

## Case Studies

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### **Persian Gulf War (1991)**

In August 1990, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein ordered his armed forces to invade the neighbouring state of Kuwait. One month later the United Nations authorized the imposition of economic and trade sanctions designed to pressure Iraq to withdraw its troops. It also set a deadline for the Iraqi withdrawal. In January 1991, following the expiration of this deadline, the United Nations subsequently authorized the dispatching of a multi-national military force led by the United States to force Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. This was known as Operation Desert Storm. In the resulting conflict, the allied coalition forces of which Canada was a part sustained very light casualties, while Iraq suffered huge military and civilian deaths. Iraqi troops were driven out of Kuwait, but Saddam Hussein remained in power as the leader of Iraq.

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### **Kosovo (1999)**

In April 1999, the United States and the United Kingdom, operating through NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), initiated a military campaign designed to force Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic to halt his persecution of ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo. This was called Operation Just Cause, and Canada participated in it by sending fighter jets to support the coalition efforts. Previous diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict between the Albanian majority and the ruling Serb minority in this region, under the auspices of the UN and the EU (European Union) had been unsuccessful, as had sanctions imposed against Milosevic's regime. The bombing of Serb military positions in Kosovo, along with targets in other parts of Yugoslavia, including the capital, Belgrade, eventually forced Milosevic to withdraw his forces and agree to a NATO occupation of the province. NATO troops faced a difficult task in disarming rival Albanian and Serb militia groups, and promoting peace and reconciliation between the two factions. In the autumn of 2000, Milosevic was overthrown in a popular uprising against his regime, and in 2001 he was sent to The Hague to stand trial for war crimes, the first sitting head of state anywhere in the world to do so.

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### **The War on Terrorism (2001)**

On September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked airplanes in the United States and crashed them into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon just outside Washington DC. Another plane crashed before it could be directed to its target. Almost three thousand people lost their lives in this tragic event, the worst incident of terrorism in recent history. An extremist group known as al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, was believed to be responsible for this attack. Bin Laden's group was known to have carried out previous terrorist bombings of American embassies and military targets. U.S. President George W. Bush declared a "war on terrorism," which he called Operation Enduring Freedom, and received substantial diplomatic and military support from a number of countries, including Canada. The first country to be singled out for attention was Afghanistan, whose ruling Taliban government had provided bin Laden and his group with sanctuary and a base of operations for their activities. When the Taliban refused Bush's ultimatum to hand bin Laden and his associates over to the United States unconditionally, a bombing campaign involving American and British forces began in October 2001. At the same time, anti-Taliban military units operating inside Afghanistan received considerable military assistance from the United States in their efforts to topple the regime. By early December 2001 it appeared that this phase of the "war on terrorism" had been partly successful. The Taliban had been ousted from power, but the whereabouts of bin Laden and his group remained unknown. It was also unclear whether other countries alleged to have harboured or supported terrorist groups, such as Iraq, were to become future targets of the American-led global "war on terrorism." In January 2002 the Canadian government announced that its first contingent of troops would be dispatched to Afghanistan, as part of the international force stationed there, including taking its turn in command of all of the forces in the region. Its mission was to assist in the delivery of humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan and help the country's new government establish its authority and rebuild its war-ravaged infrastructure. Canadian troops also find themselves in a combat role in the event that remaining Taliban or al-Qaeda units were to present a military threat to the international force or the new government. Canada redeployed troops to Afghanistan in the summer of 2005 to continue the efforts.