Kuss, 2009). The mission of NATO in Afghanistan began as an act of retaliation and retribution against the Taliban harbouring al-Qaeda (Miklaucic, 2022). Its first peace operation was the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). It was the largest operation ever deployed and the first mission of NATO outside Europe. ISAF was authorised by the United Nations (UN) Security Council as a multinational ad hoc operation focused on helping the Afghan Interim Authority. Its initial objective was to “enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country and develop new Afghan security forces to ensure Afghanistan would never again become a safe haven for terrorists” (NATO,2014).

Over the years, the mission shifted into a moral burden of state-building (Miklaucic, 2022). In 2014, NATO opened a follow-operation and created the Resolute Support Mission (RSM). In agreement with the Afghan government and the UN resolution 2139, where NATO’s RSM came portrayed as a peaceful mission (SIPRI, 2021). The RSM began as part of the Transformation Decade, where Afghanistan was projected for full leadership and ownership of its national affairs (Miranda, 2015). Its main difference from ISAF was its quality of non-combat operation, intending to create the conditions whereby the Afghan government could exercise its authority throughout the country and build the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (NATO, 2021b). Their initiatives were focused on a range of political and military efforts, from training combatants to humanitarian development projects, intending to create a strong and stable government capable of guaranteeing peace and stability (NATO, 2022b).

The Resolute Support Mission was the last operation of NATO in Afghanistan, and one of the most intriguing ones. It portrayed an image of integration and inclusiveness and followed a discourse not against threats, but for values such as cooperation, democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, security, and lasting peace (Kuus, 2009). However, its use of practices such as invasion, occupation, stabilizationstabilisation, and reconstruction efforts (Miklaucic, 2022), exemplified a reconfiguration of how its peace discourse had been biased, having nothing to be with the absence of violence and the fostering of peace (Kuss, 2009).

Research design

This thesis sustained that the mission in Afghanistan had a biased peace discourse, which was not based on the reduction of violence and the promotion of peace. The objective of this study was to understand how the discourse of NATO during the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan was composed according to the basic paradigms of Peace Research, where peace is considered the absence of violence, with the general purpose of eradicate violence. To analyse the problem two questions were designed:

1. What dimensions of peace and violence predominated in NATO's discourse?
2. To what extent did NATO's RSM discourse intended to foster positive peace?

And in accordance, the aim of the study was to detect the presence of the different dimension of peace and violence, pairing the discourse over six areas: direct peace, direct violence, structural peace, structural violence, cultural peace, and cultural violence; and to distinguish the intention of the mission to foster peace.

Therefore, according to the research questions, the project was divided into two phases. The first one was focused on exploring the essential meaning of peace as the absence of violence through the classification of the discourse in the six areas: direct violence (1), structural violence (2), cultural violence (3), direct peace (4), structural peace (5), and cultural peace (6). And the second was focused on exploring the aim of the discourse to foster peace through the application of the concepts of positive peace and negative peace. For both phases, it was decided to use the comparative table of "Systematization II of Peace and Conflict Studies" due to its ability to synthesise the basic paradigms and provide a wide range of examples. To carry out the analysis of the NATO peace discourse, it was decided to recreate the classifications from the table in a data analysis software: Atlas. ti. With the aim of examining the content with much consistency and rigor in the analytical procedure. In this way each example of the different areas of peace and violence was translated into a code that later was applied to the quotations of the discourse that matched with its meaning.

In this regard, the sample was chosen from the NATO Library (North Atlantic Treaty Organization Library), where the selected texts were the Official Texts and the NATO News of the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, limited to a total of 53 documents published during 2015- 2021

Results

The results for the questions concluded that the dimensions with more presence in the peace discourse of NATO during the Resolute Support Mission were: Cultural Violence, Direct Peace, Structural Violence, Structural Peace and Cultural Peace.

According to the results, it was suggested that the dimension with the highest presence was Cultural Violence. A type of violence that referred to the socially accepted expressions that made possible the other two types of violence: direct and structural. Where it was implied that NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on cultural patterns of militarisation, the Western community, patriarchal and patriotic hierarchies, and democracy and human rights.

The second dimension with the greatest presence was Direct Peace. Seen as the expressions of a type of peace that focused on promoting well-being. Where according to the results, it was implied that part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was built from actions that promoted peace, such as mutual aid and cooperation, alternative defence, and the construction of a future of peace.

The third area with the greatest presence was Structural Violence. Expressed as a type of violence that was reproduced in the structure of a society and present when the level of achievement of a community was below the optimal, causing the entire system to have violence. According to the results, it was suggested that part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was built from social structures that promote violence such as cultural imperialism, patriarchy, imperialism and history and future of exploitation.

The fourth area with the greatest presence was Structural Peace. Seen as the expressions of a type of peace that tried to counteract the impact of Structural Violence in the community. Based on the correction of social patterns that have been diverted to produce violence, seeking to provide the society with an optimal standard of living. According to the results, it was suggested that part of NATO's discourse was built from social structures that promoted peace such as: governance, development, parity, equity, cultural coexistence, peace between regions, sustainability, interpersonal peace and intrapersonal peace.

The fifth area with the greatest presence was Direct Violence. Expressed as a type of violence where the level of achievement of a group (or person) was reduced by a clear actor so that they were below the optimum. According to the results, it was suggested that part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was built from actions that promote geographic warfare, survival actions for the most suitable, violence against other groups and the history and future of violence.

Finally, the area with the minimum presence was Cultural Peace. Seen as the expressions of a type of peace that aimed for the conservation of peace through time and tried to build a culture in which the other two types of peace could be legitimized. According to the results it was suggested that part of NATO's RSM peace discourse was based on cultural patterns of peace education, a particularist and pluralist logic, democracy and human rights, humanist and non-speciest and in favor of life.

Consequently, for the question "What dimensions of peace and violence predominated in NATO's discourse?" The results suggested that the discourse was mainly composed by three dimensions: Cultural Violence, Direct Peace and Structural Violence. A discursive construction where Direct Peace exercised mutual aid and cooperation, alternative defence, peace movements and a history and future of peace; Structural Violence echoed patterns of cultural imperialism, patriarchy and a history and future of exploitation; and Cultural Violence recurred to forms of legitimation based on a school of militarization, a western logic, a patriotic and patriarchic approach, influenced forms of democracy and human rights, and a journalism of violence.

According to the second question "Did NATO's RMS discourse succeed in fostering positive peace?" It was suggested that only 11% of the peace discourse aimed to create conditions of peace. This number was the percentage of actions that created peace by peaceful means. In other words, they were peaceful actions, with structures directed towards peace, and a culture of peace. Which indicates that even if there was a strong presence of Direct Peace in the discourse, many of these actions did not aim to contribute to the peace in the region, since they were based on patterns of structural and cultural violence. On the other side, only 15% of the discourse promoted violence through dimensions that belonged entirely to violence. Better said, only 15% of the expressions belonged to violent purposes, under direct, structural, and cultural violence. This indicates that, for the most part NATO's RMS peace discourse did not have many actions of direct violence, but rather, the violence they generated in the area was the product of cultural and structural dimensions of violence. And finally for the gray area of the negative peace, the results suggested that it had a presence of 74%, which implies that 70% of the peace discourse contained a mixture of positive and negative dimensions. Proposing that that this mixture could be one of the reasons for the prolongation of the instability in the area.

To conclude, the results for these questions suggested that there was a leaning towards peace, where most of its areas contributed to instability and violence in the area. Imagined as a building, NATO's peace discourse during the Resolute Support Mission, had a facade based on Direct Peace, with actions focused on mutual aid and cooperation, alternative defence and a commitment to a future of peace. However, its internal pillars were based on a violent structure of cultural imperialism, patriarchy, and imperialist trade. Where its foundations had been built under patterns of cultural violence grounded on a western logic, forms of patriarchy and patriotism, a militarized school of thought, and primacy ideas of democracy and human rights.

Even if the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan was portrayed as a peace operation, one of its minor interests was to create areas that fostered peace by peaceful means. During the six years of deployment of forces, NATO's peace actions had the possibility to generate a peaceful outlook, however, due to its internal structural and cultural violence, the situation in Afghanistan was only capable of fostering situations of instability, as its main aim was not the construction of a structure, or culture of peace. According to the results, the discourse in Afghanistan portrayed a case of biased peace, where the conceptualization of the term was based on equivocated ideas of cultural and structural violence. Its definition had become subjective and did not express or nurture forms of structural and cultural peace. Denoting that the peace discourse did no longer belonged to the real purpose of peace to eradicate violence and foster peace.

This work reflects only a starting point of what could be a new perspective to approach the analysis of peace discourses. Although peace had already been explored from a conceptual way, this work demonstrates the possibility of aligning these concepts towards a preset structure of Peace Research. Therefore, an area of future exploration may be the application of each one of the theories individually to obtain more precise results on how language constructs peace matters.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Table of Official Texts by NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan

Number	Date of release	Official Texts
1.	13 August 2021	<u>NATO Secretary General statement on Afghanistan</u>
2.	14 April 2021	<u>North Atlantic Council Ministerial Statement on Afghanistan</u>
3.	17 May 2020	<u>Statement on Afghanistan by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg</u>
4.	24 April 2020	<u>North Atlantic Council Statement on Afghanistan</u>
5.	5 December 2018	<u>Resolute Support Foreign Ministers Statement on Afghanistan</u>
6.	12 July 2018	<u>Joint Statement on the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan</u>
7.	11-12 July 2018	<u>Brussels Summit Declaration</u> Paragraph 53 - Ensuring security and stability in Afghanistan
8.	27 April 2018	<u>Statement by Foreign Ministers on Afghanistan</u>
9.	29 June 2017	<u>Doorstep statement by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg ahead off meetings of NATO Defence Ministers</u>

10.	7 December 2016	<u>Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council with Resolute Support operational partner nations</u>
11.	5 October 2016	<u>Doorstep statement by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the European Union-hosted Brussels Conference on Afghanistan</u>
12.	9 July 2016	<u>Warsaw Summit Declaration on Afghanistan</u>
13.	2016	<u>The 2015 Activity Report of the NATO Secretary General Pages 46 and 102</u>
14.	1 December 2015	<u>Statement by Foreign Ministers of NATO - Resolute Support Nations and Afghanistan</u>

Appendix 2. Table of News by NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan

Number	Date of release	NATO News
1.	19 August 2021	<u>NATO Military Committee convenes special meeting with Resolute Support Mission Partners</u>
2.	14 April 2021	<u>NATO Allies decide to start withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan</u>
3.	11 December 2020	<u>NATO supports Afghan forces with hundreds of tons of pharmaceutical supplies</u>
4.	9 December 2020	<u>North Atlantic Council statement on the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations</u>
5.	24 November 2020	<u>NATO Secretary General addresses 2020 Afghanistan Conference</u>
6.	19 October 2020	<u>NATO Allies and partners reaffirm their commitment of financial support for sustainable Afghan security forces</u>

7.	17 September 2020	<u>US delivers four aircraft to the Afghan Air Force, as part of NATO continued support to the Afghan security forces</u>
8.	4 June 2020	<u>NATO Secretary General addresses Foreign Ministers of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS</u>
9.	27 May 2020	<u>Coronavirus response: Allies and partners join efforts to increase testing capacity of NATO-led mission in Afghanistan</u>
10.	29 April 2020	<u>Coronavirus response: NATO continues to support Afghan security forces and institutions tackling global pandemic</u>
11.	5 June 2019	<u>NATO Allies and partners reaffirm their firm support to Ambassador Khalilzad's continued efforts towards lasting peace in Afghanistan</u>
12.	9 November 2017	<u>NATO Ministers boost troops for Afghan training mission</u>
13.	1 November 2017	<u>NATO participates in UN Security Council debates on Women, Peace and Security and Children in Armed Conflict</u>
14.	28 September 2017	<u>Secretary General wraps up visit to Afghanistan, stresses NATO's enduring support</u>
15.	22 August 2017	<u>NATO Secretary General welcomes new US South Asia strategy</u>
16.	29 June 2017	<u>NATO builds on its support for Afghanistan</u>
17.	19 May 2017	<u>NATO Allies and partners reaffirm their Warsaw commitments to sustainable security in Afghanistan and to their strong partnership with Afghanistan</u>

18.	2 May 2017	<u>NATO and Partners firmly committed to continue supporting the financial sustainment of the Afghan Security Forces</u>
19.	10 April 2017	<u>Promoting civilian oversight of the Afghan armed forces</u>
20.	7 December 2016	<u>NATO reaffirms commitment to Afghanistan's long term stability</u>
21.	5 October 2016	<u>NATO Secretary General: We will continue to support Afghan security forces</u>
22.	9 July 2016	<u>NATO stands resolute towards a secure and stable Afghanistan</u>
23.	20 May 2016	<u>Foreign Ministers agree to sustain NATO-led mission in Afghanistan beyond 2016</u>
24.	11 May 2016	<u>NATO and Partners determined to continue supporting the financial sustainment of the Afghan Security Forces</u>
25.	6 April 2016	<u>Supporting civilian oversight of the Afghan National Army and Police</u>
26.	16 March 2016	<u>NATO praises dedication of Afghan and Resolute Support Forces</u>
27.	15 March 2016	<u>NATO demonstrates its continued support and commitment to Afghanistan</u>
28.	15 March 2016	<u>Secretary General in Kabul stresses NATO commitment to Afghanistan, encourages further reforms</u>

29.	2 March 2016	<u>NATO Secretary General welcomes change of command in Afghanistan</u>
30.	21 January 2016	<u>NATO Chiefs of Defence discussed the Resolute Support Mission, cooperation with Mediterranean Dialogue partners and NATO's adaptation</u>
31.	1 December 2015	<u>Foreign Ministers agree to sustain NATO's presence in Afghanistan, launch funding for Afghan forces</u>
32.	19 November 2015	<u>Advancing governance goals in Afghanistan's defence and security sector</u>
33.	27-28 October 2015	<u>Building environmental security in Afghanistan</u>
34.	12 September 2015	<u>NATO Chiefs of Defence discuss the way ahead with the Readiness Action Plan and NATO's future posture</u>
35.	10 September 2015	<u>NATO Allies and partners contribute to major infrastructure programme, benefitting Afghanistan stability</u>
36.	26 June 2015	<u>NATO Allies and Partners and the donors' community committed to continue supporting the financial sustainment of the Afghan Security Forces</u>
37.	25 June 2015	<u>NATO Defence Ministers confirm enduring support for Afghanistan</u>
38.	13 May 2015	<u>NATO decides to maintain presence in Afghanistan</u>
39.	15 January 2015	<u>ISAF flag returns to NATO Headquarters from Kabul, as NATO commitment to Afghanistan endures</u>

Glossary

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