

Aylin Matl  

# Drifting Apart of Transatlantic Security

The American Mark on NATO  
under Barack Obama

λογος



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Logos Verlag Berlin



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Germany

Tel.: +49 (0)30 / 42 85 10 90  
Fax: +49 (0)30 / 42 85 10 92  
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## Acknowledgment

This book is the result of more than three years of research to obtain a PhD in the discipline of political science. The idea to explore the transatlantic relationship during the Obama years in depth first came to mind towards the end of 2014 which marked the year of finishing my master's degree in War Studies at King's College London and the beginning of my working as an academic assistant at the chair of international relations and European politics at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg. Much more importantly though, the year 2014 witnessed a massive upheaval in the European security landscape with the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea among other developments. Of such gravity was the upending of the hitherto stable security environment European NATO states found themselves in since the end of the Cold War (and some since the end of the Second World War) that studying the possibly changed relationship between the United States and its European allies became pressing in my mind. After all, I had learned in my undergraduate and graduate studies that the United States had been the sole provider of security for European allies. Thankfully, my then superior at the chair I was working for, Prof. Dr. Johannes Varwick, shared my interest in the topic and agreed to become my PhD supervisor. I am deeply thankful for his willingness to accept and support me as his PhD student and guide me through the process of my research from the beginning. I would also like to very much thank Prof. Dr. Carlo Masala who agreed to act as my second supervisor. While I cannot list and thank all those who helped me with insightful knowledge throughout the lengthy process of completing my dissertation individually, I want to express my particular gratitude to Christian Stock and Jana Windwehr who have both helped me tremendously with their deep academic comprehension but also with their kind personal support at various stages throughout the past years. In addition, I want to thank the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. (KAS) for granting me a PhD stipend, which enabled my studies financially and ideationally. Having had the privilege of being a member of the KAS PhD study group "Security and Development in the 21st century", provided me with academic inspiration time and again. Beyond, some of my PhD colleagues turned into great friends which I greatly appreciate. Most importantly though, I met my partner Jakob through the study group which I am most grateful

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# 1. Introduction

The 2016 US presidential election campaign marked but the latest episode of the burden-sharing debate over the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) funding. Subsequently, the question of the role of the United States as a security provider for its European allies was back on the agenda—this issue is one of the focal points of this dissertation. Donald Trump, who ran for the Republican party, demanded that more of the financial weight be shifted from the US to European allies. This call reflected a growing frustration on the part of Washington about the relatively small contributions made by its partners to their own security.<sup>1</sup> Had former US threats to engage less with its European allies not proven groundless, the revival of its complaints might have had greater impact—not least because the American foreign and security policy establishment found the notion of paying less for its alliances increasingly appealing.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this goes deeper than the notion that “(...) European allies are prosperous and industrialized states that are more than capable of protecting themselves.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the US claim that its European partners do have the economic means to shoulder more of NATO’s defense budget is nothing new—yet, it can be argued that even with a more proportionate financial share, European military capabilities and their attitudes toward the use of force would possibly render the United States the biggest contributor to NATO’s combat capacities still.<sup>4</sup> However important the economic argument is to the bur-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bandow, Doug 2016: Ripped Off. What Donald Trump Gets Right About U.S. Alliances, in: Foreign Affairs 2016,  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2016-09-12/ripped> (13.05.2019)  
and Barrie, Douglas et al.: Defending Europe. Scenario-based capability requirements for NATO’s European members, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Scheffler Corvaja, Alessandro 2016: Beyond Deterrence. NATO’s Agenda after Warsaw, in: Facts & Findings Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (224) 2016,  
[http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_46589-544-2-30.pdf?161005142126](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_46589-544-2-30.pdf?161005142126)  
(08.06.2019) and cf. Overhaus, Marco: Indispensable, again. Die Rolle der USA in der europäischen Sicherheitspolitik. In: Europa und in die neue Weltordnung. Analysen und Positionen zur europäischen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, Band 10/ 2016, pp. 158–168.

<sup>3</sup> Bandow, Ripped Off, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ibid.

den-sharing debate, it is in fact the heightened security tensions in Europe that galvanized American calls for a fairer share of “picking up the bill.”<sup>5</sup> Since the Soviet Union ceased to be an existential threat to Alliance members, the United States had assumed that any renewed peril to European security would trigger its allies to invest more in their own defense.<sup>6</sup> Since the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia as well as Moscow’s involvement in the war in Ukraine in and since 2014,<sup>7</sup> NATO members, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, are deeply concerned by Putin’s display of military power. Thus, it is not surprising that Grzegorz Schetyna, then Foreign Minister of Poland, urged NATO to permanently station two heavy brigades in his country.<sup>8</sup> While the Polish demand was dismissed at NATO’s Warsaw Summit in July 2016, the Alliance’s decision to deploy four battalions on a rotational basis to the Baltic Republics and Poland constituted a direct response to the Alliance’s Eastern member’s security concerns about Russia.<sup>9</sup> Although Russia’s renewed display of military assertiveness concerns the Alliance as a whole, it has, first and foremost, been the United States that has guaranteed the security of its European allies in the past. Today, it seems just as salient as ever in the history of the Alliance that NATO member states depend largely on the capabilities and

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<sup>5</sup> Zeneli, Valbona 2017: Why NATO’s European Members Can No Longer Expect America to Pick Up the Bill, in: The National Interest 2017, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-natos-european-members-can-no-longer-expect-america-pick-23351> (08.06.2019).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Scheffler, Beyond Deterrence, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bershidsky, Leonid 2019: Five Years Later, Putin Is Paying for Crimea, in: Bloomberg 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-03-16/russia-s-annexation-of-crimea-5-years-ago-has-cost-putin-dearly> (08.06.2019).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Mix, Derek E. 2016: Poland and Its Relations with the United States, in: Congressional Research Service 2016, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R44212.pdf> (08.06.2019).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: NATO “Enhanced Forward Presence” im Baltikum und Polen 2017, in: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2017, <https://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/243279/nato-einsatz> (08.06.2019).

security guarantees provided by the United States—both nuclear and conventional.<sup>10</sup> Although some states have increased their defense budgets<sup>11</sup> and contributed greatly to the implementation of the Readiness Action Plan in response to Russia challenging the post-war European order, from the viewpoint of Washington these steps are only a starting point. Hence, the impression that may be given by this situation is that Europeans are reacting neither to a changed and more challenging security environment nor to US pressure. The latter aspect is especially interesting given that the United States has been regarded as the *primus inter pares* of NATO since the organization's founding.<sup>12</sup> This is to say that the US NATO policies have had a significant influence on the direction of the Alliance and thereby the respective policies of its European partners. Numerous examples underline how Washington has taken a lead in the strategic course of NATO in the past.<sup>13</sup> The era of the Cold War was especially fraught with official NATO policies that were decisively influenced by the United States. According to Ellen Hallams, NATO has been characterized by “a culture within the alliance of US dominance and European dependency on US leadership and capabilities.”<sup>14</sup> Washington’s influence did not come to an end when the Cold War did, however.

Expanding the Alliance to include former Warsaw Pact states, beginning in 1999 with the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland would not have been possible without a push by the United States. Using NATO as a means of crisis management (“going out of area”) was also heavily advocated by the Clinton administration.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Harress, Christopher 2014: Dwindling US Troop Numbers in Europe Leaves NATO in A Quandary, in International Business Times 2014, <https://www.ibtimes.com/dwindling-us-troop-numbers-europe-leaves-nato-quandary-1623536> (08.06.2019).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Peel, Michael/Williams, Aime 2019: European NATO countries continue to trail on military spending, in: Financial Times 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/a2919462-4680-11e9-b168-96a37d002cd3> (08.06.2019).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Kreft, Heinrich 2013: Deutschland, Europa und der Aufstieg der neuen Gestaltungsmächte, in: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2013, <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/173793/deutschland-europa-und-die-neuen-gestaltungsmaechte?p=all> (08.06.2019).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Petersson, Magnus: The US NATO debate. From Libya to Ukraine. New York 2015, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Hallams, Ellen: Between Hope and Realism. The United States, NATO and a Transatlantic Bargain for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In: Hallams, Ellen/Ratti, Luca/Zyla, Benjamin (ed.): NATO beyond 9/11. The Transformation of the Atlantic Alliance. London 2013, pp. 217–223, 224.

Taking these examples of US influence over NATO's agenda into account, it becomes apparent that Washington does have a considerable say in which direction the Alliance is heading. Against the backdrop of the political and consequently material investments in NATO in Europe, it is not surprising that Washington tacitly expects a greater say.

However dominant the US's expectations of being the leading influence on NATO's strategic course, and consequently its partners' Alliance policies, may be, Washington has also been demanding that Europeans contribute to shouldering NATO's burden more proportionally. At the core of this ambivalent attitude lies a "double contradiction" that dates back at least to the early 1990s and represents a distortion of the transatlantic bargain, assuming this agreement originally meant that the United States would guarantee its European allies' security in exchange for a hegemonic status in the Alliance. On the one hand, the Americans urge the Europeans to provide more capabilities and money to maintain NATO without granting them more leadership. European allies on the other hand have been demanding a greater say in the Alliance's strategic outlook without bearing the necessary burden to back up their political leadership ambitions.<sup>15</sup> The mutually reinforced contradiction delineated above was reinforced after the end of the Cold War. Differences between the United States and its European counterparts existed during the bloc confrontation as well. However, they were not nearly as pronounced as they started to become after the fall of the Berlin Wall since the task of deterring and defending against a common opponent by and large eclipsed internal dissents. Doubts about America's security guarantees have arisen in recent years in European capitals, especially after the announcement of the US's "pivot to Asia."<sup>16</sup> Reinforcing uncertainties about America's commitment to its partners in Europe, the second Obama administration began withdrawing US troops from Europe as well as closing down bases in Germany and Italy from 2012 onward.<sup>17</sup> With the events taking place in

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Keller, Patrick: Vom Skeptiker zum Förderer? Die US-amerikanische Haltung gegenüber der GASP/ESVP. In: Baluch, Alim/Epping, Volker/Lemke, Christiane (ed.): Europäische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik. Anspruch oder Wirklichkeit? Münster 2010, pp. 207–241, 207.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Clinton, Hillary 2011: America's Pacific Century, in: Foreign Policy 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Coffey, Luke 2013: Withdrawing U.S. Forces from Europe Weakens America, in: The Heritage Foundation 2013,

2014 due to Russia's actions in Ukraine and Crimea, the strategic outlook of NATO had already begun to change. The issue of reassurance and increasingly of deterrence once again ranked high on the Alliance's agenda. Acknowledging the changed security environment, the heads of state of NATO agreed on the Readiness Action Plan at the Alliance's summit in Wales in September 2014.<sup>18</sup> While European allies' contributions came more into play at the 2016 Warsaw summit, the provisions of the United States still serve as the financial backbone to counter a seemingly antagonistic Russia. The Pentagon's announcement in 2016 of its intentions to quadruple its defense budget earmarked for Europe's security further bolsters Washington's commitment to NATO and is thereby expected to strengthen the Alliance's overall defense posture.<sup>19</sup> Apart from the value Europe presents to the United States regarding its (global) crisis management ambitions, the Obama administration had underlined that the United States would not renege on its North Atlantic Treaty obligations.<sup>20</sup> Maintaining stability in Europe, which allows for the allocation of resources to other, more unstable regions, would be much more difficult for the United States were it not for the support of its NATO allies in assuming responsibilities to secure allied territory as well as contributing to crisis management operations.

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<https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/withdrawing-us-forces-europe-weakens-america> (08.06.2019) and cf. Neuman, Scott 2015: Pentagon's Money-Saver: U.S. Troops To Leave 15 European Sites, in: National Public Radio 2015, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/01/08/375916192/pentagons-money-saver-u-s-troops-to-leave-15-european-sites> (08.06.2019).

<sup>18</sup> N.B.: For an analysis of the RAP and its possible impact on NATO see, for example, Matlé, Aylin/Scheffler Corvaja, Alessandro: From Wales to Warsaw. A New Normal for NATO? NATO's new normal, in: Facts & Findings Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (187) 2015; Scheffler, Beyond Deterrence, 2016 and cf. Frum, David 2014: Obama Just Made the Ultimate Commitment to Eastern Europe. No U.S. President since Reagan has used such forceful language against Russia, in: The Atlantic 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/09/obama-commitment-eastern-europe-russia-nato/379581/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. BBC 2016: US 'to quadruple defence budget for Europe', in: BBC News 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35476180> (08.06.2019).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Wilson, Scott 2014: Biden in Europe to 'reassure our allies' over Russia's moves in Ukraine, in: The Washington Post 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/biden-in-europe-to-reassure-our-allies-over-russias-moves-in-ukraine/2014/03/18/ff05b5be-ae84-11e3-9627-c65021d6d572\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.cab4709bfed2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/biden-in-europe-to-reassure-our-allies-over-russias-moves-in-ukraine/2014/03/18/ff05b5be-ae84-11e3-9627-c65021d6d572_story.html?utm_term=.cab4709bfed2) (08.06.2019).

However, announcements by the Obama administration not to expect that a refocus on collective defense efforts in Europe would come “(...) at the expense of other defense priorities, such as (...) [the US] commitment to the Asia Pacific rebalance”<sup>21</sup> indicate the relative importance of NATO Europe. For that reason, it is fitting that the US government under Obama has been expecting its European allies to step up their security efforts so as to allow Washington to shift its geostrategic attention to other areas of the world.<sup>22</sup> Jolyon Howorth, Professor of European Politics at Yale, astutely summarized the burden-sharing issue as follows: “NATO is like a bicycle that has only ever been ridden by the United States, with the Europeans bundled behind in the baby seat. Now the United States is urging the Europeans to learn to ride the bicycle themselves (...) The Europeans need, sooner or later, to master the adult bike.”<sup>23</sup> The question remains whether or not the US’s requests to work toward a fairer burden-sharing bargain vis-à-vis its European allies resonates with the latter. The introductory remarks on Europe’s relatively small level of defense spending and its overreliance on America’s security pledges could suggest negating this question. It is reasonable to assume that the United States still heavily influences NATO’s agenda. In addition, Washington traditionally has had a decisive say in how to manage the dealings of the Alliance. Consequently, one could deduce that NATO’s *primus inter pares* is able to impact the policies of its allies. Seeing as the United States’ calls on its allies to shoulder more of the transatlantic burden are anything but new, one must evaluate what circumstances would prompt European partners to heed Washington’s demands. Does an increasingly instable and hostile security environment in Europe’s proximity influence Europe’s strategic calculations? Does the level of influence on how much or little engaged Washington is in NATO Europe determine its allies’ policies, or is the level of commitment irrelevant for the Europeans’ (re-) actions to the US course? In addition, do

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<sup>21</sup> The White House 2014: FACT SHEET: European Reassurance Initiative and Other U.S. Efforts in Support of NATO Allies and Partners, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/03/fact-sheet-european-reassurance-initiative-and-other-us-efforts-support-> (08.06.2019).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Hänsel, Lars/Ott, Nikolas: USA. Der europäische Partner in der Krise. In: Auslandsinformationen der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, November/Dezember 2015, pp. 113–132, 127.

<sup>23</sup> Howorth, Jolyon 2014: NATO, Bicycles, and Training Wheels, in: Foreign Policy 2014, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/06/19/nato-bicycles-and-training-wheels/> (08.06.2019).

European NATO members perceive a lack of leadership on part of the United States? And if they do, does that perception have an impact on their NATO policies?

It should be underpinned that the goal of this study is not to examine whether or not the United States did in fact retreat from NATO Europe during the Obama years. While America's NATO policy certainly has differed in nuances since the early 1990s in comparison to today, the overall trend vis-à-vis Europe has been a matter of its declining importance in US strategic thinking.<sup>24</sup> Even in light of the Ukraine crisis, "the long-term trend in the debate is that the United States is neither capable nor interested in taking care of Europe's security problems more permanently as it did during the Cold War."<sup>25</sup> This assessment demonstrates that dynamics with regard to the US posture in Europe have already been set in motion in Washington; dynamics that might be reversed or reinforced in the coming years but are still developing either way. Given the fluctuation of the matter on the part of the United States due to a number of domestic and international determinates, it is more germane to direct one's attention to European allies' viewpoints in order to attain a better understanding of the future course of NATO.

## **1.1. Structure and procedure**

The remaining sections of this chapter provide an overview of the theoretical framework, research fields as well as the methodology used in this study. In addition, the current state of research will be delineated. Chapter 2 of this dissertation is a historical derivation of the topic at hand. As such, the issues of burden-sharing as well as the transatlantic bargain are traced back to their origins, the inception of the North Atlantic Alliance in 1949. Following that, an overview of historical explanations of US engagement vis-à-vis (NATO) Europe from the founding of America until the end of the Cold War is provided. Chapter 3 outlines the changes in American NATO policy following 1989. Chapter 4 is dedicated to US policy toward NATO Europe under President Obama as his time in office serves as the evaluation period of this study; Chapter 4 serves to establish the independent variable of this study (US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe). To obtain a better understanding of American

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<sup>24</sup> Cf., for example, Petersson, The US NATO debate.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

actions toward its allies in Europe from 2011 to 2016, four topics and events will be scrutinized in depth: NATO's Libya campaign in 2011; the announcement to pivot to Asia as well as the adjustment of US force posture in Europe; NATO's crisis management toward Ukraine since 2014; reassurance measures taken by NATO since 2014. Following the establishment of the independent variable of this study, the theoretical framework this dissertation operates in is laid out in detail in Chapter 5: the two guiding theoretical elements are Glenn H. Snyder's alliance security dilemma and neoclassical realism. Based on the theoretical exposition, the methodology will then be introduced in Chapter 6 in greater detail, including the justification for the selection of case study countries whose NATO and defense policies represent the dependent variable of this study: Germany, Poland, and Turkey. Chapter 7 outlines the impact of the empirical findings on the theoretical framework as well as the research question and provides a summary and comparison of the three country case studies and ends with a comparative conclusion.

### **1.1.1. Theoretical framework**

The broader topic of this thesis—*intra-alliance management*—has so far been best explored by Glenn Snyder in his “Alliance Politics” (1997) and the theoretical framework he sketches therein. To be more precise, it is Snyder’s model of an alliance security dilemma which allows for an examination of the management of alliances once they have been forged. Since Snyder’s work was first published more than 20 years ago, the assumptions and logic of his theory must be put to the test, especially given that there are no more current or enhanced versions of his findings. Snyder’s alliance security dilemma has rarely been applied to NATO thus far though.<sup>26</sup> That is not to say that other alliances, pre-dating the creation of NATO, have not served as empirical case studies in order to highlight the utility of the model. An alliance comprising 29<sup>27</sup> democratic states differs starkly from two or three countries forming a temporary alliance, however. Thus, it is of importance for the validity of the model to apply its logic to NATO to test if Snyder’s assumptions

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<sup>26</sup> Cf., for example, Reichinger, Martin: *Sharing the burden – sharing the lead? Euro-atlantische Arbeitsteilung im Zeichen des allianzinternen Sicherheitsdilemmas*. Baden-Baden 2010.

<sup>27</sup> N.B.: At the time of writing, NATO consisted of 29 member states.

only fit alliances of the nature of those prior to the transatlantic alliance. The findings of this work could either point into the direction of this model only applying to a certain type of alliance, or, on the other hand, it could also come to the conclusion that NATO is too unique an alliance to be put into a theoretical framework. Regardless of the findings of this dissertation, there is no other model with a better explanatory value than Snyder's with regard to the management of already existing alliances. The value of his work is that the notion of the alliance security dilemma draws on John Herz's positing of a security dilemma regarding the precarious interplay between nation states in the international system. In so doing, Snyder examines how members of alliances handle the "security-autonomy trade-off"<sup>28</sup> in managing intra-alliance affairs. What constitutes the dilemma, however, pertains to what Michael Mandelbaum has called the fear of abandonment and the fear of entrapment, usually but not always varying conversely.<sup>29</sup>

Attempting to avoid one of the two scenarios can possibly lead to an increase in the likelihood of the other outcome. Using these "twin dangers" as an analytical starting point, Snyder comes up with an alliance game pointing out both the advantages and disadvantages of attempting to avoid abandonment as well as attempting to avoid being dragged into a conflict by an ally. In addition, he lists the determinants of which strategy, of abandonment or entrapment, an ally chooses. By using this model, it is expected to determine whether or not European allies resort to the strategies delineated by Snyder, that is, behave cooperatively or uncooperatively toward the United States. By so doing, one can deduce how the case study countries react to the US engagement in NATO Europe, if they show a reaction at all. It is of special interest to define whether changes in the Europeans' intra-alliance management will be detectable in response to possible fluctuations on the part the United States' commitment to NATO Europe. Building on that is the question of whether the respective European case study countries perceive an American retrenchment from their commitment to Europe. Taking the introductory elaborations into account, it would not be unfounded to assume that the perception of a US withdrawal can be detected. If this assumption should be validated, the consequences for Snyder's model are conceivable. Pursuing a cooperative strategy on the Europeans' part, that is, strong contributions to the Alliance, could result in the United States reducing its commitment

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<sup>28</sup> Snyder, Glenn H.: *Alliance Politics*. Ithaca 1997, pp. 181, 306.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

given that such a behavior is a long-standing request of US administrations. Consequently, Snyder's model would be turned upside down. Cooperative behavior would not increase the risk of entrapment but abonnement. If the European case study countries turn out to be pursuing a cooperative strategy in line with Snyder's model, this could prove to be counterproductive. Thus, the perception of a lessened commitment on the part of the United States—notwithstanding its correspondence to actual developments—could entail uncooperative behavior in order to increase Washington's engagement. Therefore, testing Snyder's alliance security dilemma model is a sub-goal of this study.

Given that the matter of perception is emphasized prominently in this study, it must be covered by theoretical expositions. Snyder mentions that a state's perception does influence its intra-alliance bargaining. In addition, he states that the “twin fears” of entrapment and abandonment as well as the consequential actions depend on “statesmen's perceptions.”<sup>30</sup> His case studies of intra-alliance management (1880–1914) illustrate that very point.<sup>31</sup> Although Snyder's theoretical expositions incorporate the aspect of a state's perception into its bargaining power vis-à-vis its allies, these deliberations are rudimentary.<sup>32</sup> After all, his thoughts derive from neorealism, which treats states as “black boxes” whose domestic politics are irrelevant to decision-making processes.<sup>33</sup> Thus, another theoretical approach will be added to appreciate the influence of statesmen's perceptions: neoclassical realism as advocated by Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro in their work “Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics.”

According to their expositions, perceptions and actions can differ quite starkly at times. In other words, there is a difference between what action a state takes and the reasoning behind it. To attain an understanding of the rationale behind an action, consulting one's perception, that is, the question why a certain course was chosen over alternatives, can be insightful. After all, a motive to act is closely linked to perception—consulting the concept of the latter is at least the best way to make

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<sup>30</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 308.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 79–128.

<sup>32</sup> N.B.: Snyder peeks into a nation state's “black box” insomuch as he assumes that ideologically like-minded states gain satisfaction from allying with one another, cf. *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Waltz, Kenneth N.: *Theory of International Politics*. Long Grove 1979.

sense of the former.<sup>34</sup> It is thus of value to understand decision-making processes from the viewpoint of alliance theories to better comprehend how bargaining within an alliance functions. Glenn Snyder has doubtlessly contributed to this strand of research as delineated above. Adding elements of neoclassical realist theory to his alliance security dilemma model is a way to not only understand which actions are taken but also why. Entering the “black box” of states could be a way forward to attain a better understanding of rationales that drive decision-makers. Applying that understanding to an alliance framework allows bargaining dynamics between allies to be better grasped. Given that little research has been conducted on intra-alliance management in recent years, it is all the more important to continue investigating the interactions of alliances.<sup>35</sup> This verdict applies to NATO as well: “Too little attention has been paid to the West-West conflicts that arguably have been more frequent and often more bitter if not more dangerous than the struggle with the Soviet Union.”<sup>36</sup> Much attention has instead been dedicated to studying NATO in the context of the East–West conflict as well as the alliance’s crisis management operations. By testing Snyder’s alliance security dilemma model, a tool to explore how states behave in an alliance framework, in combination with examining the motives behind an action by resorting to elements of neoclassical realism—especially the aspect of a state’s perception—this thesis aims to contribute to the under-studied topic of intra-alliance management. The case studies encompass the NATO member states of Germany, Poland, and Turkey. The decision to use the former two countries as case studies can be ascribed to the circumstance that these member states have been referred to as “particularly keen to shelter behind US protection.”<sup>37</sup> Given that one of the focal points of this project concentrates on the role of the United States as a security provider for its European allies, it is consequential to use these countries as test cases which have counted predominantly on American support in the past. To avoid yielding a somewhat biased result by focusing on one group of NATO members only, Germany is included as well. Germany is neither

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<sup>34</sup> Cf., for example, Lobell, Steven E./Ripsman, Norrin M./Taliaferro Jeffrey W.: *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*. New York 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence Kaplan: *NATO Divided, NATO United. The Evolution of an Alliance*. Westport 2004, p. ix.

<sup>37</sup> Yost, David S.: Assurance and US extended deterrence in NATO. In: *International Affairs*, Vol. 85/ 2009, pp. 755–780, 778.

remarkably known for its insistence on American security guarantees—especially not in recent years<sup>38</sup>—nor is Berlin a test case of a pronounced critic of the US (military) role in NATO Europe. All three case study countries have in common that the factors determining an ally’s bargaining power within an alliance, namely dependence, interest, and commitment, according to Snyder, apply to Germany, Poland, as well as Turkey to varying degrees. One could argue that the category of dependence is particularly pronounced in these three cases – even in the case of Germany. While Berlin might have grown weary of American security guarantees in recent years, relying on them when push comes to shove is an entirely different matter. In addition, it can be argued that all three countries are of interest to the United States in a particular important manner and should thus be used as test cases to investigate America’s commitment to NATO Europe as will be discussed throughout this dissertation. All three countries occupy a crucial geostrategic position in US defense planning in and toward Europe as well as with regard to American global crisis management responsibilities to this day.

### **1.1.2. Research goal**

Deriving from the posed questions and thoughts in the introduction as well as the introductory theoretical elaborations, this dissertation seeks to answer the following question:

#### **How did US actions vis-à-vis NATO Europe impact NATO and defense policies of European allies?**

Consequently, this dissertation addresses the question of whether and if so, how, the case study countries react to US actions affecting NATO and the European countries’ defense policies more generally. Furthermore, drawing on the insights derived from neoclassical realism, the selected European allies’ perceptions of whether the United States are disengaging will be examined to establish a plausible connection between US actions in NATO Europe and the impact this behavior has on its respective allies. To only look at actions pursued following US decisions would fall short of portraying the full picture, and so considering why a certain action has been or

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Yost, Assurance and US extended deterrence in NATO, p. 774 et seqq.

has not been taken completes the question of how European allies react to US engagement on their continent.<sup>39</sup> As already mentioned, in recent years doubts as to whether American administrations will continue their traditional defense role in NATO have emerged.<sup>40</sup> The most significant developments in this regard pertain to the years 2011 and 2012. Therefore, this study begins from the announcement of the withdrawal of American troops from European soil in 2011/12<sup>41</sup> which was concurrent with the “pivot to Asia.” The evaluation period ends in 2016. This way one and a half administrations of one presidency can be taken into consideration. Looking beyond the Obama administration would likely distort the results since a new president will most likely usher in new policies. Thus, for the purpose of administrative coherence only one presidency will be used as a point of reference. This is not to suggest that this study does not find variances in the US engagement in NATO Europe within the outlined timeframe. Even less does the examination of one American presidency exclude differences in the results on the part of the case studies. Differences among the cases study’s reactions are indeed expected. A further elaboration on the selection of the case study countries as well as anticipated variances therein will follow in the introductory remarks on the methodology used in this thesis in Section 6.1. This study does not intend to reveal decision-making processes within the administrations of the three case study countries, as such an undertaking would require a thorough process-tracing analysis which is not judged to be suitable for the subject of this work, as will be explained in the following sections. In addition, an in-depth analysis of decision-making processes would also demand a shift in the researcher’s focus to domestic factors as well which is not the declared research goal of this dissertation.

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Freedman, Lawrence: The Primacy of Alliance. Deterrence and European Security, in: Proliferation Papers institut français relations internationals (46) 2013, <https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/pp46freedman.pdf> (08.06.2019).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Coffey, Luke 2014: Russian Aggression Prevention Act of 2014. Time for American Commitment to Transatlantic Security, in: The Heritage Foundation 2014, <https://www.heritage.org/europe/report/russian-aggression-prevention-act-2014-time-american-commitment-transatlantic> (08.06.2019).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Coffey, Withdrawing U.S. Forces from Europe Weakens America, 2013.

### 1.1.3. Methodology

For the purpose of this examination, case studies of three European NATO member states are sketched. Three methods, a triangulation, are applied to explore the different cases. The decisive advantage of applying different methods to the same object of study lies in the increased validity if all methods arrive at the same or at least similar conclusions. Taken together, this approach could be described as a condensed version of process-tracing which “attempts to identify intervening causal processes—the causal chain and the causal mechanism—between independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable.”<sup>42</sup> The reason a traditional process-tracing is not considered appropriate for this study pertains to the attempt to establish causal links between the independent and dependent variables. The factors that will not be considered in the context of this study but may still influence either variable are too numerous to be accounted for. Instead of attempting to institute causality, *plausible links* between the independent and dependent variable are explored.

Furthermore, in light of the number of case studies, a thorough process-tracing exceeds the confines of this research project. However, a variety of cases seem to be apposite to take account of the differences in opinions and perceptions within NATO. For that reason, the method of content analysis (examining official documents) (*Method 1*) and the analysis of relevant indicators (*Method 2*) are applied. Both represent valid and sound methods and serve the purpose of interpreting the gathered data. In addition, expert interviews (*Method 3*) with a variety of different professionals from the three case study countries were conducted. Combining all three methods is a suitable way to scrutinize the impact that *US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe* (independent variable) has had on the *NATO and defense policies of European allies* (dependent variable). The impact of the independent variables is measured by looking at actions, perceptions, and the interplay of these two factors of the case study countries. To operationalize the independent variable (US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe), observable indicators such as strategy papers are adduced to find answers to the research question and hypotheses. All indicators are

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<sup>42</sup> Blatter, Joachim K./Jannig, Frank/Wagemann, Claudius: Qualitative Politikanalyse. Eine Einführung in die Forschungsansätze und Methoden. Wiesbaden 2007, p. 158.

derived from and are concurrent with Snyder's theoretical assumptions. He lists dependence, interest, and commitment as the three factors determinative of an ally's bargaining power within an alliance.<sup>43</sup> Since the categories of dependence and interest can be subsumed under engagement/commitment, it is only necessary to use the latter as a measuring rod to describe the independent variable. A similar logic applies to the indicators of the dependent variable. To operationalize the dependent variable (NATO policies of European allies), several observable indicators were adduced by applying all three methods.

#### **1.1.4. State of research**

This dissertation is part of the wider field of research on transatlantic security and defense relations at large. As a vast body of literature has been written on this subject since the dawn of the Cold War, it is neither conducive nor expedient to reiterate the manifold research that has been conducted on the topic. Thus, the following section provides an overview of the research that has been conducted on the various topics that are part of this research in a narrow sense to show which literature this dissertation draws on as well as to point out which "gaps" this study aims to fill. To be sure, the literature that will be outlined below is but a selection of research that is available on the various subtopics this dissertation is built on. Prior to briefly sketching the most significant relevant works relating to this dissertation's topic, that is, US NATO strategy/policy, the transatlantic bargain and burden-sharing, the case study countries' NATO and defense policies, a working definition of one of the key concepts this research operates with will be outlined to help avoid misconceptions. As the research question asks how US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe has *impacted* allied and defense policies of European member states, the concept of impact in international relations must be laid out. To be clear from the outset, this study netiher aims to detect nor evaluate the *influence* of the United States over its allies, as doing so would require an in-depth process-tracing analysis which, as explained above, does not lend itself for the purpose of this study. In addition, this study does not seek to detect influence, as aiming to do so would assume an intentional action on part of the United States which is not the aim of this study.

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 166–172.

American behavior is the independent variable in this research design, while European allies' reactions are the subject of this work as they constitute the dependent variables. As such, whether and what the United States did intentionally cannot be part of this study.

Instead, the effect these actions have had on European allies will be measured and interpreted through the application of three different methods. Foreign policy, which security and defense are parts of, is defined as the "topical formation and organizational governance of a nation state vis-à-vis its environment. It is based on those societal values and interests which have prevailed domestically over time though these processes can be subject to international actors and developments."<sup>44</sup> Consequently, nation states seek to influence their international environment in a way that serves their political, economic, and societal developments best and most effectively. Security and defense policy as part of the 'system' of foreign policy can be defined as the "aggregate of political aims, strategies and instruments aimed at the prevention of war while sustaining the capacity to self-determination at the same time."<sup>45</sup> Using military might as part of a state's security policy is referred to as defense policy.<sup>46</sup> The subsystems of foreign, security, and defense policies can have an effect on the international order and the position of an acting state in it. This is defined as "*impact* whereby the implications for the structure of the international system (...) observed and analyzed can be described (...)."<sup>47</sup> Drawing on this definition, the impact of American actions vis-à-vis NATO Europe is the subject of this research. The US (NATO) strategy toward Europe after World War II is inextricably linked with the inception of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949 as the country determined the security of the continent to be vital for America's security interests after having been dragged into two devastating wars in the span of less

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<sup>44</sup> Beckmann, Rasmus/Jäger, Thomas: Die internationalen Rahmenbedingungen deutscher Außenpolitik. In: Höse, Alexander/Jäger, Thomas/Oppermann, Kai (ed.): Deutsche Außenpolitik. Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen. Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 13–39, 16–17.

<sup>45</sup> Schubert, Klaus von: Sicherheitspolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Dokumentation 1945–1977, Band 1. 2. Auflage, Köln 1980, p. 16.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Meiers, Franz-Josef: Zu neuen Ufern? Die deutsche Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik in einer Welt des Wandels 1990–2000. Paderborn 2006, pp. 20–21.

<sup>47</sup> Beckmann/Jäger, Die internationalen Rahmenbedingungen deutscher Außenpolitik, pp. 18–19.

than 20 years.<sup>48</sup> In *American pendulum: Recurring debates in U.S. grand strategy*, Christopher Hemmer makes the argument that the United States has had a stake in European affairs long before the 20th century, thereby debunking the notion that it is an American tradition to pursue an isolationist foreign policy toward Europe. Rather, he lays out that the United States has been oscillating between multilateralism and unilateralist actions toward Europe. Yet, the author admits that isolationist tendencies have at least shaped American policy toward Europe at times (during the interwar-period for example). Overall though, he conclusively demonstrates that a more suitable way to reflect American policies toward Europe is to distinguish between multilateral and unilateral phases.<sup>49</sup> In *Understanding NATO in the 21st century: Alliance strategies, security and global governance*, one of the contributing authors to this collected volume, Matthew Rhodes, delineates US perspectives on NATO from its foundation at the onset of the Cold War until the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century. He concludes that due to changing priorities, NATO risks becoming marginalized in US security policy as “demand [for security by the Europeans] does not guarantee supply [of security delivered by the Americans].”<sup>50</sup> Magnus Petersson’s monograph *The US NATO debate: From Libya to Ukraine* explores how American commitment vis-à-vis NATO Europe has developed in the last couple of years by examining the US stance on a number of alliance policies and actions ranging from the air campaign in Libya to reassuring European allies after the Ukraine crisis in 2014. His main argument is that “despite the Ukraine crisis, the long-term trend in the debate is [that] the United States is neither

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<sup>48</sup> Cf., for example, Cleveland, Harlan: *NATO. The Transatlantic Bargain*. New York 1970; Holbrooke, Richard 1995: *America. A European Power*. In: *Foreign Affairs*, 1995, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/1995-03-01/america-european-power> (08.06.2019); Ireland, Timothy P.: *Creating the entangling Alliance. The origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. Westport 1981; Joffe, Josef: *Europe’s American Pacifier*. In: *Foreign Policy* 1984; Kaplan, Lawrence S.: *NATO 1948. The birth of the Transatlantic Alliance*. Plymouth 2007; Reid, Escott: *Time of fear and hope. The making of the North Atlantic Treaty, 1947–49*. Toronto 1977; Treverton, Gregory F.: *Making the alliance work. The United States and Western Europe*. Basingstoke 1985.

<sup>49</sup> Hemmer, Christopher: *American Pendulum. Recurring Debates in U.S. Grand Strategy*. Ithaca 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Rhodes, Matthew: *U.S. perspectives on NATO*. In: Herd, Graeme P./Kriendler, John (ed.): *Understanding NATO in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Alliance strategies, security and global governance*. Abingdon 2013, pp. 33–49, 46.

capable nor interested in taking care of Europe's security problems more permanently as it did during the Cold War. The main reason for that is the decreased military ability and political will to engage in regions that are not of first strategic priority for the United States (...)."<sup>51</sup> While this conclusion is not new, the author's systematical analysis is compelling as he compares debates in Congress to those within the Obama administration and within think tanks. The volume edited by Justin V. Anderson, Jeffrey A. Larsen, and Polly M. Holdorf, *Extended deterrence and allied assurance: Key concepts and current challenges for U.S. policy*, looks at extended deterrence (ED) as an integral part of American US defense policy, including NATO. The volume opens with a historical contextualization of ED which has its conceptual and policy roots in the early days of the Cold War; in a second step, lines of continuity and changes are delineated to better understand that the US "guarantees currently play a central role in maintaining regional stability and strongly influence the national security strategies of both allies and adversaries. From the Asia-Pacific to Europe, however, these guarantees (...) are showing signs of strain."<sup>52</sup> Against this backdrop, the study highlights several regions that are of vital strategic interest to the United States, including (NATO) Europe.

David S. Yost provides a useful overview of the topic as well as a projection on future developments in this field in *US extended deterrence in NATO and North-East Asia* where the author argues that US nuclear weapons on allied territory have fulfilled three functions in the past. First and foremost, NATO's nuclear deterrent vis-à-vis its competitors manifested itself in the presence of US nuclear weapons in Europe. By offering its European allies nuclear guarantees, Washington attempted to prevent a war waged on its NATO partners.<sup>53</sup> Signaling to European allies, the sincerity of its commitment is the second function US nonconventional weapons together with their delivery systems provided by the host nation and the Americans fulfill.<sup>54</sup> Finally, extended deterrence speaks to a domestic audience. Although the

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<sup>51</sup> Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, Justin V./Larsen, Jeffrey A./Holdorf, Polly M.: Extended Deterrence and Allied Assurance. Key Concepts and Current Challenges for U.S. Policy. In: US Air Force Institute for National Security Studies USAF Academy, Issue 69/ 2013, p. xi.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Yost, Assurance and US extended deterrence in NATO, p. 756.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Creveld, Martin van: The future of War. In: Patman, Robert G. (ed.): Security in a Post-Cold War World. Basingstoke 1999, pp. 22–36, 31.

bulk of the task is undertaken by the United States, the allies do participate financially and politically in NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements.<sup>55</sup> Tying closely in with the question of nuclear sharing in NATO, and as such a part of the balance of power between the United States and its European allies, it is important to understand American attitudes toward European ambitions to grow more independent from the United States in matters of their security and defense.

The reason why burden-sharing and the concept of the transatlantic bargain can almost be used interchangeably as terms lies in the fact that the former was produced by the latter: "The burden-sharing issue was built into the transatlantic bargain, rising in many ways from the foundation provided by contrasting US and European geographic realities, historical experiences, and military capabilities"<sup>56</sup> as Stanley R. Sloan points out in *Permanent alliance: NATO and the transatlantic bargain from Truman to Obama*.<sup>57</sup> He goes on to demonstrate that the concept, later more adequately characterized as an issue, of burden-sharing is as old as the Alliance itself although the original idea was that the United States, Canada, and their 10 European allies were equal partners contributing "(...) materials and men on a fair and equitable basis."<sup>58</sup> That description contradicts how other scholars characterize the transatlantic bargain which the inception of NATO gave rise to, among them Graeme P. Herd and John Kriendler. In *Understanding NATO in the 21st century: Alliance strategies, security and global governance*, they argue that the core of the transatlantic bargain came down to the Americans guaranteeing its Western European allies' territorial integrity via its "Article 5 commitment" encoded in the Washington Treaty, NATO's founding document—not least by ways of the US nuclear umbrella that extended to Europe. For that commitment, the Americans expected its allies to support and follow US leadership in creating and upholding a

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Yost, David S.: US Extended Deterrence in NATO and North-East Asia. In: Perspectives on Extended Deterrence Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Vol. 3/ 2010, pp. 16–17.

<sup>56</sup> Stanley R. Sloan: Permanent Alliance. NATO and the transatlantic bargain from Truman to Obama. New York 2010, p. 85.

<sup>57</sup> N.B.: For a more updated version of Sloan's approach toward transatlantic relations, which the transatlantic bargain is a significant part of, cf. Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union and the Transatlantic Bargain. Manchester 2016.

<sup>58</sup> Sloan, Permanent Alliance, p. 86.

liberal internationalist global order.<sup>59</sup> Ellen Hallams characterizes the bargain as a “balancing act between a U.S. commitment to European security and dominance of NATO, and the expectation that Europeans would accelerate efforts to provide for their own defense”<sup>60</sup> in *A transatlantic bargain for the 21st century: The United States, Europe, and the transatlantic alliance*. This definition indicates that the United States is a *primus inter pares* partner, that is, more equal than the rest of the Alliance. According to Malcolm Chalmers, the reasons for the US’s predominant role within NATO can be found in a “(...) wider range of commercial and political advantages”<sup>61</sup>, which will be investigated in greater detail in Chapter 3. At this point, it suffices to say that the United States has had a special, if not, hegemonic role in the Alliance. In *The Atlantic burden-sharing debate: Widening or fragmenting?*, Chalmers exhibits that debates over divisions of labor were “monodimensional, focusing primarily on national contributions to NATO’s defense against the Soviet Union.”<sup>62</sup> After the Cold War had ended though, the allies had to redefine how to address internal burden-sharing debates as the purpose of the Alliance itself had become unclear.<sup>63</sup> More recent studies, including *Towards a “post-American” alliance? NATO burden-sharing after Libya*, suggest that Washington is seeking to re-transform the transatlantic bargain once again. The authors, Ellen Hallams and Benjamin Schreer, describe NATO’s Libyan campaign Operation Unified Protector

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<sup>59</sup> Herd, Graeme P./Kriendler, John: NATO in an age of uncertainty. Structural shifts and transatlantic bargains? In: Herd, Graeme P./Kriendler, John (ed.): Understanding NATO in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Alliance strategies, security and global governance. New York 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Hallams, Ellen: A transatlantic bargain for the 21st century. The United States, Europe, and the Transatlantic Alliance. In: United States Army War College Press 2013, p. ix.

<sup>61</sup> Chalmers, Malcom: The Atlantic burden-sharing debate. Widening or fragmenting? In: International Affairs, Vol. 77/ 2001, pp. 569–585, 573.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 573.

<sup>63</sup> N.B.: Other studies on the changes in the burden-sharing debate of the 1990s include, among others, Hartley, Keith/Sandler, Todd: NATO Burden-Sharing. Past and Future. In: Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 36/ 1999, pp. 665–680. The authors present a variety of different indicators on which to measure burden-sharing by going beyond the most common choice of the share of defense spending of a country’s GDP. They argue that individual allies will opt for the indicator that helps them demonstrate to the rest of an alliance that they are shouldering an “unfair” burden of collective defense efforts.

in 2011 as an “example of a more equal transatlantic burden-sharing arrangement.”<sup>64</sup> Tying in with this argument is the expectation that the United States is not turning their back on Europe altogether as NATO Europe supposedly is of less strategic importance than it used to be.<sup>65</sup> Ergo, the assumption goes, that US demands toward its European allies to fulfill their part of the bargain are going to grow. In *Sharing the burden—Sharing the lead? Euro-atlantische Arbeitsteilung im Zeichen des allianzinternen Sicherheitsdilemmas*, Martin Reichinger explores the military burden-sharing equation in NATO during the Bush Junior years starting with the controversial war in Iraq in 2003. In light of shifting the core of the burden-sharing problem from Europe to the Middle East and Afghanistan, the author analyses the clashing claim of the Bush administration’s to being the lead nation in security policy in NATO and the European’s aspiration to have a greater say in NATO while becoming more autonomous from the United States. He concludes that the clash over Iraq within the Alliance has led to a shift in NATO internal power structures.<sup>66</sup> Research on Germany’s foreign and security policy, which its NATO activities are one significant but not the only part of, can be found in abundance.

For one, histoical overviews of German foreign and security policy, including university textbooks, are a major strand in research.<sup>67</sup> Another addresses Germany’s NATO history and activities in more recent times.<sup>68</sup> Franz-Josef Meiers, for example, falls into the first category as he demonstrates in *Auf zu neuen Ufern. Die*

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<sup>64</sup> Hallams, Ellen/Schreer, Benjamin: Towards a ‘post-American’ alliance? NATO burden-sharing after Libya. In: International Affairs, Vol. 88/ 2012, pp. 313–327, 313.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>66</sup> Reichinger, Sharing the burden – sharing the lead?

<sup>67</sup> Cf., for example, Baumann, Rainer/Hellmann, Gunther/Wagner, Wolfgang: *Deutsche Außenpolitik. Eine Einführung*. 2. Auflage, Wiesbaden 2006; Bierling, Stephan G.: *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Normen, Akteure, Entscheidungen*. 2. Auflage, München 2005; Böckenförde, Stephan/Gareis, Sven Bernhard (ed.): *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik. Herausforderungen, Akteure, Prozesse*. 2. Auflage, Opladen 2014; Gareis, Sven Bernhard, Deutschlands Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik. Eine Einführung, 2. Auflage, Opladen 2006; Schmidt, Sigmar/Hellmann, Gunter /Wolf, Reinhard (ed.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. Wiesbaden 2007.

<sup>68</sup> Cf., for example, Baumann, Rainer: German foreign policy within NATO. In: Rittberger, Volker (ed.): *German foreign policy since unification. Theories and case studies*. Manchester 2001, pp. 141–184; Theiler, Olaf: *Deutschland und die NATO*. In: Böckenförde, Stephan/Gareis, Sven Bernhard (ed.): *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik. Herausforderungen, Akteure, Prozesse*. Opladen

*deutsche Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik in einer Welt des Wandels 1990–2000* that Germany's core goals of foreign policy until the end of the Cold War were only attainable in the context of Euro-Atlantic structures, including NATO. Already in 1995, then Federal President, Roman Herzog, mentioned that Germany could no longer act as a “free rider.”<sup>69</sup> Meiers continues to argue that change in German foreign and security policy ought to translate into assuming more international responsibility within the NATO- and EU frameworks. His study concludes that in the realm of non-military matters, Germany was ready and willing to lead the way alongside France in matters of military force; however, the country shied away and behaved like a “power of self-restraint.” In *Die deutsche NATO-Politik: Vom Ende des Kalten Krieges bis zum Kampf gegen den Terrorismus*, Marco Overhaus explicitly examines German NATO policy from the end of the Cold War until the early days of the war on terror. He emphasizes that despite Germany's “culture of restraint,” the country has been able to present itself as a reliable partner within the Alliance by ways of leaving its mark on political developments in NATO since 1990, especially with regard to enlargement and relations with Russia. Overhaus concludes that German policy-makers should work toward explaining to the public and reducing the contradictions between commitments in NATO and the lack of the partial realization thereof.<sup>70</sup> Benjamin Teutmeyer's *Deutschland und die NATO: Eine politikwissenschaftliche Analyse und Bewertung der deutschen NATO-Politik seit 1990* offers an extensive overview of how German NATO policies developed since 1990 using the prism of different theories of International Relations to account for national changes as well as NATO's transformation since the end of the Cold War more generally. Teutmeyer finds that none of the applied theories alone—realism/neorealism, institutionalism, and idealism—can explain changes in German foreign and security policy or NATO's outlook. In slight contrast to Marco Overhaus' findings, Teutmeyer concludes that Germany's role in shaping NATO's

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2014, pp. 321–370; Varwick, Johannes: Nordatlantische Allianz. In: Schmidt, Sigmar/Hellmann, Gunter /Wolf, Reinhard (ed.): *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 763–778; Varwick, Johannes: NATO in (Un-)Ordnung. Wie transatlantische Sicherheit neu verhandelt wird.

Schwalbach 2017; Keller, Patrick: Germany in NATO. The status quo ally. In: *Survival*, Vol. 54/ 2012, pp. 95–110.

<sup>69</sup> Meiers, Zu neuen Ufern?, pp. 14–17.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Overhaus, Marco: *Die deutsche NATO-Politik. Vom Ende des Kalten Krieges bis zum Kampf gegen den Terrorismus*. Baden-Baden 2009.

transformation was small. In addition, the author concludes that Germany's actions are more in line with a "civil power" (Zivilmacht) as opposed to a "central power in Europe" (Zentralmacht Europa).<sup>71</sup> In *Deutsche Außenpolitik. Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*, an edited volume on Germany's foreign policy in general, Markus Kaim zooms into "Germany's NATO policy." While the author primarily focuses on the tenure of Gerhard Schröder (1998–2005), he does not omit to delineate transformation processes closely linking German security policy and NATO's need to adapt to a changed security environment after the fall of the Berlin wall. In addition, Kaim demonstrates that German NATO policy has stood in a perennially charged relationship with Germany's second foreign and security pillar, the development of the European community/European Union.<sup>72</sup>

Since Poland joined NATO in 1999, 50 years after the foundation of the Alliance, research on the country's NATO activities is not as extensive as with regard to the other case study countries. While Poland's past as a member of the Warsaw Pact does find its way into the introduction of the case study on Poland, the focal point of this dissertation is the country's NATO policy. Studies and monographs, including university textbooks, on this particular topic can be found and represent one major strand in research on Poland's foreign and security policy.<sup>73</sup> The year Poland,

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<sup>71</sup> Teutmeyer, Benjamin: Deutschland und die neue NATO. Eine politikwissenschaftliche Analyse und Bewertung der deutschen NATO-Politik seit 1990. Hamburg 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Kaim, Markus: Die deutsche NATO-Politik. In: Höse, Alexander/Jäger, Thomas/Oppermann, Kai (ed.): Deutsche Außenpolitik. Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen. Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 87–105

<sup>73</sup> Cf., for example, Ash, Timothy Garton: The Twins' New Poland. In: New York Review of Books, 2006; Bienczyk-Missala, Agnieszka: Poland's Foreign and Security Policy. Main Directions. In: Revista UNISCI/UNISCI Journal, No. 40/ 2016, pp. 1–18; Bromke, Adam: Poland's Politics. Idealism vs. Realism. Cambridge 1967; Dunn, David H.: Poland. America's new model ally. In: Defence Studies, Vol. 2/ 2002, pp. 63–86; Kuzniar, Roman: Poland's Foreign Policy after 1989. Warsaw 2009; Lang, Kai-Olaf: Preserving the Alliance, Going European and Knotting Direct Ties. Poland's Euroatlanticism. In: Schmidt, Peter (ed.): A Hybrid Relationship. Transatlantic Security Cooperation beyond NATO. Frankfurt am Main 2008; Lang, Kai-Olaf 2005: Machtwechsel in Warschau, Kurswechsel in der Außenpolitik? In: SWP Aktuell, 2005, [https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/aktuell2005\\_53\\_lng\\_ks.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/aktuell2005_53_lng_ks.pdf) (08.06.2019); Longhurst, Kerry/Zaborowski, Marcin: America's Protégé in the East? The Emergence of Poland as a Regional Leader. In: International Affairs, Vol. 79/ 2003, pp. 1009–1028; Osica, Olaf: In search of a new role.

Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined the Alliance, Andrew A. Michta published *America's new allies: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in NATO*, a collected volume. The chapter focusing on Poland outlines that the country is the most important of the three newcomers in NATO “because of its size and geostrategic location at the heart of central Europe.”<sup>74</sup> The chapter on Poland continues to highlight three factors which will influence the “value [Poland will have] to NATO: Polish reactions to the changed geopolitical security environment after Germany was unified and the Soviet Union imploded; the record and current [as of 1999] priorities of Poland’s Eastern policy; the current status of Poland’s armed forces.”<sup>75</sup> The author, Michta, concludes that “(...) the core of Poland’s value to NATO will ultimately rest in the political arena (...).”<sup>76</sup> Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski’s *The new Atlanticist: Poland’s foreign and security priorities* offers an extensive review of factors driving Polish elites to strive for NATO membership when they had a chance, that is, after the end of the Cold War. According to the authors, the country’s foreign and security policy is characterized by a “high level of consensus and continuity, despite ever-changing party political constellations and a near record-breaking number of governments”<sup>77</sup>—a circumstance that Kerry and Zaborowski attribute to the defining role of history and collective memory in formulating national security policies. The monograph is structured along the lines of three objectives: explaining the significance of history in the context of the evolution of Poland’s foreign, security, and defense policy; delineating the roots and implications of Poland’s approach to Euro-Atlantic security issues; outlining the

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Poland in Euro-Atlantic relations. In: Defence Studies, Vol. 2/ 2002, pp. 21–39; Wolczuk, Katarzyna/Wolczk, Roman: Poland and Ukraine. A Strategic Partnership in a Changing Europe? London 2002; Zaborowski, Marcin: Germany, Poland and Europe. Conflict, Cooperation and Europeanisation. Manchester 2004; Zaborowski, Marcin 2004: From America’s Protégé to Constructive European. In: EU-ISS Occasional Paper, Vol. 56/ 2004, <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUSSIFiles/occ56.pdf> (08.06.2019); Ziemer, Veronika: Zwischen Europa und Amerika. Polens Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik nach 1989. Wiesbaden 2009.

<sup>74</sup> Michta, Andrew M.: Poland. A linchpin of regional security. In: Michta, Andrew M. (ed.): America's New Allies. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in NATO. Seattle 1999, pp. 40–73, 40.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Longhurst, Kerry/Zaborowski, Marcin: The new Atlanticist. Poland’s Foreign and Security Priorities. New Jersey 2007, p. 1.

route that led Warsaw to join NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. In *Where from, where to? New and old configurations of Poland's foreign and security policy priorities*, Kerry Longhurst makes a historically informed argument that Warsaw has turned into the most significant player in Central Europe and had been perceived as a leader of sorts by other European countries as well as the United States by the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. She adds that Poland has slightly shifted from a staunch Atlanticist country to a more EU-friendly one. Yet, the author concludes that NATO continues to fare very high on Poland's security and defense agenda, remaining unaffected by ongoing changes in US-Polish relations.<sup>78</sup>

EU-NATO relations are addressed in greater depth in the collected volume *EU enlargement and the transatlantic alliance: A security relationship in flux* edited by Sven Biscop and Johan Lembke. The contributing authors touch upon two overarching issues: the interplay between EU enlargement and a changing transatlantic security relationship; the impact of new EU members on the role of the Union as a more independent foreign policy actor. The chapter on Poland demonstrates that Polish security policy has become increasingly "europeanized" after having been classified as "America's protégée" in the early years of its NATO and later EU membership. The author, Kerry Longhurst, explains that Poland's increased interest in the EU was informed by the country's stakes in Eastern Europe, first and foremost Ukraine, as well as its desire to mold a common approach toward Russia. Nevertheless, Poland remained a "NATO-first" proponent.<sup>79</sup> A recently published collected edition, *Peacebuilding at home: NATO and its 'new' member states after Crimea*, addresses, among others, Poland's membership in the Alliance since 1999. The chapter on Poland mainly argues that the biggest obstacles on the road to joining were to be found in domestic affairs as well the transformation of Polish Armed Forces which had to be prepared for modern warfare. The author, Michal Matyasik,

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Longhurst, Kerry: Where from, where to? New and old configurations of Poland's foreign and security policy priorities. In: Communist and Post-Communist Studies, Vol. 46/ 2013, pp. 363–372.

<sup>79</sup> Longhurst, Kerry: Poland. Empowering or Undercutting EU Collective Security. In: Biscop, Sven/ Lembke, Johan (ed.): EU Enlargement and Transatlantic Alliance. A security relationship in flux. London 2008, pp. 63–76.

presents an account of societal, political, and military changes that Poland had to undergo to be invited into the Alliance.<sup>80</sup>

Research on Turkey's foreign and security policy, which it's NATO activities are a significant part of, can best be divided into a pre-,<sup>81</sup> during,<sup>82</sup> and post-<sup>83</sup> Cold War era. Copious research on all three categories is available in forms of studies, articles as well as monographs. Thus, only a selection of titles will be introduced that are deemed instructive in offering a starting point into better understanding the research that has so far been conducted on Turkey's foreign and security policy. Melvyn P. Leffler underscores in *Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945–1952* the importance of strategies in shaping foreign policy actions and relations within alliances by ways of reconstructing the reason why Turkey wanted to join NATO and, equally important, why the United States deemed Ankara's membership essential. The historian captures the

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<sup>80</sup> Matyasik, Michal: Poland's membership in NATO. A new paradigm of national security. In: Kammel, Arnold H./Zyakla, Benjamin (ed.): Peacebuilding at Home. NATO and its 'new' Member States after Crimea. Baden-Baden 2018, pp. 93-104.

<sup>81</sup> Cf., for example, Deringli, Serim: Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War. An 'Active' Neutrality. Cambridge 1989; Hale, William: Turkish foreign policy since 1774. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Abingdon 2000; Howard, Douglas A.: The history of Turkey. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Santa Barbara 2016; Lewis, Bernard: The emergence of modern Turkey. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, New York 2002.

<sup>82</sup> Cf., for example, Hale, William: Turkish foreign policy since 1774. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, New York 2000; Howard, Douglas A.: The history of Turkey. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Santa Barbara 2016; Kubicek, Paul: Turkey's Inclusion in the Atlantic Community. Looking back, looking forward. In: Turkish Studies, Vol. 9/2008, pp. 21–35; Uslu, Nasuh: The Turkish-American Relationship between 1947 and 2003. The History of a Distinctive Alliance. New York 2003.

<sup>83</sup> Cf., for example, Aydin, Mustafa: Reconstructing Turkish-American relations. Divergences versus Convergences. In: New Perspectives on Turkey, Vol. 40/2009, pp. 126–145; Howard, Douglas A.: The history of Turkey. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Santa Barbara 2016; Hale, William: Turkish foreign policy since 1774. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, New York 2000; Harris, George S.: US-Turkish relations. In: Makovsky, Alan/Sayari, Sabri (ed.): Turkey's New World. Changing Dynamics in Turkish Foreign Policy. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy 2000, pp. 189–202; Lesser, Ian O: Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West After the Cold War. In: Fuller, Grahem et al. (ed.): Turkey's New Geopolitics. From the Balkans to Western China. Colorado 1993, pp. 99–140; Park, Bill: Turkey and the US. A transatlantic future. In: Dorman, Andrew M./Kaufman, Joyce P. (ed.): The Future of Transatlantic Relations. Perceptions, Policy and Practice. Stanford 2011, pp. 137–154.

early days of the looming Cold War shaping Turkish and American decision-makers attitude toward, firstly, forming a closer strategic relationship and, secondly, adding Ankara to the transatlantic Alliance.<sup>84</sup>

In 1999, the year the first former Warsaw Pact countries joined NATO, Ekavi Athanassopoulou published *Turkey-Anglo American security interests, 1945–1952: The first enlargement of NATO*. The monograph offers a meticulous account of Turkey's accession story from the interwar period through the country's neutral stance during World War II up until Ankara's request to be placed under NATO's, that is, American security umbrella for lack of more viable alternatives. The author also points out that the US policy establishment "had de facto placed [Turkey and Greece] in [a] prominent position within [the] American security sphere"<sup>85</sup> as Washington deemed the two countries crucial in belonging to the "Western camp" in order to deny the Soviet Union access to control the Mediterranean.

A more recent account of NATO's first round of enlargement is provided by the edited volume *NATO's first enlargement: A reassessment* in which Turkey's ambitions to join NATO are scrutinized, too. The author, Suhnaz Yilmaz, argues that the pursuit of security for Turkey (from the Soviet Union) as well as the prospect of institutionalizing its relationship with the United States via NATO was the main drivers for Ankara to strive for joining the Alliance. The second aspect of the argument is closely linked to Turkey's desire to be accepted as part of the "West." In essence, the study takes into account external and some internal factors leading shaping Turkey's quest to join NATO.<sup>86</sup> In *The Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection*, former US ambassador to Turkey, George McGhee, presents a very personal account of his time as a diplomat in Turkey. McGhee outlines Turkey's road to joining NATO as well as the country's first years as a member of the transatlantic Alliance. In addition, the author focuses on Turkey's role in the Middle East as well as the bilateral ties between the United States and Turkey. The former diplomat highlights

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. Leffler, Melvyn P.: Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO 1945–1952. In: *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 71/ 1985, pp. 807–825.

<sup>85</sup> Athanassopoulou, Ekavi: *Turkey-Anglo-American security interests, 1945–52. The first enlargement of NATO*. London 2012, pp. 236-237.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Yilmaz, Suhnaz: Turkey's quest for NATO membership. The institutionalization of the Turkish-American alliance, in: Hatzivassiliou, Evanthis/Triantaphyllou (ed.): *NATO's First Enlargement. A Reassessment*. Abingdon 2016, pp. 15-30.

that Turkey's fear of being abandoned dates back to the country's pre-accession era but was exacerbated during the post-accession phase. The partly anecdotal monograph stresses the fact that Turkey had an anchor in the Middle East for the United States as well as NATO for decades. Kemal Kirisci broadens the perspective on Turkey's NATO history in *Turkey and the West: Fault lines in a troubled Alliance*. While the author explains the driving factors leading to Turkey joining NATO as well, he goes beyond the Cold War by ways of examining Turkey's stance in the Alliance in the post-Cold War years. In addition, he highlights Turkey's domestic politics, especially the rise of the AKP which has dominated Turkish politics since 2003, in order to better explain changes in Turkey's foreign policy as well as the waning appeal of the transatlantic community as identity-establishing for the country.<sup>87</sup>

As the literature review has shown, much has been written on the subtopics this dissertation draws on US (NATO) strategy, the transatlantic bargain, and burden-sharing as well as the NATO and defense policies of the case study countries. Yet, three gaps can be identified with regard to the existing bodies of literature as well as the aims of this dissertation. Firstly, no extensive and comparative research on US-NATO allies' relations during the Obama years exists as of today. In particular, the impact American actions during the tenure of the 44th President of the United States has had on NATO and the defense policies of European allies has not yet been examined in depth. Accordingly, research on the transatlantic bargain at large during those years is still absent. Secondly, this dissertation seeks to shed light on how Germany's, Poland's, and Turkey's NATO and defense policies developed when Barack Obama occupied the White House, as no comparative research on this subject so far exists. Thirdly, while alliances are a crucial concept in studying international relations, they are, according to Glenn H. Snyder, an "understudied" subject.<sup>88</sup> Thus, this dissertation aims to contribute to shedding light on the dynamics of alliances in general and NATO in particular.

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<sup>87</sup> Kirisci, Kemal: *Turkey and the West. Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance*. Washington, D.C. 2018.

<sup>88</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 1.

## **2. Involvement of the United States in forging and forming the Alliance until the end of the Cold War**

### **2.1. Burden-sharing: An argument older than NATO itself**

As outlined by Stanley S. Sloan, the transatlantic bargain with its in-built burden-sharing concept came into existence with the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on April 4, 1949, when the Washington Treaty was signed in Washington D.C.: “The burden-sharing issue was built into the transatlantic bargain, rising up in many ways from the foundation provided by contrasting US and European geographic realities, historical experiences, and military capabilities.”<sup>89</sup> Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary at the time, had a central role in forming NATO. He realized early on that economic recovery and security were inextricably linked. Only by merging (economic) resources would the Europeans be able to fend off a Soviet subversion of the continent. This realization notwithstanding, Bevin was also aware that such an effort would take time—and time was not on the Western Europeans’ side against the backdrop of rising discontent in France and Italy and the fomenting of the Soviet Union against the governments of these countries. Thus, Bevin realized that only with the support of the United States was Western Europe able to withstand the Communist threat. Considering economic aid for the reconstruction of Western Europe,<sup>90</sup> the Americans believed that “we have borne almost single-handedly the burden of the international effort to stop the Kremlin’s political advance. But this has stretched our resources dangerously (...) It is urgently necessary for us to restore something of the balance of power in Europe and Asia by strengthening local forces of independence and by *getting them to assume part of the burden.*”<sup>91</sup> Consequently, the Truman administration was convinced of the need for the Europeans to recover economically as quickly as was feasible which is why US officials pressed for Western European (including Germany) integration to withstand Soviet pressure. Unlike American officials, their

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<sup>89</sup> Sloan, Permanent Alliance, p. 85.

<sup>90</sup> N.B.: The aid package allowed the US to grant Europe about \$13 billion which was mostly provided in US goods to “restore faith in the capitalist economies of Europe.”, cf. Hemmer, American Pendulum, p. 51.

<sup>91</sup> Thies, Wallace J: Friendly Rivals. Bargaining and burden-Shifting in NATO. Abingdon 2003, pp. 23–24.

British counterparts thought the United States should invest much more in securing Western Europe from a possible Soviet attack. Economic aid was much needed and welcomed by Western European states but was not enough to fortify Western Europe's deterrence efforts and defense posture though. Hence, British Foreign Minister Bevin suggested the idea of "organiz[ing] a bloc of states based on shared democratic ideals and containing within it resources sufficient to restore Europe's confidence in the[ir] future."<sup>92</sup> The Americans wanted to see a Western European security core first which might then be supplemented with American ad hoc assistance. A formal defense alliance was still out of the question for the United States. Thus, to the great relief of the Europeans, the US Senate passed the Vandenberg resolution on June 11, 1948 which paved the way for an American formal defense commitment. Roughly a month later, negotiations about a transatlantic security alliance were underway.<sup>93</sup> The talks dragged on from July 1948 until April 1949 when on the 4th of that month, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established.

Given that the Americans were keen on lowering the European burden on US resources as quickly as responsibly possible, Article 3 took center stage in the Alliance's first years which the United States insisted on. The provisions of this Article ensured that a balance between self-help and mutual aid would be found. Dean Acheson, Secretary of State after Marshall had resigned due to ill health, boiled the purpose of collective burden-sharing down to ensuring "that nobody is getting a meal ticket from anybody else so far as their capacity to resist is concerned."<sup>94</sup> Subsequently it was US policy to place as prominent a focus on self-help as on mutual aid. The structural layout of what would later develop into a dysfunctional burden-sharing with the United States assuming an overwhelming share of the Alliance costs was largely rooted in two factors dating back to the founding of NATO. Part of the reason why a greater European integration failed in the early months of the Alliance was down to the contradictory aims being prioritized by the US administration. On the one hand, the Americans wanted European integration by strengthening the Brussels Union. Secondly, the administration was determined to be in control of the distribution of US military aid. By retaining control over how US

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<sup>92</sup> Thies, Friendly Rivals, p. 25.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 44.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

assistance was spent, the Truman administration foreclosed the Europeans' opportunity to coordinate among themselves more effectively. The second goal, which the Americans pursued, would result in the country occupying a *primus inter pares* position within the Alliance. Compounding the US's preeminent funding role of its European partners can be attributed to the latter not seeing themselves capable to do more on their own militarily speaking. What is more, the Europeans were fully aware of the US's conflicting goals of wanting Western Europe to recover economically while at the same time expecting them to increase their own military production.<sup>95</sup> While the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 consolidated the political and military command structures of the Alliance,<sup>96</sup> burden-sharing was transformed into a permanent bone of contention. Although the issue of burden-sharing was raised by every US President since Eisenhower,<sup>97</sup> the European's non-compliance with American requests did not result in the latter ceasing their mission of protecting Europe. Although the original source of the burden-sharing debate gradually disappeared with the implosion of the Soviet Union, “(...) leaders in all NATO nations would continue to try to buy acceptable levels of security at the best price.”<sup>98</sup> It was just that the focus of burden-sharing that shifted from collective defense matters to what would become known as “non-collective defense security threats”, that is, crisis management operations from the 1990s onward. Yet, NATO's early “out-of-area” operations in the Balkans did not elicit a major burden-sharing dispute at the time due to major European contributions. The fairly balanced burden-sharing sheet could not belie initial differences between the United States and its European allies as to how to deal with the conflicts altogether.<sup>99</sup>

In retrospect, one could argue that the “war-by-committee” approach of the Europeans would prompt the first Bush Junior administration not to call upon NATO as the first responder in Afghanistan.<sup>100</sup> In the Balkan wars, however, the United

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. Thies, Friendly Rivals, p. 58.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Herd/Kriendler, NATO in an age of uncertainty, p. 18.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Hallams, A transatlantic bargain for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>98</sup> Sloan, Permanent Alliance, p. 88.

<sup>99</sup> N.B.: For further information on the latter part, cf. Yost, David S.: NATO's Balancing Act. Washington D.C. 2014, pp. 123–149 and Danielsen, Helge/Widerberg, Helene F.: The out-of-area question in historical perspective. In: Hilde, Paal Sigurd/Michta, Andrew A. (ed.): The future of NATO. Regional Defense and Global Security, Ann Arbor 2014, pp. 14–35.

<sup>100</sup> Castle, Stephen 1999: War in Europe. How NATO fights a war by committee,

States readily decided not to go it alone but instead to respond through the Alliance. Not least of all to ensure shifting some of the incurred burden to its European allies—an endeavor that had proven futile throughout the Cold War. Despite the different attitudes toward burden-sharing,<sup>101</sup> the Alliance managed to endure as the United States, despite initial reluctance to back up political support militarily, came to view Western European security as closely linked to its own. Drawing on a more abstract explanation, NATO's persistence can be explained with a concept that is inextricably linked to burden-sharing: the transatlantic bargain that was formed at the Alliance's hour of birth.

## **2.2. The transatlantic bargain: The United States as the *primus inter pares* by default**

Although the bargain was never explicitly laid out in any official document, a tacit agreement over how to deal with one another shaped transatlantic relations from the establishment of NATO onward. Ellen Hallams argues that “NATO’s value to the United States has been premised on the idea of a ‘transatlantic bargain’, a concept intrinsic to an understanding of U.S.-NATO relations, past, present, and future.”<sup>102</sup> In light of NATO’s history, Hallams’ definition captures best what the transatlantic bargain<sup>103</sup> is about: “(...) a balancing act between a U.S. commitment to European security in return for a position of U.S. leadership and dominance of NATO, and the expectation that Europeans would accelerate efforts to provide for their own defense.”<sup>104</sup> This definition indicates that the United States is a first among equals of NATO’s member states. Especially the latter aspect of Hallams’ definition of the bargain, the US’s expectations of the Europeans, can be ascribed to different interpretations of it: “Where Washington viewed the bargain as a ‘contract’ implying something in return, many European countries tended to view it in

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in: The Independent 1999, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/war-in-europe-how-nato-fights-a-war-by-committee-1089563.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>101</sup> N.B.: For further information on different arguments brought forward in this context, cf. Sloan, Permanent Alliance, pp. 87–88.

<sup>102</sup> Hallams, A transatlantic bargain for the 21st century, p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> N.B.: The term “transatlantic bargain” was first introduced and coined by then US Ambassador to NATO, Harlan Cleveland in 1970, cf. ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. ix.

less rigid terms, as a ‘compact’ that did not necessarily translate into specific commitments.”<sup>105</sup> Regarding the much greater (financial) burden Washington assumed from the Alliance’s founding onward, the United States has traditionally demanded a bigger say in NATO. This demand was partly informed by America’s extended deterrence posture vis-à-vis its European allies as part of the transatlantic bargain. Given that Washington extended its nuclear shield to its European allies, it expected them to build up their own conventional forces. The European allies fell short of Washington’s expectations, however, and the lack of European engagement consequently led to “a perceived conventional weakness that lowered the nuclear threshold. In other words, NATO expected it would quickly exhaust its conventional options and be forced to use nuclear weapons to prevent defeat.”<sup>106</sup> Thus, the United States attached more importance to readily moving to use nuclear weapons in the event of a military confrontation with the Soviet Union. Any (nuclear) fallout with Moscow would have devastated European allies first, most prominently Germany. This reality raised concerns on the part of European allies as to the viability of the change in American nuclear strategy.<sup>107</sup> Thus, European non-nuclear states were gradually involved in the US’s nuclear planning process which did ease some concerns about Washington’s commitment to its allies’ security; doubts remained throughout the Cold War era though.<sup>108</sup> Yet, “most NATO allies during the Cold War ‘prefer[ed] to live with the known uncertainties of the US nuclear guarantee than with the political and strategic uncertainties of nuclear independence’.”<sup>109</sup>

Ultimately, the institutional establishment and maintenance of NATO’s nuclear planning group as well as the bilateral nuclear-sharing arrangements entailing US nuclear forces being deployed to European soil proved to be a “visible demonstration of Washington’s preparedness to fight for Western Europe.”<sup>110</sup> In return for the preparedness to pay the ultimate price of defending its allies if necessary, the US

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<sup>105</sup> Kamp, Karl-Heinz/Volker, Kurt: Toward a New Transatlantic Bargain. In: Ducasse, Mark D. (ed.): *The Transatlantic Bargain*. Washington, DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2012, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> Haftendorn, Helga: The Alliance and the Credibility of Extended Deterrence. In: Hilde/Michta: *The future of NATO*, pp. 90–111, 93.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Yost, Assurance and US extended deterrence in NATO, pp. 755–757.

<sup>108</sup> N.B.: For further reading on this topic, see Haftendorn, *The Alliance and the credibility of extended deterrence*.

<sup>109</sup> Freedman, Lawrence: *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Basingstoke 2003, p. 313.

<sup>110</sup> Anderson/Larsen/Holdorf, *Extended Deterrence and Allied Assurance*, p. 43.

tactility demanded a greater say in NATO's decision-making processes. Although officially an alliance of equals, Washington had a favored position ever since the Alliance's founding. The cessation of the threat of a common enemy, the Soviet Union, would gradually prompt the original transatlantic bargain to crumble. Consequently, internal differences between the allies became more difficult to rein in. At the same time, a somewhat contradictory attitude on both sides of the Atlantic began to emerge, altering the original bargain characterizing NATO. While the bulk of European allies had been demanding more decision-making privileges without the necessary capabilities to underpin that request, the Americans had urged their partners to shoulder a greater share of NATO's burden without wanting to grant them greater political leadership.<sup>111</sup> These diverging expectations of the security and defense partnership are part of the in-built contradictions of the original transatlantic bargain. In exchange for economic and military assistance and protection from the Soviet Union, Western European allies agreed to follow Washington's lead in countering Moscow although transatlantic (security) interests did not always align during the Cold War.<sup>112</sup> Nonetheless, “(...) NATO has had an enduring value to Washington as an indispensable mechanism for promoting and securing its strategic interests in Europe.”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Cf. Hallams, *A transatlantic bargain for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, p. ix.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Sloan, *Permanent Alliance*, p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> Hallams, *A Transatlantic bargain for the 21st century*, p. 9.



### **3. Historical explanations for US engagement in and with (NATO) Europe: Oscillating between unilateralism and multilateralism**

#### **3.1. From the Founding Fathers to World War II**

Describing US foreign policy as either isolationist or internationalist/interventionist is insufficient and misses much of what decision-makers in Washington are preoccupied with when it comes to a strategy that captures the country's strategic interests.<sup>114</sup> Instead, a distinction should be drawn between a unilateral and multilateral approach to foreign policy given that the United States has opted in favor of an internationalist foreign policy throughout its history.<sup>115</sup> With regard to Europe, it is discernible that US foreign policy in relation to that continent has been a history of engagement. Thus, it is not a question of whether but of how the United States (inter-)acted toward and with Europe. One can delineate a pendulum between unilateralism and multilateralism vis-à-vis conducting policy toward Europe since the outgoing 19th century.

Before outlining these oscillating approaches toward Europe, it must be conceded that it is not altogether inaccurate to ascribe a relative isolationist tendency to certain aspects of US policy vis-à-vis European states prior to the post-war era beginning in 1945. Regarding the military-political realm, administrations since President James Monroe have largely abided by the doctrine which he formulated in 1823 with the exception of World War I. In the doctrine, the President proclaims recognition of the "Western hemisphere" in whose affairs European powers must not interfere by expanding or installing colonies or monarchs on their behalf. In exchange, the United States ought to stay out of European affairs and especially its wars.<sup>116</sup> Washington's

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<sup>114</sup> Cf. Freedman, Lawrence: *Strategy. A History*. New York 2013, pp. x–xi.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Hemmer, American Pendulum, p. 7 and Cohen, Eliot A: *The big Stick. The limits of Soft Power & the Necessity of Military Force*. New York 2016, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> Department of State: *Monroe Doctrine*, 1823,  
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/monroe> (08.06.2019).

brief involvement in World War I notwithstanding, the United States did try to refrain from becoming involved in European conflicts until World War II. The 1930s serve as a case in point underpinning Washington's desire to act in accordance with the Monroe doctrine—at least militarily speaking.<sup>117</sup>

The Neutrality Act of 1935 and 1937 prohibited the sale of weapons and authorization of loans to nations at war, respectively, among others.<sup>118</sup> While these laws represented a shift regarding US commerce leaning toward isolationism, President Franklin D. Roosevelt challenged the Acts in his Quarantine Speech on October 5, 1937. He argued it would be in the US's interest to modify the laws insomuch as to differentiate "between aggressors and defenders" thereby ushering in Washington's eventual siding with the allied powers in the nascent war.<sup>119</sup> However, a couple of years were still to go by before the United States would become involved militarily with Europe once again. The reason the country perpetuated a military-political isolationism toward the European continent in the meantime is twofold. Firstly, the United States deemed itself "special, representing the New World of democratic idealism as opposed to the Old World of special privilege and power politics."<sup>120</sup> Its geographical location was the second reason the United States thought it need not become entangled in European power politics again. It was common sense among military experts that technological advances such as faster and better aircraft would not render the United States more vulnerable to external attacks.<sup>121</sup> Less caution was enacted regarding the engagement with Europe in the economic area. Washington began interacting with Europe in that respect long before the country emerged as a superpower after World War II.<sup>122</sup>

Only shortly after the country had declared itself independent in 1776 did it become involved in international trade.<sup>123</sup> From that point onward, the United States were to perpetually establish commercial ties with Europe which would only be exposed to a partial slump during the 1930s. Hence, depicting the US's demeanor toward

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<sup>117</sup> Cf. Lunestad, Geir: *The United States and Western Europe since 1945. From "Empire" by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift.* New York 2003, p. 23.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, p. 36.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Lunestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*, p. 23.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, p. 7.

Europe from the early days of its founding as internationalist rather than isolationist speaks more to the point.<sup>124</sup> But the pattern that has been characteristic of US foreign policy toward Europe is an oscillation between unilateral and multilateral actions much more than it is a pendulum between engagement and disengagement.<sup>125</sup> One of the best-known statements against multilateralism, the first US presidents' farewell address in 1796, marks the beginning of a history of unilateralism versus multilateralism in American foreign policy regarding Europe: "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations (...) It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world (...)."<sup>126</sup> Thomas Jefferson, one of the American founding fathers and third president of the country, famously warned against the dangers of "entangling alliances" while advocating "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with nations" in his inaugural address in 1801.<sup>127</sup> Given that both presidents are often-times referred to as paragons of isolationism, it is all the more important to clarify that neither of them called for disengagement with other countries but for a unilateral approach. Washington's interactions with outside powers, including European nations, were not only shaped by interests but just as much by values. In this respect, it is a common misconception to delineate a dichotomy between interests and values in American foreign policy. Put differently, realism (an interest-informed approach) and idealism (a value-informed approach) can be regarded as complementary. Instead of contrasting these two approaches, it makes more sense to refer to the United States as either a "Crusader State" or the "Promised Land" as distinguished by the American historian Walter A. McDougall.<sup>128</sup> Advocates of America as a Crusader State are convinced the best way to safeguard both US interests and values is to actively push other nations to adopt American principles. This foreign policy ap-

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<sup>124</sup> Cf. LaFeber, Walter: The United States and Europe in an Age of American Unilateralism. In: Moore/Vaudagna: The American Century in Europe. Ithaca 2003, p. 25-46 p. 25.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Hemmer, American Pendulum, p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>127</sup> Fromkin, David 1970: Entangling Alliances. In: Foreign Affairs, July Issue 1970 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1970-07-01/entangling-alliances> (08.06.2019) and Hemmer, American Pendulum, p. 8.

<sup>128</sup> McDougall, Walter A: Promised Land, Crusader State. The American Encounter with the World since 1776. Boston 1997.

proach entails that “America has to spread the word as a missionary, either converting or defeating those who reject core U.S. values like democracy.”<sup>129</sup> Conceiving of the United States as the Promised Land necessitated that the country refrain from imposing its principles onto other nations. America was to instead concentrate on “perfecting democracy at home, thus making it a model that others want to emulate.”<sup>130</sup> Beginning with Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency, the United States grew in economic, military, and political power which would eventually lead Washington to translate its prowess into assuming a central (security) role in Europe. While America did not take on permanent responsibilities for its European partners until after World War II, the Crusader State approach has tended to fit US actions toward Europe better than behaving like the Promised Land since the early stages of the 20th century. For one, the first US president of the new century, Teddy Roosevelt, essentially abrogated the Monroe doctrine. The president solidifying the expansion of the American security perimeter, Woodrow Wilson, was explicitly referring to US interests in global (thus European) terms by the dawn of World War I which he entered on behalf of the United States in 1917.<sup>131</sup> That is not to say that US interests were pursued at the cost of American values: “To abandon the active pursuit of American values would not protect American power, for Wilson; it would destroy it.”<sup>132</sup> The belief that interests and values reinforce each other has had a long tradition in the United States. Even Teddy Roosevelt ascribed to the pattern of simultaneously pursuing realism and idealism<sup>133</sup>—Roosevelt being the president who has been described as a “quintessential realist in American foreign policy.”<sup>134</sup>

Therefore, the difference between Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson cannot be discerned on the basis of whether or not to engage European nations but rather which sort of engagement to opt for. The conviction that European affairs mattered to the security of the United States was brought home by World War I. The interwar period witnessed a stabilization of that attitude despite a temporary backpedal during the early to mid-1930s. Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), who ush-

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<sup>129</sup> Hemmer, *American pendulum*, p. 11.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Hunt, Michael H.: *The American Ascendancy. How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance*. New Haven 2007.

<sup>134</sup> Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, p. 24.

ered in the end of military-political hesitance toward Europe once and for all, insisted that freeing Europe was a crucial interest of the United States. What set FDR apart from his predecessors was his intention to not go about liberating and later securing Europe alone. Instead, he sought multilateral cooperation with other great powers, namely China, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. In the US president's conception, those countries would act and collaborate as “‘four policemen’, all with their own local duties and privileges similar to those of the United States in Latin America under the Monroe doctrine.”<sup>135</sup> However, the US president did not equate the assumption of responsibilities and exertion of influence over different world areas with dominion and exclusion. Seeing that the Soviet Union had the latter in mind regarding Eastern Europe, the end of cooperation between Moscow and Washington was looming after 1945.<sup>136</sup>

Following the death of Roosevelt in 1945, Harry S. Truman assumed the presidency of the United States. His administration continued and manifested the “break from the ideas and concepts that previously guided American foreign policy [military-political isolationism]”<sup>137</sup> in 1945/1946 when the United States helped (Western) European countries resist the imposition of Soviet orchestrated governments. His administration feared that the Soviet model of Communism would appeal to other countries, beginning with those in war-ravaged Europe. To prevent the Soviet Union from dominating the whole of Europe and installing puppet regimes on its behalf, the United States decided to stay engaged in (Western) Europe—not least of all in the form of occupation forces in West Germany.<sup>138</sup>

Consequently, the long-term strategy of containment was pursued to curb Soviet influence. Washington needed its allies to stay firm on its side. The United States wanted Western Europe to back it up politically in the ideological struggle just as much as it looked for its partners to share the material burden in deterring and defending allied territory.<sup>139</sup> All US presidents who served during the Cold War realized that allying with Western Europe would help lower the costs of deterring (and if necessary fighting) the Soviet Union. When Washington, along with its European allies, managed to emerge victorious from the decades-long system conflict, the

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<sup>135</sup> Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, p. 34.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>137</sup> Thies, Wallace J.: *Why NATO Endures*. New York 2009, p. 90.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, p. 43.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 65.

question of European independence was still an issue that had burdened transatlantic relations long before the 1970s and would continue to raise alarm in the United States.

### **3.2. Changes after the all defining Cold War: A history of continuity**

To understand what the end of the Cold War meant for NATO, an observation made by elder statesman Henry Kissinger is insightful. He assumed that the founders of the Atlantic alliance “took it for granted that the prize for victory in the Cold War [would be] a lasting Atlantic partnership” and that they “would have been incredulous had they been told that the victory in the Cold War would raise doubts about the future of their creation. But that is precisely what happened, and it would be left to a new set of leaders to prove that the old partnership could be preserved.”<sup>140</sup> With the existential threat fading that had brought NATO into being and the reason for the United States to remain engaged in and with Western Europe for more than four decades, the alliance partners initially struggled to find an answer to the question of why Washington should not disengage from the continent and what purpose the Alliance should serve henceforth. Thus, the transatlantic bargain along with the matter of burden-sharing seemed to be open for debate again.<sup>141</sup>

Seeing that the United States was worried that a possible re-negotiation of the original bargain could lead to more confusion than clarity (not to mention a reallocation of the burden), the subject was left untouched to the extent that Washington would continue assuming a leading security role in Europe. After all, the Americans were convinced that only they had the “capacity to prevent any European power from seeking to aggrandize itself at the expense of the others. By this logic, Washington is the necessary guardian of Europe’s peace and prosperity.”<sup>142</sup> Despite a general sensation of optimism among Europe’s capitals, it was undisputed that the United States would not leave the continent entirely, let alone disengage from NATO. The

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<sup>140</sup> Gordon, Philip H./Shapiro, Jeremy: *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis over Iraq*. New York 2004, p. 31.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Hallams, A Transatlantic Bargain for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, pp. 9–10.

<sup>142</sup> Steel, Ronald: *Europe. The Phantom Pillar*. In: Moore, Laurene R./Vaudagna, Maurizio (ed.): *The American Century in Europe*. Ithace 2003, p. 66–78, p. 71.

nature of that engagement and what the contributions of the Americans to the Alliance would look like was still up for debate. Although the transatlantic bargain was not going to be reviewed altogether, that is, the United States would remain NATO's leading presence for the time being,<sup>143</sup> the essence of the debate changed, especially regarding burden-sharing in that the focus was shifted from inputs to outputs.

While during the Cold War defense spending as measured by GDP was the benchmark of burden-sharing, the post-1989 era required that NATO leaders grasp what to defend against and how to do so given that the security environment was more volatile.<sup>144</sup> The post-Cold War transition did not lend itself to answering these questions easily. Yet, the United States at least realized that the main challenge in Europe was not going to be militarily any longer and thus started withdrawing their troops.<sup>145</sup> Thus, Washington was increasingly less concerned with Western European security and started to shift its attention to issues such as expanding the Alliance to the East as well as keeping allied territory secure by engaging in out-of-area operations.<sup>146</sup> NATO followed suit in that the Alliance's focus from the 1990s onward, and even more intensively after 9/11, was set on crisis management instead of collective defense.<sup>147</sup> In exchange for accepting the US's wish to transform NATO into an organization undertaking crisis management and expanding itself, the Europeans were assured that Washington would uphold its presence on the continent, thereby continuing its role as the "American pacifier."<sup>148</sup>

The reason Washington remained engaged in Europe was grounded in the United States' interest in a stable partner continent seeing that an "unstable Europe would

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<sup>143</sup> Cf. Steel, Europe, p. 70.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Ringsmose, Jens: NATO Burden-Sharing Redux. Continuity and Change after the Cold War. In: Contemporary Security Policy, Vol. 31/ 2010, pp. 319–338.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Steel, Europe, p. 70.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Goldgeier, James M. 2010: The Future of NATO. In: Council on Foreign Relations, Council Special Report, 2010, p. 4, [https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2009/12/NATO\\_CSR51.pdf](https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2009/12/NATO_CSR51.pdf) (08.06.2019) and Melby, Svein: NATO and U.S. Global Security Interests. In: Michta/Hilde (ed.): The future of NATO. Ann Arbor 2014, pp. 36–54, 39.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Melby, NATO and U.S. Global Security Interests, p. 39.

<sup>148</sup> Kamp/Volker, Toward a New Transatlantic Bargain, p. 6.

still threaten essential national security interests of the United States.”<sup>149</sup> Safeguarding a Europe “whole, free and at peace,”<sup>150</sup> the United States went “beyond traditional assertions of America’s “commitment” to Europe.”<sup>151</sup> Expanding the reach of NATO by inviting former Warsaw-Pact states and engaging in crisis management in the Balkans was part of that redefined commitment to defend allied territory and further European stability.<sup>152</sup> Promoting European security was partly supposed to be Europe’s responsibility in Washington’s mind. As captured in a double contradiction, the United States was not willing to accept too much autonomy among its partners when it came to European defense though. America’s stance on the EU’s Common/European Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) is indicative in this regard as the policy was an attempt to act more independently of NATO’s leading influence, the United States.

Arguably, Washington’s attitude toward the CSDP has not changed substantially between the administrations of Bush Senior and Bush Junior despite the security circumstances changing dramatically. First and foremost, the United States demanded from its European partners that they become capable allies beginning with the early 1990s. This demand was always conditioned insomuch as a growing European security and defense capability must not be used against Washington and outside NATO. Instead, the Alliance should always be given priority over establishing EU structures.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Holbrooke, *America*, p. 38.

<sup>150</sup> U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany 1989: A Europe Whole and Free. Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz. President George Bush. Reingoldhalle. Main, Federal Republic of Germany, May 31, 1989,  
<https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga6-890531.htm> (08.06.2019).

<sup>151</sup> Holbrooke, *America*, p. 38.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>153</sup> N.B.: For a more detailed discussion of the issue, cf. Keller, *Vom Skeptiker zum Förderer? Die US-amerikanische Haltung gegenüber der GASP/ESVP*.



## **4. The US President of change? Barack Obama's NATO policy**

### **4.1. Introduction**

Although the tone toward its European allies softened, the substance of the first years of NATO policy under Obama did not change considerably from his predecessors: “(...) Biden [Obamas Vice-President] (...) clarified that in return for the new tone (...), the United States would expect more from its partners.”<sup>154</sup> Accordingly, the Obama administration initially stressed the burden-sharing issue (chiefly regarding the ISAF mission in Afghanistan at the time) insistently. When the expectations of the United States were not met however, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates reproached his European counterparts at a meeting in February 2010 decrying what the United States regarded as the “demilitarization of Europe.”<sup>155</sup> Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton resorted to equally harsh words when describing that the Alliance faced the peril of turning into a “talking shop.”<sup>156</sup> While the preceding administration had lamented unequal burden-sharing as well,<sup>157</sup> NATO’s value in the eyes of the US’s security policy was not put into question. In addition, the financial crisis’ effect was not yet being fully felt. Hence, the European’s shortcomings were benignly overlooked. Yet, when Obama came into office in 2009, the economic slump took full effect; in addition, geopolitical considerations prompted foreign and security policy elites to increasingly doubt NATO Europe’s central role in US strategic thinking. Chiefly, China’s economic and military expansion “(...) moved U.S. global strategy back to its classical emphasis on geopolitics, with military priorities favoring naval- and air-based power projection in the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf regions.”<sup>158</sup> In addition, the ra-

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<sup>154</sup> Hallams, A Transatlantic bargain for the 21st century, p. 20.

<sup>155</sup> Traynor, Ian 2010: ‘Pacification’ of Europe is Threat to security, U.S. tells NATO, in: The Guardian 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/23/pacification-europe-security-threat-us-nato> (08.06.2019).

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Melby, NATO and U.S. Global Security Interests, p. 39.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

ther sobering experiences with nation-building in both Afghanistan and Iraq impelled the Obama administration to move away from counterinsurgency and crisis management operations.<sup>159</sup> Consequently, a rebalance toward Asia-Pacific was launched. The US administration's "pivot" will be discussed in detail as one element of the notion of retrenchment from Europe. Firstly, Operation Unified Protector in Libya will be examined as one of the two topics that sheds light on America's NATO policy between 2011 and 2014. The cases of Libya and Ukraine mark exceptions insomuch as they required swift actions which were not preceded by and based on strategy documents. Hence, the examinations of these topics are in large parts based on speeches and statements given by government officials and members of Congress which bear equal value to strategy papers. The reason the debate in the US Congress is included in accounting for America's NATO policy relates to the influence the legislative has on security and defense-related policies. More precisely, the "powerful American legislative body has played a major role in shaping, as well as critiquing the deal [transatlantic bargain] ... As a result, the bargain is by no means static."<sup>160</sup> Beyond this, Congress also has a significant say in budgetary as well as accession matters vis-à-vis the Alliance.<sup>161</sup>

Another actor shaping the US stance on NATO Europe is the Alliance's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) who is traditionally an American General who at the same time heads US forces stationed on the continent.<sup>162</sup> The SACEUR's testimonies whose position was filled by General Philip M. Breedlove for most part of this work's examination period are incorporated into both accounts of the Obama administration. While they are invaluable in telling how the administration views the security and defense of NATO Europe, it must be borne in mind that a SACEUR's testimony does not equate to America's overall security strategy. It is assumed that the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March

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<sup>159</sup> Cf. Melby, NATO and U.S. Global Security Interests, p. 42.

<sup>160</sup> Sloan, Permanent Alliance, p. xi.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Lammert, Christian: Kongress. In: Koschut, Simon/Kutz, Magnus-Sebastian (ed.): Die Außenpolitik der USA. Theorie – Prozess – Politikfelder – Regionen. Opladen 2012, pp. 55–64, 56 and United States Senate n.d.: Constitution of the United States, [https://www.senate.gov/civics/constitution\\_item/constitution.htm](https://www.senate.gov/civics/constitution_item/constitution.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>162</sup> Cf. North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2019: Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), 2019, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_50110.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50110.htm) (08.06.2019).

2014 changed the US's strategic calculus vis-à-vis NATO Europe. To take these assumed changes into account, a conceptual cut will be made, looking at the "second administration" separately. Consequently, a different set of events and developments will be focused on to establish the United States engagement in NATO Europe from 2014 to 2016: "crisis management" toward Ukraine and reassurance measures. As with the subjects covered during "Obama I," these developments are assumed to have had a significant bearing on the case study countries in the way they reacted to America's engagement on the continent.

## 4.2. Obama I: 2011–2014: Turning its back on Europe?

### 4.2.1. Libya: Leading from the center

While the Obama administration did support the United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1973 which sanctioned military force against the Gaddafi regime in response to its violent suppression of civilian protesters beginning in mid-February,<sup>163</sup> the US President and some members of his cabinet were initially very reluctant to buttress such a move:<sup>164</sup> "The attitude of some of Obama's closest advisors was such that they wanted the Europeans to take the lead in Libya. Consequently, the US stepped back from kinetic actions (the bulk of air strikes was carried out by European allies). Until that operation, the US has always been in the lead (and on board) when it came to leading military operations,"<sup>165</sup> a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Europe and NATO pointed out. Against the backdrop of the costly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with the US's poor reputation in the Arab world prompted by its military interventions, and the economic slump, "the political

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. Gates, Robert M.: *Duty. Memoirs of a Secretary of War*. New York, 2014, p. 510.

<sup>164</sup> N.B.: For a detailed and insightful discussion on the unfolding of the Obama administration's decision-finding about whether or not to become involved militarily in Libya, s. Gates, *Duty*, pp. 510–519. Former Secretary of Defense Gates was one of the US officials who were very skeptical about an intervention in Libya. In addition, cf. Clinton, Hillary: *Hard Choices*. New York 2014, pp. 296–299. To offer a counter-perspective, cf., for example, Rhodes, Ben: *The world as it is. A memoir of the Obama White House*, New York 2018, pp. 111–115. National Security Advisor Rhodes was among those who favored US military action in Libya.

<sup>165</sup> Author interview 1, Washington, D.C., April 9, 2018.

and public appetite for U.S. involvement in Libya was limited, at best.”<sup>166</sup> Washington did perceive of the humanitarian crisis<sup>167</sup> as “taking place in the heart of the European ‘neighborhood’ [which] represented an opportunity for European members of the Alliance to ‘step up’ and demonstrate their ability and willingness to assume a greater leadership role.”<sup>168</sup> Although it can be argued that the United States did take the back seat politically speaking so as to leave the dominant role to the Europeans,<sup>169</sup> the same cannot be said of Washington’s military contributions to Operation Odyssey Dawn and the follow-on, NATO-led Operation Unified Protector, respectively.<sup>170</sup> At the same time, the administration tried to make sure that “the risk and cost of this operation—to our military and to American taxpayers—will be reduced significantly.”<sup>171</sup> Yet, in the initial phase of enforcing the no-fly zone that was sanctioned by the United Nations, the United States did almost go it alone. The United States fired 97% of the Tomahawk cruise missiles responsible for taking out Gadhafi’s air defense system.<sup>172</sup> In addition, Washington contributed precision-guided munitions once European allies ran out of these capabilities midway through the campaign.<sup>173</sup> Then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explained the American role in Libya as follows on March 19, 2011: “America has unique capabilities and we bring them to bear to help our European and Canadian allies and

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<sup>166</sup> Hallams, A Transatlantic bargain for the 21st century, p. 30.

<sup>167</sup> N.B.: In reaction to the crisis unfolding in late February 2011, “the United States also imposed sanctions on its own and moved to provide emergency humanitarian aid to Libyans in need”, Clinton, Hard Choices, p. 296.

<sup>168</sup> Hallams, A Transatlantic bargain for the 21st century, p. 30.

<sup>169</sup> N.B.: For an in-depth discussion of how the Obama administration, especially the President, came to change its/his mind on Libya, see, for example, Chollet, Derek: *The Long Game. How Obama Defied Washington and Redefined America’s Role in the World*. New York 2016, pp. 97–103.

<sup>170</sup> N.B.: For an in-depth analysis of the United States role in NATO’s campaign against Libya, see Chivvis, Christopher S.: *Toppling Qaddafi. Libya and the Limits of Liberal Intervention*. New York, 2014.

<sup>171</sup> Obama, Barack 2011: Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya> (08.06.2019).

<sup>172</sup> Cf. Fly, Jamie/Schmitt, Gary 2011: NATO in Libya, in: *The Weekly Standard* 2011, <https://www.weeklystandard.com/gary-schmitt-and-jamie-m-fly/nato-in-libya> (08.06.2019).

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Cohen, Raphael/Scheinmann, Gabriel 2014: *Lessons From Libya. America Can’t Lead From Behind*, in: *Time* 2014, <http://ideas.time.com/2014/02/15/lessons-from-libya-america-can-t-lead-from-behind/> (08.06.2019).

Arab partners stop further violence against civilians, including through the effective implementation of a no-fly zone.”<sup>174</sup> Without that contribution, the follow-on operation initially carried out by France and Great Britain who were later joined by other allies when NATO took the lead would have been much more difficult. In addition, Washington made available 75 to 80% of air-to-air refueling during the 7 months lasting operation, while 70 to 80% of the surveillance flights were carried out by the United States, including the supply of the US joint surveillance target attack radar system and airborne warning and control system aircraft.<sup>175</sup>

At the same time, it is reasonable to assert that the United States did not assume a dominant role in the Libya campaign in comparison to previous Alliance operations.<sup>176</sup> In the end, France, Great Britain, and eight other European NATO members<sup>177</sup> carried out the bulk of combat sorties<sup>178</sup> which eventually led to the crumbling of the Gaddafi regime.<sup>179</sup> Even though the Europeans did step up on their own terms and despite the United States providing critical capabilities, the Obama administration was described to be “leading from behind.”<sup>180</sup> According to Professor James Goldgeier (American University), “the war in Libya was a case in point for

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<sup>174</sup> Clinton, Hard Choices, p. 306.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Daalder, Ivo H./Stavridis, James G.: NATO’s Victory in Libya. The Right Way to Run an Intervention. In: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 91/ 2012, pp. 2–7, 6 and Hallams, P. A Transatlantic Bargain for the 21st century, p. 33.

<sup>176</sup> N.B.: This task-sharing reflected President Barack Obama’s desire to build coalitions as they “allow the United States to carry a “lighter load” and to “look before we leap,” asking the toughest questions ahead of time. It also helps uphold the global “rules of the road” and “gain legitimacy”, Chollet, The Long Game, pp. 103–104.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2011: Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR. Protection of Civilians and Civilian-Populated Areas & Enforcement of the No-Fly Zone, 2011,  
[http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2011\\_10/20111005\\_111005-factsheet\\_protection\\_civilians.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_10/20111005_111005-factsheet_protection_civilians.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Hallams, A Transatlantic Bargain for the 21st century, p. 33.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Beaumont, Peter/Stephen, Chris 2011: Gaddafi’s last words as he begged for mercy: ‘What did I do to you?’, in: The Guardian 2011,  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/23/gaddafi-last-words-begged-mercy> (08.06.2019).

<sup>180</sup> Lizza, Ryan 2011: Leading From Behind, in: The New Yorker 2011,  
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/leading-from-behind> (08.06.2019); N.B.: For an account challenging the “leading from behind” remarks, see, for example, Chollet, The Long Game, p. 115.

the President's 'leading from behind'-approach. Obama's idea was to have Europeans in lead in NATO; that is at least what he would have liked to see materialize in order to establish a European pillar in the Alliance."<sup>181</sup> Reasons for that critical assessment can be found in the fact that the United States did withhold some critical capabilities (e.g., the A-10 Thunderbolt II and AC-130 Spectre gunships), among others.<sup>182</sup> The administration's explanation for that pertained to Obama's broader approach to foreign and security policy which, according to him, should be based on "partnership and pragmatism."<sup>183</sup> In more precise terms: the Europeans ought to take the lead in transatlantic burden-sharing whenever the circumstances seem expedient. In the words of a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in the Obama administration: "Obama pushed for the Libya campaign to be a NATO operation. This operation was a proof point of NATO's value in Obama's mind; in fact, he took pride in making sure NATO took over."<sup>184</sup>

While not only Great Britain and France ramped up their military efforts contributing to Operation Unified Protector, the Europeans taking part in the Libyan aerial campaign fell short of (US) expectations that had been raised before the intervention began.<sup>185</sup> After it became clear that the US military was essential in turning Operation Unified Protector into the military success story,<sup>186</sup> as it was later touted to have been, a reoccurring theme was back on the agenda of the United States' Congress in 2012: burden-sharing. The legislative branch called on America's European allies to spend 2% of their GDP on defense.<sup>187</sup> Despite this rebuke, most members of Congress did want the US administration to retain a prominent role in NATO during the Libya campaign. The support of the campaign in the House of Representatives went so far as to vote against limitations of funding for the operation.<sup>188</sup> Not only were immediate security risks cited to justify Operation Unified

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<sup>181</sup> Author interview 2, Washington, D.C., April 17, 2018.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Hallams, *A Transatlantic Bargain for the 21st Century*, p. 33.

<sup>183</sup> Drezner, Daniel W.: Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy? Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times. In: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90/ 2011, pp. 57–68, 58.

<sup>184</sup> Author interview 3, Washington, D.C., April 9, 2018.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Cohen, Raphael S./Scheinmann, Gabriel M.: Can Europe Fill the void in U.S. Military Leadership. In: *Orbis*, Vol. 58/ 2014, pp. 39–54.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Daalder/Stavridis, *NATO's Victory in Libya*.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Hallams, *A Transatlantic Bargain for the 21st Century*, pp. 34–35.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. Silverleib, Alan 2011: House conflicted on Libya campaign, in: CNN Politics 2011,

Protector but the support of allies, that is, burden-sharing in addition to upholding and defending principles such as the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) were of argumentative relevance, too. Yet, these arguments were not based on commonsense. Some Congress members, especially on the Republican side, asserted that NATO should be acting solely on behalf of US security interests rather than “lofty” principles such as the R2P or multilateralism.<sup>189</sup> Yet, the majority of Congress was of the opinion that contributing to the Alliance’s operation in Libya would further US security interests and values at the same time. A less unequivocal opinion could be forged on the question of whether or not the United States should assume a leadership role in NATO during the Libya campaign. Two camps emerged in the wake of discussing Washington’s part in the intervention: the first ascribed the United States the *primus inter pares* role it had traditionally occupied, regardless of party affiliation; the second wanted the United States to transfer leadership to others when proper, that is, in situations in which allies could muster the will and capabilities to step up and, more decisively, where national US interests were not at stake.<sup>190</sup> While the picture that presents itself when looking at the way Congress talked about NATO and the US’s role in it during the Libya campaign is not an account of consensus, a majority did emerge in favor of using the Alliance as a means of collective security and defense. By the same token, the US’s disproportional role in Alliance burden-sharing was not as controversial as one might have expected given the perennial rebukes of Europe’s defense short-comings. Whether or not leading the burden materially should equate to leading the Alliance politically was more controversial though. While already in 2011 the United States accounted for 65% of NATO’s overall budget, some Congress members argued that Washington need not be in charge of calling the shots in every instance of allied crisis management, that

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<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/06/24/libya.congress/index.html> (08.06.2019); cf. Savage, Charlie 2011: Attack Renews Debate Over Congressional Consent, in: The New York Times 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/22/world/africa/22powers.html> (08.06.2019); cf. Steinhauer, Jennifer 2011: House Deals Obama Symbolic Blow With Libya Votes, in: The New York Times 2011, <https://the caucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/06/24/house-takes-up-a-rebuke-to-obamas-libya-policy/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>189</sup> Cf. Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 38.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. ibid, pp. 39–40.

is, that US armed forces were not necessary in every single operation. Others, however, insisted that “our U.S. military is doing the lion’s share of the fighting [in Libya and in general]”<sup>191</sup> which is why command of military interventions should not be transferred to others.<sup>192</sup> America’s leadership question was thus a bone of contention in Congress—not so much in the Obama administration, however. The administration was very clear on how minimalist US leadership in NATO should be with regard to the Libya campaign: “American leadership is essential, but does not mean acting alone—it means shaping the conditions for the international community to act together”<sup>193</sup> according to President Obama. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates argued in a similar vein when it became clear that command and control of Operation Unified Protector would be transferred to NATO. When the operation was drawing to an end, President Obama pointed out: “It was the world’s most effective alliance, NATO, that’s led a military coalition of nearly 20 nations.”<sup>194</sup> This quote, taken from a speech Obama delivered at the United Nations on September 20, 2011, stresses two components which were telling and new to Washington’s NATO policy in this combination: the clear appreciation of multilateralism over unilateralism and consequently a reduced American leadership role. Both elements are in line with what role the United States ascribed to NATO during the Libya campaign and beyond; in the Obama administration’s viewpoint, the Alliance “should focus on collective security, rather than prompting solely US interests, (...) or values.”<sup>195</sup> For that reason, it is valid to say that the Americans sought a reduced leadership role for their country within the Alliance. This new conception of burden-sharing in NATO did not mean that the United States ceased to regard itself as the “indispensable nation,” however. What it meant instead was that Washington would continue being the lead enabler in larger-scale operations such as the one in Libya. In addition, the United States also understood that its European allies would

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<sup>191</sup> US Congressional Record, House of Representatives (CRHR), March 30, “What’s So Special About Libya,” p. H2098 as quoted in Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 39.

<sup>192</sup> N.B.: For further information on the structure and functioning of NATO’s military command, cf. Giegerich, Bastian: Die NATO. Wiesbaden 2012, pp. 26–30.

<sup>193</sup> Obama, Barack 2011: Remarks by the President on the Situation in Libya, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/18/remarks-president-situation-libya> (08.06.2019).

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 46.

still rely on its air support for the foreseeable future as they had in the aerial campaign against Gadhafi's forces.<sup>196</sup> Yet, the United States was keen on leaving operations which did not touch upon core US national security interests to its allies; in turn that entailed that "Europe should expect a relatively reduced U.S. role, and a greater role for its own forces."<sup>197</sup>

Washington thus sought to encourage what has been described as a "Post-American" Alliance.<sup>198</sup> The concept does not entail an absence of US leadership in the Alliance altogether; rather, shared leadership with European partners was aspired. Against this backdrop, the Libya campaign mirrored the US's new approach to transatlantic burden-sharing.<sup>199</sup> In light of the above elaborations, one can conclude that while "it is unwise to portray the Libyan operation as a harbinger of future trends, it is also hard not to conclude that it does mark a shift in dynamics of U.S. leadership of the Alliance—not least because, as one U.S. official conceded, 'Our ability to carry the burden is being called into question'."<sup>200</sup>

#### **4.2.2. Pivoting to Asia while remaining in Europe**

Europeans carrying more of the transatlantic burden, especially when it came to their own security, was one of the key supporting rationales regarding what infamously has been coined the US "pivot to Asia" by then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in October 2011.<sup>201</sup> Assuming Europe was largely at peace, and expecting

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<sup>196</sup> Cf. Michaels, Jeffrey H.: NATO After Libya. In: RUSI Journal, Vol. 65/ 2012, p. 58.

<sup>197</sup> Hallams, A Transatlantic Bargain for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, p. 40 and Lightfoot, Jeff/Pavel, Barry 2012: The Transatlantic Bargain After "the Pivot," in: Atlantic Council Issue Brief 2012, [https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/files/publication\\_pdfs/403/032012\\_A\\_CUS\\_TransatlanticBargain.pdf](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/files/publication_pdfs/403/032012_A_CUS_TransatlanticBargain.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>198</sup> Gates, Robert M 2011.: The Security and Defense Agenda (Future of NATO), 2011, <https://archive.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581> (08.06.2019).

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Hallams, A Transatlantic Bargain for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, p. 31.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Clinton, America's Pacific Century; Shortly after the publication of then State Secretary Clinton's article, President Obama explained the motivation for his administration to dedicate more resources to the Asia-Pacific in a speech he delivered in front of the Australian Parliament on November 17, cf. Obama, Barack 2011: Remarks By President Obama to the Australian Parliament, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/>

European NATO allies to take care of their backyard in security and if necessary military terms, gave the Obama administration an incentive to turn its attention to a region that could become a security challenge for the United States: Asia-Pacific, especially China.<sup>202</sup> The security challenge Washington saw in Beijing and the wider Asia-Pacific region prompted the Obama administration to dedicate more of its strategic attention to East Asia thereby reducing its defense presence in Europe.<sup>203</sup> This decision was informed by the conviction that European allies would be capable of absorbing the vacuum the partial re-orientation of the US military would cause. Reducing its military footprint in Europe preceded the “rebalance.” Already by the end of the Cold War, the United States had brought home 85% of its troops from Europe.<sup>204</sup> Beyond this, the US Air Force had closed two-thirds of its European bases.<sup>205</sup> While the troop reductions did not reflect Europe’s diminished role in America’s strategic calculus, rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific had already been initiated since the early 1990s with both President Clinton and George W. Bush ascribing high priority to that region.<sup>206</sup> This trend was going to continue under the Obama administration, beginning with the National Military Strategy (NMS) of 2011, published in February that year. In it, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral M. G. Mullen, laid out the groundwork for what would later be known as pivoting toward East Asia. Under the section “Strengthen International and Regional Security” Europe is mentioned only as fourth important region the United States should be paying attention to, proceeded by the Caribbean, South and Central America; the Broader Middle East; and Africa.<sup>207</sup> Nearly two

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<sup>202</sup> 17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament (08.06.2019).

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Ross, Robert S.: What the Pivot means for Transatlantic Relations. Separate Course or new Opportunity for Engagement. In: GMF Publication: Transatlantic security cooperation in Asia after the US pivot, 2013, pp. 17–18.

<sup>204</sup> N.B.: For an in-depth discussion of the Obama administration’s rationale for the rebalance to Asia, cf. Chollet, *The Long Game*, pp. 54–59.

<sup>205</sup> N.B.: A former Deputy Assistant Secretary of defense for Europe and NATO who served under Obama stated: “The 2012/13 withdrawal of force structure from NATO Europe was part of a longer development that has been set in motion after the Cold War,” author interview 1.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Ross, What the Pivot means for Transatlantic Relations, p. 18.

<sup>207</sup> Cf. Hallams, A Transatlantic Bargain for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, p. 28.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 2011: National Military Strategy of the United States of America. Redefining America’s Military Leadership, 2011, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/2011-national-military-strategy.pdf> (08.06.2019), pp. 11–12.

pages are dedicated to the Asia-Pacific region in contrast to two paragraphs outlining Europe's importance in partnering with the United States.<sup>208</sup> Consequently, the list of activities the United States planned to maintain and expand with allies and potential partners in East Asia was vaster in comparison to engaging with its NATO allies. In addition to fighting terrorism (in Afghanistan), Ballistic Missile Defense, counter-trafficking, and nonproliferation listed as areas of cooperation, the NMS does not fail to reprimand the Europeans to halt reducing their defense spending.<sup>209</sup> Turkey is the only NATO ally that is mentioned by name regarding its potentially "critical role" in stabilizing the Middle East and the Levant, Northern Africa, the Balkans, and the Caucasus.<sup>210</sup> The shift in priorities comes even more to the fore in the Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) 2012 titled "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense." Under the headline "A Challenging Global Security Environment," the DSG lists the "rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific" region as the second most important activity to keep the United States and its allies safe after the task of countering (international) terrorism.<sup>211</sup> Europe is ranked fourth in this section and described as being "home to *some* of America's most stalwart allies and partners (...). Europe is our principal partner in seeking global and economic security, and will remain so for the foreseeable future."<sup>212</sup>

The language used to describe Europe and the US allies it hosts in the US National Security Strategy 2010 is slightly stronger: "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the pre-eminent security alliance in the world today. With our 27 NATO allies (...) we will strengthen our collective ability to promote security, deter vital threats, and defend our people."<sup>213</sup> In contrast to 2010, the 2012 DSG points out that most European allies "are now producers of security rather than consumers of

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<sup>208</sup> Cf. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Military Strategy of the United States, 2011, pp. 12–14.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> Department of Defense 2012: Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership. Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense, 2012,  
[https://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Strategic\\_Guidance.pdf](https://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf)  
(08.06.2019), pp. 1–2.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

<sup>213</sup> President of the United States, National Security Strategy 2010, 2010,  
[https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf) (08.06.2019), p. 41.

it. Combined with the drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan, this has created a strategic opportunity to rebalance the U.S. military investment in Europe, moving from a focus on current conflicts to a focus on future capabilities. In keeping with this evolving strategic landscape, our posture in Europe must also evolve.”<sup>214</sup> What the last sentence meant in concrete terms was announced by then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta on January 13, 2012: two Army combat brigades were to leave Europe.<sup>215</sup> While at the time of the announcement it was not clear yet which brigades would be affected by this decision, the disengagement would result in a cut by 10,000 soldiers leaving the total of US Army personnel at 15,000 nonetheless. In the wake of the implementation of this course of action, the brigades in Baumholder and Grafenwöhr, Germany, were deactivated in 2013,<sup>216</sup> resulting in one Stryker and one airborne brigade remaining in NATO Europe. Beyond this, two fighter squadrons, a two-star numbered air force headquarters, a two-star division headquarters as well as a three-star corps headquarters were withdrawn.<sup>217</sup> While throughout the Cold War, Washington was ready to engage in two and one-half wars at the same time, the 2012 DSG broke with the so-called two-war doctrine. From now on, the US military should be “(...) capable of deterring and defeating aggression by an opportunistic adversary in one region even when our forces are committed to a large-scale operation elsewhere.”<sup>218</sup> From the strategic importance that was ascribed to the Asia-Pacific, a region the United States “will of necessity rebalance toward,”<sup>219</sup> one can deduce that the US military stopped planning for a major military confrontation in Europe. Paying more and closer attention to East Asia left many European partners puzzled at what role they would be occupying in Washington’s strategic considerations henceforth.<sup>220</sup> While these concerns did not

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<sup>214</sup> Department of Defense: Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership, p. 3.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. Svan, Jennifer H./Vandiver, John 2012: Panetta: 2 Army combat brigades will leave Europe, in: Stars and Stripes 2012, <https://www.stripes.com/news/panetta-2-army-combat-brigades-will-leave-europe-1.165867?localLinksEnabled=false#.WRbtW7zyjq0> (08.06.2019).

<sup>216</sup> Cf. Coffey, Withdrawing U.S. Forces from Europe Weakens America, 2013.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Senate Committee on Armed Services 2017: Statement of General Curtis M. Scaparrotti. Commander United States European Command March 23, 2017, p. 19, [https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Scaparrotti\\_03-23-17.pdf](https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Scaparrotti_03-23-17.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>218</sup> Defense Strategic Guidance 2012, p. 4.

<sup>219</sup> Lightfoot/Pavel, The Transatlantic Bargain After “the Pivot”, 2012, p. 2.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Chollet, The Long Game, p. 57.

correspond with how the majority of Congress viewed NATO Europe's importance, there were Congressmen, such as Representative Mike Coffman (Republican), who regarded the prospective withdrawal of two combat brigades only as the first step.<sup>221</sup> Most other Congressmen and Congresswomen continued to view NATO as a vital part of US security policy despite the administration's troop reduction plans and calls for fairer burden-sharing.<sup>222</sup> NATO was still regarded as a military and political tool to be harnessed to further collective security and to "some degree universal values, rather than US interests"<sup>223</sup> by the administration. What the US was aiming at was not so much "to build a global NATO, but rather to help other regions do more to provide for their own security and in the process become more capable every day of partnering with us to be more effectively equipped to meet global challenges"<sup>224</sup> as then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta stipulated in a speech at King's College London on January 18, 2013. Stressing the task of collective security (one of the three core tasks of NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept)<sup>225</sup> and the insistence to turn NATO into a global security provider as the Obama administration did until 2014,<sup>226</sup> collective defense was neglected. Shifting NATO's focus on collective security (in East Asia), resources would partly be pulled out of Europe because of budgetary restraints on the part of the United States which was underlined by the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance. Encouraged by the political leadership of some European allies in the Libya campaign and fueled by the strategic necessity to re-allocate resources, US administration officials continued calling on its partners to share more responsibility in an allied framework as urged by then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a budget hearing in the Senate on February 28, 2012. Other voices that emerged from the administration underpinned the stance that the United States should be leading with its allies instead of setting and implementing NATO's agenda on its own.<sup>227</sup> The reason Washington stressed the importance of

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<sup>221</sup> Cf. Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 76.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>224</sup> U.S. Department of Defense: King's College Speech, 2013, <https://archive.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1744> (08.06.2019).

<sup>225</sup> Cf. North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Active Engagement, Modern Defence. Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2010.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 91.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 96.

transatlantic multilateralism can be found in its desire to free up resources previously dedicated to Europe. The “Asian shift” launched in the National Military Strategy 2011 was echoed in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). In it, the “rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region to preserve peace and stability in the region”<sup>228</sup> was listed as the number one priority of US national security interests. Referring to the Asia-Pacific, the QDR states that “U.S. interests remain inexorably linked to the peace and security of the (...) [that] region. The Department [of Defense] is committed to implementing the President’s objective of rebalancing U.S. engagement towards this critical region.”<sup>229</sup> Mirroring these strategic deliberations, “the Pentagon is planning to station a higher proportion of American military assets in the Pacific—by 2020, 60 percent of American’s naval and air capabilities will be stationed there.”<sup>230</sup> Underpinning the shift in regional priorities, a US Base realignment and closure was stressed in light of budgetary restraints that were specifically aimed at a “comprehensive review of its [the Pentagon’s] European infrastructure.”<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, the QDR conceded that possible further cuts of the defense budget would be at the expense of “joint training and exercises that are central to our relationships with [European] allies (...).”<sup>232</sup> The Asia-Pacific region is not listed among the areas which would have to forfeit US resources. Despite the deactivation of two combat brigades in Europe, the Asia pivot was off to a modest launch, “with just 10 percent increase of naval forces in the region, greater use of port facilities in Singapore and Australia, a second missile defense site in Japan, and Marine Corps redeployments and training” as Jamie Shea, then-Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges at NATO HQ, drew an interim conclusion in April 2013, roughly one and a half years after the Pivot was announced.<sup>233</sup> In addition, the US administration itself seemed to downplay the rebalance toward Asia when Vice President Biden underlined that the United States

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<sup>228</sup> Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review 2014, 2014, [https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2014\\_Quadrennial\\_Defense\\_Review.pdf](https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf) (08.06.2019), p. V.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>230</sup> Chollet, *The Long Game*, p. 56.

<sup>231</sup> Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review 2014, p. 48.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>233</sup> N.B.: In the Cabinet Exit Memo “Department of Defense Accomplishments (2009–2016)” then Defense Minister Ashton Carter pointed out that the United States “(...) is positioning 60 percent of (...) [their] Navy and overseas Air Force assets in the Asia-Pacific region (...)" cf. Department of Defense:

would “remain both a Pacific and an Atlantic power”<sup>234</sup> in February 2013.<sup>235</sup> This reaffirmation was in line with what Secretary Clinton and Secretary Panetta said in January and February 2012, respectively. Clinton reiterated that Washington was “fully committed to maintaining a force posture in Europe that meets our enduring commitment to European security and our collective defense obligations to our NATO allies.”<sup>236</sup> Panetta on the other hand confirmed that the “United States should re[t]ain a larger military footprint in Europe than in any other place in the world.”<sup>237</sup> These rhetorical commitments translated into material engagement via rotational units in lieu of the withdrawal of the two combat brigades. Some army officials such as then commander of US Army Europe, Lt. General Mark Hertling, argued that the rotational model would be advantageous for the Europeans. While for the past 10 years prior to the decision, US-based infantrymen were deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq for the most part, thereby limiting their participation in European training missions to a limit, these units could henceforth be more engaged with their European counterparts.<sup>238</sup> These developments indicate that the US pivot had not prompted a retrenchment from Europe but rather an adjustment in posture of the American forces.

Yet, the strategic documents that were analyzed above, most importantly the DSG 2012 and QDR 2014, speak a different language insomuch as the Asia-Pacific takes priority over Europe in US strategic thinking: “Barack Obama was a self-declared

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Department of Defense Accomplishments (2009–2016), 2017, p. 3,  
<https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/FINAL-DOD-Exit-Memo.pdf> (08.06.2019).

<sup>234</sup> The White House 2013: Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to the Munich Security Conference, 2013 <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/02/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-munich-security-conference-hotel-bayeri> (08.06.2019).

<sup>235</sup> N.B.: On the point of the administration’s intent with the pivot, a former Obama administration official said: “European allies misunderstood the pivot to Asia as pivoting away from Europe which is why “rebalance” was used as a term instead. The Obama administration didn’t see that decision as a “zero-sum game”, it was not intended to be a net loss for European allies,” author interview 4, Washington, D.C., April 2, 2018.

<sup>236</sup> U.S. Department of Defense 2012: Remarks With German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, 2012, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/2009-2013-clinton/rm/2012/01/182322.htm> (08.06.2019).

<sup>237</sup> Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 85

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Svan/Vandiver, Panetta, 2012.

Pacific President who hadn't started with a focus on Europe (unlike his predecessors). He was intent on focusing on the Pacific area. In addition, Obama surrounded himself with advisors in his inner circle who didn't have much knowledge/exposure vis-à-vis Europe. While this didn't translate into outright rejection of Europe, the continent was not at the forefront of Obama's agenda either" according to a former Deputy National Security Advisor to Vice President Joseph Biden.<sup>239</sup>

### **4.3. Obama II: 2014–2016: NATO's *primus inter pares* after all?**

#### **4.3.1. Ukraine: An example of transatlantic leadership**

The political and later military conflict in Ukraine and the ensuing annexation of Crimea in March 2014 constituted the "wake-up call"<sup>240</sup> necessary to realign the United States focus on (NATO) Europe. Indeed, Congress reinforced talk of NATO not only being a political and value-based (and value exporting) organization but, first and foremost, a defense alliance that could assist Ukraine in defending itself against Russian forces. On March 27, 2014, Senator John McCain (Republican) promoted the expansion of the Magnitsky Act 2012<sup>241</sup> and the increase of sanctions against President Putin's "sources of power (...), use the upcoming NATO summit [in Wales] to enlarge the alliance, move the process for Georgia into a membership action plan, expand NATO cooperation with Ukraine (...)." <sup>242</sup> The Senate passed a non-binding military policy bill in June 2015 including provisions to provide the Ukrainian government with antiarmor systems, mortars, grenade launchers, and ammunition.<sup>243</sup> In addition, the bill stipulated that the administration ought not to

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<sup>239</sup> Cf. author interview 5, Washington, D.C., April 4, 2018.

<sup>240</sup> Nesnera de, Andre: Ukraine Crisis Seen As Wake-up Call for NATO, in: Voice of America 2014, <https://www.voanews.com/a/nato-reacts-to-ukrainian-crisis/1888939.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>241</sup> Cf. Palmer, Doug 2012: Obama signs trade, human rights bill that angers Moscow, in: Reuters 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-obama-obama-signs-trade-human-rights-bill-that-angers-moscow-idUSBRE8BD12620121214> (08.06.2019).

<sup>242</sup> US Congressional Record, Senate (CRS), March 27, 2014, "Providing for the Costs of Loan Guarantees for Ukraine," p. 1787 as quoted in Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 118.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. Herszenhorn, David M./Steinhauer, Jennifer 2015: Defying Obama, Many in Congress Press to Arm Ukraine, in: The New York Times 2015,

spend more than one half of \$300 million in aid for Ukraine unless 20% of that aid were to be earmarked for offensive weapons. The bulk of Congress members recommended NATO harness its political and cultural appeal by ways of “grant[ing] membership action plans to Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova … (...) the coalition of free democratic countries must stand united against totalitarianism.”<sup>244</sup> Referring to the difficulty of enlargement questions, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (Democrat) suggested establishing “a new category of provisional membership for nations whose military has fought alongside NATO member forces in the war on terrorism”<sup>245</sup> such as Ukraine. Others, such as Senator Marco Rubio (Republican), were more blatant when he floated the idea of inviting Georgia into the Alliance seeing as in his mind the Russian annexation of Crimea “should dispel the myth that closing NATO’s door to future allies would appease Russian aggression.”<sup>246</sup> The majority of Congress argued in favor of NATO promoting collective security and (universal) values as they had done in previous periods as well.<sup>247</sup>

The Obama administration did not follow calls from Congress in the manner the legislative branch had hoped for. In particular, the demands to send military aid to Ukraine were ignored by the executive:<sup>248</sup> “We are not taking military action to solve the Ukrainian problem (...) Ukraine is not a member of NATO (...) We don’t have those [Article Five] treaty obligations with Ukraine.”<sup>249</sup> Yet, as part of the European Reassurance Initiative the US government did provide Ukraine with non-lethal assistance such as counter-mortar radars, drones, radios, and medical equipment. President Obama also signed off on sending 20 armored Humvees and up to 200 unarmed Humvees to Kiev.<sup>250</sup> In addition, Washington responded to Ukraine’s

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/12/world/europe/defying-obama-many-in-congress-press-to-arm-ukraine.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>244</sup> CRHR, March 5, 2014, “Ukraine,” p. H2151 as quoted in Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 118.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Rubio, Marco 2014: Marco Rubio. Making Putin Pay, in: The Washington Post 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/marco-rubio-making-putin-pay/2014/03/19/86cebd2e-af75-11e3-95e8-39bef8e9a48b\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.4b55301f59de](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/marco-rubio-making-putin-pay/2014/03/19/86cebd2e-af75-11e3-95e8-39bef8e9a48b_story.html?utm_term=.4b55301f59de) (08.06.2019).

<sup>247</sup> Cf. Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 122.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. Rhodes, The world as it is, p. 272.

<sup>249</sup> The White House 2014: Statement by the President, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/28/statement-president> (08.06.2019).

<sup>250</sup> Cf. Starr, Barbara 2015: US sending \$75 million, Humvees, non-lethal aid to

request for United States “help to make their military more capable and professional (...) Washington was the first to respond to Ukraine’s requests for help, and with over \$750 million committed by 2016 in security and technical assistance, it remains by far the single largest donor.”<sup>251</sup> Part of the support came in the form of the Pentagon training Ukrainian troops, including a National Guard and special operations forces, to render the Ukrainian military force more suitable for training and cooperation with NATO forces.<sup>252</sup>

On March 6, 2014, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the State Department, Eric Rubin, affirmed that countries, including Ukraine, “need to be free to choose their membership, their alliances, their commitments to other countries, that this is basic principle of sovereignty, and therefore as a matter of basic principle NATO is an open alliance.”<sup>253</sup> While President Obama did not speak about the prospects of Ukraine joining NATO any time soon, he did declare that “Ukraine must be free to choose its own future for itself and by itself (...). So we will not accept Russia’s occupation of Crimea or its violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty.”<sup>254</sup> Secretary of State John Kerry reiterated the notion of NATO’s “open door policy” later that month.<sup>255</sup> During a visit to Romania, Vice President Joe Biden stated that common values were “the foundation of the Western alliance.”<sup>256</sup> Other members of the administration, such as Assistant Secretary of

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Ukraine, in: CNN politics 2015,  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/11/politics/ukraine-us-sends-money-humvees-non-lethal-aid/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>251</sup> Chollet, *The Long Game*, p. 169.

<sup>252</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>253</sup> US Congress, House of Representatives, Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), *U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Ukraine*, March 6, p. 32 as quoted in Petersson, *The US NATO debate*, p. 125.

<sup>254</sup> The White House 2014: Remarks by President Obama at 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Freedom Day, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/04/remarks-president-obama-25th-anniversary-freedom-day> (08.06.2019).

<sup>255</sup> U.S. Department of State 2014: Anniversaries of NATO Enlargement, 2014 <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/03/224228.htm> (08.06.2019).

<sup>256</sup> The White House 2014: Remarks by vice President Joe Biden to Romanian Civil Society Groups and Students, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/21/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-romanian-civil-society-groups-and-stude> (08.06.2019).

Defense for International Security Affairs Derek Chollet, did not forgo the opportunity to underline that NATO was first and foremost a military alliance.<sup>257</sup> While other US officials did underscore the military and political character of NATO as well, more and more voices insisted on the Alliance's role in seeking to promoting values, too.<sup>258</sup> In his remarks at the Munich Security Conference in February 2014—prior to the escalation in Ukraine—Secretary of State John Kerry underlined that the “transatlantic mission was to fight for values, for freedom.”<sup>259</sup> Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel took this logic a step further when he announced that the United States harnessed NATO among others to de-escalate the Ukraine crisis.<sup>260</sup> The Alliance should not be led by the United States solely, instead Secretary Kerry and Secretary Hagel urged their European counterparts to lead together and share the burden of leadership in their respective speeches at the Munich Security Conference in February 2014.<sup>261</sup>

President Obama summed up his idea of transatlantic leadership in a speech at the West Point Military Academy addressing Graduates on May 28, 2014: “After World War II, America had the wisdom to shape institutions to keep the peace and support human progress—from NATO to the United Nations (...) They reduce the need for unilateral American action and increase restraint among other nations (...).”<sup>262</sup> Obama’s preference for multilateral frameworks did not translate into America not leading at all. With regard to solving the Ukraine crisis, it was not the United States that led efforts, however. Instead, multilateral action steered by allies was put into practice with the so-called Normandy Format consisting of Germany, France, Russia, and Ukraine.<sup>263</sup> While the format was not under the auspices of

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<sup>257</sup> Cf. Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 126.

<sup>258</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> Cf. U.S. Department of Defense 2014: Secretary of Defense Testimony, in: U.S. Department of Defense 2014, <https://archive.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1833> (08.06.2019).

<sup>261</sup> Cf. Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 140.

<sup>262</sup> The White House 2014: Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Renzi of Italy in Joint Press Conference, in: The White House 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/27/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-renzi-italy-joint-press-confe> (08.06.2019).

<sup>263</sup> Cf. Euractiv: About. Normandy Format, n.d., <https://www.euractiv.com/topics/normandy-format/> (08.06.2019).

NATO, two transatlantic allies headed the initiative—a prime example of transatlantic burden-sharing from the viewpoint of the United States. According to a former Obama administration official, the reason for taking a backseat rested with considerations vis-à-vis Russia: “Obama didn’t want to get more deeply involved in managing the Ukraine crisis, because he did not want to suggest this was a new Cold War by portraying the crisis in Ukraine as part of a larger US-Russia competition.”<sup>264</sup> It can be concluded that the United States did not assume the leadership role vis-à-vis the Ukraine crisis European allies would have expected from Washington;<sup>265</sup> according to a former Deputy National Security Advisor to Vice President Joseph Biden, “in the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, Obama’s approach was similar to that of most Europeans, i.e. cautious. He never wanted to embark on an escalatory path with Russia over Ukraine.”<sup>266</sup> While the US administration did support the government in Kiev in words and non-lethal deeds, European allies, namely France and Germany, took diplomatic matters into their own hands. With the establishment of the Normandy format, Paris and Berlin aimed at the resolution of the conflict with the introduction of the Minsk process.<sup>267</sup>

#### **4.3.2. Reassurance: America’s rebirth as Europe’s ultimate security guarantor**

Both Congress and the Obama administration were quick in drawing the conclusion that the annexation of Crimea and Russia’s meddling in Ukraine had to result in America bolstering the transatlantic alliance. Senator John McCain (Republican), for example, insisted on the need to “(...) conduct significant contingency plans within NATO (...) especially along the eastern flank, [and] strategically shift

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<sup>264</sup> Author interview 4.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. Speck, Ulrich 2015: German Power and the Ukraine Conflict, in: Carnegie Europe 2015, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2015/03/26/german-power-and-ukraine-conflict-pub-59501> (08.06.2019) and Stanzel, Volker 2014: The Ukraine crisis and the West’s true problem. The West’s reaction to the Ukraine crisis was not as big a disaster as many think, in: European Council on Foreign Relations 2014,  
[https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_the\\_ukraine\\_crisis\\_and\\_the\\_wests\\_true\\_problem266](https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_the_ukraine_crisis_and_the_wests_true_problem266) (08.06.2019)

<sup>266</sup> Author interview 5.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. Sasse, Gwendolyn 2016: To Be or Not to Be? Ukraine’s Minsk Process, in: Carnegie Europe 2016,  
<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/62939?lang=en> (08.06.2019).

NATO military assets eastward to support deterrence”<sup>268</sup> on March 27, 2014. Reassuring European allies proved to be a bipartisan concern. On April 10, Senator Chris Murphy (Democrat) urged the administration to make good on its plans to increase US troops levels in Europe: “Secretary Hagel had already said that a third brigade is being considered, and it is time for the United States to reevaluate our historically low U.S. force strength in Europe. Even a small increase will send a clear message to our friends and our adversaries.”<sup>269</sup> The Obama administration had a very similar stance on reassurance. Susan E. Rice, President Obama’s National Security Advisor emphasized that “(...) in light of recent events, the NATO alliance and our summit this September [in Wales] will fortify the unshakable bond between Europe and the United States.”<sup>270</sup> Vice President Joe Biden affirmed in a speech in Romania on May 21 that “America’s commitment to the collective defense under Article 5 of the NATO treaty is absolutely ironclad. Its sacred commitment in the eyes of the President and myself.”<sup>271</sup> Obama himself bolstered Biden’s affirmation a couple of weeks later on June 4 when he visited Poland: “Article 5 is clear—an attack on one is an attack on all. And as allies, we have a solemn duty—a binding treaty obligation—to defend your territorial integrity. And we will.”<sup>272</sup>

Although the US President proclaimed the defense of these countries to be “a cornerstone of our own [American] security,”<sup>273</sup> the administration expected what it had sought from its allies prior to the changes in Europe’s security environment: sharing the burden of collective security and defense. According to Secretary Kerry,

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<sup>268</sup> CRS, March 27, 2014 as quoted in Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 118.

<sup>269</sup> US Congress, Senate, Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), *Transatlantic Security Challenges: Central and Eastern Europe*, April 10, No. 113–475, Washington, DC: USGPO, 2014, p. 2 as quoted in Petersson, The US NATO debate, p. 121.

<sup>270</sup> The White House 2014: Remarks by National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice at the Department of State’s Global Chiefs of Mission Conference, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/11/remarks-national-security-advisor-susan-e-rice-department-state-s-global> (08.06.2019).

<sup>271</sup> The White House, Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to Romanian Civil Society Groups and Students, 2014.

<sup>272</sup> The White House, Remarks by President Obama at 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Freedom Day, 2014.

<sup>273</sup> The White House 2014: Remarks by President Obama and President Komorowski of Poland in a Joint Press Conference, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/03/remarks-president-obama-and-president-komorowski-poland-joint-press-conf> (08.06.2019).

“every ally spending less than 2 percent of their GDP needs to dig deeper and make a concrete commitment to do more (...).”<sup>274</sup> Reversing decisions that were taken during Obama’s first tenure were greatly appreciated by Eastern European member states who long before 2014 had sought to re-focus NATO’s energy on collective defense.<sup>275</sup> On June 3, 2014, President Barack Obama announced the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) in Poland. The ERI initially provided \$1 billion in funding in fiscal year 2015<sup>276</sup> but has been increased to \$3.42 billion until 2017 thus far.<sup>277</sup> Thus, the budget for the reassurance campaign was more than tripled since its launch. As part of the ERI, funds for Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR) had been made available since March 6, 2014, when America “deployed an additional six F-15CS to augment the four already in Lithuania, fulfilling a NATO Air Policing Peacetime requirement to have quick reaction interceptor aircraft ‘ramp-ready’.”<sup>278</sup> This deployment was supplemented and followed up by the provision of air-to-air refueling support to NATO AWACS aircraft executing operations along the Eastern flank as well as military exercises and training on land, in the air and at sea while ensuring rotational presence especially in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>279</sup> The first rotational forces, members of the US Army’s 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) prior stationed in Vicenza (Italy), arrived in April 2014 as part of OAR. Upon arrival, company-sized contingents of US paratroopers were dispatched to the Baltics and Poland to increase land forces training. Shortly

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<sup>274</sup> U.S. Department of State 2014: Press Availability at NATO Headquarters, 2014, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/06/228444.htm> (08.06.2019).

<sup>275</sup> Cf. Goldgeier, *The Future of NATO*, 2010, p. 4.

<sup>276</sup> Cf. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Chief Financial Officer 2015: United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request Overview, 2015, [https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2016/FY2016\\_Budget\\_Request\\_Overview\\_Book.pdf](https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2016/FY2016_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf) (08.06.2019), pp. 3–7; N.B.: An additional 0.8\$ dollars was requested, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 3–7.

<sup>277</sup> Cf. U.S. European Command Public Affairs Office, European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) Fact Sheet, 2017, p. 1.

<sup>278</sup> House Armed Services Committee 2015: Statement of General Philip Breedlove Commander U.S. Forces Europe February 25, 2015, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20150225/103011/HHRG-114-AS00-Wstate-BreedloveUSAfp-20150225.pdf> (08.06.2019), p. 11.

<sup>279</sup> Cf. *ibid.*; N.B.: OAR countries included Poland, Baltic countries, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, cf. U.S. Army Europe: America’s Continued Commitment to European, <http://www.eur.army.mil/AtlanticResolve/> (08.06.2019).

after Russia's actions in Ukraine, the US Navy began expanding its contributions to NATO naval force deployments including more persistent deployments to the Black and Baltic Sea.<sup>280</sup> The ERI developed to consist of five different elements all designed to reassure European NATO members as well as to increase readiness levels of US military troops on the continent and its allies and partners.<sup>281</sup> These five components included rotational presence of air, ground, and sea forces throughout the continent; additional bilateral and multilateral exercises with Alliance members and partner states in Europe; improvement of infrastructure to allow for the timely movement of equipment and troops; the prepositioning of US equipment across Europe; and finally building capacities for newer NATO members and partners.<sup>282</sup> In addition to the initially deployed OAR rotational forces, the ERI funds provided for a third Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) to be brought back to Europe. The ABCT of the 4th Infantry Division from Fort Carson, Colorado, arrived in Poland on January 6, 2017,<sup>283</sup> from where it would be deployed to seven Eastern European countries and rotate on a nine-month basis.<sup>284</sup> To further bolster America's deterrence and defense posture, a Combat Aviation Brigade was shipped to Europe as well shortly after the arrival of the ABCT.<sup>285</sup> According to a former senior official at the Pentagon, "the ERI was done not only to strengthen U.S. posture in Europe but also in hopes that it would encourage Europeans to contribute more to common collective defense inside the NATO framework themselves (...) The idea for the initiative was born in the White House in May 2014; the Pentagon was charged with fleshing out the details in concert with the US European

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<sup>280</sup> Cf. House Armed Services Committee, Statement of General Philip Breedlove Commander U.S. Forces Europe February 25, 2015, p. 11.

<sup>281</sup> Cf. U.S. European Command, Operation Atlantic Resolve (Feb 2015), 2015, p. 1.

<sup>282</sup> Cf. U.S. European Command Public Affairs Office: European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) Fact Sheet, 2017, p. 1.

<sup>283</sup> Cf. Walters, Scott 2016: 3ABCT kicks off Europe arrival with seaport operations, in: U.S. Army 2016, [https://www.army.mil/article/180379/3abct\\_kicks\\_off\\_europe\\_arrival\\_with\\_seaport\\_operations](https://www.army.mil/article/180379/3abct_kicks_off_europe_arrival_with_seaport_operations) (08.06.2019).

<sup>284</sup> Cf. U.S. European Command Public Affairs Office, European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) Fact Sheet, 2017, p. 1.

<sup>285</sup> Cf. Vandiver, John 2017: Army beefs up Europe forces with arrival of aviation brigade, in: Stars and Stripes 2017, <https://www.stripes.com/news/army-beefs-up-europe-forces-with-arrival-of-aviation-brigade-1.453161#.WTqOrxPyjq0> (08.06.2019).

Command and SACEUR (...).”<sup>286</sup> Apart from the US-only led ERI, Washington contributed to NATO-initiated reassurance measures as well, not least of all through the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which was established in September 2014 at the Alliance’s Wales Summit. The United States is one of the lead nations of the so-called Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) consisting of a multinational battlegroup battalion each.<sup>287</sup> At NATO’s Warsaw Summit in July 2016, allies decided to deploy an EFP battalion to the three Baltic Republics as well as Poland. The United States agreed to serve as lead nation in Poland counting on other European nations to assume responsibility for the remaining three states: “Obama wanted to see all flags fly on the EFP battalions to make it as multilateral as possible” said a former Deputy National Security Advisor to Vice President Joseph Biden.<sup>288</sup> While the Obama administration wanted European allies to be “on board and in lead of some EFP-battalions to show Russia that it is not dealing with the US alone,” the concept of the Enhanced-Forward Presence originated in Washington, “though we would have preferred a battalion from a single ally instead of many.”<sup>289</sup> The US’s vows to reassure allies were reflected in EUCOM’s strategy adjustment in October 2015 (although it was published in January 2016 only). In it, six theatre priorities were outlined with the deterrence of Russia featuring at the top, closely followed by enabling the NATO Alliance (reassurance).<sup>290</sup> The revised EUCOM strategy also conveyed the idea that Europe remained a hub for American global crisis management operations and had not lost its importance. This circumstance together with listing the deterrence of Russia as EUCOM’s number one priority signifies how the US’s overall national security strategy was increasingly geared toward the latter goal. The growing significance of (NATO) Europe’s security in American strategic thinking was reflected in national strategy documents as well. The National Security Strategy (NSS) 2015, the first of its kind to be published since 2010, is insightful to that end. While the advance of the rebalance to Asia and the Pacific is listed before the goal of “strengthening [the] enduring alliance with Europe” to shape the international order, the document underlines that America’s commitment to NATO

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<sup>286</sup> Author interview 6, Washington, D.C., April 12, 2018.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Enhanced Forward Presence. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, n.d., <https://shape.nato.int/efp> (08.06.2019).

<sup>288</sup> Author interview 5.

<sup>289</sup> Author interview 1.

<sup>290</sup> Cf. United States European Command, Theater Strategy, 2015, p. 4.

is “ironclad.”<sup>291</sup> The same wording was used by administration officials such as Vice President Biden. Furthermore, contributing to NATO’s crisis management capability and readiness signified that NATO Europe was of unabated importance to the United States when it came to having a logistical stepping stone into the world’s most turbulent regions. The NSS not only conveys the (regained) importance the United States attaches to protecting NATO Europe; it also underpins the value alliances such as the transatlantic one have for America to face its (national) security challenges: “Our allies will remain central to all these efforts. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the world’s preeminent multilateral alliance (...). NATO is stronger and more cohesive than at any point in its history, especially due to contributions of the Nordic countries and newer members like Poland and the Baltic countries.”<sup>292</sup>

The National Military Strategy 2015 mirrored the NSS in its essence. Accordingly, the Asia-Pacific region was listed before Europe under the headline of “Global Networks of Allies and Partners” elaborating the value of alliances and partnerships to collectively maintain international security and stability—one of the premier approaches chosen by the Obama administration.<sup>293</sup> On the other hand, “Russia’s military actions (...) undermining regional security”<sup>294</sup> is mentioned before countries located in the Asia-Pacific region as posing a strategic challenge to America’s security. The order in which countries are listed under the section “strategic environment” could indicate that whereas Russia poses an immediate threat to the United States and its allies in Europe, the challenges countries such as China and North Korea present are of a long-term nature.<sup>295</sup> Referring back to the NSS 2015, it is reasonable to assume that the Obama administration was preparing the United States for an “Asia-first strategy” which ought to be lasting.<sup>296</sup> After all, the strategy

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<sup>291</sup> President of the United States 2015: National Security Strategy 2015, 2015, [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015\\_national\\_security\\_strategy\\_2.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy_2.pdf) (08.06.2019), pp. 24–25.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>293</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 9.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>295</sup> Cf. Department of Defense, Department of Defense Accomplishments, 2017, pp. 3–5.

<sup>296</sup> Driver, Darrell 2016: Burden sharing and the future of NATO. Wandering between two worlds. In: Defense & Security Analysis, 2016, pp. 7–8 and President of the United States, National Security Strategy 2015, p. 24.

singles out the pivot to Asia as among the US's most important regional priorities. Similar wording can be found in the 2016 defense budget proposal which lists the rebalance toward Asia as the Pentagon's "number one" priority while underlining that a presence in Europe would be maintained nevertheless—especially against the backdrop of a resurgent Russia.<sup>297</sup> Considering that "countering terrorists and other violent extremists" ranked very high on the US's security policy agenda (in this numeration it only lies fifth) under Obama as well, listing Russia as the second biggest challenge to the United States in the Pentagon's farewell document of the Obama administration is quite significant.<sup>298</sup> This is not least because of the "reset" the 44th President attempted to launch with Russia.<sup>299</sup> Against this backdrop, it does not come as a surprise that the United States did demonstrate decisive and swift leadership when it came to reassuring European allies. Reassurance did not only come in words but also in deeds as has been set out in detail above.

#### **4.3.3. The Obama administration: Proponents of transatlantic multilateralism**

Taking all four topics into consideration—the air-campaign in Libya, the pivot to Asia, crisis management toward Ukraine as well as reassurance—it becomes apparent that the strategic outlook of US foreign and security policy during the Obama years was focused on the Asia-Pacific region. Re-shifting attention toward this area traverses the strategic documents that were examined above and are matched by the actions that were taken consequently, especially but not exclusively during the "Obama I" period. The examinations of Obama's crisis management and reassurance did not affect the US's overall strategic emphasis on Asia-Pacific as the last Secretary of Defense's farewell document clearly demonstrates. However, it is also

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<sup>297</sup> Cf. U.S. Department of Defense 2015: Department of Defense Briefing by Deputy Secretary Work and Adm. Winnefeld on the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget in the Pentagon Briefing Room, 2015,  
<https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/607002/department-of-defense-briefing-by-deputy-secretary-work-and-adm-winnefeld-on-th/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>298</sup> Cf. Department of Defense, Department of Defense Accomplishments, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>299</sup> Cf. The White House 2010: U.S.–Russia Relations. "Reset" Fact Sheet, 2010,  
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/us-russia-relations-reset-fact-sheet> (08.06.2019).

apparent that the Obama administration did not turn its back on NATO Europe entirely because of the pivot, as has often been claimed in academia and policy circles on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>300</sup> Section 4.3 “Obama II” underlines that the US administration did show enough flexibility to react to the “crisis year 2014” leaving NATO Europe in a pinch grip with threats emanating from the Eastern and Southern flank simultaneously. Formulated differently, the US’s NATO policy toward NATO Europe was event-driven and not as strategic as policies toward the Asia-Pacific were under Obama. This chapter also revealed a lack of traditional leadership on the part of Washington in a twofold manner. Firstly, comparing the “Obama I” to the “Obama II” section, it becomes apparent that the administration was inconsistent in its NATO policy. The first time frame suggests a partial retreat from Europe which materialized only to be reversed in large parts during the second time frame. One could argue that administration’s inconsistency was the one and only constant in its NATO policy. The second departure from “traditional” leadership as exercised by previous administrations pertains to the Obama administration’s reliance on multilateralism. Going through established multilateral organizations such as NATO was a key feature of US foreign and security policy during these years. Working with others and through organizations did shape other fields than the US’s NATO policy and can be found in various shapes. The Obama administration’s proclivity to go about their Alliance policies in that manner can be explained by the legitimacy multilateralism bestowed on American actions. The other explanation is more practical in nature: by relying more on its allies, the United States was able to put burden-sharing into practice—a long-time goal of every American administration since the presidency of Eisenhower.

The second narrative seemed to be of even higher importance than the first one considering the government statements examined in this chapter. As demonstrated above, shifting more of the burden to European allies did not equal a total absence of leadership—Congress especially but also the administration in parts since 2014 emphasized Washington’s central (leadership) role in NATO. Nevertheless, the Obama administration (including Congress) demanded more of its allies than its predecessors and succeeded in parts as the examples of Libya and Ukraine underline. While the “pivot” to Asia-Pacific was decided, and implemented nationally,

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<sup>300</sup> Cf. Chollet, *The Long Game*, pp. 52–53.

administration officials did insist that America's NATO allies should follow its example and engage the region together with Washington. Even reassurance, which oftentimes is falsely portrayed as an exclusive American endeavor, demonstrates the Obama administration's insistence on multilateralism. After all, it was not only the US government deciding and implementing reassurance measures but NATO as a whole. Although the United States was the first ally to swiftly demonstrate assurance bilaterally, it can be argued that Germany is conceptionally and materially the cornerstone of the heart of reassurance toward Eastern NATO allies, namely through the Readiness Action Plan.<sup>301</sup> Shifting more of the transatlantic burden toward European allies has not gone unnoticed or without criticism. American scholar Robert J. Lieber argues, for example, that "an emphasis on working in and through international institutions (...), a de-emphasis on relationships with allies, and a desire to focus on domestic priorities"<sup>302</sup> as part of Obama's doctrine creates more instability than stability. While this is a disputable thesis, the fact remains that both Obama's critiques and defenders alike—not least the administration itself—ascribed the 44th president of the United States a preference for multilateralism. Beyond the two reasons already mentioned, increasing legitimacy for one's actions and a higher level of burden-sharing, the changed nature of threats called for the emphasis on multilateralism: "The emergence of these threats [e.g. terrorism, rogue states, failed states, and the spread of WMD] has (...) made U.S. national security more dependent (...) on international collective institutions and cooperation with other states."<sup>303</sup> Drawing on that assessment, one can make the argument that NATO remained of importance to the United States under Obama for at least four reasons. First and foremost, being a member of NATO, Washington was able to influence and shape the security landscape of the European member states. Upholding European and, to an extent, Eurasian stability due to Turkey's membership enables American decision-makers to concentrate on other hot spots in the world. Thus, retaining a (light) footprint in NATO Europe, thereby demonstrating commitment (and reassurance), helps America ensure stability in Europe which frees

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<sup>301</sup> Cf. Matlé, Aylin/Varwick, Johannes 2016: NATO-Integration und Bündnissolidarität. Der Fall Deutschland, in: Die Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift 2016, <https://www.oemz-online.at/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=11405579> (08.06.2019).

<sup>302</sup> Lieber, Robert J.: Retreat and its Consequences. American Foreign Policy and the Problem of World Order. New York 2016, p. 15.

<sup>303</sup> Melby, NATO and U.S. Global Security Interests, pp. 37–38.

up resources to be allocated to other regions such as Asia-Pacific. With this in mind, this is the second argument for American NATO membership; the US's expectation is that when the Europeans are dedicating more funds to their own security and to their immediate neighborhood, this equals a form of "regional burden-sharing." While burden-sharing is a perennial issue on the Alliance's agenda, the United States persists on maintaining its unilateral freedom of action. To that end, Europe serves as a hub for American global and regional power projection ambitions, most notably into the Middle East, which is the third argument in favor of the Alliance.<sup>304</sup> Finally, the United States benefits from NATO insofar as the organization helps to prevent a militarily strong Europe independent from the United States. Through the Alliance, Washington can seek to impact the behavior of its European allies.<sup>305</sup> This, exerting influence over its allies, was part of the motivation for the United States to join NATO in the first place and found its most prominent expression in the transatlantic bargain and the related concept of burden-sharing. Why the United States and others for that matter join alliances to begin with and what kind of bargaining dynamic such a body develops after its inception is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>304</sup> Cf. Steel, *Europe*, p. 71.

<sup>305</sup> Cf. Melby, *NATO and U.S. Global Security Interests*, pp. 48–49.



## 5. Alliance theories in the context of an everlasting Alliance

Seeing as the overall topic of this book is intra-alliance management, the goal of this chapter is to forge an understanding of alliance theories in general and Glenn Snyder's alliance security dilemma in particular, so as to grasp the bargaining dynamics within NATO. Factoring in the shortcomings of Snyder's theoretical model to explain the reasons allies act in a certain manner, an element of neoclassical realism will be applied to better understand the relations between the United States and the respective case study countries. Combining both approaches can help dissect the dynamics within NATO as precisely as possible. In fact, "only by marrying the insights of structural theory to a more contextual approach (...) can we truly explain international phenomena."<sup>306</sup> The appeal of testing and applying Snyder's alliance security dilemma to the transatlantic alliance lies in the fact that the model has rarely been applied to NATO thus far.<sup>307</sup> This is not to say that other alliances, pre-dating the creation of NATO, have not served as empirical case studies to highlight the utility of the alliance security dilemma. An alliance comprising 29 democratic states differs starkly from two or three countries forming a temporary alliance, however.<sup>308</sup> Thus, it is of importance for the validity of the model to apply its logic to NATO to test whether Snyder's assumptions only fit alliances of the nature that existed prior to the formation of the transatlantic alliance, for according to Fordham and Poast: "(...) Snyder (...), who explicitly stresses the importance of multilateralism in alliance formation (...) focuses on bilateral alliances when seeking to formalize his arguments."<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Lobell, Steven E./Ripsman, Norrin M./Taliaferro, Jeffrey W.: Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics. New York 2016, p. 88.

<sup>307</sup> N.B.: Cf., for example, Reichinger, Sharing the burden – sharing the lead?.

<sup>308</sup> N.B.: According to the political scientists Benjamin Fordham and Paul Poast, "nearly all recent empirical research on alliances employs a (...) dyadic research design (...).", Fordham, Benjamin/Poast, Paul: All Alliances are multilateral. Rethinking Alliance Formation. In: Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 60/ 2016, pp. 840–865, 843.

<sup>309</sup> Fordham, Benjamin/Poast, Paul, All Alliances are multilateral. Rethinking Alliance Formation, p. 842.

## 5.1. Alliance theories in general

Alliance theories are part of the vast literature on international relations: “Understanding the formation and consequences of formal military alliances is a research program that is central to the study of international relations. Military alliances help define and shape the nature of interactions between countries (...).”<sup>310</sup> Alliance theories generally seek to explain why and how alliances are formed.<sup>311</sup> Following from that exploration, the management of alliances has then been studied. Before investigating both subgenres further—*alliance formation and management*—a brief overview of the definition and conceptualization of alliances is necessary. Commonly, alliances, of whichever form, are characterized as “an association to further the common interests of the members; *specifically*: a confederation of nations by treaty” and “a league or compact for mutual support or common action.”<sup>312</sup> Propponents of one theoretical school, (neo)-realism, are of the opinion that alliances form a “formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between at least two sovereign states,”<sup>313</sup> according to one of their most prominent scholars, Stephen M. Walt. Put differently, an alliance “is a promise of mutual military assistance between two or more states” in the words of political scientist Arnold Wolfers.<sup>314</sup> Following from this definition, “alliances are about seeking security in a multistate system.”<sup>315</sup> Furthermore, alliances can be distinguished according to their organi-

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<sup>310</sup> Benson, Brett V./Clinton, Joshua D.: Assessing the Variation of Formal Military Alliances. In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 60/ 2016, pp. 866–898, 867.

<sup>311</sup> N.B.: Among the most important of these works are Gulick, Edward: Europe’s Classical Balance of Power. A Case History of the Theory and Practice of One of the Great Concepts of European Statecraft. New York 1955; Liska, Georg: Nations in Alliance. The Limits of Interdependence. Baltimore 1962; Morgenthau, Hans J.: Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace. New York 1993; Osgood, Robert E.: Alliances and American Foreign Policy. Baltimore 1968; Rothstein, Robert L.: Alliances and Small Powers. New York 1968; Schroder, Paul W.: Alliances, 1815–1945. Weapons of Power and Tools of Management. In: Knorr, Klaus (ed.): Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems. Lawrence 1976, pp. 227–262; Walt, Stephen: The Origins of Alliances. Ithaca 1987; Waltz, Kenneth: Theory of International Politics. New York 1979.

<sup>312</sup> Herd/Kriendler, NATO in an age of uncertainty, p. 1.

<sup>313</sup> Walt, Stephen M.: The Origins of Alliances. Ithaca 1987, p. 1.

<sup>314</sup> Wolfers, Arnold: Alliance Policy in the Cold War. Baltimore 1959, p. 268.

<sup>315</sup> Fordham/Poast, All Alliances are multilateral, p. 841.

zational make up. Some are structured hierarchically, while others follow an egalitarian order. In the former group of alliances, stark imbalances of capabilities between various member states are common, while egalitarian groupings are characterized by equally disseminated resources. Beyond this, hierarchical alliances can take a hegemonic or imperial form. If small(er) powers accept the leadership of a strong state among themselves, one can speak of a hegemonic alliance.<sup>316</sup> By contrast, an imperial alliance is based on coercion exercised by the strongest member state. Apart from these generic groupings of alliances, a more nuanced account of why alliances come into existence cannot be provided without recourse to different schools of thought prevalent in theories of international relations. The most common approach to explaining why alliances are formed is (classical) realism.<sup>317</sup> All subgenres of this theory, in particular classical realism and structural realism, have at their core the so-called security dilemma. In its most generic form, the dilemma, originally formulated by John Herz,<sup>318</sup> supposes that states are confronted with an anarchical international system which does not offer protection against threats. Hence, every state must provide for its own security. In doing so, state A prompts state B to take a similar course in order to fend off a potential aggression by state A. Central to the dilemma is the hypothesis that each state assumes its own actions are defensive while other state's actions—which in fact can be seen as reactions—are offensive in nature. This mutually suspicious perception oftentimes results in an armament spiral bearing the potential of (military) escalation.<sup>319</sup> One way to mitigate the security dilemma insomuch as to strengthen one's defense capabilities is to form an alliance:<sup>320</sup> “Alliances consist of states that have some but not all of their interests in common. The common interest is ordinarily a negative one: fear of other

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<sup>316</sup> Cf. Triepel von, Heinrich: *Die Hegemonie. Ein Buch von führenden Staaten.* Stuttgart 1961.

<sup>317</sup> Cf. Warwick, NATO in Unordnung, p. 26 et seqq.

<sup>318</sup> Cf. Herz, John H.: Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma. In: *World Politics*, Vol. 2/ 1950, pp. 157–180.

<sup>319</sup> Cf. Herz, Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma, pp. 157–180.

<sup>320</sup> N.B.: While the formation of alliances is a commonly observable phenomenon in international relations, it is not the preferred course of action for proponents of realism. From their viewpoint, a state should seek to accumulate national defense resources in order to balance against another state or group of states in order to secure its existence, cf. Teutmeyer, *Deutschland und die NATO*, p. 37.

states.”<sup>321</sup> Thus, structural realists in particular assume that states group together because of exogenous, not endogenous, reasons which is why George Liska concluded that “alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something.”<sup>322</sup> Adding onto this assumption, it should be mentioned that “the viability of an alliance may hinge on the exclusion of a particular state.”<sup>323</sup> Utilizing an alliance to counter the overwhelming power of another alliance or a single state is a logical deduction for realists.<sup>324</sup>

However, Stephen M. Walt examined that groups of states do not automatically balance against other states only if they perceive its power as threatening to their own existence.<sup>325</sup> Neoliberal institutionalists, too, assume that international relations operate in anarchy. However, proponents of this school of thought do not regard this condition as an obstacle to lasting alliances. The reason for that can be found in the conviction that states can expect rewards from working closely with other nations.<sup>326</sup> The most obvious reward members of an alliance can reap lies in the degree of cooperation among allies which provides the member states with more than an insurance policy against potential threats. Constant cooperation ensures access to a pool of credible information on the respective behavior of other states which in turn increases the level of predictability. Establishing a set of common rules and norms helps member states of an alliance to lower the number of unknowns and insecurity which is a crucial concern of security policies. Similarly to the school of neoliberal institutionalists, liberalists argue that alliances are formed when a convergence of national preferences between states exists.<sup>327</sup> Their working assumption is that (democratic) states have similar convictions that prompt them to

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<sup>321</sup> Waltz, Theory of International Politics, p. 166.

<sup>322</sup> Liska, Nations in Alliance, p. 12.

<sup>323</sup> Fordham/Poast, All Alliances are multilateral, p. 841.

<sup>324</sup> Cf. Liska, Nations in Alliance, p. 12.

<sup>325</sup> N.B.: An alternative to balancing power is to bandwagon with a stronger state, especially smaller states are found to view that as a viable approach. However, Stephen Walt arrived at the conclusion that bandwagoning is much less often done than is balancing, cf. Walt, The Origins of Alliances, p. 33.

<sup>326</sup> N.B.: Cooperation is only possible from this theory’s perspective so long as costs do not outweigh benefits, cf. Wallander, Celeste A.: Institutional Assets and Adaptability. NATO after the Cold War. In: International Organizations, Vol. 54/ 2000, pp. 705–736, 706.

<sup>327</sup> Cf., for example, Moravcsik, Andrew: The Choice for Europe. Ithaca 1998.

work closely with like-minded nations.<sup>328</sup> Unlike neoliberal institutionalism and even more so realism, the school of liberalism seeks the causes of a state's foreign policy in domestic structures.<sup>329</sup> Finally, proponents of constructivism portend that alliances are not formed because of an exogenous reason, that is, a common threat. Rather, common ideas and values bring nation states together to forge an alliance.<sup>330</sup> An example of constructivism as applied to the formation of alliances is the transatlantic alliance which "is an alliance of identity that is not threat-based, but reflects a relationship between states based on a common understanding of their shared traits."<sup>331</sup> In that regard, realism and constructivism are farthest apart in their assumptions, while the latter share some core assumptions with neoliberal institutionalism and liberalism. All the theories introduced above have something to say about the management of alliances as well, although (neo)-realist considerations are most developed in that regard. Three patterns of explanation are commonly referred to in order to make sense of internal alliance dealings: hegemonic stability, the internal security dilemma, and alliance cohesion. While the first and the last are interpreted differently by different schools of thought, the internal (alliance) security dilemma is a distinctly neorealist model which, serving as the theoretical foundation of this study, will be examined more thoroughly in Section 5.3.2. It suffices to say at this point that Glenn Snyder's alliance security dilemma is most suited for parsing the interactions between member states in an alliance, as it allows processes to be captured, whereas the other two approaches are output-oriented. The hegemonic stability approach assumes that weaker (smaller) states voluntarily subordinate themselves to a hegemon so long as the latter provides a public good (e.g., protection) which all alliance members benefit from.<sup>332</sup> However, the approach is biased inasmuch as it seeks to explain a condition, hegemonic stability, that it pre-assumes

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<sup>328</sup> N.B.: For further insights into the importance of regime types in forming alliances, cf., for example, Fordham/Poast: All Alliances are multilateral, p. 848.

<sup>329</sup> Cf. Masala, Carlo/Scheffler, Alessandro Corvaja: Alliances. In: Balzacq, Thierry/Cavelty, Myriam Dunn (ed.): Routledge Handbook of Security Studies. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Abingdon 2017, pp. 349–359, 351.

<sup>330</sup> Cf. Risse-Kappen, Thomas: Collective Identity in a Democratic Community. The Case of NATO. In: Katzenstein, Peter (ed.): The Culture of National Security. Norms and Identity in World Politics, New York 1996, pp. 357–399, 387.

<sup>331</sup> Masala/Scheffler, Alliances, p. 352.

<sup>332</sup> Cf., for example, Kindleberger, Charles: The World in Depression 1929–1938.

exists. The alliance cohesion approach is similarly short-sighted as it aims to explain an outcome that the pattern assumes *ex ante*. Thus, both the hegemonic stability and alliance cohesion design are insufficient to capture the reciprocal dynamics of alliance management in that they are mostly descriptive instead of explorative as is the alliance security dilemma approach. The reason NATO member states are used to test Snyder's alliance security dilemma can be explained by the vast body of literature on his alliance theory model, as well as others for that matter, which are applied to pre-1939 alliances, both theoretically and empirically, as the literature review section has demonstrated.<sup>333</sup>

## **5.2. Explaining NATO's existence and endurance from a theoretical viewpoint**

According to international relations' scholar Mark Webber, four main subjects are addressed in a NATO context while theorizing on the Alliance is neglected: key episodes of the Alliance's recent history; NATO's internal transformation process with regard to its command structure, bureaucracy, military doctrine, and military cooperation; member states preferences; and a critical examination of NATO's actions such as its operations.<sup>334</sup> Rarely is the alliance approached from a theoretical standpoint however.<sup>335</sup>

Yet, NATO is not a "theory free" subject either. Three elements stand out in relation to the Alliance and international relations theory. Firstly, NATO is embedded in a "security community" context in the sense it was originally drawn up by political scientist Karl Deutsch in 1957.<sup>336</sup> In other words, according to this conception, the Alliance lies at the heart of transatlanticism by being the epitome of "shared identities, values, and meanings."<sup>337</sup> A second strand of literature holds a narrower view

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Berkley 1986.

<sup>333</sup> N.B.: For more information on this aspect, cf. Thies, Why NATO endures and Snyder, Alliance Politics.

<sup>334</sup> Cf. Webber, Mark: Introduction. Is NATO a theory-free zone? In: Hyde-Price/Adrian/Webber, Mark (ed.): Theorising NATO. New perspectives on the Atlantic alliance. Abingdon 2016, pp. 1–21, 3–7.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

of NATO as a specific occurrence in international relations. The most dominant feature of this body of literature pertains to alliance theories which were discussed in detail above in a more general sense. In addition to alliance theories, NATO is increasingly explored in the context of institutionalism. Proponents of this approach view NATO as an institution rather than an alliance with the former being described as much more permanent than the latter.<sup>338</sup> Thirdly, scholars apply different theoretical approaches to explore specific alliance activities such as NATO's enlargement or behavior toward Russia.<sup>339</sup> Commonly, mainstream theories including realism, liberalism, and, especially since the early 1990s, constructivism, as explained in Section 5.1., are used to describe NATO's actions in particular fields.<sup>340</sup> Some scholars use these theories to gauge whether or not NATO would survive the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. After it did, the task of these researchers became to explain why it prevailed when it had been written off. Typically, a second group of scholars harness theoretical prisms to explain NATO's existence altogether. For example, the Norwegian political scientist Sten Rynning argues that the assumptions of classical realism are most adequate to understand why NATO endures. According to him, NATO "gathers (together) states sharing a particular status quo conception of the world and who have a geopolitical interest in protecting it."<sup>341</sup> In a similar vein, Jonathan Sireci and Damon Coletta view NATO as "a brokerage house" allowing member states to pursue other objectives while enjoying protection from the alliance they are a member of.<sup>342</sup>

It can be contended that the school of realism sees in NATO "no more than a classical defense alliance"<sup>343</sup> which is not kept together by values but rather security

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<sup>338</sup> Cf. Webber, Introduction. Is NATO a theory-free zone?, p. 8.

<sup>339</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>340</sup> N.B.: Other approaches are increasingly used to explain NATO's transformation as well as alliance behavior in general, cf. Varwick, Johannes: NATO in (Un-) Ordnung. Wie transatlantische Sicherheit neu verhandelt wird. Schwalbach 2017, p. 26 et seqq.

<sup>341</sup> Rynning, Sten: NATO Renewed. The Power and Purpose of Transatlantic Cooperation. New York 2005, p. 178.

<sup>342</sup> Coletta, Damon/Sireci, Jonathan: Enduring without an Enemy. NATO's Realist Foundation. In: Perspectives, Vol. 17/ 2009, pp. 57–81, 58.

<sup>343</sup> Mahncke, Dieter: Transatlantic Security. Joint Venture at Risk? In: Mahncke, Dieter/Rees, Wyn/Thompson, Wayne: Redefining Transatlantic Security Relations. The Challenge of Change. Manchester 2004, p. 52 and Varwick, NATO in (Un-)Ordnung, p. 29.

interests.<sup>344</sup> This assumption, however, is flawed in the sense that both elements, values and interests, are not necessarily contradictory. US foreign policy has been aspiring to conciliate both elements since the country was founded. One can even conclusively argue that one often follows from the other.<sup>345</sup> Striving to combine interests and values has marked NATO's history since its foundation as well. Following the school of liberalist thought, the transatlantic alliance was founded by countries that "have been nurtured on civil liberties and on the fundamental human rights."<sup>346</sup> While this assessment holds true for the United States and most European founding member states, Portugal (as well as Turkey and Greece in 1952) marks a stark exception in this context.<sup>347</sup> Harking back to realist proponents, security interests cannot be ignored when considering the formation and constellation of member states of an alliance. Portugal was not invited to join NATO because of its ample track record of defending civil liberties; rather, the country's geographical location was of high strategic importance to the alliance.<sup>348</sup> Neoliberal institutionalism, according to its name incorporating elements of liberalism, views NATO as more than an alliance. From their viewpoint, NATO's creators had a "breathtaking vision ... of moving erstwhile adversaries from the battlefield to the boardroom, from conflict to cooperation, to so intertwine the security and economic interests of the member states that war in Europe would become all but unthinkable."<sup>349</sup> In line with establishing institutions to intertwine allies' security interests, thereby raising the threshold of abandoning one's partner, the founding document of NATO, the Washington Treaty, did not specify an expiration date, which had been a novelty to that point.<sup>350</sup> Instead of scrapping one's alliance membership, the transatlantic allies are required to adapt their posture in light of ever changing security conditions.

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<sup>344</sup> Cf. Warwick, NATO in (Un-)Ordnung, p. 30.

<sup>345</sup> Cf., for example, Hemmer, American Pendulum.

<sup>346</sup> U.S. Department of State: Summary of a Memorandum Representing Mr. Bevin's Views on the Formation of a Western Union as quoted in Thies, Why NATO endures, p. 88.

<sup>347</sup> Cf. Samp, Lisa Sawyer 2017: How to deal with authoritarianism inside NATO, in: War on the rocks 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/08/how-to-deal-with-authoritarianism-inside-nato/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>348</sup> Cf. Yost, NATO's Balancing Act, p. 4.

<sup>349</sup> Hunter, Robert: Maximizing NATO. In: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 78/ 1999, pp. 190–203.

<sup>350</sup> Cf. NATO: North Atlantic Treaty 1949, 2012, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/stock\\_publications/20120822\\_nato\\_treaty\\_en\\_light\\_2009.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20120822_nato_treaty_en_light_2009.pdf) (08.06.2019).

That adaption process is not limited to exogenous circumstances. If the alliance were to endure indefinitely as anticipated by the founding document, member states “would have to be more solicitous of each other’s interests than was the case for previous alliances.”<sup>351</sup>

It is not just (classical) realism and liberalism that are used to explain NATO’s endurance and existence. Constructivist scholars such as Victoria Kitchen and Andreas Behnke argue that NATO is being hold together by common values and shared historical backgrounds.<sup>352</sup> The political scientists Brian Lai and Dan Reiter come to a similar conclusion in that “states with similar regime types are more likely to ally with each other but only after 1945.”<sup>353</sup> Applied to NATO, one can make the assessment that Western European states as well as North America were inclined to cooperate with one another seeing as they felt beholden to similar values and objectives against the backdrop of an ideological rivalry.<sup>354</sup>

Referring to ideational explanations does not suffice to understand the formation and endurance of NATO though, as realist scholars would argue. After all, a significant part of the Alliance did and does consist of a unified military command structure.<sup>355</sup> Common military structures, the geographical proximity as well as the highly-developed road and rail network in Europe ensured the swift movement of NATO members’ armed forces from one’s respective home soil to an ally’s territory. This was not an end in itself but was thought to facilitate the defense of the Alliance’s territory when faced with an attack by the Soviet Union. The result was not only an increased collective defense posture but it also led to the perennial member state’s habit to pass on the buck in order to dedicate more resources to domestic issues.<sup>356</sup> Evidently, however, NATO has been withstanding the manifold prophecies of its doom. The reasons for the transatlantic alliance’s endurance thus

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<sup>351</sup> Thies, Why NATO endures, p. 122.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. Behnke, Andreas: NATO’s Security Discourse after the Cold War. Representing the West. London 2013, pp. 183–191 and Kitchen, Veronica M.: The Globalisation of NATO. Intervention, Security and Identity. London 2010, pp. 26, 118–120.

<sup>353</sup> Lai, Brian/Reiter, Dan: Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816–1992. In: Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 44/ 2000, pp. 203–227, 223.

<sup>354</sup> Cf. Thies, Why NATO endures, p. 124.

<sup>355</sup> Cf. for example, Giegerich, Die NATO, p. 26 et seqq.

<sup>356</sup> Cf. Thies, Why NATO endures, p. 128.

far can be divided into two categories: reasons of necessity and reasons of convenience. The former category consists of a lack of alternatives and a lack of resources. Particularly in the wake of the late 1940s, an “ideological split” between the East and West was emerging which left both sides with few, if no readily available, alternative alliances as had been the case prior to the establishment of NATO in 1949 and the Warsaw Pact in 1955, respectively. While from the end of the Cold War until today, alternative patterns of action have become more feasible and popular—that is, unilateralism, coalitions of the willing, abstention—it cannot be denied that (Western European) NATO’s member states hardly have any alternative choice in terms of alliance structures.<sup>357</sup> In addition, the establishment of a unified military command alongside the pooling of resources was chiefly born of necessity rather than choice, particularly in the early years of NATO’s existence.<sup>358</sup> Unlike pre-1945 alliances, NATO member states have been encouraging one another to grow militarily stronger to contribute more to allied defense.<sup>359</sup> The second category of factors explaining NATO’s endurance in the light of burden-sharing can be referred to as reasons of choice. Firstly, joining an alliance consisting mostly of democracies contributes to a different atmosphere when dealing with one another. Within NATO, confronting an ally does not become a matter of retreating into neutrality or abandoning a partner as it did in pre-1945 alliances. A crucial factor in this regard is the consultation mechanisms that are at play in democracies and are transferred into the alliance context. In other words, most member states are used to opposition to their ideas as well as consequently striking compromises.<sup>360</sup> Secondly, in comparison to pre-1945 alliances, NATO allies had more obvious common interests in founding and maintaining the organization. The most pressing issues at the time of the Alliance’s establishment pertained to upholding the status quo in Europe after World War II. A territorial loss of one of the allies would have resulted in the weakening of everyone else’s position.<sup>361</sup> Against the backdrop of these four subcategories of factors contributing to NATO’s endurance, each theoretical approach explains them differently. As the following two chapters will explain, of all the various schools, Snyder’s alliance security dilemma model and elements of neoclassical

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<sup>357</sup> Cf. Sloan, Permanent Alliance, pp. 16–19.

<sup>358</sup> Cf. Yost, NATO’s Balancing Act, p. 4.

<sup>359</sup> Cf. Thies, Why NATO endures, p. 135.

<sup>360</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 296.

<sup>361</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 135.

realism are best suited to explain NATO's member state's management and ultimately its endurance though.

### **5.3. Alliance politics and the merit of the alliance security dilemma**

#### **5.3.1. Alliance formation in a multipolar system: The primary alliance dilemma**

While a great many scholars—regardless of their theoretical preference—dwelled extensively on the formation of alliances as laid out in Section 5.1., Snyder's take on why states group together will briefly be introduced before turning to his alliance security dilemma, the model that helps us understand the dynamics within an alliance after its formation. His theoretical explorations will be applied to NATO in general as well as the selection of case study countries in particular which are deduced from Snyder's findings. Like other neorealist theorists, Snyder assumes that alliances are formed to enhance one's own security so long as the costs do not outweigh the benefits.<sup>362</sup> Already in 1948, Hans Morgenthau—though not the founder of realism in international relations—pointed out that “a policy of alliances is (...) a matter not of principle but of expediency. A nation will shun alliances if it believes that it is strong enough to hold its own unaided or that the burden of the commitments resulting from the alliance is likely to outweigh the advantages to be expected.”<sup>363</sup> The latter mainly includes increasing security from an ally's commitment to coming to one's aid in case of an attack. According to Snyder, the most important security benefits of joining an alliance include enhanced deterrence against an attack on oneself as well as enhanced capabilities for defense in case deterrence fails.<sup>364</sup> The degree to which security enhancement by joining an alliance is of advantage to a state is determined by three factors: a state's own need for security, the degree to which a prospective ally will fulfill that need, and the actual terms of an alliance.<sup>365</sup> One can conclude that the most important motive for the

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<sup>362</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 165–166.

<sup>363</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 102.

<sup>364</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 43.

<sup>365</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 45 et seqq.

founding countries of the alliance, chiefly Western Europe, was the prospect of enhancing their security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union by cooperating with the United States. For Western European leaders, the benefits clearly outweighed the costs. The same holds true for Washington; otherwise, the United States would not have become a (founding) member of the transatlantic alliance, according to Snyder's assumptions.

A benefit that is deduced from enhanced security provided by one's allies pertains to the topic of burden-sharing: "The stronger their allies, the greater their own freedom to transfer resources from defense to other uses, like health, welfare, housing, and the like."<sup>366</sup> Relying on partners to step up their efforts in order to "freeing resources for more politically appealing (...) activities at home"<sup>367</sup> seems to be a phenomenon peculiar to NATO.<sup>368</sup> This issue, the risk of others free-riding at one's own expense is one of the biggest costs of joining an alliance; grouping together with other states means sacrificing autonomy by committing oneself to maintaining the security of other states.<sup>369</sup> More precisely, the autonomy-security trade-off is better described by the "twin-risk" of being entrapped by or abandoned by an ally. The former includes becoming involved in a conflict on behalf of only one ally or the alliance as a whole. Abandonment can occur when an ally feels restrained in its freedom of action.<sup>370</sup> To mitigate one's prospective costs while increasing the benefits, allies are not chosen randomly. Rather, they follow the logic of each state pursuing two aims when selecting possible allies: to be in the most powerful alliance and to maximize one's own share of the alliance's net benefit.<sup>371</sup> Yet, these generic goals must be divided into general and particular interests in order to capture which precise patterns states follow in choosing their allies. The general interests pertain to the anarchic structure of the international system which a neorealist such as Snyder presupposes.<sup>372</sup> This assumption in turn leads to a state gravitating for

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<sup>366</sup> Thies, Why NATO endures, p. 126.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>368</sup> Cf. Thies, Wallace: Alliances and Collective Goods. A Reappraisal. In: The Journal of Conflict Resolutions, Vol. 31/ 1987, pp. 319–320, 298, 332,

<sup>369</sup> Cf. Thies, Why NATO endures, p. 129.

<sup>370</sup> Cf. Snyder, Alliance Politics, pp. 43–44.

<sup>371</sup> Cf. Snyder, Glenn H.: The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics. In: World Politics, Vol. 4/ 1984, pp. 461–495, 464.

<sup>372</sup> Cf. ibid.

security—one way to achieve this is to join an alliance.<sup>373</sup> Interests then more precisely influence which country to ally with. These include considering ideological, ethnic, economic, or prestige values.<sup>374</sup> Again, referring to the foundation of NATO, one can conclude that both categories of interests were considered. For one, both North America and Western Europe—although the latter were initially keener on aligning themselves with the United States than vice versa—sought the creation of NATO to enhance their defense posture. Secondly, the similarity in the (internal) make-up of the founding states is striking, that is, the vast overlap in political and economic constitution as well as their shared history and (ethnic) origin. Common political constitutions are also assumed to influence the management of alliances, as was discussed in Section 5.2. regarding the longevity of NATO. Before considering the specifics of the transatlantic alliance's internal bargaining procedures, a general introduction into Snyder's secondary alliance dilemma should be provided. While Snyder assumes that the primary interest of a given state in managing an alliance is to control or influence a partner to minimize one's own costs and risks,<sup>375</sup> dealing with one's allies can also be directed at promoting joint benefits. To be sure, being part of an alliance is a collaborative exercise in and of itself. According to Snyder, the most fundamental common interest is to preserve an alliance. Considering his primary alliance dilemma, this assessment ought to be augmented insofar as the benefits must outweigh the costs incurred through a membership to subscribe to the goal of alliance cohesion. Whether or not preserving NATO is its member states' highest priority will be explored in the individual case studies in Chapter 6 among others; in particular, the examination of the case study countries' perceptions and their subsequent (re)actions of and to American actions, an American withdrawal is supposed to be revealing in that context. Before diving into the case studies however, the model with which to analyze the bargaining mechanisms within NATO must be introduced, namely Glenn Snyder's elaborations on intra-alliance management and his alliance security dilemma.

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<sup>373</sup> Cf. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, p. 17.

<sup>374</sup> Cf. Snyder, *The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics*, p. 464.

<sup>375</sup> Cf., *Alliance Politics*, p. 165.

### 5.3.2. The secondary alliance dilemma: How to deal with one's allies

Snyder identifies three features determining the intra-alliance bargaining power of a given ally: dependence, commitment, and interest. The first determinant is to be understood as the net benefits<sup>376</sup> of being part of an alliance weighed against alternative means of protection.<sup>377</sup> Following Snyder's elaborations, alliance dependence is best captured by defining it in military terms consisting of three elements: a state's need for military assistance, the degree to which an ally satisfies that need, and the availability of alternative ways of meeting the need for military assistance.<sup>378</sup> The second category is especially pertinent to this thesis' research question and will thus be focused on more closely, as part of US engagement in and with NATO Europe is informed by the concept of commitment. These three elements do not exclude other benefits attained from an alliance membership, which may include reputation (for credibility), domestic stability, and imperial ventures.<sup>379</sup> The factors adding up to dependence are constantly changing because the affairs outside and within an alliance are in frequent flux. This in turn means that one's bargaining power is not fixed either; dependence on the alliance varies with a state's bargaining edge: the greater the dependence, the lesser an ally's bargaining dominance is. This hypothesis must be born in mind regarding the examination of the three case studies. After all, the historical assumption is that the United States has been the least dependent NATO ally due to its military prowess. This in turn suggests that Washington attains the bargaining edge within the Alliance. The analysis of the case study countries will reveal whether this assumption holds true. In addition, the empirical part of this thesis aims to shed light on the European allies' susceptibility to American impact. Commitment to an alliance, the second element of intra-alliance bargaining influence, can be defined as an "obligation to fulfill a promise."<sup>380</sup> As with the determinant of dependence, commitment is not static but varies, that is, the

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<sup>376</sup> N.B.: The reason benefits are described in net terms is attributable to the circumstance that advantages received from an alliance membership must be compared to the costs that one's commitment entail, cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 167.

<sup>377</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>378</sup> N.B.: According to neo-realism, alternatives could include rearming unilaterally or entering into an alliance with another state, cf. *ibid.*

<sup>379</sup> Cf. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, pp. 33–49.

<sup>380</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 169.

degree of commitment cannot be defined in absolute terms. For both the state in question and even more so from the ally's viewpoint, commitment is difficult to gauge before acting on it becomes necessary.

One way of grasping commitment includes the following two suggestions: a (verbal) promise in an alliance contract and an interest in assisting an ally that would exist without a formal contract. The latter usually pertains to an *á priori* strategic interest of preventing an ally's resources from becoming available to a possible opponent and coming to this ally's aid in order to prevent the former.<sup>381</sup> If those interests exist and are known, it becomes difficult for a state to credibly threaten to withhold support in times of a crisis.<sup>382</sup> Thus, a militarily weaker state can more credibly threaten to withhold support than a stronger partner. Following from that observation, the former can have more bargaining power contrary to initial assumptions. As with dependence, strong commitment weakens an ally's bargaining edge: the more committed an ally is to its partners, the less credible threats to abandon the alliance become. In other words: "Deeper alliance agreements impose higher costs while shallower commitments impose lower costs."<sup>383</sup> According to Snyder, such threats are "the most important tactical source of alliance bargaining power."<sup>384</sup>

Part of the interest in the use of empirical research lies in exploring whether or not the case study countries perceived a US withdrawal from NATO Europe. Depending on the results, one can draw conclusions as to whether a threat to and the action of retrenching from an alliance resonates sufficiently with allies to be pressured into stepping up their contributions to the common defense pact. While one can reasonably argue that the United States has traditionally been the least dependent ally,<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 169.

<sup>382</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>383</sup> Benson, Brett V./Clinton, Joshua D.: Assessing the Variation of Formal Military Alliances. In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 60/ 2016, pp. 866–898, 873.

<sup>384</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 168.

<sup>385</sup> N.B.: It should be noted though that Europe has been serving as a hub for US equipment and personnel designated for the defense of Europe as well as for crisis management operations in the Middle East, cf. Heritage Foundation 2018: Europe, 2018, <https://www.heritage.org/military-strength/assessing-the-global-operating-environment/europe> (08.06.2019) and cf. Stoutamire, Dan 2017: Romanian air base proving crucial as US hub ahead of major exercises,

speaking of Washington as the most committed ally on average is also sensible. Hence, one could assume that the United States has had a mixed record of bargaining power in the Alliance. Whether or not this holds true for the Obama years as well is to be examined in the case studies. After all, exploring how the Europeans perceive of and react to US commitment will help reveal Washington's bargaining edge. The third determinant of bargaining power within an alliance is an ally's interests. Most commonly, two value dimensions are involved in negotiations between allies. On the one hand, allies share common interests, which, according to Snyder, are ultimately the preservation of the alliance;<sup>386</sup> a sub-goal of the latter is to resist a common adversary and potential threats. Yet, the views on how to go about doing that can differ within an alliance. Differences can arise in the following security areas: military preparedness, diplomatic appeals, and military action. Allies must come to terms with how to best share the benefits and costs in that regard. Understanding the burden-sharing equitation of NATO during Barack Obama's two presidential terms is one major goal of this study. On the other hand, allies have individual interests that are in conflict with another ally's interests, which the distribution of costs and benefits is but one example of. The latter is the subject allies wrangle about, on which they make offers and demands. To achieve one's goal, the parties involved threaten to foil the realization of the common interest(s) to prevail on issues which they are in conflict about. Other issues that might prompt discontent among allies include the admission of new alliance members as well as the decision which threats to focus on.<sup>387</sup> The three determinants—dependence, commitment, interest—of intra-alliance management influence the maneuvering of states in the alliance security dilemma. As much as the formation of an alliance is a security-autonomy trade-off so is the management thereof, that is, allies have to achieve a balance between gaining security and relinquishing autonomy by allying with others. The balance is subject to constant changes due to the alliance's security environment, interests, capabilities, and the domestic situation of its members.<sup>388</sup> To better grasp the security-autonomy trade-off, Michael Mandelbaum's distinction

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in: Stars and Stripes 2017, <https://www.stripes.com/news/romanian-air-base-proving-crucial-as-us-hub-ahead-of-major-exercises-1.464105#.WPZirOR1rcs> (08.06.2019).

<sup>386</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 170–171.

<sup>387</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>388</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 167.

between the fear of abandonment and fear of entrapment should be considered. The “twin-fear” of the materialization of either characterizes Snyder’s alliance security dilemma.<sup>389</sup> Forms of abandonment may include a formal withdrawal from an alliance, the failure to fulfill one’s commitments and/or to support an ally diplomatically in a (military) conflict with a (common) adversary.<sup>390</sup> Entrapment on the other hand may range from an ally’s outright and unexpected attack of a (common) adversary by provoking an opponent into attacking, to not budging in diplomatic quarrel resulting in war.<sup>391</sup> Attempting to avoid one outcome increases the chances of the other fear occurring. To avoid being abandoned by one’s allies requires increasing one’s commitment and support of a partner state whose temptation to defect will be reduced in turn due to an increase in its security. Moving closer to one’s ally to prevent him from defection ought to result in not only non-abandonment but also the establishment of one’s perception of loyalty.<sup>392</sup> Building up one’s reputation of being a loyal ally pursues the goal of remaining appealing to allies.<sup>393</sup> Alternatively, one can threaten to defect unless other allies (or one ally in particular) fail to be more supportive of the alliance. This tactic bears the risk of being abandoned if the pressured ally is considering retreating anyhow. Exerting pressure could in fact determine an ally’s decision for abandonment. In addition, this tactic only works if one’s commitment to the alliance is low. Otherwise, a threat of abandonment will ring hollow. Finding out whether this is an effective tactic is one of the objectives of this study. To this end, one of the hypotheses assumes that European allies are doing less in response to a perceived American withdrawal to galvanize the United States to become re-engaged. However, attempting to avoid abandonment increases the risk of entrapment. For example, increasing one’s reputation for loyalty may decrease one’s influence to restrain an ally starting a conflict with a third party. Building up a reputation for coming to an ally’s aid also increases the risks of buck-passing and free riding in an alliance.<sup>394</sup> The most obvious responses to avoiding entrapment include moving away from an ally, reducing one’s commitment or

<sup>389</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 181.

<sup>390</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>391</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 185–186.

<sup>392</sup> N.B.: For a more detailed discussion on the issue of credibility within alliances, cf. Walt, Stephen M.: *Alliances in a Unipolar World*. In: *World Politics*, Vol. 61/ 2009, pp. 86–120, 97.

<sup>393</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 184.

<sup>394</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

threatening to withhold support. Another option is deterrence though: If an ally is perceived as reckless<sup>395</sup> and unrestrainable, gathering one's own capabilities behind this particular ally could prompt an adversary to back down, thereby avoiding military conflict and one's entrapment in it.<sup>396</sup> As hinted at above, threatening to withhold one's support only works credibly if one's commitment to the alliance and/or a particular ally is low. Hence, entrapment is more likely to occur when one has a strategic interest in (defending) a partner.<sup>397</sup>

As mentioned above, the categories of dependence, commitment and interest determine an ally's choices and thus actions. When mutual dependence between allies is high and symmetrical, the dilemma will be tense since both sets of fears of abandonment and entrapment will be high; each ally will try to avoid both outcomes.<sup>398</sup> An asymmetrical balance of dependence will increase the more dependent an ally's fear of abandonment is and inversely the less dependent an ally's fear of entrapment.<sup>399</sup> On the point of commitment, one can conclude that being highly dedicated to an alliance decreases the chances of abandonment while at the same time the probability of entrapment is increased and vice versa. Some circumstances allow for the withholding of support without abandoning an ally though: "abstain[ing] in contingencies not explicitly mentioned"<sup>400</sup> in an alliance agreement need not be perceived as abandonment per se. Since the intensity of commitment may change due to internal and external reasons, the fear of the "double-dangers" does too. The relative worries about abandonment and entrapment also change when the allies' interests differ. Facing a common enemy lowers the risk of being abandoned, while entrapment is more likely now that it is not seen as such given that all allies agree on the necessity to fend off an opponent, militarily or otherwise. Yet, when allies face different threats or are in conflict over different issues with the same enemy, both the likelihood of abandonment and entrapment will be high.<sup>401</sup> With regard to

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<sup>395</sup> N.B.: Thomas Schelling's stipulation about the "threat that leaves something to chance" is informative in this regard as he assumes that ambiguity is necessary in order for deterrence to be successful, cf. Schelling, Thomas C.: *The Strategy of Conflict*. Cambridge 1960, pp. 187–203.

<sup>396</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 185.

<sup>397</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 185 et seqq.

<sup>398</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>399</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>401</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

the European NATO allies which will be parsed, examining the factor of dependence will be of special importance seeing as traditionally speaking the United States has provided them with (nuclear) protection. Furthermore, the case studies will have to show whether the various case study countries fear abandonment more than they dread the prospect of entrapment as Snyder's elaborations suggest. To determine the dependence, commitment and interest of an ally in the framework of the alliance security dilemma, observing past behavior of partner states is a recommended course.<sup>402</sup> While past actions might serve as a guide, this recommendation is not sufficient to thoroughly gauge intra-alliance management determinants. Rather, a look inside a state's so-called black box seems to be a useful tool to examine how dependent, committed, and interested an ally is on, to and in its alliance. Determining the various degrees of these aspects will help to judge how and why a state takes certain actions within that alliance.

#### **5.4. Adding a perception layer: Neoclassical realism**

Just as much as structural realism, neoclassical realism (NCR) assumes that nation states "construct their foreign policy primarily with an eye to the threats and opportunities that arise in the international system, which shape each state's range of policy options."<sup>403</sup> Thus, on the face of it, NCR is externally driven, reacting to the material distribution of power in the international system. Yet, proponents of NCR do not concur with neorealism's view that states inevitably "respond as fluidly and mechanically to changing international circumstance as structural realist balance-of-power-theories imply."<sup>404</sup> The reason for the waning of that conception can be related to four factors that NCR scholars deem crucial to the external behavior of states: perception and misperception, clarity of systemic signals in the international system, problems of rationality, and the mobilization of domestic resources.<sup>405</sup> All four factors challenge the systemic assumptions of neorealist thought, including Snyder's model of the alliance security dilemma. While he does not entirely deny that dynamics within the "black-box" influence a state's external affairs, Snyder

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<sup>402</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 189.

<sup>403</sup> Lobell/Ripsman/Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, p. 19.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>405</sup> N.B.: For a detailed overview of all four elements, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 20–25.

primarily focuses on systemic factors as his alliance security dilemma illustrates. When exploring the way a state behaves within an alliance, which policies a state pursues, domestic factors do not count for much in his model. Neoclassical realists challenge the assumption that the balance-of-power solely determines a state's outward actions incorporating the four domestic-related factors mentioned above. The category of perception/misperception will be focused on in particular to properly understand European allies' reactions to US engagement in NATO Europe. Thus, in addition to the (re)actions to US commitment, the reason why a European ally reacts the way it does will be scrutinized in the empirical part of this study. To understand the motivation for a given action, the perception of US engagement will be investigated lest a causal link between the independent and dependent variable cannot be sufficiently established.<sup>406</sup> Failing to do the latter would provide an opening to misinterpretations resulting in faulty conclusions. To illustrate the point, an example can be given: Germany, one of the case studies in this book, has been investing more in NATO since 2013/2014. Stepping up its effort need not be a reaction to a perceived US retrenchment from NATO Europe though but could have other reasons such as lengthy planning periods in defense matters, domestic reasons, or a European-based explanation. Hence, examining the perception of a state's decision-makers will tighten the assessment of American impact on European NATO allies.<sup>407</sup> While the other three element proponents of NCR that delineate to understand a state's foreign policy are of value to other academic endeavors, they will not be considered in this study. The category "clarity of systemic signals in the international system" mainly focuses on adversarial relationships between states. This work, however, studies intra-alliance management above all—while Snyder's model does not exclude the consideration of external developments and opponents to an alliance, the focus lies on the dynamics within it. "Rationality" will not be factored in because it is largely used in the context of crises that state leaders find themselves in, which does not apply to this study. Beyond this, grasping rational decision-making would necessitate to explore each state leaders as well as their

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<sup>406</sup> N.B.: For a discussion of the relationship between perception and motivation, cf. Lobell/Ripsman/Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, pp. 20–21.

<sup>407</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 20.

subordinate's psychological make-up. Doing this, however, would exceed the limitations of this work and is not deemed to be necessary to arrive at conclusive results. Finally, the category "mobilization of domestic resources" is not considered in this study as foreign policy decision oftentimes is disconnected from public opinion.<sup>408</sup> As with the third category, including opposition and other influencing groups within each case study countries, society, parliamentary and otherwise would go beyond the limits of this study and is not expected to generate a value added.

To summarize, neoclassical realism combines structural and unit-level characteristics, including the element of perception of decision-makers, to account for a state's foreign policy.<sup>409</sup> Thus, this branch of realist thought is more suited to explain the existence of NATO after 1990 unlike its predecessor structural realism.<sup>410</sup> Yet, structural realist approaches are useful to explain a state's intra-alliance management which NCR is poorly equipped to do.<sup>411</sup> Hence, combining these two strands of realism is expected to make up for the other's shortcomings and thereby help deliver a dense conclusion of this thesis' research question. Several criticisms of NCR could be listed at this point.<sup>412</sup> Seeing as it is not the intention of this work to test the theory itself,<sup>413</sup> only the shortcomings in relation to alliances will be dealt with here.

Firstly, NCR has been charged with lacking a "mechanism for identifying *ex ante* the ordering of the relevant intervening variables shaping a state's foreign policy (or, indeed, behavior within an alliance) and therefore lends itself to ad hoc hypothesizing."<sup>414</sup> While this criticism is valid, it has no bearing on this dissertation as it

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<sup>408</sup> Cf. Matlé/Varwick, NATO-Integration und Bündnissolidarität, 2016.

<sup>409</sup> Cf. Sperling, James: Neo-classical realism and alliance politics. In: Hyde-Price/Adrian/ Webber, Mark (ed.): Theorising NATO. New perspectives on the Atlantic alliance. Abingdon 2016, pp. 61–92, 61.

<sup>410</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>411</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>412</sup> N.B.: For a discussion of the limitations of the theory, cf. Lobell/Ripsman/Taliaferro, Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics, pp. 175–183.

<sup>413</sup> N.B.: For further information on this useful theoretical approach, cf. *ibid.*, p. 26 et seqq.

<sup>414</sup> Sperling, Neo-classical realism and alliance politics, p. 81.

does not seek to test and/or further develop the theory of NCR. Thus, “ad hoc hypothesizing” is not an impediment, not least because the major theoretical framework of this work is Snyder’s alliance security dilemma. In addition, there is no need to sort the intervening variables according to their relevance as only one, perception, is considered in this thesis.

A second limitation of NCR which might present an obstacle to this work’s research pertains to the claim that the theory does not offer a mechanism “for understanding the aggregation of national policies of collective action inside or outside an alliance.”<sup>415</sup> According to critics, NCR can only point out variables influencing the outcome of national foreign policy decisions but cannot explain alliance behavior as such. This limitation is of no concern to applying elements of NCR to this work though since it is not the goal of this research project to explain NATO’s actions as a whole at a given point in time. Rather, the impact of the US’s NATO Europe engagement with the NATO policies of the case study countries’ is the focal point of this research.

## **5.5. Two forms of realism combined**

As most literature on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is “descriptive, policy-prescriptive and empirically focused”<sup>416</sup> this thesis aims to bring empirical evidence and theoretical suppositions closer together. Combining two forms of realism, a structural intra-alliance management model coupled with an element of the unit-centric neoclassical realism, is a promising approach to better capture NATO in theory as it is a useful guide to scrutinize members of the alliance in practice. The transatlantic alliance is “neither the result of merely the Balance of Power and the structural logic of material factors, nor can it be attributed to the ideational preferences of individual member states.”<sup>417</sup>

Starting from the theoretical findings that were outlined above, the following chapters will examine how alliance member states deal with one another and if and how

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<sup>415</sup> Sperling, Neo-classical realism and alliance politics, p. 81.

<sup>416</sup> Webber, Is NATO a theory-free zone?, p. 23.

<sup>417</sup> Hyde-Price, Adrian: Theorising NATO. In: Hyde-Price/Adrian/Webber, Mark (ed.): Theorising NATO. New perspectives on the Atlantic alliance. Abingdon 2016, pp. 22–40, 36.

these actions influence the outlook of NATO at large. To be more precise, the impact of one member, the United States, on others, Germany, Poland, and Turkey, respectively, will be explored and analyzed in detail. From the findings in turn it is expected to answer the research question of this thesis. In addition, it is hoped that the empirical findings will give an indication of the utility of the theoretical findings this chapter has presented.



## 6. Case studies: America's role in European security and defense

The following chapter is the core of this study as they deal with the exploration of the dependent variables, that is, the NATO and defense policies of European allies, namely Germany, Poland, and Turkey. Before focusing on the respective country case studies, an overview of this work's methodological approach will be provided. This study is based on a qualitative (holistic/historically and policy-oriented) approach instead of a quantitative (scientistic) one. While the latter has increasingly found its way into political science in recent years, methods in this category are not suitable to the research question guiding this study. Since the 1950s, scientistic approaches have increasingly penetrated the sphere of political science, including the sub-genre of international relations. One reason for this circumstance is rooted in the attempt to code empirical findings in numbers and figures in order to analyze them using formulas borrowed from natural science. Deded from that, proponents of this approach assume that this form of data can yield reliable conclusions. Merging methods from the natural sciences into the social sciences became known as "behavioralism" in the United States, while in the German-speaking sphere this collective strand was coined positivism. Proponents of this movement criticized qualitative methods as being unscientific and instead called for the introduction of quantitative methods into the study of political science, including the study of international relations.<sup>418</sup> Those defending hermeneutic-traditionalist approaches in the study of political and social sciences purported that these subjects did not lend themselves to being investigated using quantitative methods. This controversy sparked the so-called behavioralism dispute which in Germany became known as the positivism dispute.<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Cf. Falter, Jürgen W.: Die Behavioralismus-Kontroverse in der amerikanischen Politikwissenschaft. In: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, Vol. 31/ 1979, pp. 1–24.

<sup>419</sup> Cf. Menzel, Ulrich/Varga, Katharina: Theorien und Geschichte der Lehre von den Internationalen Beziehungen. Einführung und systematische Bibliographie. Hamburg 1999, p. 27.

While behavioralism prevailed in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, the movement resonated only moderately in the German political and social sciences communities; if anything, behaviorism was regarded as helpful in the study of elections rather than international relations. Only later, in the 1980s, with the emergence of regime theory did behaviorism also spread into the sphere of international relations in Germany.<sup>420</sup> This trend was observable until the mid-1990s. In reaction to this trend, hermeneutic and interpretative methods re-emerged in order to reveal causal links in addition to constructivist, post-structuralist approaches—among others—thereby questioning scientist methods.<sup>421</sup> While there are still disputes about which approach—quantitative or qualitative—is more suitable to research questions of political science,<sup>422</sup> more and more advocates of the discipline are convinced that the method should fit the subject of study as well as the underlying theory that is used.<sup>423</sup> Accordingly, this study relies on qualitative methods as the subject and the theoretical foundation of the dissertation call for it. The impact of the United States under the Obama administration on NATO and defense policies of European allies cannot be explored quantitatively, nor approximated in that manner. Firstly, empirical data on the subject are selective as the topic at hand is a sensitive one. Hence, causation can only be approximated which is why this study works with the concept of plausibility. Even a thoroughly applied process-tracing would leave room for doubt with regard to the establishment of a causal link between the independent and dependent variable(s) as some data (e.g., personal notes of decision-makers) are kept under wraps for years, sometimes decades.<sup>424</sup> Secondly, and as the revelation of causation is nearly impossible, qualitative methods allow for more analytical interpretation (including the methods that this study is

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<sup>420</sup> Cf. Menzel/Varga, *Theorien und Geschichte der Lehre von den Internationalen Beziehungen*, p. 27.

<sup>421</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>422</sup> N.B.: As proclaimed by Rudra Sil still more “divergence than convergence among scholars on issues pertaining to method” exists, cf. Sil, Rudra: Research communities, constrained pluralism, and the role of eclecticism. In: Masoud, Tarek E./Shapiro, Ian/Smith, Rogers M. (ed.): *Problems and methods in the study of politics*. Cambridge 2004, pp. 307–331, 310.

<sup>423</sup> Cf. Sil, *Problems and methods in the study of politics*, pp. 307–331.

<sup>424</sup> Cf., for example, The United States Department of Justice 2016: *Declassification Frequently Asked Questions*, 2016, <https://www.justice.gov/open/declassification/declassification-faq> (08.06. 2019).

based on). This characteristic suits studies attempting to understand the impact one country has on another in a policy field which cannot be expressed solely in numbers. In addition to the subject-related reasons why qualitative methods are chosen over quantitative ones, the theoretical assumptions this study rests on call for such an approach. The elements taken from neoclassical realism (NCR) are suited to “qualitative case studies, rather than large-N quantitative analysis. Quantitative methods are useful for discerning general patterns of correlation, and they can be useful as a reality check to confirm the generalizability of findings based on small-N case studies, but (...) they cannot determine whether hypothesized independent variables actually had any (...) impact on the policy choice of any individual state in a large-N study.”<sup>425</sup> While this study does not attempt to establish a causal link between the independent and dependent variable(s) as would be called for by NCR, discerning plausibility is also better achieved through qualitative case studies. Glenn Snyder’s alliance security dilemma (ASD) is rooted in neorealism, a sub-discipline of international relations’ theory, very closely related to NCR which is why the same methodological premises can be applied to the ASD as well. It complies with the assumptions of NCR that “requires [researchers] to get inside the ‘black box’ of the state to be able to answer (...) questions [of why particular policies were selected] with reasonable certainty. For this reason, it is incumbent upon researchers, where possible, to go beyond secondary historical sources to do so.”<sup>426</sup> While the ASD does not necessarily want to look into the “black box” of a state, this model nonetheless assumes that nation states are the crucial players in international relations. As such, it is inevitable to resort to official accounts of decision-makers which represent primary sources just as much as expert interviews and relevant indicators such as a country’s defense budget do.

All three sets of sources will be used in the three following case studies. They are each organized along topical “mini case studies” within the country case study. The topical case studies are structured along the following order: action, perception, analysis. The action part describes how the case study country has acted in a certain policy area; the perception part evaluates the motivation of why a given decision

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<sup>425</sup> Lobell/Ripsman/Taliaferro, Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics, p. 131.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

was taken; finally, the concluding analysis binds the former two together and examines the hypotheses in relation to the country's study findings. These chapters will summarize the findings of the four issue areas (NATO's intervention in Libya 2011; the US pivot/American retrenchment from NATO Europe; crisis management toward Ukraine; NATO reassurance after 2014) and answer this dissertation's research question of how the Obama administration impacted European allies' NATO and defense policies during the evaluation period. Possible divergences between official stances and (unofficial) explanations as to what motivated Berlin to act the way it did will be taken into account, too. Differences of opinion among different interview groups, that is, ministry staff and think tankers, will be outlined if detected as well. Finally, the hypotheses guiding this thesis will be examined in light of the case study findings.

Official documents and accounts as well as secondary sources and the relevant indicators are mostly used to explain the action part, while the expert interviews are used for the perception part in order to verify and/or explain the decisions that were taken. Investigating actions and the corresponding perception/motives is in line with the hypotheses guiding this study which will be introduced in Section 5.2. The perception/motive aspect is mirrored in the first part of the hypotheses (1 and 2), while the action part is reflected in the second part of the hypotheses (3 and 4).

## 6.1. Methodology

Three European NATO member states are examined in the case studies by ways of applying three methods, a triangulation, to explore the different cases. The decisive advantage of applying different methods to the same object of study lies in the increased validity if all methods arrive at the same conclusion.<sup>427</sup> Taken together, this approach could be described as a condensed version of process-tracing, which "attempts to identify intervening causal processes—the causal chain and the causal

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<sup>427</sup> N.B.: While this study is not based on analytical eclecticism as defined by Rudra Sil, it should be noted that the value of his approach is acknowledged as "for the social sciences as a whole, eclecticism serves a distinctive and valuable function by expanding the scope of communication across a wider range of research communities, and by experimenting with permutations of components of varied research products (...)," Sil, Research communities, constrained pluralism, and the role of eclecticism, p. 309.

mechanism—between independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable.”<sup>428</sup> The reason a traditional process-tracing is not considered appropriate for the purpose of this study pertains to this method attempting to establish causal links between the independent and dependent variable. The factors that will not be considered in the context of this study but which may still influence either variables are simply too numerous to be accounted for. Being aware of aspects that might be germane to how the independent variable influences the dependent one and not considering them anyway might imperil the establishment of causality. Instead of attempting to institute the latter, this study focuses on exploring plausible links between the independent and dependent variable. Attempting to establish causality is a highly improbable, if not impossible undertaking without access to archives that would reveal decision-makers’ classified thoughts regarding policies they sanctioned while in power.<sup>429</sup> Furthermore, “process tracing focuses on finding and interpreting diagnostic evidence that addresses (...) descriptive tasks.”<sup>430</sup> Hence, the causality that process-tracing seeks to establish is in a way also constructed, or put differently: “the unity of the social sciences lies in the essentially uniform logic undergirding all genuinely scientific efforts at recording and interpreting observations.”<sup>431</sup> For a contemporary political science project such as this one, resorting to archived documents of administrations that left office in recent years or, as with the case study countries, are still in office is unattainable. It is sufficient to seek to establish plausible links and applying a triangulation is an appropriate tool to reveal a dense picture of a research question such as the one driving this thesis, short of delving deep into the “black box” of a state. In accordance to “straw-in-the-Wind” tests

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<sup>428</sup> Blatter/Janning/Wagemann, Qualitative Politikanalyse, p. 158 and cf. Collier, David: Understanding process tracing. In: Political Science and Politics, Vol. 44/ 2011, pp. 823–830, 823.

<sup>429</sup> N.B.: As stated by Daniel Kahneman “by and large (...) the idea that our minds are susceptible to systematic errors is now generally accepted (...) we are prone to overestimate how much we understand about the world and to underestimate the role of chance in events”; in other words, even if researchers claim to have established causal links between different variables, there is still room for fallacy, Kahneman, Daniel: Thinking, fast and slow. London 2011, pp. 10–14.

<sup>430</sup> Collier, Understanding process tracing, p. 824.

<sup>431</sup> Sil, Research communities, constrained pluralism, and the role of eclecticism, p. 331 in reference to King, Gary/Keohane, Robert/ Verba, Sidney. Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research Princeton 1994.

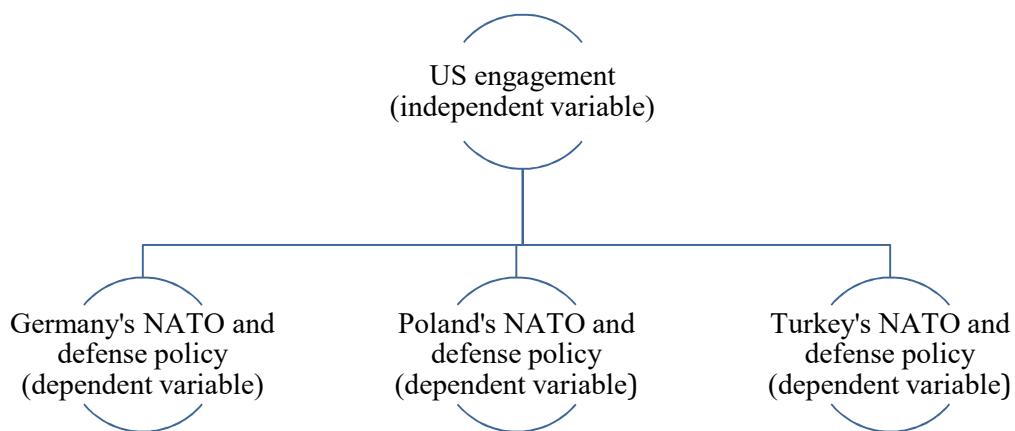
as elaborated by David Collier, “they provide valuable benchmarks in an investigation by giving an initial assessment of a hypothesis. Furthermore, if a given hypothesis passes a multiple straw-in-the-wind tests [a triangulation], it adds up to important affirmative evidence.”<sup>432</sup> Furthermore, and in light of the rather high number of case studies, a thorough process-tracing exceeds the confines of this research project. However, a variety of cases seems to be apposite to take account of the differences in opinions and perceptions within NATO, which would not be possible with only one or two case studies. For that reason, the method of content analysis (Method 1) and the analysis of relevant indicators (Method 2) are applied. Both represent valid and sound methods and will serve the purpose of interpreting the gathered data. In addition, expert interviews (Method 3) with a variety of different professionals from the three case study countries were conducted. Combining all three methods is a suitable way to scrutinize the impact that *US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe* (independent variable) has had on the *NATO and defense politics of European allies* (dependent variable) as depicted in Figure 1. Tying in with the theoretical assumptions, the impact of the independent variables will be measured by looking at actions, perceptions, and the interplay of these two factors of the case study countries. The reason the two Obama administrations are explored can be explained by the fact that little research has been conducted on the impact of his policies vis-à-vis Europe on European NATO allies, as the state of research chapter has demonstrated. To date and more particularly, nothing has been written on the Obama presidency’s impact on the three case study countries at hand, Germany, Poland, and Turkey.

Although Obama came into office in 2009, the evaluation period of this dissertation begins in 2011 only. While NATO policy was not absent from the Obama administration’s agenda in 2009 and 2010, much of what his predecessor had implemented continued with regard to Alliance policy. Even the US troop surge in Afghanistan that was decided upon in 2009 was a topic Obama inherited from Bush Junior. In essence, the first two years of President Obama’s tenure were mostly characterized by continuity rather than change in regard of the US’s stance on NATO. As Ben Rhodes, former national security advisor to Obama, aptly noted: “In the absence of international crises throughout 2010, (...) our foreign policy (...) focused largely on methodically advancing a few issues (...) But 2010 would be

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<sup>432</sup> Collier, Understanding process tracing, p. 826.

the last year when foreign policy felt somewhat routine; those meetings would become far more consequential soon enough.”<sup>433</sup> Obama’s first Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, who had previously served under Bush Junior arrived at a similar conclusion: “Although Obama to my mind is a liberal Democrat and I consider myself a moderately conservative Republican, for the first two years, on national security matters, we largely saw eye to eye. As with most presidential transitions, there was considerable continuity in the area between the last years of the Bush administration and the first years of Obama’s presidency (...).”<sup>434</sup> This assessment can be applied and widened to American NATO policy from 2009 to 2010, too. It has been deemed methodically more plausible to only evaluate one US President’s impact on European NATO policies as incorporating other administrations would have required considering an entirely different set of decisions as well as policy-makers. In addition, official documents are more easily accessible after an administration has left office.



*Figure 1: Depiction of variables: Impact of US engagement in NATO Europe on NATO and defense policies of European allies.*

It is supposed that a variance will be detected with regard to the influence the independent variable has on the dependent variables, that is, the different case studies. Using Germany, Poland and Turkey as case studies should enable the researcher to produce a balanced account of how different European NATO members reacted to America’s commitment to Europe’s security. Bearing the varying threat perceptions

<sup>433</sup> Rhodes, *The world as it is*, pp. 90–91.

<sup>434</sup> Gates, *Duty*, p. 297.

of different member states in mind, it seems likely that these variations will be depicted in the results of the case studies. To operationalize the independent variable (US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe) observable indicators such as strategy papers as well as interviews were adduced to find answers to the research question and hypotheses. In addition, all indicators are derived from and concurrent with Snyder's theoretical assumptions. He lists dependence, interest, and commitment as the three factors determinative of an ally's bargaining power within an alliance.<sup>435</sup> Since the categories dependence and interest can be subsumed under commitment, it is only consequential to use the latter as a measuring rod to describe the independent variable. A similar logic applies to the indicators of the dependent variable. To operationalize the dependent variable (NATO policies of European allies), the triangulation described above was applied.

### **6.1.1. Content analysis**

Part of the triangulation is the application of the method of content analysis to relevant documents including press and government statements, speeches by government officials (usually ministers) as well as official strategic documents. As a content analysis must be context-sensitive, it should be underlined that official documents, of whichever form, can naturally be biased and are much less objective than secondary sources such as scientific research.<sup>436</sup> Thus, the content analyses conducted in the case studies are complemented by data collected through other methods. Data that are used for a content analysis typically "stem from symbolic forms in an indigenous language,"<sup>437</sup> including cartoons, private notes, literature, theater, TV drama, advertisements, film, political speeches, historical documents, small group interactions, interviews, and sound events. For the purpose of this study, a wide range of political speeches are analyzed. In addition, strategic documents such as White Books are taken into consideration. It is argued that both types of documents disclose attitudes and designs of thought of those accountable for political speeches as well as strategic documents, that is, politicians. To apply a content anal-

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<sup>435</sup> Cf. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 166-172.

<sup>436</sup> Cf. Krippendorff, Klaus: *Content analysis. An introduction to its methodology*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Newbury Park 1980, p. 49.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

ysis, context units must be defined, that is, “symbols codetermine their interpretation and (...) they derive their meanings in parts from immediate environment in which they occur.”<sup>438</sup> Different units can be chosen from to be used in a content analysis: physical and referential units as well as systematic sampling. A combination of the former two is applied here. Physical units include books, newspapers, and the like. To analyze these units, a “mechanical” device is required; nowadays, one would refer to these devices as computer-based programs to help distract the sought-after data from a physical unit. This way of defining a unit is considered efficient and reliable as the cognitive operations involved are minimal. If, however, the limits of a physical unit, for example, a newspaper article, coincide with the boundaries of the content described; this method can cause unreliability in recording (specific part of content that is characterized by placing it in a given category) and may not reveal interesting findings.<sup>439</sup> To circumvent these limitations, referential units are used as well. That means that “the same person or subject [is referred to] in different ways.”<sup>440</sup> To avoid difficulties with this method of defining units, this study is restricted to the use of single words or short denotative phrases. A systematic sampling was not deemed necessary in this case as this method is more suitable for regular publications which this study is not working with. As indicated above, one technique of analyzing a text is context-based. This relates to the conception of a given material as well as the material itself. Considering the sources of the documents (state officials) that were analyzed as well as the intended target audiences (professional and wider public), it becomes apparent that the context of this material is inherently biased.<sup>441</sup> Thus, other methods in addition to a content analysis are applied to counterbalance the source bias. With regard to the interpretation of the text itself, a valence analysis is used. This technique allows for the parsing of particular text elements through a category system, thereby assessing and summarizing the content based on its context.<sup>442</sup> Thus, categories were developed deductively based on the theoretical framework and the state of research this thesis works with and starts from. In addition, these categories were developed to fit the

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<sup>438</sup> Krippendorff, Content analysis, p. 59.

<sup>439</sup> Cf. ibid., pp. 61–63.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>441</sup> Cf. Mayring, Philipp: Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Grundlagen und Techniken. 9<sup>th</sup> edition, Weinheim 2007, p. 50.

<sup>442</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 57.

material they were applied to, thereby deducing categories from the material directly. Hence, both the theoretical findings and the analyzed material were considered in developing categories to parse the documents by. Guided by these principles, a list of key words was developed which were searched for in the relevant documents. A basis of keywords was looked for in all analyzed documents; however, depending on the nature of the document some keywords were added occasionally, thus tailoring the “search units” to the documents. Only those passages in the text were referred to in the analysis in the case studies as well as the “analysis sheets” collecting all the keyword hits that were of contextual relevance. For example, “solidarity” is one key word searched for in the documents. If, however, “solidarity” was mentioned in the context of energy security, this passage was omitted from the analysis. To systemize the process checking the material for these keywords, the Computer Assisted Text Markup and Analysis (CATMA)-Program was used. The documents were inserted into CATMA as were the key words. The next step entailed the browsing of the keywords in the respective documents, including the context they were mentioned in.

### **6.1.2. Relevant indicators**

Relevant indicators were analyzed which speak for or against the case study countries' support of the United States in NATO. The data are secondary sources as they were not collected but put together and analyzed by the author. The assessment of the data helps us understand whether and how the United States and its actions have had an impact on the NATO and the defense policies of Germany, Poland, and Turkey. All the following indicators are connected to the perennial question and issue of burden-sharing in NATO by and large. This topic has dogged the Alliance since its inception. Every US President from Harry S. Truman to Barack Obama has tried to nudge their European counterparts in the direction of taking on a greater share of the transatlantic security and defense burden—sometimes successfully, more often to no avail. Thus, it is deemed necessary to consider indicators that exemplify and operationalize burden-sharing in order to capture a better understanding of how European allies react to American actions—in this case, the ever-present demand to contribute more to the overall costs of the Alliance, mostly in material terms.

*Table 1: Indicators of US support in NATO.*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Type of contribution</b>
■ Defense budget based on GDP (“2%-goal”) <sup>443</sup>	■ Since 2006, spending 2% of one’s GDP is a guideline in NATO; this goal was formalized at NATO’s Wales Summit in 2014	■ Indirect contribution because defense budgets are not exclusively dedicated to NATO <sup>444</sup>
■ Equipment expenditure as share of defense expenditure (“20%-goal”)	■ Since 2014, allies have committed themselves to spend 20% of their defense budget on equipment	■ Indirect contribution because defense budgets are not exclusively dedicated to NATO <sup>445</sup>
■ Contributions to NATO budget	■ Civil and military budget NATO Security Investment Program <sup>446</sup>	■ Direct contribution (these payments are exclusively dedicated to NATO’s common budget; it is up to the individual states to decide how much money they are contributing to the budgets/programs)
■ Participation in NATO exercises since 2013	■ 2013 is used as the year of reference as no major or any exercises were organized before other than in the evaluation period of this thesis (2011–2016)	■ Direct contribution (whether and many national troops are contributed is up to the individual ally)

<sup>443</sup> N.B.: For further information on why the “2%-goal” is of particular importance to US decision-makers, cf., for example, Techau, Jan 2015: The Politics of 2 Percent. NATO and the Security Vacuum in Europe, in: Carnegie Europe 2015, p. 10, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP\\_252\\_Techau\\_NATO\\_Final.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_252_Techau_NATO_Final.pdf), (08.06.2019).

<sup>444</sup> Cf. NATO 2018: Funding NATO, 2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_67655.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

Indicator	Explanation	Type of contribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Defense projects/cooperation with allies inside NATO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Based on the concept of “Smart Defence” introduced in 2012, Allies agreed to cooperate more closely on defense projects against the backdrop of austerity<sup>447</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Indirect contribution because defense projects are predominantly not NATO-owned and operated but in the hands of nation states</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Support/participation of/in nuclear sharing arrangement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In December 1957, the North Atlantic Council agreed to NATO’s first formal nuclear arrangement resulting in the US stationing nuclear bombs on allied territory with the host nation providing launch systems for the nuclear weapons<sup>448</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Indirect contribution because NATO’s nuclear sharing arrangement is of a bilateral nature (United States and host nation cooperation)</li> </ul>

### 6.1.3. Expert interviews

The third component of the triangulation consists of expert interviews to obtain knowledge that is otherwise not obtainable, as the majority of interviewed experts are government officials. To round out the findings gained through the data yielded by the content analysis, it was deemed necessary to speak with officials who could either confirm or contest official accounts given in government documents such as the German White Book. To obtain as broad an assessment as possible, the interviews were conducted with staffers working in relevant ministries (e.g., ministry of defense, foreign ministry) as well as scholars from the respective NATO countries. Factoring in the theoretical assumptions, this study builds on—alliance security dilemma and neoclassical realism (NCR)—it was necessary to speak with “those policymakers ‘who matter’ in the formulation of foreign [and security and defense

<sup>447</sup> Cf. NATO 2017: Smart Defence, 2017  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/topics\\_84268.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/topics_84268.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>448</sup> Cf. Alberque, William: The NPT and the Origins of NATO’s Nuclear Sharing Arrangements. In: Études de l’Ifri Proliferation Papers, Vol. 57/ 2017, p. 14.

policy].”<sup>449</sup> Both theoretical approaches assume that nation states are the key actors in international relations and as such in charge of national foreign policies. NCR refines this assumption by delving into the “black box,” that is, the nation state. By doing so, the theory distinguishes between the foreign policy executive (FPE) and the foreign, defense, and intelligence bureaucracy (FDIB).<sup>450</sup> The FPE usually consists of the head of government and ministers who are responsible for the formulation of foreign policy and “may also include other individuals who are members of minister, subcommittee, or subcabinet sessions on foreign security policy (...).”<sup>451</sup> In comparison, members of the FDIB are the bureaucratic backbone “charged with the collection and assessment of foreign intelligence or the formulation of specific policy options for consideration and selection by the FPE, as well as with the implementation of actual foreign and defense policies.”<sup>452</sup> Experts selected to be interviewed consist of the FDIB for three reasons. Firstly, access to heads of government or ministers is nearly impossible. While, secondly, members of the FDIB are not those with the final say on which policy to opt for, but are those active in formulating foreign policy options that are presented to their superiors. In addition, FDIB members are in charge of the implementation of a given policy and are thus nearest to the subject. To round out “the picture” of why decisions relevant for this dissertation were made, memoirs by and about FPE members in the case study countries as well as the United States were incorporated into the findings of this study as far as they were available.<sup>453</sup> Thirdly, expert interviews are one of three methodological strands used to gather data. Thus, it is not necessary to dive deeply into the “minds” of members of the FPE and the environment they operated in as it would be if expert interviews were the only method used.<sup>454</sup> While one could argue that insights provided by scholars in an interview do not differ from those they publish in their work, it was deemed necessary to interview a sample of them anyhow and to include the findings of these interviews. The reason for this is twofold.

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<sup>449</sup> Lobell/Ripsman/Taliaferro, Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics, p. 123.

<sup>450</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>453</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>454</sup> N.B: For further information on the application of expert interviews on foreign policy issues according to neoclassical realism, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 125–128.

Firstly, some wanted to be referred to anonymously in this study (as with most government officials) which leads to the assumption that some of the answers provided were too sensitive and not published in another context before. Secondly, all experts I interviewed are long-time observers of the topic at hand making it necessary to include their opinions as well as they have been very close to decision-makers or their staffers. In this function, it is assumed that these experts, mostly think tankers, have insights into some of the decisions and actions that are evaluated in this study. Although the focus here is European NATO states, US policies toward these states will serve as the starting point of this project. Thus, it was deemed necessary to speak with American experts in addition. All interviews were conducted in a so-called problem-centered manner. This form of interview encompasses open and semi-structured conversations. By using this particular form, one can ensure that the interviewee has the chance to speak as freely as possible to approximate a relatively open conversation without suggesting possible answers beforehand. This in turn increases the authenticity of the answers and the results of the interviews. Using semi-structured interviews allows for topics to develop in the course of the interview despite having a guideline for the conversation. Thus, topics that have not been considered beforehand by the interviewer can influence the results of the research in a conducive manner. Nevertheless, an interview guideline was used to guarantee comparability. The interviews are mostly referred to anonymously to secure as authentic an answer as possible. Otherwise, officials that were interviewed could have been inclined to only reveal official standpoints which would be of little value for the advancement of this study. In addition, the interviews were not recorded on audio tape as none of the still active government officials and some scholars would have agreed to an interview otherwise. Thus, it was decided to record the findings of the interviews via result-based protocols.<sup>455</sup> It was considered appropriate to choose one form of recording and not a variety which is why those experts who were open to an audio tape recording were not recorded in such a manner either. On the point of intersubjectivity, it must be mentioned that the supervisor of this dissertation was given the real names of the experts who requested to be referred to anonymously, that is, only in a functional manner. In addition, the same

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<sup>455</sup> Cf. Mieg, Harald A./Näf, Matthias: Experteninterviews. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Zürich 2001, pp. 5–6.

interview guide was used for all interviewed experts although they varied in nuances when government officials were interviewed as opposed to scholars as the latter group could not respond to some questions that included bureaucratic inside knowledge. To facilitate the assessment of the interview protocols, they were analyzed through a content analysis based on pre-determined set of key words.

## 6.2. Introduction to case studies

Before turning to the selection of case study countries, the hypotheses guiding this study will be introduced as they have explanatory power regarding the countries chosen to explore the research question: *How did US actions vis-à-vis NATO Europe impact NATO and defense policies of European allies?* No less important, the determinants of intra-alliance management, derived from one of the guiding theoretical frameworks, Snyder's alliance security dilemma, are mirrored in the hypotheses: dependence, commitment, and interest. All three are built into the hypotheses although it should be borne in mind that "dependence" is thought to be central to the reactions of the dependent variables, while "commitment" is supposed to be central to the actions of the independent variable. Deduced from Snyder's alliance security dilemma, too, the "twin danger" of entrapment and abandonment, respectively, are reflected in the hypotheses and serve as leitmotivs for the three case studies. The analysis of the hypotheses follows at the end of each country case study and will be brought together in the concluding chapter of this study:

1. The European allies did perceive an American withdrawal from NATO Europe.
2. The European allies did not perceive an American withdrawal from NATO Europe.
3. If the United States has been decreasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies,
  - 3.1 no implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted.
  - 3.2 positive implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted. *It is expected that the European allies will comprehend that a lessened US engagement in NATO Europe means that they increasingly will have to take care of their security by themselves.*

- 3.3 negative implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted. *It is assumed that a lessened American engagement in NATO Europe will not facilitate a "European pillar" within the Alliance. Instead, it is expected that the American withdrawal will result in a nationalization of European NATO member state's defense efforts. The rationale behind such a course of action could have roots in an attempt to keep the United States invested in European security by conjuring the specter of uncooperative European defense. After all, one of the key motives for the United States to engage with Europe after World War II has been to keep the continent at peace.*
4. If the United States has been increasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies,
  - 4.1 no implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted.
  - 4.2 positive implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted. *It is expected that an increased US engagement in NATO will incentivize European allies to do more themselves for their security. The rationale behind such a course of action could have its roots in an attempt to keep the United States invested in European security as a "reward" for doing more themselves.*
  - 4.3 negative implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted. *It is expected that an increased US engagement in NATO Europe means will result in European allies doing less for their own security. The rationale behind such a course of action could have roots in a complacent attitude.*

Contradicting hypotheses offer the advantage of expanding one's research and not so be limited to just one outcome for the research question. This in-built open-endedness is especially important when it comes to subjects that have yet to be examined more thoroughly, as is the case with the research question of this thesis. All selected case study countries—Germany, Poland, and Turkey—share the fact that they are or have been dependent on US security guarantees. Thus, the selection is derived from and in line with Snyder's alliance security dilemma as one of his detected determinants in intra-alliance management affairs is dependence. One can argue that the other two determinants, interest and commitment, can plausibly be subsumed under the aspect of dependence as the latter is assumed to be the overriding motive for the case study countries' engagement with the United States. To understand whether or not this assumption holds true, the perception/motivation (*why actions were taken*) of the case study countries will be explored in addition to

describing the actual actions that were pursued. Choosing one country sitting on the Eastern flank, one sitting on the Southern flank, and one which does not belong to either is conducive to obtaining a broader understanding of European allies' attitudes toward US engagement with them and their continent. In this way, it is hoped that more generalized conclusions can be drawn from this study. Within the case studies, four topic areas will be explored to measure US impact by; accordingly, they are the same issues that were used to determine the independent variable of US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe: NATO's Libya campaign in 2011; the US pivot to Asia/partial material retrenchment from NATO Europe in 2011/2012; NATO's crisis management toward Ukraine; and reassurance activities since 2014. With the exception of the second issue area, all activities were taken in a NATO framework and are thus expected to have had an impact on the case study countries' NATO policies. The sequence of the exploration of the four topics follows a chronological order as examining them in a different order would not represent a value-added approach. All four topics are expected to have had a major impact on the NATO policies of the case study countries, as they are directly or indirectly (*pivot/retrenchment*) allied decisions. The reason the "pivot/retrenchment" topic is included is rooted in the fact that both issues were perceived as indicative of the Obama administration's attitude toward NATO Europe at the time by European allies, especially the case study countries as the following sections will demonstrate.

In addition, it will become clear that this issue area did have an impact on the case study countries' NATO policies although the pivot as well as the partial material US retrenchment from allied territory was not a genuine NATO policy. In addition, all four topics have three aspects in common that are unique and have not been explored in this combination until now. Firstly, all four topics are expected to have an impact on the NATO policies of the case study countries as they are relevant to either their security or their bargaining position in NATO, or both. Secondly, all four topics are directly or indirectly relevant topics for NATO. After all, this study deals with the NATO policies of the United States as well as three of its European partners allied activities. Thirdly, other relevant NATO topics that were of relevance during the evaluation period of this study, for example, ISAF in Afghanistan or NATO's Missile Defense, have been studied at length in other contexts already.

In addition, other NATO-relevant discourses will be included into the case studies as undercurrents.

### **6.3. Germany: A champion of transatlantic multilateralism**

The case study on Germany is structured in three major blocs. Firstly, the main features of Germany's NATO policy since its accession in 1955 will be delineated in a broad-brush manner: a close linkage between allied and national security and defense policy, alliance solidarity, conceiving of NATO as a US-influenced organization. The second part consists of exploring Germany's actions in/vis-à-vis and perceptions of four subject areas: NATO's air campaign over Libya in 2011, US pivot and partial retrenchment from NATO Europe, NATO's crisis management toward Ukraine, and NATO's reassurance activities since 2014. These subject areas were also examined in the context of understanding US engagement in and toward NATO Europe under the Obama administration in Chapter 4. The third part of this case study includes an analysis of Germany's NATO policy between 2011 and 2016 as well as an assessment of the hypotheses guiding this dissertation.

#### **6.3.1. Germany's NATO history until 2011: A tale of unfettered Alliance solidarity**

The history of the Federal Republic of Germany's (FRG) security and defense policy is intimately linked with the country's NATO membership.<sup>456</sup> Some observers even claim that the transatlantic integration "comes as close to a basic law of German foreign and security policy as there exists."<sup>457</sup> Certainly, until the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, Germany's defense posture was the story of the transatlantic Alliance: "[German] foreign policy was identified almost exclusively with the Cold War aims of NATO (...)."<sup>458</sup> Closely connected to Germany's security and defense

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<sup>456</sup> Cf., for example, Keller, Patrick: Germany in NATO. The status quo ally. In: *Survival*, Vol. 54/ 2012, pp. 95–110.

<sup>457</sup> Wolfgang, Ischinger: Germany After Libya. Still a responsible power? In: Valasek, Thomas (ed.): All Alone? What US retrenchment means for Europe and NATO, pp. 45–59, 45.

<sup>458</sup> Belkin, Paul 2009: German Foreign and Security Policy. Trends and Transatlantic Implications. In: Congressional Research Service, 2009, p. 3, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34199.pdf>.

policy equaling German NATO policy in most parts is another narrative: (alliance) solidarity with the United States has motivated Germany's NATO policies for the longest stretches of its membership since 1955.<sup>459</sup> The reason for that rests in this approach having been in Germany's national interest.<sup>460</sup> Both linkages exceeded the end of the Cold War and were the dominating pattern of German allied behavior until at least 2003: "German Atlanticism strongly marked (...) the post-World War II era;<sup>461</sup> in the post-Cold War era, the Atlantic partnership has remained strong, but both a European and international role based on German interests have increasingly supplemented it."<sup>462</sup> The reason why the first part of this quote holds true can be found in the convergence of German and US interests during the Adenauer era marking the beginning of the two countries' close security and defense relations. The overlapping areas of interest included deterring the Soviet Union, the integration of the (FRG) into the political and strategic West with the aim to contain Bonn. Doing so helped convince the FRG's European partners of Germany's peaceful intentions as well as its desire for security.<sup>463</sup> To achieve the latter, a degree of leverage over the most influential ally had to be attained from a German perspective. While Germany tried to exert influence over the United States, Washington tried to pressure Bonn (and later Berlin) just as much and succeed just as often.<sup>464</sup> Regardless of the mutual attempts and successes at influencing each other's decisions,

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<sup>459</sup> Cf., for example, Teutmeyer, *Deutschland und die neue NATO*, pp. 264, 266.

<sup>460</sup> N.B.: For further discussion on German security and defense interests, cf. Teutmeyer, *Deutschland und die neue NATO*.

<sup>461</sup> N.B.: Despite the unequivocal profession of the Federal Republic of Germany to belong with the "Western" camp at the dawn of the Cold War, one should not overlook that Germany has a long history of being "torn between East and West (especially America), a history preceding the East-West conflict of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cf., for example, Lieber, *Retreat and its Consequences*, pp. 37–39.

<sup>462</sup> Mattox, Gale A.: *Germany. From Civilian Power to International Actor*. In: Dorman, Andrew M./Kaufman, Joyce P. (ed.): *The future of Transatlantic Relations. Perceptions, Policy and Practice*. Stanford 2011, pp. 113–136, 123–124.

<sup>463</sup> Cf. Overhaus, *Die deutsche NATO-Politik*, p. 41.

<sup>464</sup> N.B.: NATO's post-Cold War enlargement to Eastern Europe is a case in point for the US attempting to change German NATO policy. In 1994, the US pressured Germany (and other European allies for that matter) to accelerate the process of arriving at a decision about whom, when and how to enlarge the Alliance to. While initially reacting with irritation, Bonn became one of the most vocal supporters of NATO expansion, resulting in Germany and the United States assuming an "engine function" in enlarging the Alliance, cf.

Germany's NATO policy from 1955 to 2003 was such that Bonn/Berlin tried to accommodate Washington's demands. The so-called German double-no on Iraq in the beginning of 2003—no German participation in a military intervention and no to such a participation even with a UNSC mandate<sup>465</sup>—marked an unprecedented nadir in German–US relations in and outside a NATO context. This precedent led some observers, such as Peter Rudolf from the German think tank German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) to assert: “(...) there will be no resurrection of the once-unique German–American relationship. In this respect, one can speak of the ‘end of the transatlantic epoch.’”<sup>466</sup> That this estimate was exaggerated, even in its historic context, can be found in one short-term and one long-term response on the part of Germany. Firstly, Berlin did not deny the United States its right to use its military facilities on German soil in preparation and execution of the Iraq war.<sup>467</sup> Secondly, as a way of making amends after the political fallout Germany's decision had caused, Berlin expanded its (military) engagement in Afghanistan which it had launched in 2003 with the assumption of commanding ISAF in tandem with the Dutch before NATO took over in August that same year –<sup>468</sup> yet it was not until 2010 that German soldiers were engaged in combat actions.<sup>469</sup> Participating in ISAF can plausibly be interpreted as an attempt to emphasize alliance solidarity with the US (and other allies who were active in more dangerous areas in the country than Germany)<sup>470</sup> after it had publicly proclaimed it was standing by

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Hyde-Price, Adrian: *Germany & European order. Enlarging NATO and the EU*. Manchester 2000, pp. 137, 149–154.

<sup>465</sup> Cf. Overhaus, *Die deutsche NATO-Politik*, pp. 305–306.

<sup>466</sup> Rudolf, Peter: The myth of the ‘German Way’. *German Foreign Policy and Transatlantic Relations*. In: *Survival*, Vol. 47/ 2006, pp. 133–152, 135.

<sup>467</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>468</sup> N.B.: For an overview of this aspect cf., for example, Overhaus, *Die deutsche NATO-Politik*, pp. 320–325 and Mattox, Gale M.: *Germany. The legacy of the war in Afghanistan*. In: Grenier, Stephen M./Mattox, Gale M.: *Coalition Challenges in Afghanistan. The Politics of Alliance*. Stanford 2015, pp. 91–107, 94.

<sup>469</sup> Cf. Mattox, *Germany*, pp. 99–100 and Kornelius, Stefan: *Angela Merkel. Die Kanzlerin und ihre Welt*. Hamburg 2013, p. 156.

<sup>470</sup> Cf. Mattox, *Germany*, pp. 99, 289.

the United States after the 9/11 attacks.<sup>471</sup> Gradually loosening the rules of engagement<sup>472</sup> of the German armed forces in Afghanistan is in large parts a result of accommodating US wishes, too,<sup>473</sup> although allies, including Washington, had pressured Berlin to move faster in this regard.<sup>474</sup> Following US-allied guidelines motivated post-Cold War German NATO policy prior to the war on terror though. Then-defense minister Volker Rühe justified Germany's participation in NATO's monitoring of the economic embargo in former Yugoslavia with alliance solidarity as well<sup>475</sup>—an Alliance effort that was chiefly pushed through by the United States. The air campaign against the Milosevic regime in Kosovo in 1999 was also an American-initiated NATO intervention. In this context, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said to US President Bill Clinton on February 13, 1999, roughly a month before the launch of the intervention: "Germany is engaged in Kosovo as well as Macedonia (...). We will not take a back seat to our partners. That you can rely on."<sup>476</sup> After American–German relations had hit rock bottom in the wake of the Iraq war episode, "relations between Merkel and Bush appeared to be far more in the realm of 'normal' than during the Kohl administration, when Germany routinely accepted US decisions—particularly at the official level—without major dissent."<sup>477</sup> With Angela Merkel having been the German Chancellor since 2005, one can contend

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<sup>471</sup> N.B.: Another aspect that most likely contributed to this decision relates to NATO being the only forum through which Germany can influence US foreign, security and defense policy, cf., for example, Theiler, Deutschland und die NATO, pp. 321–370.

<sup>472</sup> N.B.: Regarding the war on terror, which has to be distinguished from ISAF, Germany placed two national caveats on its engagement: 1. Berlin was against placing a premium on the military dimension in general, instead decision-makers advanced the so-called "comprehensive approach" including political and economic instruments to fight terrorism; 2. The German expectation was that its demonstration of solidarity would be tied to multilateral, coordinated, and cooperative actions of the US, cf., for example, Overhaus, Die deutsche NATO-Politik, p. 259.

<sup>473</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 344.

<sup>474</sup> Cf. Mattox, Germany, pp. 97–100.

<sup>475</sup> Cf. Deutscher Bundestag: Plenarprotokoll 12/101, p. 8639 as quoted in Teutmeyer, Deutschland und die neue NATO, p. 176.

<sup>476</sup> Wieland, Leo: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: Clinton und Schröder warnen Serben vor Fehlschlag in Rambouillet. In: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung vom 13.02.1999, p. 5.

<sup>477</sup> Mattox, Germany, p. 123.

that under her leadership, Germany began displaying a more nuanced “assertiveness vis-à-vis the United States”<sup>478</sup> in comparison to her predecessor. On a more abstract level of analysis, one can conclude that German preference for “multilateralism and its aversion to the use of military force as a means”<sup>479</sup> stands in direct contrast to the United States’ foreign and security policy tradition at large which came to a head during the Bush Junior administration with its “disregard for multilateral diplomacy and standards of international law—both fundamental tenets of German foreign policy.”<sup>480</sup> Not only do these two differing conceptions of foreign and security policy cause frictions bilaterally but also in a NATO context. Whereas Germany does not feel comfortable with the American preference “to use NATO as a tool box through which to realize independently defined U.S. interests, rather than (...) a legitimate multilateral forum to define interests collectively,”<sup>481</sup> Washington oftentimes singles out Berlin to pressure Germany to spend more on defense.<sup>482</sup> One can conclude that “the German approach to the United States does involve a delicate balancing act (...) result[ing] from asymmetric power and strategic divergences within the alliance.”<sup>483</sup> Whether or not this assessment from 2005 still holds true will be explored in the next four subchapters which are organized along the topics that were examined in order to determine American engagement in NATO Europe: Libya, the pivot to Asia, the Ukraine War as well as reassurance measures following the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 2014.

### **6.3.1.1. Indicators of German–US support in NATO**

The following data was drawn from secondary sources as they were not collected but put together and analyzed by the author. The assessment of the data helps us understand whether and how the United States and its actions have an impact on the NATO and the defense policies of Germany.

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<sup>478</sup> Mattox, Germany, p. 124.

<sup>479</sup> Maull, Hanns W.: Introduction. In: Maull, Hanns W. (ed.): *Germany’s Uncertain Power. Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*. Basingstoke 2006, pp. 1–12, 1.

<sup>480</sup> Belkin, *German Foreign and Security Policy*, 2009, p. 3.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>482</sup> Cf. Driver, *Burden sharing and the future of NATO*, p. 9.

<sup>483</sup> Rudolf, *The myth of the ‘German Way’*, p. 138.

*Table 2: Defense budget (2+20% guideline):<sup>484</sup> “indirect contributions.”<sup>485</sup>*

Year	Defense expenditure as share of GDP (based on 2010 prices) “2%-goal” <sup>486</sup>	Equipment expenditure as share of defense expenditure “20%-goal” <sup>487</sup>	Defense expenditure (based on 2010 prices) <sup>488</sup>
2011	■ 1.28 %	■ 16.4 %	■ 48,14 billion US Dollars
2012	■ 1.31 %	■ 16.5 %	■ 46,47 billion US Dollars
2013	■ 1.22 %	■ 12.7 %	■ 45,39 billion US Dollars
2014	■ 1.19 %	■ 12.9 %	■ 46,10 billion US Dollars
2015	■ 1.18 %	■ 11.9 %	■ 39,81 billion US Dollars
2016	■ 1.20 %	■ 12.2 %	■ 41,59 billion US Dollars

<sup>484</sup> N.B.: The 2 %-metric is guiding the Alliance at least since NATO’s summit in Riga in 2006, cf. Techau, Jan 2015: The Politics of 2 Percent. NATO and the Security Vacuum in Europe, in: Carnegie Europe 2015, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP\\_252\\_Techau\\_NATO\\_Final.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_252_Techau_NATO_Final.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>485</sup> Cf. NATO, Funding NATO, 2018.

<sup>486</sup> Cf. NATO 2017: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2010–2017), 2017, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_06/20170629\\_170629-pr2017-111-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_06/20170629_170629-pr2017-111-en.pdf), p. 8 (08.06.2019).

<sup>487</sup> Cf. NATO 2018: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2010–2017), 2018, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2018\\_03/20180315\\_180315-pr2018-16-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_03/20180315_180315-pr2018-16-en.pdf), p. 3 (08.06.2019).

<sup>488</sup> Cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2017, p. 7.

- Contributions to NATO common funding budgets<sup>489</sup> → “direct contributions”:<sup>490</sup>
  - The civil budget covers personnel expenses, operating costs, and capital and program expenditure of the International Staff at NATO Headquarters. Most member states fund the civil budget through their foreign ministry budgets. The budget is supposed to fund four major objectives: active operations, alliance capabilities, consultation and cooperation with partners, and public relations. In addition, four support objectives are financed by the common civil budget: providing support to the consultation process with allies; maintaining the facilities and site of NATO Headquarters; governance and regulation through the monitoring of business policies, processes and procedures; and Headquarters security.
  - The military budget funds the operating and maintenance expenditures of the NATO Command Structure. Most allies contribute to the common military budget through their national defense funds. The budget finances the International Military Staff, the Strategic Commanders, the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force, the common-funded portions of the Alliance’s operations and missions among others.
  - The NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP) finances major construction and command and control system investments beyond national defense requirements of allies. The NSIP contributes to the roles of the NATO Strategic Commands by providing installations and facilities such as air defense communication and information systems, military headquarters for the integrated structure and for deployed operations among others.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> N.B.: Contributions to operations are not listed in the section of indicators as they are referred to throughout the discussion on the historical ties each case study country to NATO.

<sup>490</sup> Cf. NATO, Funding NATO, 2018.

<sup>491</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

*Table 3: German contributions to NATO's common funding.*

Year	Civil budget <sup>492</sup>	Military budget <sup>493</sup>	NATO Security Investment Program <sup>494</sup>
2011	■ 31,085,485 million €	■ 238,720,064 million €	■ 1,05 billion €
2012	■ 31,129,383 million €	■ 236,858,659 million €	■ 92,43 million €
2013	■ 31,346,252 million €	■ 248,589,890 million €	■ 94,59 million €
2014	■ 31,486,958 million €	■ 234,030,784 million €	■ 85,28 million €
2015	■ 31,671,394 million €	■ 205,507,118 million €	■ 83,22 million €
2016	■ 32,604,879 million €	■ 207,787,120 million €	■ 88,39 million €

- Participation in exercises since 2013:<sup>495</sup> The following lists the largest NATO-led exercises since 2013 in greater detail as they signify the importance of overall unity and solidarity within the Alliance:
  - *Steadfast Jazz November 2013*: largest live exercise since 2006 (collective defense scenario, around 6,000 troops from allied and partner countries; around 3,000 participate in live exercise and 3,000 HQ personnel in command and control exercise; conducted at sea, in the air, and on land (three

<sup>492</sup> N.B.: The Nations' shares were calculated as cost-share of the initial Budgets authorized for the selected year. The amount, therefore, does not constitute the actual payment by the respective nations during the year: the actual payments take other factors into consideration (amounts paid in advance, contributions paid voluntarily in advance, redistribution of refundable surpluses, etc.

<sup>493</sup> Cf. NATO, Funding NATO, 2018.

<sup>494</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>495</sup> N.B.: In November 2013, NATO conducted its largest live exercises since 2006 in a collective defense scenario which is why 2013 is used as a point of reference for the indicator "exercises," cf. NATO 2016: Connected Forces Initiative, 2016, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_98527.htm#](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_98527.htm#) (08.06.2019).

Baltic states, Poland); included HQ component provided by Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum:<sup>496</sup> Germany took part<sup>497</sup>

- *June 2015 Noble Jump*: in Zagan, Poland, over 2,100 troops from nine nations involved, VJTF elements deployed for the first time:<sup>498</sup> Germany took part (alongside Czech, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Lithuanian, Belgian, US, and Hungarian troops)
- *Trident Juncture October and November 2015*: in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, and Norway; with about 36,000 troops, 140 aircraft, and 60 ships from over 30 allies and partner nations:<sup>499</sup> Germany took part (was one of the locations, Stuttgart)
- *Anakonda in June 2016 in Poland* (included land air forces): around 31,000 troops from more than 23 nations (18 allies, five partner countries):<sup>500</sup> Germany took part<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>496</sup> Cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative, 2016 and cf. NATO 2013: Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013. Scope, Aim, Components, Conduct, Locations, 2013, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2013\\_10/20131031\\_131031-SFJZ13-Factsheet.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2013_10/20131031_131031-SFJZ13-Factsheet.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>497</sup> Cf. Vandiver, John 2013: NATO forces mobilize across eastern Europe for war games, in: Stars and Stripes 2013, <https://www.stripes.com/nato-forces-mobilize-across-eastern-europe-for-war-games-1.250916> (08.06.2019).

<sup>498</sup> Cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative, 2016.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid. and NATO 2015: Trident Juncture 2015, 2015, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2015\\_10/20151021\\_151021-tj15-infograph.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_10/20151021_151021-tj15-infograph.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>500</sup> Cf. NATO 2016: Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2016,

[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_07/20160704\\_1607-factsheet\\_exercises\\_en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160704_1607-factsheet_exercises_en.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>501</sup> Cf. Smith, Alex Duval 2016: Nato countries begin largest war game in eastern Europe since cold war, in: The Guardian 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/06/nato-launches-largest-war-game-in-eastern-europe-since-cold-war-anaconda-2016> (08.06.2019).

In 2015, Germany took part in six out of 12 key NATO and allies multinational exercises (around 280 were conducted in total that year).<sup>502</sup> Out of these six exercises, Germany only once participated by hosting part of the exercise in DRAGOON RIDE; alongside Germany, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland provided their soil for the exercise.<sup>503</sup> In 2015, Germany participated in 50% of all the major exercises that were conducted that year. The following year, Germany participated in six out of 19 key NATO and allied multinational exercises (240 were conducted in total that year)<sup>504</sup>. Once, Germany not only participated but was also a host nation for the exercise alongside Poland in SWIFT RESPONSE that took place in May and June 2016.<sup>505</sup> In sum, Germany's participation in major exercises equated a 31% ratio.

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<sup>502</sup> Cf. NATO 2015: Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2015,  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2015\\_10/20151007\\_1510-factsheet\\_exercises\\_en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_10/20151007_1510-factsheet_exercises_en.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>503</sup> Cf. NATO, Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2015

<sup>504</sup> Cf. NATO, Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2016.

<sup>505</sup> Cf. ibid.

- Selection of most important multilateral allied defense cooperation projects and capabilities:

*Table 4: German contributions to allied defense cooperation projects.*

Project	NATO-owned/nation-owned	Number of participating member states	Germany
■ Alliance Ground Surveillance	■ Half-half (group of allies acquiring system which NATO will operate and maintain on behalf of 29 allies) <sup>506</sup>	■ 15 <sup>507</sup>	■ Yes
■ Strategic Airlift Capability	■ Nation-owned	■ 10 <sup>508</sup>	■ No
■ Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)	■ Predominantly nation-owned; only command and control systems of Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence eligible for common funding, thus: NATO-owned <sup>509</sup>	■ 9 <sup>510</sup>	■ Yes (provision of Patriot missiles and hosting of NATO BMD command center in Rammstein) <sup>511</sup>
■ Strategic Sealift	■ Nation-owned	■ 11 <sup>512</sup>	■ Yes

<sup>506</sup> Cf. NATO 2018: Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS), 2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/em/natohq/topics\\_48892.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/em/natohq/topics_48892.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>507</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf. *ibid.*

<sup>508</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf.: NATO 2017: Strategic airlift, 2017, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_50105.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50105.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>509</sup> Cf. NATO 2019: Ballistic Missile Defence, 2019, [https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/topics\\_49635.htm#](https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/topics_49635.htm#) (08.06.2019).

<sup>510</sup> Cf. NATO 2016: NATO Ballistic Missile Defence, 2016, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_07/20160630\\_1607-factsheet-bmd-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160630_1607-factsheet-bmd-en.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>511</sup> Cf. NATO, Ballistic Missile Defence, 2019.

<sup>512</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf.: NATO, Strategic airlift,

Project	NATO-owned/nation-owned	Number of participating member states	Germany
■ Nuclear sharing arrangement	■ Nation-owned	■ 5 <sup>513</sup>	■ Yes (host nation for American nuclear capabilities + provision of launcher system)

*N.B.: Nation-owned means: funded/maintained by member states but made available to rest of alliance; among the only NATO-owned military equipment is the AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control) fleet, cf. NATO: 10 things you need to know about NATO, 2018, <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/126169.htm> (08.06.2019).*

### 6.3.2. The inhibited ally: Germany's non-participation in Libya

While Germany did condemn Gadhafi's gruesome actions toward his own people starting in early February 2011 and demanded political and economic sanctions,<sup>514</sup> the federal government was very skeptical toward a military intervention once this option had been discussed publicly by France and the United Kingdom at the beginning of March 2011.<sup>515</sup> One of the reasons Berlin felt comfortable not going along with its European partners was down to the United States initially being unconvinced of a military option as well.<sup>516</sup> The attitude in Washington changed on

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2017.

<sup>513</sup> N.B.: In addition to Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey participate in NATO's nuclear sharing arrangement, cf., for example, Alberque, The NPT and the Origins of NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements.

<sup>514</sup> Cf. Auswärtiges Amt 2011: Regierungserklärung durch Bundesminister Westerwelle vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zur aktuellen Entwicklung in Libyen (UN-Resolution), 2011, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/110318-bm-regierungserklaerung-libyen/242740> (08.06.2019) and cf. Die Bundesregierung 2011: Pressestatement von Angela Merkel zur aktuellen Entwicklung in Libyen, March 18, 2011, <https://archiv.bundesregierung.de/archiv-de/dokumente/pressestatement-von-bundeskanzlerin-angela-merkel-zur-aktuellen-entwicklung-in-libyen-842900> (08.06.2019).

<sup>515</sup> Cf. Rinke, Andreas: Eingreifen oder nicht? Warum sich die Bundesregierung in der Libyen-Frage enthielt. In: Internationale Politik, 2011, pp. 42–54, 44.

<sup>516</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 48.

March 15, however, when Samantha Power, special assistant to the President, and Susan Rice, US ambassador to the UN, convinced President Obama to vote in favor of a military intervention sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council.<sup>517</sup> Two days later, when UNSC Resolution 1973 was voted on, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in an interview with a German newspaper that she viewed “a military intervention with skepticism. As chancellor, I cannot authorize an operation with a highly uncertain outcome.”<sup>518</sup> Her line of argument was that unlike in Afghanistan, German security would not be defended in Libya by intervening in that country.<sup>519</sup> Another reason for abstaining from voting in favor of the UNSC Resolution is to say that had Berlin supported the resolution, Germany would have had to participate militarily given the economic size of the country.<sup>520</sup> Merkel was supported by her Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle and her Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière. The latter assured NATO’s Secretary General Rasmussen of Germany’s loyalty to the Alliance.<sup>521</sup> To back up his rhetoric, he promised to provide German military staff for NATO’s AWACS mission in Afghanistan—the same staff that was withdrawn from a mission overseeing the Mediterranean in order to prevent German soldiers from supporting the military intervention in Libya.<sup>522</sup> While not openly criticizing Germany’s decision to abstain from voting with its Western allies, some partner countries did not belie their disappointment with Berlin’s course. US Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton indirectly expressed her displeasure with Germany’s attitude.<sup>523</sup> Nicholas Burns, who served as US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs from 2005 to 2008, found blunter words to judge Berlin’s Libya decision: “(...) the fact that Germany, the largest European

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<sup>517</sup> Cf. Rinke, Eingreifen oder nicht?, p. 49.

<sup>518</sup> Saarbrücker Zeitung 2011: Kanzlerin Angela Merkel kündigt Überprüfung aller Atomkraftwerke an, in: Saarbrücker Zeitung 2011,  
<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Interview/2011/03/2011-03-17-merkel-saarbruecker-zeitung.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>519</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>520</sup> Cf. Rinke, Eingreifen oder nicht?, p. 52.

<sup>521</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>522</sup> Cf. Friederichs, Hauke 2011: Chaostage in der deutschen Außenpolitik, in:  
Zeit Online 2011, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2011-03/libyen-aussenpolitik-deutschland/komplettansicht> (08.06.2019).

<sup>523</sup> Cf. Zeit Online 2011: De Maizière rechnet nicht mit deutschem Libyen-Einsatz, in: Zeit Online 2011, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2011-04/de-maiziere-libyen-washington> (08.06.2019).

member of the alliance and a keystone country in many ways of the alliance, has not supported the NATO mission, I think is very detrimental to the mission (...) Even if Germany had decided not to contribute military forces one would [have] hoped for much greater political support from Germany (...) the fact that Germany held out and abstained (...) really puts into question German leadership at NATO.”<sup>524</sup> Some commentators assessed Germany’s decision not to vote with at least one ally represented on the UNSC as the “sad high point of Germany’s ‘alienation from the Alliance’.”<sup>525</sup> Others did not see Berlin’s choice to abstain from voting and participating in what was transformed into NATO’s Operation Unified Protector on March 2011 as critical.<sup>526</sup> The two following sections will outline German actions as well as the perceptions of why certain decisions were chosen in the context of NATO’s intervention in Libya.

### **6.3.2.1. Rhetorical lip service rather than actual support**

Germany was quick to declare its solidarity with the democratic movements that took hold of Northern African countries beginning in Tunisia in December 2010 and swiftly spread to neighboring countries, including Libya. At the same time, the government condemned Gadhafi’s actions.<sup>527</sup> Foreign minister Guido Westerwelle promised that Germany as a democracy would side with “those who are suppressed,

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<sup>524</sup> Deutsche Welle 2011: Berlin’s stance on Libya has isolated Germany in NATO, in: Deutsche Welle 2011, <http://www.dw.com/en/berlins-stance-on-libya-has-isolated-germany-in-nato/a-14985036> (08.06.2019).

<sup>525</sup> Keller, Germany in NATO, p. 106 and cf. Major, Claudia/Mölling, Christian 2016: Von Libyen nach Syrien. Die Rolle des Militärs in einer neuen deutschen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik, in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 2016, <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/230579/das-militaer-in-einer-neuen-deutschen-sicherheits-und-verteidigungspolitik?p=all> (08.06.2019).

<sup>526</sup> Cf. Katsioulis, Christos 2011: Die Deutsche Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik nach der Intervention in Libyen, in: Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft 2011, [https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/ipg/2011-4/06\\_a\\_katsioulis\\_d.pdf](https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/ipg/2011-4/06_a_katsioulis_d.pdf) (08.06.2019); Sarah Brockmeier argues that Germany’s decision did not mark the end of German commitment to multilateralism and/or the Western alliance; instead, Berlin’s decision was informed by how events unfolded as the government was not given enough time to have the Parliament debate a possible participation, cf. Brockmeier, Sarah: Germany and the Intervention in Libya. In: Survival, Vol. 55/ 201, pp. 63–90.

<sup>527</sup> Cf. Brockmeier, Germany and the Intervention in Libya, p. 66.

agonized, tortured and murdered because of their advocacy for democratic principles.”<sup>528</sup> Chancellor Angela Merkel even went a step further in her line of argumentation when she declared that Germany ought to show solidarity with Libyan refugees fleeing from a dictator waging war against its own people.<sup>529</sup>

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voted on Resolution 1970 on February 26, 2011. The resolution authorized the imposition of economic sanctions against Libyan authorities, including Gadhafi, an arms embargo and the freezing of assets of the country’s leaders; the ongoing violence against civilian demonstrators was referred to the International Criminal Court.<sup>530</sup> As a non-permanent member of the UNSC at the time, Germany voted in favor of the resolution. Not only did Berlin support the passing of economic sanctions against the Libyan regime, but prior to the vote on Resolution 1973 which called for “all necessary means,”<sup>531</sup> that is, a military intervention to stop the regime from using violence against its population, German Foreign Minister Westerwelle advocated the idea of even stricter economic and financial sanctions while praising the punitive measures already in place in a government declaration before the German national parliament.<sup>532</sup> In addition, he claimed that the sanctions were primarily responsible for the downfall of the Libyan government instead of NATO’s air campaign while not altogether denying the military intervention had contributed to the success of the Libyan rebels, too.<sup>533</sup> Chancellor Merkel was more cautious in her assessment of who or what had toppled

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<sup>528</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, Regierungserklärung durch Bundesminister Westerwelle vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zur aktuellen Entwicklung in Libyen, 2011.

<sup>529</sup> Cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin 2011: Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel zum Europäischen Rat am 24./25. März 2011 in Brüssel (Mitschrift), 2011, <https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-de/aktuelles/regierungserklaerung-von-bundeskanzlerin-angela-merkel-zum-europaeischen-rat-am-24-25-maerz-2011-in-brussel-mitschrift--1009388> (08.06.2019).

<sup>530</sup> Cf. UN News 2011: Security Council imposes sanctions on Libyan authorities in bid to stem violent repression, 2011  
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37633#.WcEHINNjB-Y> (08.06. 2019).

<sup>531</sup> United Nations Security Council 2011: Resolution 1973 (2011), 2011, [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2011\\_03/20110927\\_110311-UNSCR-1973.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_03/20110927_110311-UNSCR-1973.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>532</sup> Cf. Auswärtiges Amt, Regierungserklärung durch Bundesminister Westerwelle vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zur aktuellen Entwicklung in Libyen, 2011.

<sup>533</sup> Cf. Spiegel Online 2011: Streit um Libyen Einsatz. Merkels merkwürdige

Gadhafi.<sup>534</sup> While Germany did abstain from voting in favor of UNSC Resolution 1973 and consequently refrained from participating in NATO's air campaign, various members of the government, such as the German Foreign Minister, assured that they "decisively support the elements of UNSC Resolution 1973 which toughened sanctions against the Gadhafi regime."<sup>535</sup> In the same speech, he also asserted that an alternative to a military campaign was not inaction but the toughening of sanctions.<sup>536</sup> In addition, Westerwelle reiterated that Germany belonged to those countries which had strongly advocated the imposition of economic sanctions at the United Nations and the European Union.<sup>537</sup> Germany's Foreign Minister was not the only official underlining Berlin's principal support of the goals of Resolution 1973 which, as indicated above, went beyond toughening economic sanctions and travel restrictions by calling for the installation of a no-fly-zone which would entail a military air campaign. Two days after the passing of Resolution 1973, Angela Merkel stated that Germany "shared the goals of the resolution unconditionally" and that German abstention from voting at the UNSC should "not be confused with neutrality."<sup>538</sup> Yet, she defended Berlin's decision to abstain from voting and participating in military actions against the Libyan regime—the latter being the motive for Germany's abstention as Westerwelle explained: "The German federal government arrived at a different conclusion [referring to military actions] at the Security Council after the consideration of substantial foreign policy and military dangers and risks."<sup>539</sup> Consequently, Germany withdrew its military staff from NATO's

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Rechtfertigung, in: Spiegel Online 2011

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/streit-um-libyen-einsatz-merkels-merkwuerdige-rechtfertigung-a-784263.html> (08.06.2019), cf. Süddeutsche Zeitung 2011: Westerwelle vollzieht Kehrtwende bei NATO-Militäreinsatz, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung 2011, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/die-deutschen-und-der-krieg-in-libyen-westerwelle-vollzieht-kehrtwende-bei-nato-militaereinsatz-1.1135764> (08.06.2019).

<sup>534</sup> Cf. Süddeutsche Zeitung, Westerwelle vollzieht Kehrtwende bei NATO-Militäreinsatz, 2011.

<sup>535</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, Regierungserklärung durch Bundesminister Westerwelle vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zur aktuellen Entwicklung in Libyen, 2011.

<sup>536</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>537</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>538</sup> Die Bundeskanzlerin, Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel zum Europäischen Rat am 24./25. März 2011 in Brüssel, 2011.

<sup>539</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, Regierungserklärung durch Bundesminister Westerwelle vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zur aktuellen Entwicklung in Libyen, 2011.

AWACS participation in the operation Active Endeavour<sup>540</sup> and the maritime joint task force patrolling the Mediterranean as both activities were part of the Alliance's Libya campaign by enforcing the UN's arms embargo—an embargo Germany had demanded.<sup>541</sup> As a result, two frigates and two boats with a staff number of 550 soldiers were put under national command. The same applied to the approximately 70 soldiers participating in the Alliance's AWACS surveillance flights.<sup>542</sup> Instead, Berlin offered to deploy the German AWACS crew over Afghanistan.<sup>543</sup> After a precipitated vote in the Bundestag, German soldiers contributed to surveilling the skies above the Hindukush.<sup>544</sup> In the wake of NATO's air campaign, German Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière considered a deployment of German armed forces to Libya were the United Nations to establish a reconstruction mission following the military intervention.<sup>545</sup> Such a request was never directed at Germany though because a rebuilding mission for Libya did not materialize after the conclusion of NATO's operation. A request that did reach Germany among others, however, came from the Alliance's logistics agency Namsa to assist NATO partners active in the Libya campaign with ammunition in late May 2011. Defense Minister de Maizière explained that Germany would comply with the request as this was an established Alliance procedure according to members of the defense committee in the German parliament in which the minister spoke in front of in late June.<sup>546</sup> In the end, it turned out that Namsa had accepted an offer from another ally in early June

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<sup>540</sup> Cf. Friedrichs, Chaostage in der deutschen Außenpolitik, 2011.

<sup>541</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>542</sup> Cf. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2011: Kabinett beschließt Awacs-Einsatz in Afghanistan, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2011,  
<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/als-entlastung-fuer-libyen-krieg-kabinett-beschliesst-awacs-einsatz-in-afghanistan-1613302.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>543</sup> Cf. Friedrichs, Chaostage in der deutschen Außenpolitik, 2011.

<sup>544</sup> Cf. Brose, Ekkehard 2013: Parlamentsarmee und Bündnisfähigkeit. Ein Plädoyer für eine begrenzte Reform des Parlamentsbeteiligungsgesetzes. In: SWP-Studien, 2013, p. 10, [https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/studien/2013\\_S18\\_bre.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/studien/2013_S18_bre.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>545</sup> Cf. Welt 2011: De Maizière erwägt Bundeswehr-Einsatz in Libyen, in: Welt 2011, <https://amp-iframe.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article13421350/De-Maiziere-erwaegt-Bundeswehr-Einsatz-in-Libyen.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>546</sup> Cf. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2011: Nato braucht Berlins Munition nicht, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2011,  
<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/libyen-einsatz-nato-braucht-berlins-munition-nicht-13233.html> (08.06.2019).

already. Instead, the German armed forces did react positively to a bilateral request from the Swedish armed forces to be provided with ammunition for fighter jets. While Sweden is not a NATO member, it did participate in the Libyan air campaign.<sup>547</sup>

As mentioned in the introductory passages to this chapter, not only Germany's allies but also international and domestic observers were puzzled at Berlin's pattern of action and explanation in the wake of the Libyan crisis: "Westerwelle's statement that Germany "shared the values" in the resolution was an attempt to pull the wool over the public's eyes, and suggested to analysts a total confusion in Germany's foreign policy."<sup>548</sup> Due to the bewilderment of many German and foreign observers, the following section will shed light on the motives of Germany's decision-makers at the time.

### 6.3.2.2. The self-chosen "Sonderweg"

In contrast to the actions Germany took and refused to take vis-à-vis Libya, the 2011 defense guidelines published in May that year described crisis prevention and management as the most probable operational scenario and thus structurally determinant for the main features of the armed forces.<sup>549</sup> Intervening in Libya on behalf of parts of the civilian population which was thought to be in danger of genocide<sup>550</sup> would have constituted a crisis management task as described in the German defense guidelines. Moreover, the operation was primarily undertaken by European

<sup>547</sup> Cf. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Nato braucht Berlins Munition nicht, 2011.

<sup>548</sup> Rousseau, Richard 2011: Why Germany Abstained on UN Resolution 1973 on Libya, in: Foreign Policy Journal 2011, <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2011/06/22/why-germany-abstained-on-un-resolution-1973-on-libya/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>549</sup> Cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2011: Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien. Nationale Interessen wahren – Internationale Verantwortung übernehmen – Sicherheit gemeinsam gestalten, 2011, <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/13568/28163bcaed9f30b27f7e3756d812c280/g-03-download-die-verteidigungspolitische-richtlinien-2011-data.pdf> (08.06.2019), p. 16.

<sup>550</sup> N.B.: Then defense minister Thomas de Maizière points out that the people in question numbered a couple of thousands while in Ruanda more than a million people were at risk of being killed underlining that "pictures alone need not decide whether to opt in favor of an intervention," cf. De Maizière, Thomas: Damit der Staat dem Menschen dient. Über Macht und Regieren. München, 2013, p. 343.

allies, certainly in political but also military terms. Seeing as Germany has traditionally been keen to coordinate military matters and actions with its European partners, joining Operation Unified Protector would have been in accordance with German defense goals.

Why then did Berlin decide to abstain from voting in favor of Resolution 1973 alongside its most important transatlantic and European allies and find itself in the same camp as Brazil, China, India, and the Russian Federation? After all, this occasion marked the first time that Germany did not vote alongside any of its most important allies. One could object to that assessment by referring to Germany's opposition to the US-led war in Iraq in 2003. Back then, however, Berlin was joined by Paris in not going along with George W. Bush's decision to topple Saddam Hussein and which caused the most severe strains in transatlantic relations up until then.<sup>551</sup> Some German politicians of the Conservative party (CDU), who were in a coalition with the Liberals (FDP) in 2011, as well as opposition parties, took the Libya decision as a sign of a new German "Sonderweg"<sup>552</sup> as Berlin neither supported its European or transatlantic partners as it had in the past. Apart from the official reasoning that was put forward by the German government which will be elaborated below, other explanation patterns circulated, one of which attributed Berlin's decision to abstain as an attempt to curry favor with the BRIC countries. Brazil and India were non-permanent members of the UNSC at the time of the passing of Resolution 1973;<sup>553</sup> China and the Russian Federation, both permanent members, abstained from voting on the resolution just as Brazil, India and Germany. Some observers interpreted Berlin's voting behavior as a means to "improve Germany's standing there [with the BRIC countries], making future [economic] dividends more likely."<sup>554</sup> Others denied that voting in favor of a military intervention

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<sup>551</sup> Cf., for example, Gordon/Shapiro, *Allies at War*.

<sup>552</sup> Fichtner, Ullrich 2011: Deutscher Sonderweg. Die Welt hilft den libyschen Rebellen und wundert sich über die Berliner Haltung, in: Spiegel Online 2011, <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/dokument/d-82800289.html> (08.06.2019) and cf. Lau, Jörg 2011: „Wir hätten zustimmen sollen“. Der CDU-Politiker Ruprecht Polenz über die Libyen-Politik der Bundesregierung, in: Zeit Online 2011, <https://www.zeit.de/2011/14/interview-polenz> (08.06.2019).

<sup>553</sup> Cf., for example, Hacke, Christian 2011: Deutschland und der Libyen-Konflikt. Zivilmacht ohne Zivilcourage, in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 2011, <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/33124/deutschland-und-der-libyen-konflikt-zivilmacht-ohne-zivilcourage-essay?p=all> (08.06.2019).

<sup>554</sup> Rousseau, Why Germany Abstained on UN Resolution 1973 on Libya, 2011.

would have triggered an automatic obligation for Germany to participate in Operation Unified Protector. After all, Germany had supported UNSC resolutions calling for “all necessary measures”<sup>555</sup> in the past without participating in such.<sup>556</sup> Berlin, however, insinuated such an obligation had it supported Resolution 1973 and used that reasoning as one of the central arguments to justify its abstention.<sup>557</sup> Angela Merkel even cited US President Barack Obama as an approver of the validity of this logic. According to the German Chancellor, she had told Obama in a private conversation that some critics in the German parliament had been in favor of supporting the resolution but not the deployment of soldiers. Allegedly, Obama responded by stating that this path would have been “non-sense. If Germany agrees [to the resolution] it also has to participate [in military actions].”<sup>558</sup> The main argument against German participation in an intervention against the Gaddafi regime was the risk of civilian casualties.<sup>559</sup> As Foreign Minister Westerwelle put it: “Every military operation causes civilian casualties. That we know from distressing experience (...) I know that we have discussed this issue with regard to the Iraq and Afghanistan campaign time and again.”<sup>560</sup> He reiterated this argument in his memoirs, pointing out that the consequences of the intervention were not considered

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<sup>555</sup> UN News 2011: Security Council authorizes ‘all necessary measures’ to protect civilians in Libya, 2011, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/03/369382-security-council-authorizes-all-necessary-measures-protect-civilians-libya> (08.06.2019).

<sup>556</sup> Cf. Spiegel Online, Streit um Libyen-Einsatz, 2011 and cf. Naumann, Klaus 2011: Ich schäme mich für die Haltung meines Landes, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung 2011, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/krieg-in-libyen-deutsche-position-ich-schaeme-mich-fuer-die-haltung-meines-landes-1.1074606#redirectedFromLandingpage> (08.06.2019).

<sup>557</sup> N.B.: Allegedly, Angela Merkel said to her staffers that endorsing the intervention but not sending troops would be “disingenuous.” Responding to the argument that symbolic support could be provided—for example, participating in the sea blockade or dispatching German troops to the AWACS planes—Merkel and her Defense Minister felt that such a move would be of “faltering” nature, cf. Kornelius, Angela Merkel, p. 166.

<sup>558</sup> Spiegel Online, Streit um Libyen-Einsatz, 2011.

<sup>559</sup> N.B.: One should also bear in mind that the German government claimed it could not have contributed capacities that the intervening parties would have needed, cf. Katsiolis, Die deutsche Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik nach der Intervention in Libyen, p. 40. This argument, however, did not correspond with reality as former chairman of the military committee of NATO, General Klaus Naumann explained, cf. Naumann, Ich schäme mich für die Haltung meines Landes.

<sup>560</sup> Auswärtiges Amt, Regierungserklärung durch Bundesminister Westerwelle vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zur aktuellen Entwicklung in Libyen, 2011.

well enough by the intervening parties, adding that the Libya case did not constitute an Article Five scenario thus not calling for alliance solidarity anyhow.<sup>561</sup> The then Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière referred to the debate over the possible consequences of an intervention in more general terms by pointing out that one ought to be careful in deciding to agree to any military operation, as some of the effects could only be known in hindsight: “One ought to consider the consequences, an exit strategy, and a political concept during and after the intervention.”<sup>562</sup> Yet, the German government did not mind offering the German AWACS crew to execute air surveillance in Afghanistan in lieu of participating in the air campaign over Libya: “We are ready to relieve our NATO partners, especially with regard to AWACS capabilities by assuming additional responsibility in Afghanistan”<sup>563</sup> as Angela Merkel declared at the Libya summit in Paris on March 19. Demonstrating solidarity with its NATO allies and relieving them of part of the defense burden was used as the only argument why Germany decided to deploy German AWACS crew members to Afghanistan.<sup>564</sup> After all, a similar mission had already been sanctioned by the German Bundestag in 2009. Yet, the mandate expired after a year without being renewed. Thus, the German government, especially Foreign Minister Westerwelle, was stuck for an answer as to why the AWACS mandate was not renewed in 2010 but was seemingly necessary in 2011. Considering Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière’s claim that “the deployment of AWACS [flights] is important and necessary regardless of the development in Libya”<sup>565</sup> underlines that the German government’s decision to provide a German AWACS crew for surveillance flights over Afghanistan necessitated further explanation. An additional distortion of Germany’s official line of argument as to why it would deploy German staff to Afghanistan but not to Libya relates to the fact that AWACS aircraft in Afghanistan were coordinating airstrikes as well—the very reason German crew members were removed from Operation Active Endeavour over the Mediterranean,

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<sup>561</sup> Cf. Westerwelle, Guido: Zwischen zwei Leben. Von Liebe, Tod und Zuversicht. Hamburg 2015, pp. 27–28.

<sup>562</sup> De Maizière, Damit der Staat den Menschen dient, p. 344.

<sup>563</sup> Friedrichs, Chaostage in der deutschen Außenpolitik, 2011.

<sup>564</sup> Cf. Deutschlandfunk 2011: Es ist ein politisches Zeichen unserer Bündnissolidarität, in: Deutschlandfunk 2011,  
[http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/es-ist-ein-politisches-zeichen-unserer-buendnissolidaritaet.694.de.html?dram:article\\_id=69845](http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/es-ist-ein-politisches-zeichen-unserer-buendnissolidaritaet.694.de.html?dram:article_id=69845) (08.06.2019).

<sup>565</sup> Friedrichs, Chaostage in der deutschen Außenpolitik, 2011.

as the government suspected that the AWACS flights being part of that Operation could be used in service of managing airstrikes in Libya.<sup>566</sup> Thus, arguing against participating in Operation Unified Protector in order to prevent civilian casualties rings hollow in light of German AWACS crew members participating in an operation over Afghanistan that also had the potential for lethal consequences. According to some observers, the gap between rhetoric and action in this regard could be explained by ways of pointing out that the German Foreign Minister at the time had not realized that voting in favor of UNSC Resolution 1973 would have been possible without committing any troops to a military operation automatically.<sup>567</sup> In addition to this actor-centric argument, a source emphasised that voting in favour without contributing to an ensuing mission would not have gone down well with Germany's allies.<sup>568</sup> Thus, this expert echoed the argument Chancellor Merkel had raised with Barack Obama.

Another argument brought forward in this context was the need to demonstrate loyalty with its allies: "German behavior in the wake of the Libya crisis had prompted disappointment on part of our allies, particularly the US"<sup>569</sup>, an employee at the Defense Ministry, who in 2011 served at Germany's permanent representation at NATO, assessed. While the Americans showed some understanding of the German decision-making process in the run-up to the UNSC vote, the result damaged Berlin's reputation in NATO according to this insider.<sup>570</sup> A staffer at the Foreign Ministry came to a similar conclusion in that the German decision to abstain from voting in favor of UNSC Resolution 1973 and the subsequent abstention from NATO's air campaign harmed Berlin's esteem in the Alliance.<sup>571</sup> This expert added that it was solely Germany's decision to decline supporting the resolution, that is, that the United States had had no influence on this choice.<sup>572</sup> Other staffers from the Foreign Ministry supported that assessment.<sup>573</sup> Only one interviewed expert, a desk officer

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<sup>566</sup> Cf. Friedrichs, *Chaostage in der deutschen Außenpolitik*, 2011.

<sup>567</sup> Cf. author interview 7, Berlin, October 4, 2017 and Brockmeier, Germany and the intervention in Libya, pp. 71-72.

<sup>568</sup> Cf. author interview 7.

<sup>569</sup> Author interview 8, Berlin, November 18, 2017.

<sup>570</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>571</sup> Cf. author interview 9, Berlin, October 10, 2017.

<sup>572</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>573</sup> Cf. author interview 10, Berlin, November 6, 2017.

with a military background at the Defense Ministry, arrived at a different conclusion: “One can delineate US attempts to influence German decision-making in the run-up to the vote on Resolution 1973.”<sup>574</sup> On a more general note, this source went on to contend that the United States was hoping for greater German engagement in NATO for reasons of (financial) burden-sharing and as an additional basis for legitimacy by acting in multilateral concert.<sup>575</sup>

### **6.3.3. The specter of an American pivot to the Asia-Pacific region**

The gradual drawdown of US military forces from Germany was announced right after the end of the Cold War, even before the Eastern and Western parts of the country were reunified, on September 18, 1990.<sup>576</sup> The initial round of retrenchment involving the closure of 110 sites was followed by 20 more rounds of base closures. In 1996, only 85.000 US military personnel were left in Germany—a 75% decrease in comparison to 1989.<sup>577</sup> While the troop level reduction was slowed down for some time during the mid-1990s—in parts due to the Balkan wars and the ensuing instability in Europe—the trend of gradually minimizing its military footprint in Europe (and Germany for that matter) was continued. In 2010, the United States announced the closing down of the bases in Heidelberg (shut down in 2013) and Mannheim (shut down in 2011), both having served as former strongholds and headquarters of the US Army in Germany.<sup>578</sup> With the announcement that the United States would concentrate more of its military resources on the Asia-Pacific in October 2011, yet another round of personnel and base reductions were to affect Europe. In January

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<sup>574</sup> Author interview 11, Berlin, October 17, 2017.

<sup>575</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>576</sup> N.B.: For a more detailed analysis and figures of the development of US military personnel in Germany from 1985 to 2016, cf. Wissenschaftliche Dienste Deutscher Bundestag 2017: Die Entwicklung der Personalstärke der US-Streitkräfte und ihrer deutschen Zivilangestellten seit dem Jahr 1985 in Deutschland –insbesondere in der Westpfalz und in der Kaiserslautern Military Community, 2017,  
<https://www.bundestag.de/blob/496190/b34ad5b97fa008c61fd38e88946a1521/wd-2-009-17-pdf-data.pdf> (08.06.2019).

<sup>577</sup> Cf. Aus dem Moore, Jan Peter/Spitz-Oener, Alexandra: Bye Bye, G.I.—The Impact of the U.S. Military Drawdown on Local German Labor Markets on German labor market. In: SFB 649 Discussion Paper, 2012 p. 8.

<sup>578</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 9.

2012, the US administration confirmed the deactivation of two heavy combat brigades, the 170th stationed in Baumholder, Germany (shut down in October 2012), and the 172nd stationed in Grafenwöhr,<sup>579</sup> Germany (shut down in May 2013). While the Obama administration assured that the “pivot” along with the partial retrenchment from Europe was not occurring at the expense of the continent’s security, fears among allies of exactly such a result flared up. And yet these fears were unfounded or at least outdated as the US forces stationed in Europe (including Germany) were mostly rotating back and forth to Iraq until the end of 2011. With the war in Iraq ending in December 2011, it was only consequential that parts of the troops that had served there were brought back to the United States instead of being re-deployed to bases in Europe. Thus, large parts of the US military presence in Europe were not intended for European security but rather for the Middle East and Afghanistan.<sup>580</sup> Europe served as a hub for US military operations in other regions. While this was no secret to German decision-makers and the strategic community in Berlin, worries of abandonment circulated nonetheless: “What the pivot means for Europe is most likely an eventual softening of U.S. security guarantees for the continent, a decline in U.S. engagement in Europe’s near abroad (...), and greater U.S. expectations for a meaningful European foreign policy to help address global challenges.”<sup>581</sup> Regardless of whether and how the “pivot” materialized, the following two subchapters will scrutinize how and with what motivation Germany reacted to the announcement of the American rebalance toward Asia as well as the partial retrenchment from Europe, which, in terms of troop reductions and base closures, affected Germany the most.

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<sup>579</sup> N.B.: The Joint Multinational Command Training Center Grafenwöhr is still the third largest military training area in Europe used by the United States Army Europe, the United States Air Force in Europe and other NATO forces where live ammunition is used. In 2015, the US stationed material for an addition heavy brigade in Grafenwöhr, cf. Bell, Anthony/Samp, Lisa Sawyer: Evaluating Future U.S. Army Force Posture in Europe. Phase II Report. Washington, D.C., 2016, pp. 17, 21.

<sup>580</sup> Cf. Wissenschaftliche Dienste Deutscher Bundestag: Die Entwicklung der Personalstärke der US-Streitkräfte und ihrer deutschen Zivilangestellten seit dem Jahr 1985 in Deutschland –insbesondere in der Westpfalz und in der Kaiserslautern Military Community, 2017, p. 6.

<sup>581</sup> Siegel, Nicholas 2011: As the US Pivots toward Asia, Europe Stumbles, in: GMF 2011, <http://www.gmfus.org/commentary/us-pivots-toward-asia-europe-stumbles> (08.06.2019).

### 6.3.3.1. Attempts to live up to transatlantic expectations

In its 2011 defense policy guidelines, Germany had already professed a commitment to assuming more international responsibility, an expectation the US had directed at Berlin time and again, as the debate about German troop levels and caveats in Afghanistan underlines.<sup>582</sup> As a matter of fact, the strategy document uses the phrase “assuming international responsibility” in its title next to “safeguarding national interests” and “shaping security together.”<sup>583</sup> Wolfgang Ischinger, the chairman of the Munich Security Conference, asserted that the “assumption of international responsibility” can thus be interpreted as “one of the three core national interests.”<sup>584</sup> The importance of becoming more active in security and defense matters is underpinned in the document itself: “Germany’s place in the world is characterised above all by our national interests as a strong nation in the centre of Europe and by our international responsibility for peace and freedom.”<sup>585</sup> The defense guidelines go on to refer to Germany’s “alliance solidarity and making a reliable and credible contribution to the Alliance (...) [as] part of Germany’s raison d’état.”<sup>586</sup> According to the document, Berlin takes its international responsibility within NATO seriously and defines “developments within the Alliance (...) [as] decisive in determining Germany’s defence policy.”<sup>587</sup> In sum, one can conclude that the 2011 defense guidelines are a sketch of the “new responsibility” debate that was initiated by three administration officials at the 2014 Munich Security Conference and which will be discussed in the concluding analysis section of this case study.<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>582</sup> Cf., for example, Deutsche Welle 2008: US Wants More as Germans Prepare for Afghanistan Deployment, in: Deutsche Welle 2008, <https://www.dw.com/en/us-wants-more-as-germans-prepare-for-afghanistan-deployment/a-3201090> (08.06.2019).

<sup>583</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien, 2011, p. 1.

<sup>584</sup> Ischinger, Germany After Libya, p. 54.

<sup>585</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

<sup>588</sup> N.B.: The responsibility debate which was encapsulated in the Munich consensus was conceptually prepared by a project run by the German Marshall Fund and the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, cf. GMF/SWP 2013: Neue Macht. Neue Verantwortung. Elemente einer

To put principles into practice, the German armed forces were to be reformed according to these defense guidelines. The most important paper guiding the reform can be found in the “Vertices of the realignment of the armed forces.”<sup>589</sup> In it, the Defense Ministry laid out plans for the German armed forces to be reduced to a maximum of 185,000 soldiers by scrapping conscription. Instead, the armed forces were to be transformed into a more professional army capable of being deployed around the globe in reaction to quickly changing security environments.<sup>590</sup> While the mission of the Bundeswehr on paper still involved territorial defense, the capabilities to do so were rescinded gradually.<sup>591</sup> The main task of the German armed forces was de facto participation in crisis management operations.<sup>592</sup> In line with that reorientation the stationing concept of the Bundeswehr in Germany was redefined, entailing the reduction of army sites from 328 to 264.<sup>593</sup>

Against the backdrop of the 2009 coalition agreement between the CDU and FDP governing Germany until 2013, the commitment to assuming international responsibility in the 2011 defense guidelines can be interpreted as a change in the coalition’s mind set. While the conservative-liberal coalition professed its commitment

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deutschen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik für eine Welt im Umbruch, 2013,  
[https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt\\_papiere/DeutAussenSicherhpol\\_SWP\\_GMF\\_2013.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt_papiere/DeutAussenSicherhpol_SWP_GMF_2013.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>589</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2011: Eckpunkte für die Neuausrichtung der Bundeswehr. Nationale Interessen wahren – Internationale Verantwortung übernehmen – Sicherheit gemeinsam gestalten, 2011,  
<https://ifg.rosalux.de/files/2011/07/EckpunkteFinalBWReform.pdf> (08.06.2019).

<sup>590</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>591</sup> Cf. Bierman, Kai/Stahnke, Julian 2017: Kaputte Truppe, in: Zeit Online 2017,  
<https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-04/bundeswehr-bestand-ausruestung-panzer> (08.06.2019) and cf. Jungholt, Thorsten 2016: Die kleinste und marodeste Bundeswehr aller Zeiten, in: Welt 2016,  
<https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article151479434/Die-kleinste-und-marodeste-Bundeswehr-aller-Zeiten.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>592</sup> Cf. Deutscher Bundeswehr-Verband 2017: Bundeswehr-Pläne. Heer soll drei volle Divisionen bekommen, 2017, <https://www.dbwv.de/aktuelle-themen/politik-verband/beitrag/news/bundeswehr-plaene-heer-soll-drei-volle-divisionen-bekommen/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>593</sup> Cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2011: Die Stationierung der Bundeswehr in Deutschland Oktober 2011, 2011,  
<https://www.bundeswehr.de/resource/blob/61186/3cd279dd2baa05276c91a4911955075b/20190620-stationierung-der-bundeswehr-data.pdf> (08.06.2019), p. 17.

to “secure peace through partnership and responsibility in Europe and the world,”<sup>594</sup> it did not correspond with what Germany’s European and transatlantic partners expected from Berlin, that is, increasing its troop and capability levels in military operations such as Afghanistan.<sup>595</sup> Beyond this, the agreement called for the withdrawal of remaining US nuclear weapons in Germany which had been stationed there since 1958 as part of NATO’s nuclear sharing framework.<sup>596</sup> Although the government did underline the importance of the Alliance and its (bilateral) relations with the United States in the coalition agreement and beyond,<sup>597</sup> advocating to rescind of one of the most significant allied sharing agreements marked a departure from Germany’s traditional NATO policy. The proposal, which was largely a matter of the heart of the liberal FDP,<sup>598</sup> was never seriously discussed let alone implemented. In fact, the proposal was reversed by the next German government to assume power in 2013.<sup>599</sup> In addition, from 2011 onward, Germany regained a transatlantic momentum, both rhetorically and practically. Chancellor Angela Merkel, for example, did profess in a speech in July 2012 that the “American wish for better burden-sharing—that I want to say explicitly—certainly is understandable.”<sup>600</sup> It is noteworthy that Merkel mentioned the transatlantic community’s responsibility for Afghanistan in that context<sup>601</sup> considering that Germany’s partners—especially the

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<sup>594</sup> CDU Deutschlands/CSU-Landesleitung/FDP Deutschlands 2009: Wachstum. Bildung. Zusammenhalt. Der Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und FDP 17. Legislaturperiode 2009, p. 113 et seqq.

<sup>595</sup> Cf., for example, Deutsche Welle, US Wants More as Germans Prepare for Afghanistan Deployment, 2008.

<sup>596</sup> Cf. CDU Deutschlands/CSU-Landesleitung/FDP Deutschlands, Wachstum. Bildung. Zusammenhalt, 2009, p. 120.

<sup>597</sup> Cf. ibid., pp. 118–119.

<sup>598</sup> Cf. Dpa 2010: Bundestag fordert Abzug von US-Atomwaffen, in: Zeit Online 2010, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2010-03/bundestag-atomwaffen-abruestung> (08.06.2019).

<sup>599</sup> Cf. CDU Deutschlands/CSU-Landesleitung/SPD Deutschlands 2013: Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten. Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD 18. Legislaturperiode 2013, p. 177, <https://www.cdu.de/sites/default/files/media/dokumente/koalitionsvertrag.pdf>.

<sup>600</sup> Die Bundeskanzlerin: Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel anlässlich der 60-Jahr-Feier der Atlantik-Brücke e.V. im Deutschen Historischen Museum, July 2, 2012, <https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-de/aktuelles/rede-von-bundeskanzlerin-angela-merkel-anlaesslich-der-60-jahrfeier-der-atlantik-bruecke-e-v-im-deutschen-historischen-museum-463292> (08.06.2019).

<sup>601</sup> Cf. ibid.

United States—had almost constantly been pushing Berlin to show more commitment in the ISAF operation at the Hindukush. At NATO's Chicago Summit in 2012, the conclusion of the ISAF operation had been agreed upon by all member states which might have made it easier, that is, less consequential for the German Chancellor to speak of the West's commitment to Afghanistan.<sup>602</sup> Yet, as already mentioned in the 2011 defense guidelines,<sup>603</sup> Merkel called upon the European Union to develop into a more ready and capable entity in order to assume more responsibility to secure its member states as well as to project stability abroad, including operations such as the one in Afghanistan.<sup>604</sup> Germany was to play a key role in enabling European defense. After the coalition with the FDP had come to an end and the Social Democrats switched into governing power as the CDU's junior partner, a broader window of opportunity seemed to have opened. According to the government's coalition agreement from 2013, "Germany accepts its international responsibility. We want to actively help form the global order."<sup>605</sup> The government that was formed in 2009 spoke more hesitantly of aiming to "assume a formative role in the alliances and organizations which we participate in."<sup>606</sup> In contrast to the 2009 coalition agreement, the 2013 document dedicated a whole chapter to Berlin's "responsibility in the world." The previous government had spoken of "responsibility in Europe and the world" and did not deal with both questions separately.<sup>607</sup> Another indication that Germany was prepared to assume more responsibility in a European and transatlantic context can be found in its reference to the establishment

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<sup>602</sup> Cf. NATO 2012: Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan, 2012, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_87595.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87595.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>603</sup> N.B.: The document advocates that "Europe must improve its ability to take action in the area of security policy so that it can independently assume responsibility for meeting collective security challenges within and beyond Europe's borders," cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*, 2011, pp. 7–8.

<sup>604</sup> Cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin, Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel anlässlich der 60-Jahr-Feier der Atlantik-Brücke e.V. im Deutschen Historischen Museum, 2012.

<sup>605</sup> CDU Deutschlands/CSU-Landesleitung/SPD Deutschlands, Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten, 2013, p. 168.

<sup>606</sup> CDU Deutschlands/CSU-Landesleitung/FDP Deutschlands, Wachstum. Bildung. Zusammenhalt, 2009, p. 113.

<sup>607</sup> N.B.: The 2013 agreement devoted 16 pages on Germany's responsibility in the world whereas the government that was formed in 2009 only spent 13 pages on Germany's international responsibilities.

of the “Framework Nations Concept” (FNC)<sup>608</sup> in the 2013 coalition agreement: “Germany is ready to produce capabilities with other NATO partners as a framework nation.”<sup>609</sup> The concept originates in the assumption that Germany’s armed forces would participate in military operations abroad in the future requiring a broad capabilities spectrum. To guarantee this and drawing on NATO’s smart defense and the EU’s pooling and sharing initiatives, Berlin proposed to serve as a framework nation so as to support partners and to be supported with the maintenance and build-up of military means.<sup>610</sup> To be more precise, smaller and bigger states were supposed to be grouped together into so-called clusters to coordinate their capacities in order to place the development and provision of military devices on a firm foundation. In the spirit of the name of the concept, one bigger state would serve as a framework nation for each cluster and as such provide the military backbone such as logistics, intelligence as well as command and control structures. Smaller states would then plug in with niche capacities such as anti-aircraft units.<sup>611</sup> The FNC was drawn up by Germany and introduced into the Alliance whose other member states agreed upon the concept at the 2014 Wales summit of NATO.<sup>612</sup> Devising the FNC was a way for Berlin to demonstrate to its European and transatlantic partners that “Germany will continue to reliably contribute its adequate share of the burden in the Alliance.”<sup>613</sup> At the Munich Security Conference in February 2014, Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen specified the aim of the FNC when she laid out that the concept would relieve the United States of its burden in the Alliance as well as balance out disparities within Europe.<sup>614</sup> The 2009 coalition agreement made no

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<sup>608</sup> N.B.: The concept of the FNC is already mentioned in the 2011 defense guidelines, cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien, 2011, p. 11.

<sup>609</sup> CDU Deutschlands/CSU-Landesleitung/SPD Deutschlands, Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten, 2013, p. 169.

<sup>610</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>611</sup> Cf. Glatz, Rainer L./Zapfe, Martin 2017: Ambitious Framework Nation. Germany in NATO, in: SWP Comment 2017, [https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2017C35\\_glt\\_zapfe.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2017C35_glt_zapfe.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>612</sup> Cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2017: Framework Nations Concept. Zusammenarbeit intensiviert, 2017 <https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/framework-nations-concept-zusammenarbeit-intensiviert-11200> (08.06.2019).

<sup>613</sup> CDU Deutschlands/CSU-Landesleitung/SPD Deutschlands, Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten, 2013, pp. 168–169.

<sup>614</sup> Cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2014: Rede der Bundesministerin der

mention of either burden-sharing or Germany's part in it in a transatlantic context. Not only did the CDU/CSU-SPD government refer to Berlin's responsibility to contribute more to the transatlantic burden; it also contextualized it by way of acknowledging the American pivot to Asia.

While the coalition agreement does not mention any concerns that the rebalance will come at the cost of Europe's security, one cannot ignore the fact that Germany incorporated America's re-orientation into its government program: "We want to use the increased American foreign policy orientation towards Asia-Pacific as a chance and help contribute that in this region as well politics of cooperation and balancing of interests is preferred over politics of confrontation."<sup>615</sup> The rationale to draw on Washington's decision to reorient its foreign and security policies toward the Asian-Pacific region to justify its own actions are captured in a quote by Wolfgang Ischinger: "US actions, rather than strategic thinking in Berlin, will drive German [foreign and security] policy."<sup>616</sup> This assessment is in line with another claim aired by the chairman of the Munich Security Conference: "The possibility of a substantial reduction of America's commitment to NATO is barely recognized and discussed in Germany."<sup>617</sup> Whether or not both assessments hold true will be examined in the following section on Berlin's perception vis-à-vis the partial US retrenchment from Germany.

#### **6.3.3.2. Enhanced German responsibility still in its infancy**

Opinions on whether or not the German political elites did perceive an American withdrawal from Germany (and NATO Europe at large) are split. The differences in perception can be found in academia as well as the ministerial bureaucracy, including the Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry, and the Chancellery. While a

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Verteidigung, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen, anlässlich der 50. Sicherheitskonferenz München, 2014,  
[https://www.securityconference.de/fileadmin/MSC\\_2014/Reden/2014-01-31\\_Rede\\_BMin\\_von\\_der\\_Leyen\\_MSC\\_2014.pdf](https://www.securityconference.de/fileadmin/MSC_2014/Reden/2014-01-31_Rede_BMin_von_der_Leyen_MSC_2014.pdf), p. 4.

<sup>615</sup> CDU Deutschlands/CSU-Landesleitung/SPD Deutschlands, Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten, 2013, p. 173.

<sup>616</sup> Ischinger, Germany After Libya, p. 58.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid., pp. 57–58.

staffer at the German Foreign Ministry was of the opinion that Berlin did not perceive a withdrawal,<sup>618</sup> a staffer at the Defense Ministry asserts that such a retrenchment was registered:<sup>619</sup> “Obama’s speech on the rebalance, though it was not implemented, was fatal from an alliance policy perspective. Had the pivot been implemented, NATO would have been weakened tremendously in the wake of it.”<sup>620</sup> The defense ministry staffer went on to say that the American pivot to Asia and the withdrawal of two combat team brigades from Germany shortly thereafter prompted uncertainty about the US’s commitment to German security with parliamentarians as well as in government circles.<sup>621</sup> One reason for this uncertainty gaining ground can be ascribed to the fear that Germany would “finally retreat into its shell” were the Americans to leave the continent. In other words, foreign and security policy experts and practitioners, especially in conservative circles, worried that Berlin would do less in terms of security and defense policies if Washington reduced its commitment to German and European security, respectively.<sup>622</sup> But such a reaction on the part of Germany was far from what the United States had intended, according to a German scholar based in Washington, D.C.<sup>623</sup> The rationale behind the pivot and the deactivation of two combat brigade teams stationed in Germany was an American attempt to release the Europeans into “strategic independence”<sup>624</sup> instead. Yet, many in Berlin and other European capitals (and conservative internationalists in America) read these steps as a retreat from Europe.<sup>625</sup> Another reason why the American decisions taken in 2011/2012 (pivot and partial withdrawal of troops and closure of bases) induced worries was related to the economic ramifications Washington’s actions entailed with regard to US military bases stationed in Germany.<sup>626</sup> A staffer at the Defense Ministry pointed out that one of the motives why decision-makers in Berlin reflexively reacted to the American pivot insomuch

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<sup>618</sup> Cf. author interview 9.

<sup>619</sup> Cf. author interview 7.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

<sup>621</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>622</sup> Ibid.

<sup>623</sup> Author interview 12, Berlin/Washington, D.C., May 24, 2017.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid.

<sup>625</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>626</sup> N.B.: For more in-depth analysis of how the stationing of US military forces affected local German labor markets, cf., for example, Aus dem Moore/Spitz-Oener, *Bye Bye*, G.I., 2012, p. 8.

as they wanted the United States to stay in Germany was down to “regional economic considerations” since Bavaria and Baden Wuerttemberg would be most affected by US military base closures.<sup>627</sup> To what extent German decision-makers perceived the American pivot and partial troop reduction and base closure from and in Germany as a withdrawal was assessed differently by members of the ministerial bureaucracy as well as academics/think tankers. Little dissent could be witnessed in relation to the consequences of American actions toward Berlin in 2011/2012 though. Consensus could be detected about the reason why Germany developed the FNC. For one, the decrease of defense budgets across Europe forced Berlin to contemplate ways to bundle resources more effectively, as one German defense expert explained: “Budgetary pressure was the main driver of the FNC, not pressure exerted by the US. The concept is an attempt to prevent complete military incapacity.”<sup>628</sup> Secondly, the American pivot to Asia was listed as a driver for the establishment of the FNC.<sup>629</sup> A German scholar based in Washington, D.C. put it this way: “The Framework Nations Concept attempted to fill the capability gaps that had emerged due to the American retrenchment.”<sup>630</sup> While yielding more capacities together with its European partners was enumerated by other interview partners as well, “maintaining military (infra-)structure in Germany” was mentioned as another motivation to devise the FNC. Only by including parts of the militaries of partner states can Germany afford to perpetuate (training) structures.<sup>631</sup> Although a Foreign Ministry staffer claimed that Germany belongs to the “conceptionally stronger” nations in the alliance once more thanks to the FNC,<sup>632</sup> offering this idea ought not to be confused with German leadership. While the concept does entail that Berlin was doing more in military terms, it, by no means, intended to go it alone but instead in close concert with partner nations.<sup>633</sup> Asked whether or not Germany introduced the FNC due to US pressure most experts dismissed this notion. While the Obama administration regarded the German Framework Nations Concept with favor, two Foreign Ministry staffers explained that the concept was not US-triggered; rather,

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<sup>627</sup> Author interview 7.

<sup>628</sup> Author interview 14, Berlin, January 10, 2018.

<sup>629</sup> Cf. author interview 7.

<sup>630</sup> Author interview 12.

<sup>631</sup> Author interview 7.

<sup>632</sup> Author interview 9.

<sup>633</sup> Cf. author interview 7.

Germany's willingness to assume more strategic responsibility in transatlantic security relations prompted the government in 2013 to devise the concept.<sup>634</sup> A desk officer with a military background at the Defense Ministry questioned the notion that the establishment of the FNC could be ascribed to direct pressure on part of the US government. Instead, he pointed out that Germany has had an inherent interest in cooperating closely with its most important transatlantic ally. Coming up with a concept that would demonstrate to the United States that Germany was ready to assume more responsibility was "a skillful diplomatic gambit on the part of the German government."<sup>635</sup> Establishing itself as a linchpin for smaller European allies would relieve part of the United States' burden within NATO.<sup>636</sup> The German desire to demonstrate "visible assumption of responsibility to the Alliance, its own population and the world at large" was mentioned as the main motivation behind the FNC by another employee at the Defense Ministry.<sup>637</sup> In the words of a German researcher, "the FNC must be seen in the context of the German responsibility debate. While the concept as such is not revolutionary, the idea of a framework nation for force development is indeed new."<sup>638</sup> Furthermore, while the US announcement of its intention to pivot to the Asia-Pacific in large parts explains Germany's decision to introduce the FNC, an employee at the Defense Ministry did not discern direct influence by Washington on Berlin in this regard.<sup>639</sup> Claudia Major from the Berlin-based think tank SWP did not attribute US pressure as the main reason for the emergence of the FNC. Rather, the necessity to present a "deliverable" at the Wales Summit in September 2014 and the traditional commitment to cooperation was more of a driving force.<sup>640</sup> Moving to the forefront of military and political engagement in NATO would become even more pressing and relevant for Germany's security and defense establishment in 2014—the year that witnessed Russia annexing Crimea and launching a (covert) war in Ukraine. In the beginning of that

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<sup>634</sup> Cf. author interview 10.

<sup>635</sup> Author interview 11.

<sup>636</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>637</sup> Author interview 8.

<sup>638</sup> Author interview 15, Berlin, November 30, 2018.

<sup>639</sup> Cf. author interview 8.

<sup>640</sup> Author interview 16, Berlin, November 6, 2017; N.B.: For a further discussion by Claudia Major of the inception of the FNC, cf.: Major, Claudia/Christian, Mölling 2017: The Twenty-First-Century German Question in European Defense, in: Carnegie Europe 2017, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/71590> (08.06.2019).

same year, the German government (including the Federal President Joachim Gauck, Defense Minister von der Leyen, and Foreign Minister Steinmeier)<sup>641</sup> embarked on a debate about why and how the country should contribute more to European and transatlantic security, including the use of military means.<sup>642</sup> How and with what justification Berlin reacted to the emerging security threats in 2014 are the topics of the following two chapters on crisis management toward Ukraine and the reassurance measures undertaken by NATO.

#### 6.3.4. Managing the crisis in Ukraine: The test case for German maturity

Then-Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovych's announcement on November 21, 2013, of his decision to decline signing the association agreement with the European Union came as a surprise to the EU's member states, including Germany.<sup>643</sup> Consequently, Berlin was involved in trying to calm the waves that erupted on Maidan after Yanukovych's decision to rebuff the EU. Thus, then-German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle together with his Polish counterpart Radoslaw Sikorski issued a joint statement on November 26, 2013, urging all parties involved to refrain from violent actions: "Peaceful demonstrations taking place in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities are a strong signal that the citizens of Ukraine are longing for closer ties between the EU and Ukraine. We share that wish and stand firm in our

<sup>641</sup> Cf. Auswärtiges Amt 2014: Rede von Außenminister Frank-Walter Steinmeier anlässlich der 50. Münchener Sicherheitskonferenz, 2014, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/140201-bm-muesiko/259554> (08.06.2019); cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Rede der Bundesministerin der Verteidigung, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen, anlässlich der 50. Sicherheitskonferenz München, 2014; cf. Der Bundespräsident 2014: Eröffnung der 50. Münchener Sicherheitskonferenz, 2014, <http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Joachim-Gauck/Reden/2014/01/140131-Muenchner-Sicherheitskonferenz.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>642</sup> N.B.: Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier mentions in his memoirs that he could observe how Germany's role had changed between the time he was foreign minister between 2005-09 and 2013-16, leading him to conclude that Berlin had to assume more responsibility internationally, cf. Steinmeier, Frank-Walter: *Flugschreiber. Notizen aus der Außenpolitik in Krisenzeiten*. Berlin 2016, pp. 21–22.

<sup>643</sup> Cf. Grytsenko, Oksana/Traynor, Ian 2013: Ukraine suspends talks on EU trade pact as Putin wins tug of war, in: The Guardian 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/21/ukraine-suspends-preparations-eu-trade-pact> (08.06.2019).

commitment to the people of Ukraine who would have been – and still can be – the main beneficiaries of the EU's unprecedented offer of close political and economic cooperation. The offer of an ambitious association agreement is still on the table. This requires the political will of the Ukrainian leadership to demonstrate determined action and tangible progress on the conditions set out in December 2012<sup>644</sup> (...)." <sup>645</sup> After it became clear that the Ukrainian government would not reverse its decision on the Association Agreement whose implementation protestors on the Maidan had been calling for since November 2013 and violence against demonstrators intensified, then-German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (who had replaced Guido Westerwelle following general elections in September 2013) travelled to Kyiv on February 19. He was joined by his French and Polish colleagues, charged with the task of brokering a compromise agreement between the Ukrainian government and the opposition to put a halt to the violence. Two days later, the three diplomats oversaw the conflicting parties signing the "Agreement on settlement of political crisis in Ukraine" which was supposed to usher in a peaceful and democratic transition in Ukraine.<sup>646</sup> In another surprise move, Ukraine's President Yanukovych fled his country for Russia the next day.<sup>647</sup> With the head of state gone, the unrest in the country did not settle. Shortly after the February episode, Russia annexed the Ukrainian peninsula Crimea on March 16, 2014. The German government condemned this move insisting that the so-called referendum violated international law just as much as the declaration of independence and the inclusion of Crimea into the Russian Federation.<sup>648</sup> In reaction to the annexation, Germany announced that EU-sanctions coordinated with the United States would be imposed

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<sup>644</sup> N.B.: For further information on the matter, cf., for example, European Commission 2013: Signature of Association Agreement with the EU will depend on Ukraine's performance, 2013, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-436\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-436_en.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>645</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland 2013: Joint Statement by Polish and German Foreign Ministers on Ukraine, 2013, [https://www.msz.gov.pl/en/news/joint\\_statement\\_by\\_polish\\_and\\_german\\_foreign\\_ministers\\_on\\_ukraine](https://www.msz.gov.pl/en/news/joint_statement_by_polish_and_german_foreign_ministers_on_ukraine) (08.06.2019).

<sup>646</sup> Cf. Olchawa, Maciej: Mission Ukraine. The 2012-2013 Diplomatic Effort to Secure Ties with Europe. Jefferson 2017, p. 93.

<sup>647</sup> N.B.: Yanukovych himself claimed he had to leave as his life was being threatened, cf. BBC News 2014: Ukrainian ex-leader Viktor Yanukovych vows fightback, in: BBC News 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26386946> (08.06.2019).

<sup>648</sup> Cf. Die Bundesregierung 2014: Bundesregierung verurteilt Referendum, 2014,

on Russia. Berlin was said to be the leading actor in convincing its European partners to agree to the regime of sanctions with the personal support of Barack Obama.<sup>649</sup> In addition, Angela Merkel would later be a prominent figure in the so-called Normandy format negotiations aimed at nudging the Ukrainian government, Russia and the separatists it supported in Eastern Ukraine to agree to a cease fire.

#### 6.3.4.1. Managing to live up to transatlantic and European expectations

The Maidan revolution that took hold of Kiev in late 2013, resulting in the pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych being toppled and the ensuing conflict with Moscow, turned out to be an unexpected test case for Germany to put its principles into practice. Unlike in the United States,<sup>650</sup> no officials in Berlin called for military intervention, including the delivery of weapons as a means to react to the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea and to entangle the war parties in Ukraine.<sup>651</sup> From the very beginning, the German debate underlined that only a diplomatic approach would be acceptable to solve the crisis.<sup>652</sup> Part of the reason for that argument can be found in the circumstance that leading decision-makers such as Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle were of the opinion that Germany should

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<https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2014/03/2014-03-17-krim-statement-sts.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>649</sup> Cf. Kundnani, Hans/Pond, Elizabeth 2015: Germany's Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis. Caught Between East and West, in: Foreign Affairs 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/eastern-europe-caucasus/germany-s-real-role-ukraine-crisis> (08.06.2019).

<sup>650</sup> N.B.: The US President Barack Obama had ruled out sending weapons or troops to Ukraine from the outset of the crisis unlike members of Congress cf., for example, Kundnani/Pond, Germany's Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis, 2015.

<sup>651</sup> Cf., for example, Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Rede der Bundesministerin der Verteidigung, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen, anlässlich der 50. Sicherheitskonferenz München, 2014; cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin 2014: Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel, 2014, <https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-de/aktuelles/regierungserklaerung-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-443682> (08.06.2019); cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015: Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel, 2015, <https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-de/aktuelles/regierungserklaerung-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-442482> (08.06.2019).

<sup>652</sup> N.B.: Only after the shooting down of a Malaysian airplane over Ukraine did Germany's attitude change whereas prior to this incident, Berlin was reluctant to impose sanctions on Russia, cf., for example, Kundnani/Pond, Germany's Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis, 2015.

not side with either party, that is, Ukraine or Russia, too ostensibly, not least because of concerns about Russian reactions.<sup>653</sup> As a matter of fact, right after the annexation of Crimea, German decision-makers were uncertain about the necessity of burdening Russia with sanctions:<sup>654</sup> “German[y] insisted on dialogue with Russia and the need for a political solution, and they took some time to accept that Russian expansionism required more than a purely diplomatic response.”<sup>655</sup> In addition to supporting EU-imposed sanctions,<sup>656</sup> German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in concert with French President François Hollande, assumed responsibility in bringing together the conflict parties Ukraine and Russia in the so-called Normandy format.<sup>657</sup> This approach was in line with what Defense Minister von der Leyen had coined “leadership from the center” which conveyed the German government’s conviction about the need to assume leadership with its European and transatlantic partners instead of ever going it alone.<sup>658</sup> Accordingly, under the auspices of, and aid from, Germany and France did Ukraine and Russia settle on the so-called Minsk agreement (or Minsk II) after the first (Minsk Protocol) had crumbled. On February 11 and 12, 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President François Hollande hosted and mediated a meeting between Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and Russian President Putin after fighting in the Donbass had flared up again, violating the provisions of the Minsk Protocol.<sup>659</sup> The Minsk II agreement

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<sup>653</sup> Cf. Westerwelle, *Zwischen zwei Welten*, p. 19.

<sup>654</sup> Cf. Matlé/Varwick, *NATO-Integration und Bündnissolidarität*, 2016.

<sup>655</sup> Kundnani/Pond, *Germany’s Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis*, 2015.

<sup>656</sup> Cf. European Commission 2015: Commission Notice of 25.9.2015. Commission Guidance note on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EU) No 833/2014, 2015,  
[https://europa.eu/newsroom/sites/newsroom/files/docs/body/1\\_act\\_part1\\_v2\\_en.pdf](https://europa.eu/newsroom/sites/newsroom/files/docs/body/1_act_part1_v2_en.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>657</sup> Cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015: Ukraine-Gipfel in Paris. Leichte Annäherung der Konfliktparteien, 2015,  
<https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Reiseberichte/2015-10-02-merkel-normandie-format.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>658</sup> Cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2015: Speech by the Federal Minister of Defense, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen on the Occasion of the 51<sup>st</sup> Munich Security Conference, 2015,  
[https://www.securityconference.de/fileadmin/MSC\\_2015/Freitag/150206-2015\\_Rede\\_vdL\\_MSC\\_Englisch-1\\_Kopie\\_.pdf](https://www.securityconference.de/fileadmin/MSC_2015/Freitag/150206-2015_Rede_vdL_MSC_Englisch-1_Kopie_.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>659</sup> Cf. Pifer, Steven 2017: Minsk II at two years, in: Brookings 2017,  
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/02/15/minsk-ii-at-two-years/> (08.06.2019).

yielded a 13-point plan calling for an immediate ceasefire as well as political follow-on steps to find a durable solution to the conflict by granting the separatist regions more autonomy but restoring Ukrainian sovereignty at the same time.<sup>660</sup> Accordingly, von der Leyen aired the idea that a “reconciliation of interests within Ukraine, guaranteeing both territorial integrity and the adequate degree of autonomy [for the separatist areas in the East of the country]”<sup>661</sup> must be feasible. In her speech at the Munich Security Conference 2015, she went on to say that Russia was interfering in the conflict beyond doubt and providing the separatists with potentially endless supplies. From this assessment, the German Defense Minister deduced responsibility to react—von der Leyen omits to specify whose responsibility (to do what) she is referring to though.<sup>662</sup> Against the backdrop of Germany’s responsibility debate that was launched a year earlier, one can safely assume that the German Defense Minister is referring to her country’s responsibility to settle the Ukraine conflict using diplomatic means. Her colleague, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, backed her up when he underlined that supplying the Ukrainian government with weapons would only worsen the situation on the ground. Instead, a solution ought to be hammered out at the negotiation table involving all conflict parties to de-escalate the conflict.<sup>663</sup> Similar to von der Leyen, Steinmeier pointed out that Germany carried a special responsibility for the security of Europe; deduced from that proclamation whereby the German foreign minister asserted that the country had to “think beyond the current Ukraine conflict.”<sup>664</sup> By that he was not advocating the establishment of the status quo ante. Rather, he contemplated how to integrate Russia into a European security architecture after the diffusion of the conflict. While Steinmeier did not answer his question specifically—most likely speaking to how daunting the challenge was—his speech conveys the notion that

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<sup>660</sup> Cf. BBC News 2015: Ukraine ceasefire. New Minsk agreement key points, in: BBC News 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31436513> (08.06.2019).

<sup>661</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Speech by the Federal Minister of Defense, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen on the Occasion of the 51<sup>st</sup> Munich Security Conference, 2015.

<sup>662</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>663</sup> Cf. Auswärtiges Amt 2015: Rede von Außenminister Steinmeier bei der Münchener Sicherheitskonferenz, 2015, [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2015/150208\\_BM\\_M%C3%BCCKO.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2015/150208_BM_M%C3%BCCKO.html) (08.06.2019).

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*

Germany would have to play a role in solving this conflict as well as others for that matter—regardless of most Germans viewing a heightened international role for their country skeptically:<sup>665</sup> “Germany is ready to do more in terms of foreign policy. The litmus test came earlier and in a harder fashion than we might have assumed a year ago. But we did not shy away from assuming more responsibility.”<sup>666</sup> To round out the governmental consensus to shoulder more of the European and transatlantic burden, Chancellor Angela Merkel raised her hand, too, at the same conference. Concurring with her cabinet colleagues, the German chancellor strictly ruled out any military option for the country: “This conflict cannot be solved militarily. I am telling all people who are worried: military actions are not an option for us.”<sup>667</sup> Giving preference to diplomatic solutions is also emphasized in Germany’s currently most important strategic document, the 2016 White Book. In it, the Normandy Format is cited as an example of “German initiative to find solutions for pending questions with security policy relevance.”<sup>668</sup> Assuming responsibility on the (diplomatic) international stage was deemed to be in line with the recognition that “the United States will increasingly expect its partners, including in Europe, to bear more responsibilities.”<sup>669</sup> According to the White Book, Berlin is ready to “shoulder a bigger share of the mutual burden.”<sup>670</sup> While Germany was adamant about NATO not turning into one of the fighting parties on the ground in Ukraine,<sup>671</sup> Berlin supported the Alliance’s move to assist the government in Kiev. Not only did the German government endorse such a move, it also agreed to contribute to parts of the five Trust Funds that were bolstered to aid Ukraine in the wake of NATO’s Wales Summit in September 2014—some of the programs were put in

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<sup>665</sup> Cf. Auswärtiges Amt, Rede von Außenminister Steinmeier bei der Münchener Sicherheitskonferenz, 2015.

<sup>666</sup> Ibid.

<sup>667</sup> Die Bundeskanzlerin, Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel, 2014.

<sup>668</sup> Die Bundesregierung 2016: Weissbuch 2016 zur Sicherheitspolitik und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr, 2016, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/975292/736102/64781348c12e4a80948ab1bdf25cf057/weissbuch-zur-sicherheitspolitik-2016-download-data.pdf> (08.06.2019), p. 81.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid.

<sup>671</sup> N.B.: As a matter of fact, allied boots on the ground were never a serious consideration for other NATO members either, cf. Kundnani/Pond, Germany’s Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis, 2015.

effect prior to 2014.<sup>672</sup> Following from the establishment of these Funds, Germany decided to serve as a lead nation (together with Canada and the United Kingdom) in assisting Kiev with command, control, communications, and computers. In practical terms, this assistance resulted in “providing tactical radios and satellite phones to Ukraine and (...) establishing a Regional Airspace Security Programme.”<sup>673</sup> In addition, the lead nations decided to “install a simplified cross-border coordination unit to handle air security incidents.”<sup>674</sup> Germany also contributed to NATO’s Defence Education Enhancement Programme which is designed to “advise Ukrainian academics from defense education institutions on developing course and using modern educational practices.”<sup>675</sup> Drawing on the Trust Fund structure, NATO allies agreed on a Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Ukraine at its Warsaw Summit in July 2016. Most elements of the Trust Funds merged into the CAP. The stated goal of package was to “continue provid[ing] strategic-level advice on defence and security sector reform and institution building.”<sup>676</sup> As part of that, Germany decided to lead the Trust Fund for the Disposal of Radioactive Sources from former Soviet Military Sites.<sup>677</sup>

#### **6.3.4.2. Setting an example of leadership**

While the preceding section showed that Germany was ready to accept a bigger role in European and transatlantic burden-sharing, including a reaction to the crisis in Ukraine, it remains yet to be seen why Berlin assumed greater responsibility vis-à-vis the conflict between Kiev and Moscow. In addition, the motivation to participate

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<sup>672</sup> N.B.: For further information on the details of the individual trust funds, cf., Summary of ongoing NATO Trust Funds – October 2017, 2017, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_10/20171025\\_171025-trust-funds.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_10/20171025_171025-trust-funds.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>673</sup> NATO 2015: NATO’s practical support to Ukraine, 2015, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2015\\_12/20151130\\_1512-factsheet-nato-ukraine-supportr\\_en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_12/20151130_1512-factsheet-nato-ukraine-supportr_en.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>674</sup> Ibid.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid.

<sup>676</sup> NATO, NATO’s practical support to Ukraine, 2015.

<sup>677</sup> Cf. NATO 2016: Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine, 2016, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_09/20160920\\_160920-compreh-ass-package-ukraine-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_09/20160920_160920-compreh-ass-package-ukraine-en.pdf) (08.06.2019).

in NATO's efforts to support Ukraine via a set of aid packages needs to be scrutinized. According to a staffer at the Foreign Ministry, Germany's participation in the Minsk process is an example of an assumption of leadership which can in part be explained by the perceived leadership vacuum the United States helped to bring into being in Europe.<sup>678</sup> Following this logic, the Obama administration did not directly have an impact on German actions, yet "the leadership role in the Minsk process was also a result of the lack of US leadership that was registered in Berlin."<sup>679</sup> A Defense Ministry staffer took a similar view by arguing that Germany paid close attention to US actions vis-à-vis Ukraine. Subsequently, Berlin's role in crisis management toward Ukraine was an attempt to prevent weapon deliveries which were heatedly debated in the United States: "Supplying Kiev with arms would have been too much for Germany to accept which is why Berlin jumped on the bandwagon to influence the course in Ukraine."<sup>680</sup> In addition, Germany was said to have felt the compulsion to make a move after the United States announced to return to Europe, according to this source. Another staffer at the Defense Ministry asserted that Germany's engagement and crisis diplomacy in Ukraine to a large extent could be ascribed to US influence. According to her, the coordination between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and US President Barack Obama was very close in this case.<sup>681</sup> Claudia Major from the German think tank SWP supported this assessment insomuch as she referred to the gratitude President Obama had expressed for Germany showing leadership in the diplomatic efforts to solve the conflict in Ukraine. In addition, the United States signaled its appreciation of Berlin's participation in NATO's Trust Funds that were established to aid Kiev provide for its security.<sup>682</sup> On a more general note, a desk officer with a military background at the Defense Ministry argued that the United States expected more German (international) security engagement for a lack of resources and for reasons of legitimacy on the part of the United States.<sup>683</sup> Thus, it stands to reason that the United States, including the Obama administration, would attempt to have an impact on Germany's security policies, not only in an Alliance context. Yet, he also

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<sup>678</sup> Cf. author interview 9.

<sup>679</sup> Ibid.

<sup>680</sup> Author interview 7.

<sup>681</sup> Cf. author interview 17, Berlin, October 17, 2017.

<sup>682</sup> Cf. author interview 16.

<sup>683</sup> Cf. author interview 11.

noted that Berlin was equally trying to exert influence on Washington. Thus, this source concluded that both capitals were mutually influencing one another when it came to Germany's and America's engagement in Ukraine.<sup>684</sup> A German scholar in Washington, D.C. echoed the majority of the ministerial staffer's assessments inasmuch as she concluded that the decision to accept a leading role in solving the Ukraine crisis [via the Normandy Format and the ensuing Minsk process] was closely tied to the United States reducing its footprint in Europe.<sup>685</sup> While other scholars, such as Marco Overhaus, a researcher with the Berlin-based think tank SWP, conceded that the conflict in Ukraine had brought NATO to the fore of German security policy again, they did not ascribe German diplomatic engagement in Ukraine to US influence.<sup>686</sup> <sup>687</sup> Two Foreign Ministry staffers took a similar stance by asserting that US pressure was not responsible for Germany's lead role in diplomatic efforts in Ukraine: "Berlin did not need encouragement from Washington to reach the conclusion that it should take a leading role in the Normandy format and the steps that followed from it."<sup>688</sup> However, these staffers continued, German leadership without the explicit support of the United States is difficult to conceive of: "It was in the Obama administration's interest that Germany in tandem with France go ahead with bringing together the conflicting parties. The Americans gave us Europeans credit for assuming leadership responsibility, not least because they expected us to carry more of the transatlantic security burden."<sup>689</sup>

### **6.3.5. Reassurance: Germany as the role model ally**

Only a couple of weeks before the annexation of Crimea and the ensuing war in Ukraine, Germany's top foreign, security, and defense politicians pledged to assume more responsibility in international security affairs at the Munich Security Conference. Prior to the formulation of the so-called Munich consensus, following years of allied and European pressure and pleading with Berlin to increase its burden-sharing role, former German Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière (who was

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<sup>684</sup> Cf. author interview 11.

<sup>685</sup> Cf. author interview 12.

<sup>686</sup> Cf. author interview 13, Berlin, September 20, 2017.

<sup>687</sup> N.B.: This engagement was undertaken outside the NATO framework.

<sup>688</sup> Author interview 10.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid.

succeeded by Ursula von der Leyen on December 17, 2013) reiterated that “(...) I am telling my foreign friends that we have come a long way in the last 20 years since the reunification and the beginning of deploying German soldiers abroad.

That is good, and part of Germany’s maturation (...) The realization that sometimes (...) conflicts can only be ended through military means is part of the normality of international relations. This has to be normal for Germans, too (...).”<sup>690</sup> He goes on to underline that national territorial defense is virtually identical with allied collective defense from Germany’s point of view: “If the Alliance is in need on its own territory, it is a matter of course for our country (...) that we will demonstrate solidarity.”<sup>691</sup> Both aspects of his exposition, Germany’s international engagement and alliance solidary as self-evidence, are brought to the fore in the responsibility debate which was kicked-off at the Munich Security Conference in February 2014; both aspects raised allied and European expectations that Germany would act when events took Europe by surprise in the beginning of 2014. The key to understanding Germany’s acceptance to take on a greater burden internationally is rooted in the realization that the country “has benefitted from openness like no other: from open borders, open markets and the freedom of movement in Europe”<sup>692</sup> as former Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier explained in a speech at the George-Washington University in Washington, D.C. on March 1, 2016. In turn, Germany felt the responsibility to help contribute to safeguarding these freedoms and (global) openness. As already deliberated in the previous section, Germany delivered on the pledge of assuming more responsibility where European and transatlantic security was concerned when it volunteered for a leadership role in managing the crisis in Ukraine together with France (and Russia). In addition, contributing to NATO’s Trust Funds set up for the support of Ukraine backed up Berlin’s diplomatic efforts. Yet, Berlin’s allies expected more from the EU’s economically most prosperous country than taking the lead in diplomacy. As then-Federal President Joachim Gauck, flanked by the ministers of foreign affairs and defense, proclaimed in February 2014, Germany had to step up its game in international affairs not only by providing political and diplomatic tools. If push came to shove, Germany had to resort to military means as a last resort, always in concert with its allies and on solid

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<sup>690</sup> De Maizière, Damit der Staat den Menschen dient, pp. 349–350.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>692</sup> Steinmeier, Flugschreiber, pp. 163–164.

legal grounds. Following these proclamations, Germany participated actively in formulating and implementing NATO's reassurance measures beginning in 2014. As a country that had benefitted from its allies' defense pledges—first and foremost the United States—for nearly four decades during the Cold War, it seemed to observers to be a matter of course for Germany to return the favor to NATO's most exposed allies in their hour of need—particularly because alliance solidarity has marked Germany's NATO policy since the early days of its accession as explained in Section 6.3.1. A less-ideals-driven explanation that has been circulating since Germany's heightened engagement in NATO goes like this: weary of sending its soldiers abroad to fight and possibly die in the service of their country, Berlin was eager to contribute to a task which would most likely not involve an active war. Which of these two explanations apply in describing Germany's motivation to be at the forefront of NATO's adaptation process will be explored on the following pages. Firstly, however, an overview of what Germany did contribute to allied reassurance measures will be provided.

#### **6.3.5.1. Turning into the backbone of the Alliance**

In reaction to and beginning with Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and its ensuing involvement in Ukraine's destabilization, NATO reacted by unequivocally refocusing its defense planning on collective defense after nearly two decades of crisis management activities.<sup>693</sup> Concrete measures that the allies engaged in and manifested at their Wales Summit in September 2014 are divided into short-term (assurance) and long-term (adaptation) actions. The former were put in place shortly after the Crimean usurpation and included an increased number of air policing patrols over the Baltic States, an increased deployment of fighter jets to Romania and Poland, AWACS surveillance flights over the territories of NATO's Eastern member states, an increase in maritime surveillance in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean with NATO's Standing Maritime Groups as well as additional allied exercises.<sup>694</sup> These activities pursued the goal of reassuring NATO's Eastern members, most notably Poland as well as the Baltic Republics,

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<sup>693</sup> Cf. Matlary, Janne Haaland: Burden Sharing after Afghanistan. In: Hilde, Paal Sigurd/Michta, Andrew A. (ed.): *The Future of NATO. Regional Defense and Global Security*. Ann Arbor 2014, pp. 76–89.

<sup>694</sup> Cf. Matlé/Varwick, *NATO-Integration und Bündnissolidarität*, 2016.

and deterring Russia from attacking an ally—the core of the Alliance's collective defense pledge by politically and militarily demonstrating solidarity among the 29 member states. Refocusing the Alliance's activities on collective defense, including potential threats of so-called hybrid warfare, at the Wales Summit was especially important for NATO's Eastern member states according to German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In fact, in her speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2015, she underlined that the Alliance's "Eastern partners count on that [the centrality of collective defense] (...) Their worries about security are ours (...)."⁶⁹⁵ Already on September 1, 2014, a couple of days before the gathering of NATO's heads of government and state convened in Newport from September 4 to 5, Merkel announced in a government declaration that "we [Germany] stand by our Alliance obligations. Article 5 of the NATO treaty applies to all [member states]."⁶⁹⁶ Following from that (theoretical) promise, every ally must contribute what it can to warrant the Alliance's collective defense.<sup>⁶⁹⁷</sup> Not only did Germany increase its staff participating in naval surveillance in the Baltic Sea and provided additional soldiers for allied exercises, thus contributing to NATO's short-term reassurance measure.<sup>⁶⁹⁸</sup> Berlin also played an essential role in drawing up the Alliance's long-term structural changes in NATO's forces and command structure in response to Russia upending the security architecture Europe had rested on since the end of the Cold War.<sup>⁶⁹⁹</sup> Germany also provided ideas as to how to conceptualize the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), the main result of the Alliance's Wales Summit. An important element of the RAP includes the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF)

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<sup>⁶⁹⁵</sup> Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015: Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel anlässlich der 51. Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz, 2015,  
<https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-de/aktuelles/rede-von-bundeskanzlerin-angela-merkel-anlaesslich-der-51-muenchner-sicherheitskonferenz-397814> (08.06.2019).

<sup>⁶⁹⁶</sup> Die Bundeskanzlerin 2014: Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel vor dem Bundestag, September 1, 2014, <https://m.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkinm-de/aktuelles/regierungserklaerung-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-vor-dem-bundestag-456644> (08.06.2019).

<sup>⁶⁹⁷</sup> Cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin, Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel anlässlich der 51. Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz, 2015.

<sup>⁶⁹⁸</sup> Cf. Major, Claudia: NATO's Strategic Adaptation. Germany is the backbone for the Alliance's military reorganisation. In: SWP Comments, 2015, p. 2.

<sup>⁶⁹⁹</sup> Cf. Bundestag 1990: Charta von Paris. Für ein Neues Europa, 1990,  
<https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/189558/21543d1184c1f627412a3426e86a97cd/charта-data.pdf> (08.06.2019).

whose conception can in large parts be ascribed to the government in Berlin.<sup>700</sup> As part of the RAP, the NATO Response Force (NFR) level was decided to be increased from 13,000 to up to 40,000 troops. Germany offered to provide up to eight brigades to staff the NFR (including the VJTF) leaving large parts of the force's manpower equipment to Berlin. An important part of the NFR is the VJTF, or Spearhead Force, encompassing round about 5,000 troops (land, sea, air, and special forces) which ought to be deployable within 2–3 days. The Alliance left no doubt that the force is not only conceptualized for the Eastern but also Southern flank if need be. Thus, NATO member states reacted to both Russia's aggressive demeanor and the rise of the Islamic State on NATO's Southern doorstep and the subsequent havoc the terrorist group introduced into the already fragile Middle East. The leadership of the VJTF rotates on an annual basis with Germany being the first ally in 2015 having assumed the lead nation role and thereby essentially contributing to the construction of the force.<sup>701</sup> Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen underlined in her speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2015 that "Germany is (...) a framework nation and key enabler of the new NATO spearhead force (...)." <sup>702</sup> She added that "the contribution of the Bundeswehr to implementing the decisions taken at the NATO summit in Wales is (...) indispensable (...)." <sup>703</sup> One example of the German armed forces crucial contribution was the establishment and initial maintenance of the VJTF to enhance the quick deployability of reaction forces. In addition to the VJTF, small multinational headquarters—NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs)—were established in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Romania as part of the RAP in September 2015. The purpose of the NFIUs is to advance cooperation between national and allied forces to facilitate the quick transfer of forces to the host nation. In addition, the NFIUs are supposed to help the planning and coordinating of common exercises and training. Furthermore,

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<sup>700</sup> Cf. Matlé, Aylin/Johannes, Varwick: Die NATO zwischen den Gipfeln von Wales und Warschau. In: Der Mittler Brief. Informationsdienst zur Sicherheitspolitik, Vol. 30/ 2015.

<sup>701</sup> N.B.: Apart from Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Turkey and the United Kingdom have offered to assume the rotating leadership of the VJTF, too, cf. [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int). fact sheet RAP 2015 (08.06.2019).

<sup>702</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Speech by the Federal Minister of Defense, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen on the Occasion of the 51<sup>st</sup> Munich Security Conference, 2015.

<sup>703</sup> Ibid.

the regional headquarters are tasked with eventually maintaining the Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters in Szczecin (Poland) and the Multinational Division Southeast Headquarters in Bucharest (Rumania).<sup>704</sup> Each NFIU is staffed with approximately 40 national and allied staff; Germany had dispatched two field officers to the regional headquarters in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia as well as one to Rumania. In a speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2015, Chancellor Angela Merkel referred to Germany's role in expanding the multinational headquarters in Szczecin (together with Denmark and Poland) to serve as a hub for regional cooperation and collective territorial defense: "With that we are assuming direct responsibility for the security of our allies and for the security of our neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe."<sup>705</sup> Berlin did not stop at participating in conceptualizing and later implementing the assurance and adaptation measures that were agreed upon by the Alliance in Wales. The German government went one step further by helping draw up and assuming responsibility for the advancement of the Wales decisions which were taken 2 years later at NATO's Warsaw summit in July 2016. Accordingly, Berlin contributed to the design the Alliance's constant rotational Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP). The EFP aims to be part of NATO's deterrence posture (toward Russia) and consists of four multinational battalions deployed to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. In each of these countries another ally serves as the lead nation: The United Kingdom accepted responsibility for Estonia, Canada for Latvia, Germany for Lithuania, and the United States for Poland. The move to not only incorporate the "new" Eastern member states into allied defense planning but also provide them with a NATO presence is largely regarded to conclude "the process started in Wales in 2014 (...) by shifting from mere reassurance to actual deterrence."<sup>706</sup> Serving as an allied "tripwire," the heads of state and governments reacted to the inherent shortcomings of the deterrence value of the VJTF deployed in Western Europe, thus the decision to dispatch troops from other NATO member states to the exposed allies in Central and Eastern Europe—a decision that was significantly promoted by the German government. Not only did Germany help design and tout this effort, but also Berlin agreed to serve as a lead nation

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<sup>704</sup> Cf. Matlé/Varwick, Die NATO zwischen den Gipfeln von Wales und Warschau.

<sup>705</sup> Die Bundeskanzlerin, Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel anlässlich der 51. Münchener Sicherheitskonferenz, 2015.

<sup>706</sup> Scheffler, Beyond Deterrence, 2016, p. 2.

for one of the four multinational allied battalions as part of the Alliance's constant rotational EFP<sup>707</sup>—in this function, the German armed forces began deploying 450 troops to Rukla, Lithuania, their host nation in late January 2017. While troops are rotated every 6 months to comply with the NATO-Russia Founding Act from 1997,<sup>708</sup> Germany agreed to maintain one armored infantry battalion with main battle tanks on Lithuanian soil as long as the Alliance agree to perpetuate the EFP and policy-makers in Berlin decide to contribute to this particular measure. Germany was supported by troops from Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, and Norway resulting in a total of approximately 1,022.<sup>709</sup> Apart from the EFP, NATO leaders promised at the Warsaw summit in July 2016 to enhance the alliance's presence not only in the East but also in the Southeast, thereby acknowledging and underlining that the Black Sea region is “important for Euro-Atlantic security.”<sup>710</sup> Instead of an EFP, NATO allies pledged to create a Tailored Forward Presence (TFP) for the Southeast. Similar to reassurance and deterrence measures in the East, the TFP includes air, land, and sea components to serve as a deterrent. Part of the tailored presence encompasses a multinational brigade under Romanian leadership located in Craiova, Romania. The brigade is tasked with intensifying common exercises and training of NATO troops under the leadership of the Multinational Division Southeast Headquarters in Bucharest. The land component is meant to be complemented by air and sea support.<sup>711</sup> As with the VJTF and the EFP, Germany contributed to NATO's Tailored Forward Presence (TFP) along with Canada, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United Kingdom.<sup>712</sup> Apart from its role in the NFIUs as part of the TFP, Germany deployed two staffers to the Multinational Division Southeast

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<sup>707</sup> Cf. Scheffler, *Beyond Deterrence*, 2016, p. 2.

<sup>708</sup> Cf. NATO: Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France, 2009, [https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/\\_official\\_texts\\_25468.htm?](https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/_official_texts_25468.htm?) (08.06.2019).

<sup>709</sup> Cf. NATO 2017: NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, 2017, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_05/1705-factsheet-efp.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_05/1705-factsheet-efp.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>710</sup> NATO 2016: Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 2016, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/\\_official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/_official_texts_133169.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>711</sup> Cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2016: NATO in Osteuropa. Verstärkte Präsenz zeigen, 2016, <https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/nato-in-osteuropa-verstaerkte-praesenz-zeigen-11450> (08.06.2019).

<sup>712</sup> Cf. ibid.

in Bucharest.<sup>713</sup> In addition to Germany's active participation in NATO's reassurance measures, the country also served as a "logistical hub" for the United States: American material designated for Eastern allies landed in Bremerhaven and would pass through Germany.<sup>714</sup> The following section will shed light on the motivation why Germany decided to be a major part of NATO's reassurance later deterrence measures while at the same time insisting that the principles of the NATO-Russia Founding Act from 1997 be abided by.<sup>715</sup>

### **6.3.5.2. Placing alliance solidarity center stage**

While the German government left no doubt about its intention to comply with the NATO-Russia Founding Act from the beginning of the Alliance's refocus on collective defense,<sup>716</sup> it was equally adamant about its obligations. At the Munich Security Conference in 2015, Angela Merkel made that point clear: "Their [Eastern European] worries about security are ours."<sup>717</sup> From this, it followed that Germany (together with the Netherlands and Norway) would serve as a framework nation and assume responsibility for the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) which was still under development at the time. Showing solidarity with its Eastern partners thus served as an explanation for Germany playing a major part in NATO's reassurance (and deterrence) activities. This motive, that is, solidarity, did find its way into another speech of Merkel when she addressed the German Parliament on July 7, 2016, a day before the Warsaw Summit: "The Alliance solidarity expressed in Article 5 of the NATO treaty is a central pillar of this architecture [European security architecture]. This solidarity has to be visible and credible in the today and in the future (...) Our Eastern European partners need to be reassured through the

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<sup>713</sup> Cf. NATO 2017: NATO's Defense and Deterrence, 2017, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_03/20170316\\_170316-def-det-map.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_03/20170316_170316-def-det-map.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>714</sup> Author interview 7.

<sup>715</sup> Cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin, Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel vor dem Bundestag, September 1, 2014, 2014.

<sup>716</sup> N.B.: In a government declaration on July 7, 2016, Angela Merkel stated in front of the German Parliament that "Solidarity with our allies according to Article 5 and dialog with Russia are not a contradiction," cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin, Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel, July 7, 2016.

<sup>717</sup> Die Bundeskanzlerin, Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel anlässlich der 51. Münchener Sicherheitskonferenz, 2015.

Alliance unambiguously.”<sup>718</sup> As outlined in the previous section, one measure of reassurance was tied to the VJTF and the NATO Integration Force Units in Eastern Europe whose establishment is an “expression of Alliance solidarity”<sup>719</sup> according to the German government. At the same time, Merkel underlined that demonstrating solidarity within NATO went beyond “utilitarian considerations.”<sup>720</sup> According to her, Article 5 of the Washington Treaty was based on common values and convictions making it all the more important to make collective defense measures credible.<sup>721</sup> The motivation to identify with the case of alliance solidarity thus went beyond government declarations. Germany’s most important current strategic document, the White Book published in the summer of 2016,<sup>722</sup> declares that alliance solidarity is part of Germany’s *raison d’état*:<sup>723</sup> “Germany, which could count on the solidarity and readiness of its allies for nearly 40 years during the Cold War, recognizes the duty and responsibility to contribute to solidary and collective defense.”<sup>724</sup> A staffer at the Foreign Ministry confirmed the centrality of alliance solidarity in Germany’s motivation to participate in NATO’s reassurance activities: “We do have a deep understanding of an alliance working according to the principles of solidarity.”<sup>725</sup> Realizing the necessity to be at the forefront of NATO’s territorial defense engagement can largely be ascribed to wanting to demonstrate solidarity with its Eastern partners and less to US pressure and recognizing a threat in Russia for the state of Germany according to this source. A German researcher put

<sup>718</sup> Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016: Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzlerin Dr. Angela Merkel, 2016, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungserklaerung-von-bundeskanzlerin-dr-angela-merkel-446484> (08.06.2019).

<sup>719</sup> Ibid.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid.

<sup>721</sup> Cf. Die Bundeskanzlerin, Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel anlässlich der 51. Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz, 2015.

<sup>722</sup> N.B.: Prior to the publication of the White Book, national and international observers alike pointed out that drafting a new strategic guideline as well as increasing military spending was motivated by the need for “widened NATO engagement”, cf., for example, Driver, Burden sharing and the future of NATO, p. 11; cf. Delfs, Arne/Parkin, Brian 2015: Germany Defense Spending Rises as NATO Commitments Grow, in: Bloomberg 2015, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-18/germany-defense-spending-rises-as-nato-commitments-grow> (08.06.2019).

<sup>723</sup> Cf. Die Bundesregierung, Weissbuch 2016 zur Sicherheitspolitik und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr, 2016, p. 49.

<sup>724</sup> Ibid.

<sup>725</sup> Author interview 9.

it this way: “Not only the US turned to Germany with the expectation that Berlin would participate in NATO’s reassurance measures, other Europeans have just as high expectations.”<sup>726</sup> Two other staffers at the Foreign Ministry concurred with that assessment: “Germany has developed into a lead nation regarding NATO’s reassurance activities on its own accord. One cannot speak of the US triggering this decision.”<sup>727</sup> Instead, the interplay of the design of reassurance and deterrence measures as well as Germany’s capabilities led to the decision to take on a larger share of the transatlantic burden. Furthermore, these two staffers pointed out that most of the reassurance and deterrence measures such as the Readiness Action Plan as well as the eFP bear the hallmarks of Germany (e.g., dual-track approach vis-à-vis consisting of deterrence and dialogue; adhering to the NATO-Russia Founding Act, thereby allowing for continued dialogue with Russia in the framework of the NATO-Russia Council). This, they argued, indicated that the German government engaged in the adaptation of the Alliance from conviction and not in reaction to outside pressure from the United States.<sup>728</sup> In addition and on a more general note, these two sources suggested that they could not discern a causal link indicating that European NATO allies did more in security policy terms in reaction to US pressure.<sup>729</sup> A government official from the German Chancellery echoed the assessments coming from the Foreign Ministry sources insomuch as he did ascribe Germany’s decisions primarily to Russia’s behavior toward Eastern European allies combined with the violation of international law in Ukraine and the Russian military capability build-up.<sup>730</sup> The debate over spending 2% of one’s GDP on defense—a pledge Germany agreed to at the Wales Summit in 2014<sup>731</sup>—was driven mostly by the fact that European allies had to increase their defense efforts in light of the changed security environment and as part of the transatlantic burden-sharing.<sup>732</sup> Whether one could refer to US pressure in this context anyhow depended on the ministry one spoke to.<sup>733</sup> Members of the German strategic community, that is,

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<sup>726</sup> Author interview 15.

<sup>727</sup> Author interview 10.

<sup>728</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>729</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>730</sup> Cf. author interview 18, Berlin, October 17, 2017.

<sup>731</sup> Cf. NATO 2014: Wales Summit Declaration, 2014,

[https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official\\_texts\\_112964.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>732</sup> Cf. author interview 18.

<sup>733</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

employees of think tanks painted a similar picture as did the civil servants at the Foreign Ministry and the Chancellery. A Washington-based German observer of transatlantic security issues noted that the combination of the Ukraine crisis, the partial withdrawal of the United States from Europe until 2014 together with American pleas to provide more military readiness had ushered in Germany's willingness to assume more responsibility in reassuring Eastern allies.<sup>734</sup> Recognizing the necessity of reassuring the Alliance's exposed member states against the backdrop of Russia's aggressive demeanor was the main driver for Germany to participate in NATO's short-term and structural changes according to Marco Overhaus (SWP) as well. Rather than being exposed to American pressure, Germany wanted to "close ranks" within the Alliance after 2014, the political scientist pointed out.<sup>735</sup> Another researcher at the SWP, Claudia Major, stated that Germany's "impressive contributions to the Readiness Action Plan, its involvement in shaping the Wales decisions and later on the Warsaw decisions, such as with the Harmel approach was the result of a rethink within the German government that had taken office in 2013."<sup>736</sup> Yet, she conceded that Germany would probably not have engaged in reassurance activities the way it did had Berlin not enjoyed Washington's political support.<sup>737</sup> Another German defense expert went a step further: "Germany would not have assumed leadership in NATO's reassurance measures had it not been for American political and military backing."<sup>738</sup> A similar line of argument was used by a staffer at the Defense Ministry who purported that the United States has always had a significant impact on Germany's NATO policy. According to this civil servant, Germany was keen on having the Obama administration's political backing also publicly vis-a-vis the Eastern European allies to assume responsibility for one of the four multinational battle groups in Lithuania.<sup>739</sup> In fact, the United States had touted Germany's part in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Eastern Europe:<sup>740</sup> "Basic trust in American support and acknowledgment of our actions provides Germany with the necessary self-confidence to go ahead with a more pronounced role

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<sup>734</sup> Cf. author interview 12.

<sup>735</sup> Author interview 13.

<sup>736</sup> Author interview 16.

<sup>737</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>738</sup> Author interview 14.

<sup>739</sup> Cf. author interview 17.

<sup>740</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

in NATO.”<sup>741</sup> A desk officer with a military background at the Defense Ministry confirmed his civilian colleagues’ assessment: “We did not have to be convinced by the Americans to contribute to NATO’s reassurance and deterrence measures but we needed the administration’s political support.”<sup>742</sup> An inherent motivation to participate in allied reassurance activities was listed as part of the explanation by another staffer at the Defense Ministry: “The notion of responsibility could finally be filled with life.”<sup>743</sup> In addition, this source mentioned alliance solidarity and US influence as explanations for Germany’s NATO policy since 2014: “One can only draw a strong partner closer by becoming strong oneself.”<sup>744</sup>

### **6.3.6. Analysis**

#### **6.3.6.1. From blocker to engine status: Germany’s NATO policy changes from within**

Germany’s official explanation as to why it abstained from voting in favor of the UNSC Resolution 1973 sanctioning military action in Libya and the subsequent non-participation in NATO’s air campaign was based on Berlin’s skepticism about an intervention with an uncertain outcome and purpose. Operation Unified Protector was deemed too risky, especially because of the high possibility of civilian casualties. This argument is misleading insomuch as any military intervention is prone to causing civilian deaths just as much as the outcome of an operation can change or cannot be met due to various circumstances.<sup>745</sup> In addition to the security-related argument, another line of explanation emerged: voting in favor of the UNSC Resolution but abstaining from subsequent military action was deemed to be implausible. This argument, however, is flawed insomuch as Germany followed exactly this path in the past as elaborated in the section on Libya. An inexperienced foreign minister as well as political convenience regarding the AWACS mission in Afghan-

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<sup>741</sup> Author interview 17.

<sup>742</sup> Author interview 11.

<sup>743</sup> Author interview 7.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid.

<sup>745</sup> Cf., for example, Gent, Stephen E.: Going in When It Counts. Military Intervention and the Outcome of Civil Conflicts. In: International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 52/ 2008, p. 713-735.

istan (as a mandate on that activity had been passed once before) served as explanations to account for the implausibility in official rhetoric justifying Germany's double abstention. While Germany abstained from voting on the UNSC Resolution and from participating in NATO's military campaign, officials did not grow tired of underlining German loyalty to the Alliance. According to official arguments and the interview analysis, Germany was not exposed to American pressure to vote in favor of the Resolution or to participate in Operation Unified Protector. The findings of the pivot/retrenchment chapter suggest a similar conclusion in relation to US impact. One can only speak of indirect impact, if at all. The recognition on Berlin's part that it had to contribute more to allied burden-sharing by increasing its own activities was mentioned in the 2013 coalition agreement and manifested itself even more prominently in the so-called Munich consensus that was forged at the 2014 Munich security conference.<sup>746</sup> The majority of interview partners suggested that Berlin was motivated by an inherent conviction that it had to contribute more to transatlantic burden-sharing. However, the concepts of alliance solidarity and burden-sharing were mentioned more often in government statements than by interviewed experts, including government officials. The reason for that could lie in the fact that both concepts are rather abstract and thus suited for official declarations which usually do not elaborate on how to fill and implement a concept such as alliance solidarity in greater depth. The necessity to assume responsibility in foreign and security policy terms was reiterated by government officials repeatedly in relation to the role Germany played in European and transatlantic crisis management vis-à-vis Ukraine. In addition, the need to contribute to European security was mentioned. Both Berlin's leadership role in launching the Normandy format (and the ensuing Minsk Processes) as well as its participation in NATO's Trust Fund activities in and for Ukraine can be ascribed to Germany's urge to assume responsibility. Yet, parts of the interviews brought to the surface the fact that the Obama administration's stance on Ukraine did impact German behavior. Accordingly, a perceived United States' lack of leadership in Ukraine and partial withdrawal from Europe until 2014 prompted Germany to take the lead in diplomatic efforts to solve the crisis between Kiev and Moscow. The analysis of German participation in NATO's reassurance (and deterrence) measures and the motivation to do so brought

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<sup>746</sup> Cf. Kiesewetter, Roderich/Nick, Andreas/Vietz, Michael: Erklären, was wir außenpolitisch wollen. Zur Rolle des Parlaments in der strategischen Kultur. In: Internationale Politik, 2017, pp. 30–33.

to the fore two lines of arguments. One the one hand, alliance solidarity and Berlin's responsibility therein were propounded frequently to explain Germany's engagement in reassuring its Eastern allies rhetorically and in material terms. It should be mentioned that Germany's recognition that it had to stand firmly by its Eastern partner's side was a result of the responsibility debate (coined by some interviewees as a "rethink" in the German administration) that gained momentum in early 2014 in the Federal Republic. Assuming a leadership role in the conception, implementation, and advancement of short-term activities as well as NATO's structural adaptation was ascribed to the necessity to demonstrate solidarity with the Alliance's exposed member states. Burden-sharing was not explicitly cited as a motivation to increase German NATO activities though. The second line of argument, representing the minority of expert interview results and official sources analyses, concluded that American pressure on Berlin's decision-makers resulted in Germany's reassurance commitments. It is striking—particularly in contrast to the other findings—that the official stance on Germany's actions and explanations thereof, drawn from government declarations and the like and the expert interviews scrutinizing Berlin's motivation are in sync. The analysis of both types of sources predominantly pointed to the circumstance that it was not American impact to participate in NATO's reassurance but rather a conviction that came from within Berlin's policy-making apparatus as a result of the responsibility debate. It can be concluded that the United States had little to moderate impact on Germany's NATO policies. While the empirical findings indicate that in some topic areas Washington's opinion was more relevant than others, the overall picture does not change. The drivers of German NATO policy between 2011 and 2016 were Alliance solidarity, burden-sharing, and a new-found responsibility.

### **6.3.6.2. Assessment of hypotheses**

The hypotheses which are supposed to help answer the overall research question of this dissertation (How did US actions vis-à-vis Europe impact NATO and defense policies of NATO allies?) will be examined in the following section. The data used to assess the validity of the hypotheses are drawn from the expert interview results. The reason for this methodology is down to the hypotheses being geared toward the perception of decision-makers and members of the strategic community which is best captured through expert interviews. On balance and on the face of it, most

interviewed experts denied that an American withdrawal from NATO Europe was perceived during the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016 (hypothesis 2). Two interviewees, one civil servant at the Defense Ministry and a Washington-based scholar verified that decision-makers and parliamentarians in Berlin perceived of the Obama administration engaging in a partial retrenchment (hypothesis 1), at least until 2014. After the Ukraine crisis had begun, these experts, too, conceded that American re-engagement with (NATO) Europe was visible. Those who did not confirm this perception, that is, did not see an American withdrawal to begin with qualified their statements in various ways. The first pattern can be coined the “normalization” argument. Following this line of thought, the material reduction of US Army footprint in Europe (and Germany in particular) equated a stabilization as there had been no need for large troop contingents in NATO Europe any longer until 2014. At the time, the decision to de-active two heavy combat brigades in Germany was made to fit into a generic development that had begun after the end of the Cold War. The second pattern of argument can be coined “Europe as a hub.” According to this, those troops that were still stationed in European NATO countries were designated for the Middle East anyway and not for the defense of Europe. The third pattern refers to different “arenas of debate.” Some argued that no public discussion about a possible American withdrawal had taken place, and thus, a perception of such a development could not be detected. Others claimed that a development of retrenchment was perceived in the public sphere but not in decision-maker circles. Still others pointed out the need to differentiate between ministries to conclude whether or not a withdrawal was perceived. According to an observation by one scholar, the Foreign Ministry, tending to be more critical of the Alliance and US involvement in it, did not perceive less American engagement until 2014, neither in political nor in material terms.<sup>747</sup> The Defense Ministry on the other hand, known to be more NATO and US friendly, did observe Obama’s decision to withdraw two brigades from and the closure of bases in Germany with more caution.<sup>748</sup> Interestingly enough, the majority of interviewed staff working at the Defense Ministry confirmed that assessment. The Chancellery was said to be somewhere between the perception of the other two ministries.<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>747</sup> Cf. author interview 16.

<sup>748</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>749</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

A civil servant at the Chancellery did concur with this evaluation insomuch as he portended that the United States demands that European allies should shoulder more of the transatlantic burden and should not be equated with retrenchment. Regardless of the patterns of argumentation, all interviewees who, in the majority, argued against the perception of an American withdrawal in the evaluation period of this dissertation (2011–2016) pointed out that 2014 characterized a watershed—as did those who confirmed the perception of an American withdrawal. After 2014, an American re-engagement was detected by all experts. Regardless of whether an American retrenchment and/or increased engagement was perceived, all confirmed that the implications were of positive nature, thereby validating hypothesis 3.2 (If the United States has been decreasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, positive implications will be the result) and hypothesis 4.2. (If the United States has been increasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, positive implications will be the result). Positive implications in this context translate into a heightened European engagement to provide more for their own and the Alliance's security. While all interviewees confirmed this assumption—both against the backdrop of a perceived American withdrawal and a perceived re-engagement—two patterns of explanation emerged to account for more NATO-related activities on Germany's part, especially since 2013. The *first pattern* followed the argument that Germany recognized it needed to do more for transatlantic and thus its own security. At the same time, Berlin worked toward keeping American forces on German soil, also prior to 2014. On the political front, Germany was said to be keen on American acknowledgment of its increased NATO activities. One plausible conclusion from this mélange of arguments is to content that Germany did more to keep the United States on board. The *second pattern*, not far removed from the first, claimed that NATO was used as a lever to influence US security and defense policies vis-à-vis the Alliance. Only by increasing its commitment to NATO in military terms would Germany be able to successfully influence the United States, the argument continues. It stands to reason that, similar to the first pattern, an increase of one's own engagement would keep Washington committed to NATO Europe in general and Germany in particular. The interpretation of some of the indicators of German-US support in NATO supports this assessment. While neither the so-called 2%-goal nor the 20%-goal was met in the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016, other indicators suggest that

there were German attempts to back American policies and wishes in NATO, including first and foremost a more equal burden-sharing. Although some commentators argue that the 2%-metric is too coarse to be used as one rubric for determining Alliance solidarity and commitment,<sup>750</sup> the goal is nevertheless of crucial importance to the United States especially.<sup>751</sup> The allied provision to spend 20% of a nation's defense budget on equipment is of a similar rank as this metric provides information about the readiness of national forces. The closest Germany got to complying with the 2%-metric was in 2012 when 1.31% of the country's GDP was spent on defense, that was the same year when the 20%-score was highest with 16.5% during the evaluation period. On the other hand, the level of German participation in allied exercises from 2013 to 2016 as well as the country's commitment to bilateral and multilateral allied defense cooperation projects and capabilities indicate more solid support of the American burden-sharing demand. For one, Germany did contribute to NATO's biggest collective defense exercises held since 2006 in 2013. While 2014 did not witness any such exercise, 2015 and 2016 did so all the more. In 2015, Germany participated in 50% of all the major allied exercises that were conducted that year; in 2016, the country reached a score of 31%. In addition, out of five major bilateral and multilateral allied defense cooperation projects and capabilities that were analyzed for this study, Germany took part in four. It is especially noteworthy that Germany continued to be a participant in NATO's nuclear sharing arrangement during the evaluation period as this provision represents a bone of contention in domestic discussions.<sup>752</sup> In conclusion, it can be stated that

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<sup>750</sup> Cf., for example, Techau, The Politics of 2 Percent, 2015 and cf. Martin, Garrett/Martonffy, Balazs 2017: Abandon the 2 Percent Obsession. A New Rating For Pulling Your Weight in NATO, in: War on the Rocks 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/abandon-the-2-percent-obsession-a-new-rating-for-pulling-your-weight-in-nato/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>751</sup> Cf., for example, Banks, Martin 2018: Results are in: Here's how much NATO allies spent on defense in 2018, in: Defense News, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2018/03/15/results-are-in-heres-how-much-nato-allies-spent-on-defense-in-2017/> (08.06.2019) and cf. Grundman, Steven 2018: NATO's 2 Percent Guideline: What About the United States?, in: Atlantic Council 2018, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/nato-s-2-percent-guideline-what-about-the-united-states> (08.06.2019).

<sup>752</sup> Cf., for example, Sonne, Werner 2018: Atomwaffen im Koalitionsvertrag. Die Bombe bleibt, in: Cicero 2018, <https://www.cicero.de/innenpolitik/atomwaffen-koalitionsvertrag-atombombe-deutschland-usa-nato-aufraestung> (08.06.2019).

the assessment of the hypotheses, which were partly validated, and partly invalidated, did show that American allied actions in and beyond NATO Europe played a role in Germany's NATO policy considerations. Yet, it can also be concluded that the US's direct impact on Berlin's Alliance actions, as validated by the results of the expert interviews and the content analyses of official documents, was little to moderate in the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016. Instead, a rethink in government circles, paying closer attention to European allies' sensitivities in combination with Russian aggression in Europe, is said to be mainly responsible for a shift in Germany's NATO policy. Furthermore, regardless of a perceived American withdrawal and/or a perceived increased commitment, Germany's NATO policy became more active, especially since 2013.

## **6.4. Poland: A champion of transatlantic bilateralism**

The case study on Poland is structured in three major blocs. Firstly, the main features of Poland's NATO policy since its accession in 1999 will be broadly delineated: a desire to be closely aligned with Washington for security reasons; (alliance) solidarity with the United States; concerns of abandonment by the United States. The second part consists of exploring Poland's actions in/vis-à-vis and perceptions of four subject areas: NATO's air campaign over Libya in 2011; US pivot and partial retrenchment from NATO Europe; NATO's crisis management toward Ukraine; NATO's reassurance activities since 2014. These subject areas were examined in the context of understanding US engagement in and toward NATO Europe under the Obama administration in Chapter 4, too. The third part of this case study includes an analysis of Poland's NATO policy between 2011 and 2016 as well as an assessment of the hypotheses guiding this dissertation.

### **6.4.1. Poland's NATO history until 2011: A tale of keeping the United States in**

The reason Warsaw's political elites strove to join the transatlantic alliance in order to be aligned with Washington shortly after it had gained independence in 1989

from the Soviet Union is of geopolitical and historical nature.<sup>753</sup> Polish affinity for the United States dates back to at least the 18th century when “Poles fleeing their homeland fought under George Washington in the American War of Independence.”<sup>754</sup> It was President Woodrow Wilson who in his Fourteen Points Plan of 1918 called for the reconstruction of Poland as a sovereign state. The status of an independent nation only lasted from 1918 (agreed upon in the Treaty of Versailles)<sup>755</sup> until 1939 when Germany overran Poland. It is safe to say that the latter felt abandoned by its then security guarantors, the United Kingdom and France.<sup>756</sup>

Toward the end of World War II, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union placed Poland firmly in Moscow’s orbit at the Yalta conference in 1945: Its provisions, which formally did not determine the future of Poland, were received by the Anglo-Saxons with the silent presumption that Poland would become a part of the Soviet sphere of influence, and the West would accept it. Unsurprisingly, the outcome of the Yalta conference, coupled with the Polish experience of 1939 (and 1938 when Britain, France, Italy and Germany decided the future of Czechoslovakia without the latter being at the conference table), left the country with the impression it could not rely on the Western European states.<sup>757</sup> In addition, Eastern and Central Europeans, including Poland, later felt deserted by its neighbors to the West during the Cold War as the détente was given priority over solidarity with the Warsaw pact states. While the United States was decisive in NATO’s actions (including a rapprochement with the Soviet Union) and responses during the frozen conflict decades, Eastern and Central Europeans “appear to have more confidence in the reliability of the United States than in the reliability of their Western European counterparts.”<sup>758</sup> After Poland succeeded in casting off the Soviet yoke it had to live under for four decades, the path for the country’s decision-

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<sup>753</sup> Cf. Zielińska, Anna: The Transatlantic Relationship. Poland and the United States. In: Dorman, Andrew M./Kaufman, Joyce P. (ed.): The future of Transatlantic Relations. Perceptions, Policy and Practice. Stanford 2011, pp. 155–173, 155.

<sup>754</sup> Ibid.

<sup>755</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 155.

<sup>756</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 168 and cf. Osica, Olaf: In search of a new role. Poland in Euro-Atlantic relations. In: Defence Studies, Vol. 2/2002, pp. 21–39, 23.

<sup>757</sup> Cf. Kuzniar, Roman: Geopolitics and Poland’s Security Policy. In: The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs, Vol. 17/ 2008, pp. 55–70, 60.

<sup>758</sup> Ibid., p. 60

makers was clear: accession to the transatlantic alliance as Poland attempted to secure its livelihood through alignment with the United States – Washington turned into the country's security guarantor.<sup>759</sup> While membership was out of sight in October 1991—together with Hungary and Czechoslovakia—Warsaw nevertheless appealed to NATO to be included in parts of its activities. Poland's attempt to become a member state to NATO eventually succeeded on March 12, 1999, when (alongside the Czech Republic and Hungary) the former Warsaw pact state joined the transatlantic alliance<sup>760</sup>. Joining the defense alliance was seen as a means to ally with a country, the United States,<sup>761</sup> that could counterweigh Russian attempts at domination over its former sphere of influence.<sup>762</sup> Coalescing with Washington on security matters was a matter of consensus before and after becoming a member of the alliance, regardless of party politics in Warsaw.<sup>763</sup> Thus, Poland's security and defense policy has been characterized by demonstrating solidarity with the United States—inside and outside an allied framework. Although by the launch of the military campaign in Iraq in 2003, Poland had been a member of NATO for 4 years already, the government regarded the war “as opportunity to demonstrate their reliability to Washington and thereby enhance US appreciation of their standing as security partners.”<sup>764</sup> As Poland did not feel endangered by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, showcasing “loyalty towards the US and its commitment to being a model ally as a quid pro quo for the Article 5 guarantee that the United

<sup>759</sup> Cf. Zielińska, *The Transatlantic Relationship*, p. 156.

<sup>760</sup> N.B.: Another vital goal of the Polish elites who pressed for their country to join NATO was EU membership which materialized in 2004. Oftentimes, it is argued that joining NATO was of greater importance due to American security guarantees that were expanded to Poland through the Alliance, cf. Longhurst, Kerry: Poland. Empowering or Undercutting EU Collective Security. In: Biscop, Sven/Lembke, Johan (ed.): *EU Enlargement and the Transatlantic Alliance. A Security Alliance in Flux*, Sven Biscop & Johan Lembke (Ed.), 2008, pp. 63–76.

<sup>761</sup> N.B.: A year before accession talks were launched in 1997, then Defense Minister Janusz Onyszkiewicz underlined at a conference the importance of NATO guaranteeing the “continued political and military presence of the US in Europe” Terry, Sarah Meiklejohn: Poland's foreign policy since 1989. The challenges of Independence. In: Communist and Post-Communist Studies, Vol. 33/ 2000, pp. 7–47, 35.

<sup>762</sup> Cf. Zielińska, *The Transatlantic Relationship*, p. 156.

<sup>763</sup> Cf. Ras, Maciej: Foreign and Security Policy in The Party Discourse in Poland. Main Futures. In: *Revista UNISCI/UNISCI Journal*, No 43/ 2017, pp. 117–141.

<sup>764</sup> Yost, Assurance and US extended deterrence in NATO, p. 767.

States was effectively providing”<sup>765</sup> motivated the Polish government to participate in the war on terror by dispatching troops to Iraq. Hence, when Warsaw withdrew its troops from Iraq in 2008, Polish decision-makers “fear[ed] that the US might abandon Europe, the implication being that therefore Poland felt obliged to support all American actions (...).”<sup>766</sup> Worries about US abandonment only grew after the election of Barack Obama in 2009. In reaction to the 2008 election result, 22 current and former leaders of Central and Eastern Europe, among them Polish nationals, voiced their concern that “Central and Eastern European countries are no longer at the heart of American foreign policy.”<sup>767</sup> What spurred Polish (and the region’s) concerns further was connected to the circumstance that the Alliance had only started in 2009 to include the former Warsaw pact states in its contingency planning.<sup>768</sup> Compounding Poland’s qualms, the Obama administration partly cancelled plans for US Army Patriot air and missile defense batteries to be deployed to the country the same year—what made the announcement of the unexpected cancellation an especially delicate affair was its timing:<sup>769</sup> the 70th anniversary of the Soviet Union’s invasion of Poland.<sup>770</sup> The George Bush Junior administration plans—signed in August 2008—would have marked the first permanent stationing of US forces on the soil of an Eastern European country. Then Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski boiled down Poland’s decision to host part of an American missile defense installation in Poland as follows: “Everyone agrees that countries that have US soldiers on their territory do not get invaded.”<sup>771</sup> The Obama administration’s change of plans exacerbated Polish fears of the United States “drifting away [from Poland]” forcing the country’s elites to contemplate looking for alternatives to safeguard its security interests.<sup>772</sup> In order to calm its allies’ nerves, Vice President Joseph Biden

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<sup>765</sup> Zielińska, *The Transatlantic Relationship*, p. 162.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>767</sup> An Open Letter to the Obama Administration From Central and Eastern Europe, in: Radio Free Europe 2009,  
[https://www.rferl.org/a/An\\_Open\\_Letter\\_To\\_The\\_Obama\\_Administration\\_From\\_Central\\_And\\_Eastern\\_Europe/1778449.html](https://www.rferl.org/a/An_Open_Letter_To_The_Obama_Administration_From_Central_And_Eastern_Europe/1778449.html) (08.06.2019).

<sup>768</sup> Cf. Matlé/Varwick, *NATO-Integration und Bündnissolidarität*, 2016.

<sup>769</sup> Cf. Lieber, *Retreat and its consequences*, p. 40.

<sup>770</sup> Cf. Zielińska, *The Transatlantic Relationship*, p. 165.

<sup>771</sup> Yost, *Assurance and US extended deterrence in NATO*, p. 768.

<sup>772</sup> Dempsey, Judy 2014: Why Defense Matters. A New Narrative for NATO, in: Carnegie Europe 2014,

[http://carnegieendowment.org/files/why\\_defense\\_matters1.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/why_defense_matters1.pdf) (08.06.2019)  
and cf. Zielińska, *The Transatlantic Relationship*, p. 157.

had to travel to the region to “underscore the continued viability of (...) U.S. security guarantees.”<sup>773</sup> While then Prime Minister Donald Tusk welcomed the adapted plans presented to him during Biden’s visit, the Polish administration was undeniably snubbed with the original plans having been scrapped.<sup>774</sup> Washington’s explanation that the updated version of the missile defense program was more apt to secure Europe from missiles launched from Iran,<sup>775</sup> including Poland, did not change the fact that Polish-American relations had soured.<sup>776</sup> Poland as one location for the missile defense shield was incorporated into the updated plans of the Obama administration.<sup>777</sup> Part of the dissatisfaction with the reluctance to establish Bush Junior’s missile defense plans in Poland was mirrored in leaked comments by then Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski when, in February 2015, he characterized relations with Washington as “worthless,”<sup>778</sup> a sentiment shared by other members of the administration at the time. Reasons for his appearing to “have (...) drifted away from his earlier robust pro-Americanism” were tied to the partial cancellation of the missile defense program, Poland’s participation in the Iraq war as well the American “pivot” to Asia, according to the Polish journalist Jan Cienski.<sup>779</sup> Whether the United States under Obama impacted the Polish NATO policy despite the cooling of relations will be the subject of the following chapter. It will also be examined whether the Alliance remained the main pillar of Polish security policy

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<sup>773</sup> Lieber, Retreat and its consequences, p. 40.

<sup>774</sup> Cf. Harding, Luke/Traynor, Ian 2009: Obama abandons missile defence shield in Europe, in: The Guardian 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/17/missile-defence-shield-barack-obama> (08.06.2019).

<sup>775</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>776</sup> Cf. Baker, Peter/Dempsey, Judy 2009: U.S. Mulls Alternatives for Missile Shield, in: The New York 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/29/world/europe/29missile.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>777</sup> Cf. Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance 2018: European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) 2018, <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems-2/missile-defense-systems/policy-coming-soon/european-phased-adaptive-approach-epaa/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>778</sup> Schake, Kori 2014: How to Lose Friends and Alienate Allies, in: Foreign Policy 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/30/how-to-lose-friends-and-alienate-allies/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>779</sup> Cienski, Jan 2014: Overheard in Warsaw, in: Foreign Policy 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/25/overheard-in-warsaw/> (08.06.2019).

with its “raison d’être as a collective military organization committed to Article 5.”<sup>780</sup>

#### **6.4.1.1. Indicators of Polish US support in NATO**

The following data are drawn from secondary sources as they were not collected but put together and analyzed by the author. The assessment of the data helps us understand whether and how the United States and its actions have an impact on the NATO and the defense policies of Poland.

*Table 5: Defense budget (2+20% guideline):<sup>781</sup> “indirect contributions.”<sup>782</sup>*

Year	Defense expenditure as share of GDP (based on 2010 prices) “2%-goal” <sup>783</sup>	Equipment expenditure as share of defense expenditure “20%-goal” <sup>784</sup>	Defense expenditure (based on 2010 prices) <sup>785</sup>
2011	■ 1.72 %	■ 16.1 %	■ 8,67 billion €
2012	■ 1.74 %	■ 15.2 %	■ 8,90 billion €
2013	■ 1.72 %	■ 13.9 %	■ 8,91 billion €
2014	■ 1.85 %	■ 18.8 %	■ 9,92 billion €
2015	■ 2.22 %	■ 33.1 %	■ 12,34 billion €
2016	■ 2.00 %	■ 21.6 %	■ 11,44 billion €

- Contributions to NATO common funding budgets<sup>786</sup> → “direct contributions.”<sup>787</sup>

<sup>780</sup> Dempsey, Why Defense Matters, 2014, p. 19.

<sup>781</sup> N.B.: The 2 %-metric is guiding the Alliance at least since NATO’s summit in Riga in 2006, cf. Techau, The Politics of 2 Percent, 2015.

<sup>782</sup> Cf. NATO, Funding NATO, 2018.

<sup>783</sup> Cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2017, p. 8.

<sup>784</sup> Cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2018, p. 3.

<sup>785</sup> Cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2017, p. 7.

<sup>786</sup> N.B.: Contributions to operations are not listed in the section of indicators as they are referred to throughout the discussion on the historical ties each case study country to NATO.

<sup>787</sup> Cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2018.

- The civil budget covers personnel expenses, operating costs, and capital and program expenditure of the International Staff at NATO Headquarters. Most member states fund the civil budget through their foreign ministry budgets. The budget is supposed to fund four major objectives: active operations, Alliance capabilities, consultation and cooperation with partners, and public relations. In addition, four support objectives are financed by the common civil budget: providing support to the consultation process with allies; maintaining the facilities and site of NATO Headquarters; governance and regulation through the monitoring of business policies, processes, and procedures; and Headquarters security.
- The military budget funds the operating and maintenance expenditures of the NATO Command Structure. Most allies contribute to the common military budget through their national defense funds. The budget finances the International Military Staff, the Strategic Commanders, the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force, the common-funded portions of the Alliance's operations and missions among others.
- The NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP) finances major construction and command and control system investments beyond national defense requirements of allies. The NSIP contributes to the roles of the NATO Strategic Commands by providing installations and facilities such as air defense communication and information systems, military headquarters for the integrated structure and for deployed operations among others.<sup>788</sup>

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<sup>788</sup> Cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2018.

Table 6: Polish contributions to NATO's common funding.

Year	Civil budget <sup>789</sup>	Military budget <sup>790</sup>	NATO Security Investment Program <sup>791</sup>
2011	■ 4,876,960 million €	■ 33,169,802 million €	■ 14,90 million €
2012	■ 5,320,050 million €	■ 35,939,143 million €	■ 12,94 million €
2013	■ 5,357,113 million €	■ 37,855,375 million €	■ 14,17 million €
2014	■ 5,715,061 million €	■ 37,526,863 million €	■ 13,31 million €
2015	■ 5,751,825 million €	■ 32,242,695 million €	■ 12,74 million €
2016	■ 6,035,130 million €	■ 32,965,554 million €	■ 14,80 million €

- Participation in exercises since 2013:<sup>792</sup> The following enumeration lists the largest NATO-led exercises since 2013 in greater detail as they signify the importance of overall unity and solidarity within the Alliance:
  - *Steadfast Jazz November 2013*: largest live exercise since 2006 (collective defense scenario, around 6,000 troops from allied and partner countries; around 3,000 participate in live exercise and 3,000 HQ personnel in command and control exercise; conducted at sea, in the air, and on land (three

<sup>789</sup> N.B.: The Nations' shares were calculated as cost-share of the initial Budgets authorized for the selected year. The amount, therefore does not constitute the actual payment by the respective Nations during the year: the actual payments take other factors into consideration (amounts paid in advance, contributions paid voluntarily in advance, redistribution of refundable surpluses, etc.

<sup>790</sup> N.B.: The Nations' shares were calculated as cost-share of the initial Budgets authorized for the selected year. The amount, therefore does not constitute the actual payment by the respective Nations during the year: the actual payments take other factors into consideration (amounts paid in advance, contributions paid voluntarily in advance, redistribution of refundable surpluses, etc.

<sup>791</sup> Cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2018.

<sup>792</sup> N.B.: In November 2013, NATO conducted its largest live exercises since 2006 in a collective defense scenario which is why 2013 is used as a point of reference for the indicator "exercises," cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative, 2016.

Baltic states, Poland); included HQ component provided by Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum: <sup>793</sup> Poland served as host nation<sup>794</sup>

- *June 2015 Noble Jump*: in Zagan, Poland, over 2,100 troops from nine nations involved, VJTF elements deployed for the first time:<sup>795</sup> Poland took part
- *Trident Juncture October and November 2015*: in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Netherlands and Norway; with about 36,000 troops, 140 aircraft and 60 ships from over 30 allies and partner nations:<sup>796</sup> Poland took part
- *Anakonda in June 2016 in Poland* (included land air forces): around 31,000 troops from more than 23 nations (18 allies, five partner countries):<sup>797</sup> Poland served as host nation

In 2015, Poland took part in six out of 12 key NATO and allied multinational exercises (around 280 were conducted in total that year).<sup>798</sup> Poland participated three times and hosted the exercise; only once did the country host an exercise (DRA-GOON RIDE; alongside Germany, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) while not participating in it.<sup>799</sup> Thus, in 2015, Poland participated in 50% of all the major exercises that were conducted that year. In 2016, Poland participated in 11 out of 19 key NATO and allied multinational exercises (240 were conducted in total that year).<sup>800</sup> Four times, Poland participated while also hosting an exercise.<sup>801</sup> In sum, Poland's participation in key allied exercises equated to a 57% ratio.

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<sup>793</sup> Cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative, 2016 and cf. NATO, Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013, 2013.

<sup>794</sup> Cf. NATO, Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013, 2013.

<sup>795</sup> Cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative, 2016.

<sup>796</sup> Cf. ibid. and cf. NATO, Trident Juncture 2015, 2015.

<sup>797</sup> Cf. NATO, Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2016.

<sup>798</sup> Cf. NATO, Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2015.

<sup>799</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>800</sup> Cf. NATO, Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2016.

<sup>801</sup> Cf. ibid.

- Selection of the most important allied defense cooperation projects and capabilities:

*Table 7: Polish contributions to allied defense cooperation projects.*

Project	NATO-owned/nation-owned	Number participating member states	Poland
■ Alliance Ground Surveillance	■ Half-half (group of allies acquiring system which NATO will operate and maintain on behalf of 29 allies) <sup>802</sup>	■ 15 <sup>803</sup>	■ Yes
■ Strategic Airlift Capability	■ Nation-owned	■ 10 <sup>804</sup>	■ Yes
■ Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)	■ Predominantly nation-owned; only command and control systems of Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence eligible for common funding, thus NATO-owned <sup>805</sup>	■ 9 <sup>806</sup>	■ Yes (Aegis Ashore system as of 2018)
■ Strategic Sealift	■ Nation-owned	■ 11 <sup>807</sup>	■ No
■ Nuclear sharing arrangement	■ Nation-owned	■ 5 <sup>808</sup>	■ No

<sup>802</sup> Cf. NATO, Alliance Ground Surveillance, 2018.

<sup>803</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf. *ibid.*

<sup>804</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf.: NATO, Strategic airlift, 2017.

<sup>805</sup> Cf. NATO, Ballistic missile defence, 2019.

<sup>806</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>807</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf. NATO, Strategic airlift, 2017.

<sup>808</sup> In addition to Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey participate in NATO's nuclear sharing arrangement, cf., for example, Alberque, The NPT and the Origins of NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements.

*N.B.: Nation-owned means: funded/maintained by member states but made available to rest of Alliance; among the only NATO-owned military equipment is the AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control) fleet.*

#### **6.4.2. Engaging in crisis management: Proving its value in contributing to transatlantic security**

Poland has been participating in NATO operations immediately upon joining the Alliance, among them the intervention in Kosovo 1999 as well as ISAF in Afghanistan.<sup>809</sup> As a matter of fact, even prior to joining the Alliance, Warsaw dispatched troops to support NATO's Implementation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996.<sup>810</sup> Due to its NATO (since 1999) and later EU (since 2004) membership, Poland's contribution to UN-led missions has decreased though—yet, during the Cold War the only form of crisis management Warsaw participated in were UN-led peacekeeping missions.<sup>811</sup> With the prospects and later realization of the possibility of joining the transatlantic alliance, Poland developed into “the most active participant in international military missions and assignments”<sup>812</sup> among all new NATO members.<sup>813</sup> Due to its earlier military contributions to allied operations (as well as its steadfast support of the American-led Iraq war), Poland gained a reputation as an active Alliance member.<sup>814</sup> Part of the reason for such an engagement can be attributed to so-called new world thinking according to the scholars Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski. They argue that prior to joining the European Union,

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<sup>809</sup> Cf. Bienczyk-Missala, Poland's Foreign and Security Policy, p. 107-108 and cf. The National Security Bureau 2013: White Book On National Security of the Republic of Poland 2013, 2013, <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/download/1/20897/WhiteBookNationalSecurityPL2013.pdf> (08.06.2019), p. 50.

<sup>810</sup> Cf. Providing for Peacekeeping 2012: Peacekeeping Contributor Profile. Poland, 2012, <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-poland/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>811</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>812</sup> Bil, Ireneusz: Poland. In: Bartels, Hans-Peter/Kellner, Anna Maria/Optenhögel, Uwe (ed.): Strategic Autonomy and the Defence of Europe. On the road to a European Army? Bonn 2017, pp. 319–348, 331.

<sup>813</sup> N.B.: For further information on Poland's contribution to ISAF cf. for example, Ulrich, Marybeth P.: Visegrad Four: Achieving Security. In: Grenier/Mattox, Coalition challenges in Afghanistan, pp. 157–169, 160–161.

<sup>814</sup> Cf. Bienczyk-Missala, Poland's Foreign and Security Policy, p. 107.

Poland was caught between “old world” and “new world” security thinking. The former pattern is embedded in national territorial defense while the latter is based on membership in NATO as well as the bilateral alliance with the United States.<sup>815</sup> Bogdan Klich, who served as Poland’s Minister of National Defense from November 2007 until August 2011, was responsible for continuing the trend of transforming of Poland’s Armed Forces into an operationally prepared army, which had been begun in 2003, the year Warsaw joined the US-led Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>816</sup> While Polish forces were withdrawn from Iraq in 2008, the country perpetuated its role in international crisis management operations, most importantly by participating in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan since 2004.<sup>817</sup> The 2007 Strategy of National Security (SNS) as well as the accompanying Defense Strategy of the Republic of Poland encapsulated what the country’s armed forces had been doing in the past couple of years as well as what Poland’s leadership still sought to achieve with its armed forces: operational preparedness for out-of-area operations and missions serving NATO, the EU and the United Nations in this order. The 2007 SNS as well as similar documents released before and after highlight that Poland’s security and defense policy priorities lie in supporting NATO and EU operations and missions as well as the bilateral partnership with the United States.<sup>818</sup> In 2011, the year NATO engaged in Operation Unified Protector in Libya, Poland was officially still prioritizing crisis management over territorial defense.<sup>819</sup> The two following sections will shed light on how Poland behaved vis-à-vis the Libya campaign as well as the motivation behind its actions.

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<sup>815</sup> Longhurst/Zaborowski, *America’s Protégé in the East?*, p. 1025.

<sup>816</sup> Cf. Lubecki, Jacek: Poland in Iraq. The Politics of The Decision. In: *The Polish Review*, Vol. 50/ 2005, pp. 69–92.

<sup>817</sup> Cf. Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Poland to NATO: Poland’s contribution to NATO operations and missions, n.d., [https://brukselanato.msz.gov.pl/en/poland\\_in\\_nato/polish\\_commitment\\_to\\_operations\\_and\\_missions/](https://brukselanato.msz.gov.pl/en/poland_in_nato/polish_commitment_to_operations_and_missions/) (08.06.2019).

<sup>818</sup> Cf. Providing for Peacekeeping, *Peacekeeping Contributor Profile*, 2012.

<sup>819</sup> Cf. National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2007, 2007, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/156796/Poland-2007-eng.pdf> (08.06.2019).

#### **6.4.2.1. Poland's contributions to NATO's operation in Libya: A case against the point**

The image of Warsaw as an engaged NATO ally slightly changed when the country's political elites decided against engaging in Operation Unified Protector, NATO's military operation in Libya in 2011. Essentially three arguments officially circulated to explain Poland's abstention from participating in the Libya operation. Firstly, government officials argued that Poland did not have any direct interests in the North African country. In early March, Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski articulated that point in an interview with Foreign Policy when he argued that “[i]t's an internal Libyan conflict so far” and went on to emphasize that “[w]e have to hope that the Libyan[s] themselves resolve this internal civil war”, instead of ascribing a role to NATO to settle what already then emerged as a humanitarian crisis.<sup>820</sup> Secondly, as Poland was about to assume the EU's presidency in July 2011, decision-makers thought it best to remain neutral in the conflict so as to facilitate a dialogue with a post-Gaddafi Libya. As a matter of fact, then Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk ascribed a sense of hypocrisy to other European leaders by intervening in the North African country, as human rights “must be universal and not invoked only when it is convenient, profitable or safe,” he stated in an interview with a Polish newspaper.<sup>821</sup> To avoid the impression that all members of the European Union only acted on behalf of a suppressed peoples when resource interests (e.g., oil) were at stake, Tusk continued explaining his country's abstention from the military engagement. Thirdly, Poland had allegedly reached the limits of its military capabilities which were bound in Afghanistan at the time.<sup>822</sup> Poland's government failed to mention that the majority of the population was strongly against a Polish contribution to the war efforts in Libya (yet a majority of polled participants in opinion surveys did speak out in favor of an intervention in general).<sup>823</sup> With regard

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<sup>820</sup> Rogin, Josh 2011: Polish FM on Libya. No no-fly yet, let them work it out internally, in: Foreign Policy 2011, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/03/02/polish-fm-on-libya-no-no-fly-yet-let-them-work-it-out-internally/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>821</sup> Reuters 2011: Polish PM chides Europe over Libya “hypocrisy,” in: Reuters 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/poland-eu-libya-idAFLDE73806T20110409> (08.06.2019).

<sup>822</sup> Cf. Dylla, Daria 2011: Poland, Libya, and NATO, in: Atlantic Council 2011, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/poland-libya-and-nato> (08.06.2019).

<sup>823</sup> Cf. ibid.

to the third official argument as to why Poland did vote against deploying capabilities to the Libyan operation, Polish military experts were in disagreement about whether or not Poland had exhausted its war fighting capacities. Some observers, such as scholar Daria Dylla, argued that a symbolic contribution (a couple of Polish F-16 fighter jets for example) would have sufficed to begin with. These assumptions notwithstanding, the Polish government opted against directly participating in Operation Unified Protector. When the operation was drawing to an end, Prime Minister Tusk underlined that “Poland was directly involved in these activities [operations in Libya] thanks to the Polish officers’ presence in the NATO headquarters.”<sup>824</sup> Furthermore, Warsaw did support the United Nations Security Council Resolution rhetorically as Poland was not a non-permanent member of the UN body at the time unlike its neighbor Germany.<sup>825</sup> Before the vote on UNSC Resolution 1973 allowing “all necessary means” took place on March 17, Prime Minister Tusk indicated the need for a no-fly zone of sorts on March 11 already: “We do not exclude that the closure of airspace [at] some point in the future would precondition the effective delivery of humanitarian aid.”<sup>826</sup> While he did not refer to the use of military means explicitly, it is safe to say that the “closure of airspace” has to be backed up by fighting power in order to be enforced.<sup>827</sup> In addition, the country anticipated an active role for the European Union to play in preventing a humanitarian crisis in Libya: “It is worthwhile focusing the efforts on ensuring effective humanitarian aid and a long-term support to the changes in Libya (...), namely the effective support for democratic changes”, Prime Minister Tusk underlined at an EU summit in Brussels on March 11.<sup>828</sup> On the dawn of allied war efforts in Libya, Tusk stressed that his government would be willing to assist a new Libyan administration in democracy training among others: “It [training in democracy] is directly

<sup>824</sup> The Chancellery of the Prime Minister 2011: Prime Minister on the end of war in Libya, 2011, <https://www.premier.gov.pl/en/news/news/prime-minister-on-the-end-of-war-in-libya.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>825</sup> Cf. Dylla, Poland, Libya, and NATO, 2011.

<sup>826</sup> The Chancellery of the Prime Minister 2011: Prime Minister at the EU summit on Libya, 2011, <https://www.premier.gov.pl/en/news/news/prime-minister-at-the-eu-summit-on-libya.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>827</sup> Keating, Joshua E. 2011: Do No-Fly Zones Work? Yes, but they might not stop Qaddafi, in: Foreign Policy 2011,  
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/28/do-no-fly-zones-work/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>828</sup> The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Prime Minister at the EU summit on Libya, 2011.

connected with our experiences and the good name Poland enjoys as a country which overcame communism with democratic methods and was immensely successful.”<sup>829</sup> In the spirit of this offer, on May 10, 2011, Poland’s Foreign Minister Sikorski was the first European leader to visit the country after the uprising against the dictator Gadhafi began to visit the Libyan Interim Transitional National Council located in Benghazi.<sup>830</sup> On that occasion, Sikorski reiterated Poland’s (and the EU’s for that matter) support for “the departure from power of Colonel (Muammar) Gaddafi and the launch of a constitutional process that would lead Libya to democratization.”<sup>831</sup> Seeing as Poland was a member of the Libya Contact Group<sup>832</sup> and about to assume the EU’s rotating presidency for the first time since joining the Union, it seemed to be only right that it be at the forefront of engaging with the Transitional Team. Despite the reputation of being a staunch supporter of allied military operations, as outlined at the beginning of this section, indicators of a wish for restraint vis-à-vis crisis management tasks can be found in strategy papers that pre-date the 2011 Libyan War. The 2007 National Security Strategy (NSS) outlines that Poland “supports NATO’s selective engagement in stabilization missions outside Europe, provided, however, that the Alliance maintains a credible potential and is fully capable of collectively defending its member states (...).”<sup>833</sup> Most likely informed by its sobering experience participating in the Iraq War (2003–2008),<sup>834</sup> Warsaw contemplated a slight course correction in that the policy establishment re-shifted its (capability) focus on national and collective defense within allied borders instead

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<sup>829</sup> The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Prime Minister at the EU summit on Libya, 2011.

<sup>830</sup> Cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland 2011: Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski visits Benghazi, 2011,  
[http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/sikorski\\_visit\\_benghazi](http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/sikorski_visit_benghazi) (08.06.2019).

<sup>831</sup> Baczyńska, Gabriela 2011: Poland’s Sikorski meets Libyan rebels, delivers aid, in: Reuters 2011,  
<https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE74A0JZ20110511> (08.06.2019).

<sup>832</sup> Cf. NATO 2011: Libya Contact Group, 2011  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2011\\_04/20110926\\_110413-Libya-Contact-Group-Doha.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/20110926_110413-Libya-Contact-Group-Doha.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>833</sup> National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2007, 2007, p. 10.

<sup>834</sup> Cf. Associated Press 2008: Poland formally ends its Iraq mission, in: NBC News 2008, [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/27023061/ns/world\\_news-mideast\\_n\\_africa/t/poland-formally-ends-its-iraq-mission/#.XQDuudMzb-Y](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/27023061/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/poland-formally-ends-its-iraq-mission/#.XQDuudMzb-Y)(08.06.2019).

of going out of area. Yet, the 2007 NSS did not preclude the possibility of the country's military being deployed to crisis management tasks, concluding that the “Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland [AFRP] will maintain their readiness to participate in operations of asymmetrical nature, including multinational, joint anti-terrorist operations carried out in compliance with international law, organized by NATO, EU or an *ad hoc* coalition of states.”<sup>835</sup> Supplementing the NSS, Poland published its Defense Strategy in 2009 in which “engagement in international crisis response operations led by NATO and the EU” came last in the category of “strategic defense goals” (after national and allied territorial defense).<sup>836</sup> To the end of establishing crisis management tasks, the goal of retaining the readiness of the AFRP was stipulated once more as in the NSS 2007.<sup>837</sup> These two documents point to Poland’s reserved attitude toward crisis management while at the same time underlining the primacy of (collective) territorial defense. The most important strategic paper indicating Poland’s (or any other country for that matter) security and defense outlook, the White Book, was published again in 2013, 2 years after NATO’s air campaign over Libya. Upholding the tradition of the NSS 2007 and the Defense Strategy 2009, the White Book unmistakably subordinates crisis management tasks to collective defense in a national as well as allied framework.<sup>838</sup> While the pros and cons of the Libya operation are not explored, Operation Unified Protector is referred to as an example of the United States “falling out of the role of the ‘global policeman’.”<sup>839</sup> Consequently, European allies were tasked to assume more responsibility “for security in their direct surroundings.”<sup>840</sup> Whether or not Poland should be at the forefront of this task remains unstated.

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<sup>835</sup> National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2007, 2007, p. 23.

<sup>836</sup> The Ministry of National Defence: Defence Strategy of the Republic of Poland. Sector strategy of the National Security of the Republic of Poland 2009, 2009, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/156791/Poland%202009.pdf> (08.06.2019), pp. 7–8.

<sup>837</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>838</sup> Cf. The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, 2013, p. 166.

<sup>839</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>840</sup> *Ibid.*

#### **6.4.2.2. Moving back to its roots: Prioritizing collective defense once more**

Against the backdrop of the so-called Komorowski doctrine,<sup>841</sup> it is plausible to deduce a de-prioritization of crisis management tasks, regardless of an American lack of leadership in this field as expressed in the 2013 Polish White Book. The doctrine, named after the Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski (who was in power from 2010 to 2015), encapsulated what the above-mentioned strategic papers expressed: “Poland’s [m]ilitary forces must be focused on the direct defense of Poland’s territory instead of expeditionary capabilities.”<sup>842</sup> This stipulation found its correspondence in Poland’s decision to abstain from participating in Operation Unified Protector. Other expectations that were connected to Poland’s contributions to expeditionary engagements included a more comprehensive inclusion of the country in NATO’s contingency planning as well as its disappointment with the West’s limited response to Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008.<sup>843</sup> The sobering experiences that resulted from Poland’s participation in expeditionary operations coupled with what was regarded a relative US withdrawal from Europe, including the changed BMD plans, led to the emergence of the Komorowski doctrine according to two Polish security and defense experts working with a think tank (PISM) in Warsaw.<sup>844</sup> In a sense, they continued, US policies (including the one’s taken by the Obama administration) “exerted negative influence”<sup>845</sup> on Poland’s security and defense policy in general. For one, Warsaw predominantly participated in (allied)

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<sup>841</sup> N.B.: The term was first publicly used in April 2013 by Stanislaw Koziej, then head of the National Security Bureau consulting the President, cf. National Security Bureau 2014: [Die] “Komorowski-Doktrin” bedeutet (...) Priorität für die Verteidigung des eigenen Territoriums, 2014 <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/pl/wydarzenia/4549,Doktryna-Komorowskiego-czyli-priorytet-dla-obrony-wlasnego-terytorium.html> (08.06.2019). A year later in 2014, the main tenets of the doctrine were specified and published in a communiqué of the National Security Bureau, cf. National Security Bureau: Komorowskis (...) Annahmen, 2014, <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/pl/wydarzenia/5226,Doktryna-Komorowskiego-zalozenia.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>842</sup> Micha, Piekarski: A Story of Change. Poland’s Armed Forces and the ISAF Operation in Afghanistan. In: The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs, Vol. 23/ 2014, pp. 79–100, 98.

<sup>843</sup> Cf. Demmer, Ulrike/Neukirch, Ralf 2010: NATO Developed Secret Contingency Plans for Baltic States, in: Spiegel Online 2010, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/fear-of-russia-nato-developed-secret-contingency-plans-for-baltic-states-a-733361.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>844</sup> Cf. author interview 19, Warsaw, February 20, 2018.

<sup>845</sup> Ibid.

crisis management operations to demonstrate its reliability to Washington. In return, Poland expected security gains mainly from the United States. When these gains failed to materialize, as mentioned above, a rethink vis-à-vis out-of-area operations began in Poland, eventually led to the Komorowski doctrine. Secondly, what the two think tank experts described as a relative US withdrawal from Europe had an impact on Poland's security considerations as well as the fact that the country's elites thought it necessary to re-focus defense efforts on protecting the homeland instead of dispatching soldiers abroad. The first implementation of the Komorowski doctrine was the Polish government's decision to abstain from participating in NATO's air campaign over Libya in 2011. Ireneusz Bil, Head of the Amicus Europae Foundation in Warsaw, stated that one reason for the abstention can be found in the premises of the Komorowski doctrine. One should not forget that Poland was still engaged in Afghanistan at the time of Operation Unified Protector, Bil continued to point out. In other words, a contribution to the engagement in Libya would have stretched the Polish Armed Force's capacities. The provision of some of Poland's F16s would have been the only military asset useful for the military campaign. Yet, as Bil emphasized: "These fighter jets are much too precious for Poland's defense outlook to risk sacrificing them in an air operation over Libya."<sup>846</sup>

Drawing on that rationale, Poland's reluctance to support NATO's operation against Muhammed Gaddafi was also tied to a sense of task-sharing from Warsaw's viewpoint. As the country was engaged at the Hindukush still and had been involved in the US-led war against Iraq, Poland did not regard Libya as "its place to be."<sup>847</sup> Rather, countries that had a stake in the future of the North African nation were better suited to participate in the military operation from a Polish perspective, Bil concluded. A high-ranking Polish official made a similar argument in that the Libya decision "resulted from the assessment of our defence needs on the eastern flank which were already strained by our serious involvement in other missions outside of NATO territory (mainly Afghanistan and the Balkans)."<sup>848</sup> In light of Poland regarding Russia as a potential threat to its security already in 2011 and the thinning out of forces concentrating on homeland defense, a contribution to the operation in Libya was determined to be "unjustified" in the words of this expert. He

<sup>846</sup> Author interview 20, Warsaw, February 20, 2018.

<sup>847</sup> Ibid.

<sup>848</sup> Interview questionnaire 1, January 27, 2018.

went on to underpin that Poland's move to abstain from participating in Operation Unified Protector was a "national deliberate decision."<sup>849</sup>

A former Polish ambassador to NATO held a similar opinion in that the "internal prevailing view in Poland was such that the country should focus more on national defense efforts once more instead of participating in out-of-area operations."<sup>850</sup> Fitting into the mold of that argument, two security and defense experts working with the Warsaw-based think tank PISM contended that Poland's Libya decision was mainly reached on domestic grounds, that is, they could not detect the Obama administration having had an impact on that choice whatsoever. If anything, Germany's decision to abstain from voting on the UNSC Resolution and participating in NATO's operation might have had an effect on Poland's decision-makers at the time as German-Polish relations were particularly close in 2011 according to these two think tank experts.<sup>851</sup> A Polish diplomat concurred with this assessment: "Poland's decision to abstain from NATO's air campaign over Libya was mostly domestically driven and not influenced by the Obama administration. Decision-makers at the time concluded that the Polish people would not be in the mood for another out-of-area operation."<sup>852</sup> What helped Poland to go ahead with this decision was Germany abstaining as well, so the diplomat continues. According to this source, the "European factor, i.e. Berlin, was much more decisive in Poland's determination to withhold its support than American influence."<sup>853</sup> An Assistant Professor at the Institute of International Relations (University of Warsaw), Marek Madej, approached the matter from a slightly different angle: "The United States did not seriously question Poland's stance on the operation in Libya. In general, the Polish abstention did not cause a lot of trouble for Poland with the two leading European countries involved in the campaign, France and the United Kingdom. Yet there is no doubt that both countries were disappointed with Poland's stance—this disappointment did not have any serious repercussions on Poland's standing in NATO though."<sup>854</sup> On the point of French political leadership in pressing for an intervention in Libya, a former Minister of National Defense commented: "It is true

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<sup>849</sup> Interview questionnaire 1.

<sup>850</sup> Author interview 21, Warsaw, February 23, 2018.

<sup>851</sup> Cf. author interview 19.

<sup>852</sup> Author interview 22, Warsaw, February 23, 2018.

<sup>853</sup> Ibid.

<sup>854</sup> Author interview 23, Warsaw, February 22, 2018.

that Poland did not participate in Libya but, to be frank, it was considered (...) not as a strictly NATO [-pushed] operation but rather an operation initiated by the French with NATO being brought into the fray as a result of an operational necessity.”<sup>855</sup> A Polish security expert working with a European think tank had a similar reading of the run-up to the Libya episode in 2011; according to him, it did play a role for Polish decision-makers that the Obama administration did not push for every NATO ally to participate in the operation. Coupled with Berlin’s reluctance to become involved, this mélange made it easier for Warsaw to desist from participation. In the opinion of a minority of interviewed experts, Poland’s decision to not take part in Operation Unified Protector was a mistake because it revealed a lack of solidarity with European NATO allies.<sup>856</sup> One of the interviewees criticizing Poland’s Libya decision, a government official, pointed out that the Komorowski doctrine was to “some extent harmful as demonstrated by the political fallout of refraining to stand by our European allies’ side.”<sup>857</sup> According to this source, the repercussions of Poland abstaining from supporting the operation in Libya came in the form of a damage to Warsaw’s reputation as a reliable ally in NATO: “Poland’s position in the Alliance was tangibly weakened through the stance we took on Operation Unified Protector.”<sup>858</sup> Furthermore, this development could have been prevented had the Polish government heeded the advice of experts at the time: “Many advisors in the National Security Bureau, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the Ministry of Defense strongly argued in favor of contributing something to the operation.”<sup>859</sup>

#### **6.4.3. The specter of an American pivot to the Asia-Pacific region at the expense of European security**

As Poland had been eager to prioritize its bilateral bonds with the United States since joining the transatlantic alliance, working toward an American troop and military equipment presence on Polish soil has been one of Warsaw’s security and

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<sup>855</sup> Interview questionnaire 2, April 20, 2018.

<sup>856</sup> Cf. author interview 24, Warsaw, February 21, 2018 and cf. author interview 25, Warsaw, February 22, 2018.

<sup>857</sup> Author interview 25.

<sup>858</sup> Ibid.

<sup>859</sup> Ibid.

defense policy goals since 1999.<sup>860</sup> In 2012, Poland attained this goal at least in parts when the United States dispatched F-16 aircraft from the California National Guard to train with Polish F-16s for the first time. In addition, and more significantly, the Obama administration decided to establish a US aviation detachment in Poland in 2012—a first in Polish-US bilateral ties. Deploying US Air Force troops and aircraft to Poland represented the first “permanent presence” of American service members.<sup>861</sup> It has to be underlined though that the detachment in agreeing to host rotations of US F-16 fighter jets and C-130 cargo aircraft was thus only quasi-permanent. Nevertheless, observers such as political scientist Andrew Michta, who at the time headed the German Marshal Fund of the United States office in Warsaw, concluded that the American decision “is an extremely significant development” signifying that Washington “is serious about the security of Poland and its neighbors, (the other) NATO allies in the region.”<sup>862</sup> Concurrently, the American “pivot” to Asia was announced in October 2011 as well as the partial troop and capability removal from Western Europe in early 2012, allegedly prompting concerns in Warsaw about the seriousness of US commitment to the security and defense of NATO Europe.<sup>863</sup> As demonstrated by the non-participation in NATO’s Libya air campaign, Poland was already re-orientating its security and defense policy in 2011, aiming at strengthening the country’s territorial defense capabilities which had been neglected in favor of expeditionary prowess in previous years. Accordingly, a number of high-profile procurement decisions followed to make Poland’s army fit for the purpose of territorial defense tasks. Although the major push to modernize the Polish Armed Forces, which will be elaborated on in greater detail in the following chapter, came in 2012, the formal launch of the main priority procurement projects occurred in 2013/2014.<sup>864</sup> The two following sections have a twofold purpose:

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<sup>860</sup> Cf. Hunzeker, Michael A./Lanoszka, Alexander 2018: The Case for A Permanent U.S. Military Presence in Poland, in: War on the Rocks 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/10/the-case-for-a-permanent-u-s-military-presence-in-poland/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>861</sup> Svan, Jennifer H. 2012: USAFE to establish first U.S. aviation detachment in Poland this year, in: Stars and Stripes 2012, <https://www.stripes.com/news/usafe-to-establish-first-u-s-aviation-detachment-in-poland-this-year-1.168576> (08.06.2019).

<sup>862</sup> Ibid.

<sup>863</sup> Cf. Swieboda, Paweł 2012: Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Pivot?, in: Foreign Affairs 2012, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/poland/2012-12-04/who-s-afraid-big-bad-pivot> (08.06.2019).

<sup>864</sup> Cf. Bil, Poland, p. 333.

Firstly, the so-called Komorowski doctrine, which was used to conceptualize Poland's abstention from Operation Unified Protector, and the strategic decisions following the doctrine will be explored. The second aim of the chapter is to establish whether a plausible connection exists between Poland's decision to shift its armed force's strategic outlook to territorial defense and the American pivot as well as partial retrenchment from Europe.

#### 6.4.3.1. Increasing the focus on self-reliance

The effect of the so-called Komorowski doctrine did go beyond formulating a constraint regarding Poland's participation in crisis response operations. Refocusing defense efforts on territorial defense left its mark on the structure and planning of the armed forces as well. The Defense Modernization Initiative that was announced by then President Bronislaw Komorowski (or: Technical Modernization Program, TMP) in August 2012 aimed at strengthening the Polish armored forces, the naval forces, the air force as well as the country's industrial defense base.<sup>865</sup> The initiative was provided with 46.3 billion dollars for the updating of the armed forces across the services.<sup>866</sup> The main goal of modernizing Polish Armed Forces was to improve the country's homeland defense capabilities: “(...) the primary focus of Poland's 10-year defense modernization plan is territorial defense rather than out-of-area capabilities, though Poland tries to balance the two with planned capabilities important to both (...).”<sup>867</sup> To the end of strengthening Warsaw's homeland defense posture, capabilities such as new submarines, mobile heavy artillery, long-range air and long-launched cruise missiles were invested in to bolster Poland's territorial defense posture.<sup>868</sup> Shifting attention and resources away from crisis management

<sup>865</sup> Cf. Jankowski, Dominik P. 2013: Beyond Air and Missile Defense. Modernization of the Polish Armed Forces, in: Foreign Policy Association 2013, <https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2013/09/18/beyond-air-and-missile-defense-modernization-of-the-polish-armed-forces/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>866</sup> Cf. Michta, Andrew A. 2013: Polish Hard Power. Investing in the Military As Europe Cuts Back, in: National Security Outlook AEI 2013, [http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/-polish-hard-power-investing-in-the-military-as-europe-cuts-back\\_170557821177.pdf](http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/-polish-hard-power-investing-in-the-military-as-europe-cuts-back_170557821177.pdf)(08.06.2019). p. 3.

<sup>867</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>868</sup> Cf. Kucharczyk, Maciej 2017: Modernizing Poland's Armed Forces, in: The Warsaw Institute Review 2017, <https://warsawinstitute.org/modernizing-polands-armed-forces/> (08.06.2019).

which Poland's military had been engaged in primarily from its accession to NATO until 2012 became essential under the modernization program. Notwithstanding that one single country cannot invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, Poland felt the need to refocus its defense efforts on (allied) territorial security. The rationale behind increasing national defense capabilities goes back to 2008. That year, NATO's Bucharest Summit in April ruled out Alliance membership of the aspirants Georgia and Ukraine—at least in spirit.<sup>869</sup> This decision in turn left Poland in the situation of a border state of the Alliance—while Poland and Russia do not share a direct land border, the Russian oblast Kaliningrad is located at Poland's north-eastern frontier. Heightening Warsaw's sense of vulnerability, Russia engaged Georgia in a short war in the summer of 2008 prompting “reorientation in Poland's strategy leading to an emphasis on regional and traditional territorial defense.”<sup>870</sup> Concerns about what appeared like Russia's attempt to expand its power in Eastern Europe grew unabatedly in Warsaw leading to the country's efforts to focus national but also allied defense thinking on collective security: “More than anything else, Russia's invasion of Georgia drove home the critical importance of having workable NATO contingency plans and sufficient capabilities to perform key national defense tasks to make those plans credible.”<sup>871</sup> It was not until after the Georgian-Russian conflict in August 2008 that the Alliance decided to include Poland and other former Warsaw Pact states into NATO's contingency planning.<sup>872</sup> In the run-up to the Alliance's summit in Lisbon 2010, which brought forth NATO's current Strategic Concept, Poland emphasized the need “of reactivating planning and joint training for Article 5-related missions to be part of NATO's post-ISAF agenda.”<sup>873</sup> Thus, Warsaw took matters into its own national hands by modernizing its armed forces. One way to ensure the implementation of the modernization process can be ascribed to then President Bronislaw Komorowski who refused to sign off on military spending cuts going beyond 2013. In addition, a law warranting that military

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<sup>869</sup> Cf. Michta, Polish Hard Power, 2013, p. 5.

<sup>870</sup> Ibid., pp. 5–6.

<sup>871</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>872</sup> Cf. Demmer/Neukirch, NATO Developed Secret Contingency Plans for Baltic States.

<sup>873</sup> Kulesa, Lukasz 2014: Poland and Ballistic Missile Defense. The Limits of Atlanticism, in: Proliferation Papers 48 IFRI 2014, <https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ pp48kulesa.pdf>, p. 35 (08.06.2019).

spending would not drop below a 1.95% of GDP threshold was passed (into law) in 2013.<sup>874</sup> The same year, on June 3, 2013, Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk together with his Defense Minister Siemoniak unveiled the launch of the "Polish Fangs" project whose goal was to develop capabilities to implement a national deterrence strategy. In support of reaching that aim, they announced the purchase of cruise missiles for both the F-16 fleet and conventional submarines, combat drones, special operations forces as well as a Navy Coastal Defense Missile Battalion system.<sup>875</sup> Thus, already by 2013 Poland had worked toward and advocated "the factual strengthening of Article 5 commitments (e.g. preparations for all possible threat scenarios, active participation in joint NATO exercises, etc.)."<sup>876</sup> Since the Alliance's strategic agenda did not change according to Poland's national security concerns until 2014, a "sense (...) of growing "transatlantic deficit" in ties between the United States and its NATO allies in Central Europe"<sup>877</sup> began festering in Warsaw's decision-makers. Apart from the Obama administration's decision to alter the 2008 missile defense agreement, the American announcement in 2012 to reduce the number of its forces located in Europe "led Poland to give more attention to its own strategic and military options should the American security guarantee grow even weaker."<sup>878</sup> In fact, some researchers such as Lukasz Kulesa from the European Leadership Network claim that the missile defense episode constituted a major motivation to work toward a national air and missile defense system as part of the country's military modernization efforts.<sup>879</sup> Expressions of the necessity to become more independent militarily (while remaining committed to NATO) were stipulated in Poland's National Security Strategy Review (NSSR) 2010–2012 published in December 2012.

In the NSSR, the National Security Bureau, attached to the President, formulated that Poland should strike a balance between its efforts of "internationalization [i. e. integration] and autonomy."<sup>880</sup> A year later, in 2013, this recommendation found

<sup>874</sup> Cf. Michta, Polish Hard Power, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>875</sup> Cf. Jankowski, Beyond Air and Missile Defense, 2013.

<sup>876</sup> Ibid.

<sup>877</sup> Michta, Polish Hard Power, 2013, p. 6.

<sup>878</sup> Ibid.

<sup>879</sup> Cf. Kulesa, Lukasz, Poland and Ballistic Missile Defense, 2014, p. 25.

<sup>880</sup> Head of National Security Office 2012: The National Security Strategic Review (NSSR) 2010-2012, 2012,

<http://www.bbn.gov.pl/download.php?s=1&id=12616> (08.06.2019), p. 18.

its way into the White Book, the country's most important guiding document in security and defense policy terms. Both approaches were to be harnessed to focus Poland's defense efforts on three priorities: full-spectrum readiness for national security; support of the integration processes in NATO (particularly in collective defense terms); selective support and participation of and in crisis management tasks.<sup>881</sup> Both documents were published after the announcement of the Obama administration's plans to "pivot to Asia" (October 2011) and to reduce its material footprint in Europe (January 2012). While the NSSR only mentions the circumstance of the American plan to focus more resources on the Asia-Pacific region, the White Book explicitly assesses the "pivot." Although Poland expressed understanding for the reasons behind the decision, it links the "pivot" to the 2012 US announcement to withdraw parts of its military presence in Europe: "What speaks against such a reduction is, among other things, the strategic significance attributed by the USA to NATO as a reliable collective defense structure of the West (...)."<sup>882</sup> The document goes on to take the repercussions of the announcement and partial implementation seriously: "The United States is currently reducing its military presence in Europe. This process should not be downplayed by the European members of NATO. Poland should advocate a decreased scale of withdrawal of the US military potential (...)."<sup>883</sup> From a Polish viewpoint, an American military presence continued to be of vital importance for the security and defense of the continent.<sup>884</sup> This aspect, continued US hard power posture in Europe, had already been emphasized in the "Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012–2016," published in March 2012.<sup>885</sup> At the same time, Warsaw was well-advised to increase its military contributions to the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy, according to the White Book.<sup>886</sup> Considering possible repercussions of Washington re-emphasizing the Asia-Pacific as a region of strategic significance further, the 2014 National Security Strategy points out the importance of the United States remaining

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<sup>881</sup> Cf. The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, 2013, pp. 14–15.

<sup>882</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>883</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>884</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>885</sup> Cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 2012: Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012–2016, 2012,  
[https://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/d31571cf-d24f-4479-af09-c9a46cc85cf6:JCR \(08.06.2019\)](https://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/d31571cf-d24f-4479-af09-c9a46cc85cf6:JCR (08.06.2019)), p. 15.

<sup>886</sup> Cf. The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, p. 162.

committed to the security of Europe while the latter increases its contribution to (allied) burden-sharing.<sup>887</sup> While American partial retrenchment and the “pivot” are not explicitly mentioned in any strategic document as the driving force behind Poland’s 2012 military modernization initiative and the increased focus on national capabilities, the overlap of both developments gives pause. Thus, the next section will explore whether or not the described concurrence was of an accidental or cor-relational nature.

#### 6.4.3.2. Dreading American retrenchment

Then Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski made some insightful remarks about how he viewed Poland’s security and defense provisions in a speech delivered in front of the Polish Parliament in March 2013: “History teaches us that Poland must look to itself to look after its security—also in the military sense—and that this security largely depends on our defense potential (...).”<sup>888</sup> While he goes on to underline the importance of alliance systems, the highest ranking Polish diplomat at the time does not omit to mention that in order to be supported by others one has to “use [its] forces to enable these allies to come to your help.”<sup>889</sup> Sikorski’s deliberation brings home the Polish conviction that the country had to start focusing more on national defense efforts. In part, this conviction arose from what was perceived as a partial US withdrawal from NATO Europe (at least until 2014) coupled with American attempts to pivot toward the Asia-Pacific region. A former Minister of National Defense described how Polish policy-makers “not like some in Western Europe who read this development differently, recognized the US withdrawal from Europe not as a result of a loss of interest but rather as a result of [the] assessment (...) that the situation in Europe is rather stable and does not require US attention.”<sup>890</sup> Ireneusz Bil, Head of the Amicus Europae Foundation in Warsaw, attested to the Polish government’s “relative perception of an American withdrawal of attention and means under the Obama administration until 2014”<sup>891</sup> which in turn gave rise

<sup>887</sup> Cf. National Security Bureau 2014: National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2014, 2014, <http://en.bbn.gov.pl/download/3/1314/NSSRP.pdf> (08.06.2019), p. 21.

<sup>888</sup> As quoted in Jankowski, Beyond Air and Missile Defense, 2013.

<sup>889</sup> Ibid.

<sup>890</sup> Interview questionnaire 2.

<sup>891</sup> Author interview 20.

to the Komorowski doctrine—a concept that was aimed at bringing back Polish troops from expeditionary operations and an increased investment in national territorial defense. According to Bil, “there certainly is a connection between focusing more on homeland defense and the perception of a relative withdrawal of the United States.”<sup>892</sup>

A similar connection was delineated between the emergence of the Komorowski doctrine and the US pivot to Asia by a Polish security expert working with a European think tank: “The pivot was one factor leading to the doctrine as Poland feared that the US would not deploy heavy conventional forces on Polish soil. Poland began to realize that the Americans could not always take care of Polish security concerns because of engagements elsewhere in the world, mainly in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, we began focusing more on national territorial defense priorities, as opposed to out-of-area engagement.”<sup>893</sup> This source went on to stress that in the wake of what was perceived as a “decreased interest on part of the US in NATO-Europe” until 2014, deliberations began taking place whether or not Poland should be able to defend itself independently if need be: “These discussions were rooted in a sense of potential abandonment by the US.”<sup>894</sup> This awareness was confirmed in the wake of the allied Steadfast Jazz exercise that took place in November 2013 (the largest exercise since 2006)<sup>895</sup> practicing collective defense scenarios for the first time since the end of the Cold War and NATO’s enlargement.<sup>896</sup> The United States contributed 250 troops<sup>897</sup> of a total of approximately 6,000 allied soldiers:<sup>898</sup> “The minor presence of American troops validated the Polish notion of not being able to rely on the US as a security provider all the time.”<sup>899</sup> Yet, according to this

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<sup>892</sup> Author interview 20.

<sup>893</sup> Author interview 26, Warsaw, February 22, 2018.

<sup>894</sup> Ibid.

<sup>895</sup> Cf. NATO 2013: NATO’s Steadfast Jazz exercise gets underway, 2013, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_104648.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_104648.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>896</sup> Cf. Gotkowska, Justyna 2013: High on reassurance, low on deterrence. Germany’s stance on strengthening NATO’s eastern flank, in: OSW Commentary 2016, [https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/commentary\\_217\\_0.pdf](https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/commentary_217_0.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>897</sup> Cf. U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs 2013: USAREUR to participate in Steadfast Jazz 2013, 2013, [https://www.army.mil/article/113882/usareur\\_to\\_participate\\_in\\_steadfast\\_jazz\\_2013](https://www.army.mil/article/113882/usareur_to_participate_in_steadfast_jazz_2013) (08.06.2019).

<sup>898</sup> Cf. NATO, NATO’s Steadfast Jazz exercise gets underway, 2013.

<sup>899</sup> Author interview 26.

expert, this development was not judged as a “tragedy by Poland’s government because of national capabilities being ramped up while trying to keep the US committed to Polish and European security and defense matters.”<sup>900</sup>

Although another Polish security expert described the Obama administration’s policy toward NATO as lacking in political leadership, especially with regard to deterrence and defense matters: “From the Polish viewpoint, the US was losing interest in NATO discussions which was accompanied by (planned) military reductions; while this changed a bit after 2014—mostly on a bilateral level though—the overall assessment remains the same: we had to witness an American withdrawal from the Alliance during the Obama years.”<sup>901</sup> Consequently, NATO was perceived as growing weaker as the Alliance has always been less credible for Poland without US leadership. Hence, Poland began investing more in national capabilities: “Before the Obama administration came into office, Poland felt it could rely on the US a 100%, during his time in office this sense of reliability went down to 99%.”<sup>902</sup>

The reason for the diminishing of the view that the United States was a steadfast and reliable ally to Poland could certainly be found in the downgrading of US military presence in NATO Europe between 2012 and 2014 as outlined and professed above by several interviewed experts, among them a Polish diplomat: “Until 2014 the Polish reading of US security and defense policy was such that Poland and other Central European countries grew less important in American strategic calculations.”<sup>903</sup> Apart from the lighter military footprint in Europe, this source also cited the US pivot and the re-engagement (“surge”) in Afghanistan by the American military as indicators for (Central) Europe forfeiting importance: “It is plausible to assume that the described US policy vis-à-vis Europe and Poland had an impact on Warsaw’s decision to bring troops back home to prepare them for the task of territorial defense along with the upgrading of military equipment,” the diplomat concluded.<sup>904</sup> In order to accomplish the latter, the modernization initiative of the armed forces was launched in 2012. According to the Polish diplomat, decision-makers came to realize that spending 1.95% of GDP on defense would not suffice

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<sup>900</sup> Author interview 26.

<sup>901</sup> Author interview 25.

<sup>902</sup> Ibid.

<sup>903</sup> Author interview 22.

<sup>904</sup> Ibid.

to modernize the military. While for political purposes, the government claimed that new capabilities as part of the modernization initiative were earmarked primarily for national usage, the diplomat continued to explain that behind the scenes it was clear that newly procured capabilities would be provided for NATO's Defense Planning Process (NDDP)<sup>905</sup>—the NDDP is an internal allied mechanism aimed at identifying the necessary capabilities for fulfilling the tasks NATO's member states deem necessary; the process includes drawing up a timetable for development and procurement by allies individually or together. Already in 2012, Poland was determined to re-focus its national but also NATO's efforts on collective defense again having in mind the Georgian-Russian War in 2008 as well as what was regarded a militarization of the Russian enclave Kaliningrad beginning in 2012.<sup>906</sup> According to Marek Madej (University of Warsaw), Poland's perception in 2012/2013 was such that NATO would neither be prepared nor particularly willing to act on collective defense as enshrined in the Alliance's Article 5. Part of that perception was borne of the American pivot to Asia which was thought to have "become a problem for the security of Poland. Decision-makers in Warsaw at the time were afraid that Europe could be treated as fixed business."<sup>907</sup> Against the backdrop of Polish concerns that the United States could be poised to pay less attention to European security—especially in light of the augmentation of BMD plans by the Obama administration—it was very important that the Americans established an aviation detachment at the Polish 32nd Tactical Airbase in Lask<sup>908</sup>—marking the first permanent US military footprint in Poland.<sup>909</sup> A former Polish Ambassador to NATO confirmed that Poland was concerned about the United States decreasing its military presence in Europe until 2014 as this reduction meant that there would be no increase of assets on the Eastern flank: "These worries were a subject of discussion behind the scenes at NATO's Headquarters in Brussels as well as in bilateral talks with the Americans. Yet, in my mind, the Central Europeans, including Poland were

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<sup>905</sup> Cf. Author interview 22.

<sup>906</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>907</sup> Author interview 23.

<sup>908</sup> Cf. author interview 19.

<sup>909</sup> Cf. Brezenzinski, Ian 2012: US Aviation Detachment Establishes Permanent Presence in Poland, in: Atlantic Council 2012, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/us-aviation-detachment-establishes-permanent-presence-in-poland> (08.06.2019).

not bold enough in their demands of a boosted US military presence on the Alliance's Eastern flank, at least until 2014.”<sup>910</sup> At the same time, American diplomats assured their Polish counterpart of US determination to increase its military presence in NATO's East if the threat situation changed, according to this source.<sup>911</sup> This assertion was not discounted by a high-ranking Polish official; in fact, from his viewpoint, the Americans decided to return to Europe prior to 2014 already. At the same time, Poland “seriously considered the preview of the future ‘pivot’ of the USA from Europe to Asia. It [the pivot] had a significant impact on our national and allied policy. We recognized that this is a serious signal to increase our own European defence capabilities within NATO and the EU.”<sup>912</sup> The latter aspect, the diversification of Poland's security foundation, coincided with the 2011 announcement of the American pivot to Asia as well as the partial reduction of the US's footprint in NATO Europe beginning in 2012. In this context, two sources referred to Polish attempts to pay more attention to Europe's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in the years 2011–2014.<sup>913</sup> Neither, however, drew a direct link between Poland's heightened interest in CSDP and the American pivot as coupled with the partial military retrenchment from NATO Europe: “The former government under Sikorski and Tusk tried to broaden Poland's security cooperation with European allies, first and foremost Germany. Trying to strengthen CSDP as part of that approach was an attempt to push European partners to invest more in their security which in turn would have strengthened NATO. It was not a reaction to a perceived American retrenchment though.”<sup>914</sup>

#### **6.4.4. Polish ambitions to integrate Ukraine into Euro-Atlantic structures**

Poland held the biannually rotating EU presidency when the text of the EU-Ukrainian Association Agreement was finalized in 2011<sup>915</sup>—the very agreement that is said

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<sup>910</sup> Author interview 21.

<sup>911</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>912</sup> Interview questionnaire 1.

<sup>913</sup> Cf. author interview 20 and cf. author interview 24.

<sup>914</sup> Author interview 24.

<sup>915</sup> Cf. Weymouth, Lally 2014: Talking with Poland's foreign minister about the Ukraine crisis and Russia's next moves, in: *The Washington Post* 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/talking-with-polands-foreign-minister-about-the-ukraine-crisis-and-russias-next-moves/2014/04/17/f1811e84-c5ad-11e3-bf7a->

to be responsible for the violent upheaval in Ukraine beginning in late 2013 after then Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovych refused to sign the agreement into law.<sup>916</sup> Poland has a history of touting to integrate Ukraine into Euro-Atlantic (security) structures, as will be laid out below. Already in October 1990, one year prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Poland supported Ukraine's bid for sovereignty. Both countries, putting behind them a troubled past characterized by mistrust, moved together more closely after the end of the Cold War as they regarded Russia as a potential threat to their territorial integrity.<sup>917</sup> Underpinning their rapprochement, Poland and Ukraine signed a Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation "affirm[ing] the sanctity of the borders and renounced all territorial claims against one another."<sup>918</sup> In the spirit of supporting one another, Warsaw included Ukraine, among others,<sup>919</sup> into its idea of a regional pre-NATO alliance system (dubbed "NATO-2") in the hope of preparing former Warsaw Pact states more quickly to be ready for joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1992. While the idea did not meet with great enthusiasm on the part of most of the countries included in the proposal, Ukraine paid close attention. In fact, in early 1993, the country presented a similar idea ("Baltic-to-Black Sea security zone") in an attempt to thwart "latent military and political instability" in the region by cooperating more closely.<sup>920</sup> While Poland felt uncomfortable supporting the proposal for fear of diminishing its own chances for inclusion into the West, in 1994 Polish Foreign Minister Andrzej Olechowski "(...) placed Ukraine on par with Russia in its importance to Poland's security, noting that Warsaw 'anticipated' intensive military-political cooperation with Ukraine within the framework of PfP [Partnership for Peace] and would work to see that 'this country [Ukraine] takes its proper place in international politics.'"<sup>921</sup> Following up on this commitment, Poland advocated Ukraine's accession to the

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be01a9b69cf1\_story.html?utm\_term=.63f86c50619d (08.06.2019).

<sup>916</sup> Cf. Grytsenko/Traynor, Ukraine suspends talks on EU trade pact as Putin wins tug of war, 2013.

<sup>917</sup> Cf. Longhurst, Poland, pp. 63–76, 70–73.

<sup>918</sup> Larrabee, Frederick S.: Ukraine and the West. In Survival, Vol. 48/ 2006, pp. 93–110, 104.

<sup>919</sup> N.B.: The other countries Poland designated for the "NATO-2" proposal included the Baltic Republics, Belarus, the Visegrad states, Romania and Bulgaria, cf. Terry, Poland's Foreign Policy since 1989, p. 10.

<sup>920</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>921</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

Central European Initiative which the latter joined in 1996.<sup>922</sup> In light of Russia already having in the first half of the 1990s taken on an increasingly assertive stance toward its “near abroad,”<sup>923</sup> Poland tried to associate Kiev with NATO once it had joined the Alliance in March 1999. For example, the Polish–Ukrainian Peace Force Battalion, established in 1995 intended for UN and NATO missions, was deployed to Kosovo as part of the peacekeeping forces (KFOR) in 2000.<sup>924</sup> On a more structural level, Poland tried to influence domestic progress in Ukraine to ensure the country’s preparedness to set course for a Euro-Atlantic integration.<sup>925</sup> Eventually, Poland would become the “strongest advocate of Ukrainian membership in NATO.”<sup>926</sup>

#### 6.4.4.1. Polish attempts to turn into a regional leader

Warsaw showed a pronounced interest in aiding Kiev to untangle the crisis (and later war) the country has been finding itself in since late 2013.<sup>927</sup> Shortly after protests against the government not signing the EU association agreement began in late November 2013, then Prime Minister Donald Tusk spoke out on behalf of Ukraine by stating on December 11, 2013, that “it is important that Ukrainians receive an unmistakable signal that the aid from the European Union and the visa-free traffic is possible if the Ukrainian authorities show respect to democracy and human rights.”<sup>928</sup> It was down to Polish pressure that the discernable upheaval in Ukraine was placed top of the agenda of the EU’s summit in December 2013. While on February 18, 2014, the Polish Prime Minister claimed that both pro and anti-government forces were responsible for the escalation of violence in the wake of

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<sup>922</sup> Cf. Terry, Poland’s Foreign Policy since 1989, p. 31.

<sup>923</sup> Ibid., pp. 14–16.

<sup>924</sup> Cf. National Security Bureau/National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine: Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin, Warsaw 2012, p. 82.

<sup>925</sup> Cf. Osica, In search of a new role, p. 27.

<sup>926</sup> Larrabee, Ukraine and the West, p. 105.

<sup>927</sup> N.B.: Former Polish President Kwasniewski headed the EU mission that was in charge of negotiating the EU-Ukraine association agreement whose cancellation of part of Ukraine was said to be responsible for the protests on Maidan, cf. Olchawa, Mission Ukraine, pp. 84, 90–93.

<sup>928</sup> The Chancellery of the Prime Minister 2013: Prime Minister Tusk. Ukraine will be the main subject of the upcoming EU summit, 2013,  
<https://www.premier.gov.pl/en/news/news/prime-minister-tusk-ukraine-will-be-the-main-subject-of-the-upcoming-eu-summit.html> (08.06.2019).

the Maidan revolution, he continued to state that “Poland would like to see democracy in Ukraine, with all its standards. A democratic Ukraine and peace in this part of the world is in Poland’s interest.”<sup>929</sup> Acting in the spirit of wanting to bring about the end of turmoil and ushering in a peaceful and democratic transition in Ukraine, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski (alongside his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a French and a Russian envoy) acted as witness to the signing of the “Agreement on settlement of political crisis in Ukraine” on February 21, 2014. The document aimed to put an end to violence on the Maidan and to solve the political crisis that had taken hold of the country was signed by then-President Viktor Yanukovych and opposition leaders.<sup>930</sup>

To act in concert with (European) partners was given priority by Poland’s government in 2014: “Poland shall continue to co-organize and initiate actions of the international community, including the EU and NATO, that will aim at reducing and eliminating the threat of aggression in Ukraine,”<sup>931</sup> Prime Minister Tusk underlined in early March. Hence, Poland tried to attain a seat on the negotiating table of the Normandy format: “Poland was, along with France and Germany, one of the countries that orchestrated the political shift in Ukraine in February [2014].”<sup>932</sup> Due to the insistence of Russia, Poland was not invited to take part in the conflict resolution mechanism that would become known as the Normandy format including Germany, France, Ukraine, and Russia.<sup>933</sup> Prior to Russia’s rejection of including Poland in the Normandy format, Warsaw continued to influence the EU’s and NATO’s response

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<sup>929</sup> The Chancellery of the Prime Minister 2014: PM on situation in Ukraine.

Increased radicalization on both sides is a concern, 2014,

<https://www.premier.gov.pl/en/news/news/pm-on-situation-in-ukraine-increased-radicalisation-on-both-sides-is-a-concern.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>930</sup> Cf. The Guardian 2014: Agreement on the Settlement of Crisis in Ukraine.

Full text, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/21/agreement-on-the-settlement-of-crisis-in-ukraine-full-text> (08.06.2019).

<sup>931</sup> The Chancellery of the Prime Minister 2014: Donald Tusk on Ukraine. Our strategy does bring results, 2014, <https://www.premier.gov.pl/en/news/news/donald-tusk-on-ukraine-our-strategy-does-bring-results.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>932</sup> Buras, Piotr 2014: Has Germany sidelined Poland in Ukraine crisis negotiations?, in: ECFR 2014, [http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_has\\_germany\\_sidelined\\_poland\\_in\\_ukraine\\_crises\\_negotiations301](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_has_germany_sidelined_poland_in_ukraine_crises_negotiations301) (08.06.2019).

<sup>933</sup> Cf. Smolar, Eugeniusz 2015: Letter From Warsaw, in: Carnegie Europe 2015, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/?fa=60322> (08.06.2019).

to Moscow's actions vis-à-vis Kiev. The goals of promoting Ukraine's role in Euro-Atlantic security systems as well as the democratization of the country had found their way into important Polish strategic documents prior to the Maidan revolution and the ensuing war in the neighbor to the east. On the first goal, the 2013 White Book stipulates that "allied partnership policy" represents an important part of NATO's tasks. Furthermore, "Poland's steady support for the 'open door policy', as well as the Alliance's cooperation with Ukraine (...) within the NATO-Ukraine Commission (...)"<sup>934</sup> is highlighted. The document also points to the circumstance that NATO's southern neighborhood is given more attention [as it stood in November 2013] at the expense of the eastern flank. Hence, "Poland should strive for [allied partnership policy's] geographical (and consequently, financial) balance, especially in (...) Eastern Europe."<sup>935</sup> While Poland recognized that NATO was obliged to pay more and closer attention to the Eastern flank, the White Book points to Ukraine as an example of Russia attempting to stake out its claim to (former) spheres of influence: "(...) in recent years one may speak of Russia's increasing influence in some countries, especially those that adjoin Poland (Belarus, and to a certain extent—Ukraine. Indicative of this trend is that Ukraine's attempts to draw its foreign and security policy closer to the West have become feebler."<sup>936</sup> To counter this development, the White Book goes on to express Poland's desire to firmly place Ukraine in the midst of the political West by strengthening the country's democratic institutions and safeguarding its independence. This in turn would strengthen Poland's security.<sup>937</sup> The document argues that an "independent, stable, and open for cooperation Ukraine" is not only in Poland's vital interest, rather, this sort of constitution of the country is a "key element of stability in Central and Eastern Europe"<sup>938</sup> according to the White Book. The importance of Ukraine in Polish strategic thinking is also emphasized in the "Strategy of development of the national security system of the Republic of Poland 2022" which was published in April 2013. In the document, Ukraine and Georgia are listed as Eastern partnership countries which should be

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<sup>934</sup> The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, 2013, p. 158.

<sup>935</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>936</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>937</sup> Cf. ibid., pp. 34, 103.

<sup>938</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

given priority by NATO's Partnership for Peace program<sup>939</sup>—a program that is custom tailored to partner countries to bring them closer to the transatlantic community, in security but also political terms. Helping Ukraine on its way to further democratize its institutions is not only a security policy goal but also a theme that finds its way into foreign policy documents such as the “Foreign Policy Priorities 2012–2016” that were published in March 2012. Therein, the Polish government defines that one of the country’s diplomatic goals is the development of strategic partnership with Ukraine in order to “support the process of adoption of the association agreement with the EU and negotiations on liberalization of the EU-Ukraine visa regime and implementation of domestic reforms.”<sup>940</sup> The authors of the document grant Ukraine an equally important role in the context of transatlantic security relations by proclaiming that “cooperation with Ukraine and other countries in Eastern Europe” was a proof of Poland being a reliable ally in a stable transatlantic order.<sup>941</sup> In the same spirit, the document points out that “deepening NATO-Ukraine relations is a Polish foreign policy priority.”<sup>942</sup> Poland’s goal of supporting the democratization of Ukraine (and NATO as well as EU-link) finds its way into strategic documents that were published after the beginning of the upheavals as well. Accordingly, the 2014 National Security Strategy states that the “Republic of Poland supports reforms in Eastern Partnership countries [which Ukraine is one of] and pronounces itself in favor of their closer links with the EU and NATO.”<sup>943</sup> Furthermore, Ukraine is explicitly cited as an example of Russian “reassertion (...) as a major power at the expense of its neighborhood” which, in the eyes of Poland, has “a negative impact on the security in the region.”<sup>944</sup> To counterbalance Russia’s actions in Ukraine, NATO had already established a series of Trust Funds as discussed in Section 5.3.4.1. Poland acted as a contributor to the Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4) Trust Fund which Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom

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<sup>939</sup> Cf. 2013: Strategy of development of the national security system of the Republic of Poland 2022, 2013, [https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS\\_RP.pdf](https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf) (08.06.2019), p. 44.

<sup>940</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012–2016, 2012, p. 21.

<sup>941</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>942</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>943</sup> National Security Bureau, National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland 2014, 2014, p. 10.

<sup>944</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

headed as lead nations. As mentioned in the case study on Germany, the goal of this trust fund was to help Ukraine modernize its C4 structures to enable the country providing for its security on its own. To that end, the designated assistance included “assessment, introduction and implementation of a modern C4 architecture; procurement of C4 equipment and provision of associated training.”<sup>945</sup> The program is estimated to be completed in 2019.<sup>946</sup>

In addition to contributing to the C4 Trust Fund, Poland agreed to serve as lead nation (alongside the Czech Republic and the Netherlands) of NATO’s Logistics and Standardization Trust Fund whose goal is to “support the on-going reform of Ukraine’s logistics and standardization systems for the Ukrainian Armed Forces (...).”<sup>947</sup> Furthermore, Warsaw assumed the role of lead nation of the Alliance’s Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP). As mentioned in Section 6.3.4.1., the DEEP was designed to have experts from allied member states counsel Ukrainian academics work at defense education institutions on setting up courses for their servicemen and servicewomen.<sup>948</sup> Warsaw is also active in contributing to the Professional Development Program for Ukraine which is divided into four phases with the third and fourth currently under way. Similar to DEEP, this program aims at educating Ukrainian officials in different executive capacities such as the Ministry of Defense and the Diplomatic Academy who are sought to be trained in a way to establish defense and security sector capacities for their country. The program is expected to be completed in 2021.<sup>949</sup> While the Polish government(s), regardless of the political party in charge during the examination period of this thesis, were and still are very active in supporting Ukraine in the context of NATO’s activities in and for Kiev, Warsaw’s official stance, much like Berlin’s, on arming the Ukrainian army has been to repudiate this throughout the remainder of the debate. Then Polish Defense Minister Tomasz Siemoniak said in an interview with the Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* on February 10, 2015: “The delivery of heavy

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<sup>945</sup> NATO 2016: NATO’s support to Ukraine, 2016,  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_07/20160627\\_1607-factsheet-nato-ukraine-support-eng.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-nato-ukraine-support-eng.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>946</sup> Cf. NATO, Summary of Ongoing NATO Trust Funds, 2017, p. 6.

<sup>947</sup> NATO, NATO’s support to Ukraine, 2016.

<sup>948</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>949</sup> Cf. NATO, Summary of Ongoing NATO Trust Funds, 2017, p. 12.

weaponry, the supply of equipment of special units, tanks or similar weapons to Ukraine is out of the question. Poland did not and does not have any plans of the sort.”<sup>950</sup> However, commentators such as the Polish journalist Eugeniusz Smolar claimed that “Poland [is] a strong but discreet supporter of the demand to assist Ukraine—from finances to arms.”<sup>951</sup>

#### **6.4.4.2. No security in an unstable neighborhood**

The desire to assist Ukraine across the board after the Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014 is steeped in Polish–Ukrainian historical ties as outlined in the introduction to this section, as well as by a sense of national security. As stated by a Polish security expert: “A strong and independent Ukraine is a vital Polish security interest. Thus, no outside pressure from the US was necessary (neither was it exerted) to prompt Polish decision-makers to advocate and participate in NATO’s Trust Funds that were set up to support Ukraine.”<sup>952</sup> In fact, this source argued in favor of “doing even more in aid of Kiev resisting Russia, including the delivery of lethal weapons.”<sup>953</sup> The chances of such a controversial proposal being seriously considered and implemented would drastically increase where NATO to be used as a coordinating body, for example, in the framework of an assistance mission for Ukraine. In this way, individual countries could be less easily singled out by Russia in order to pressure them to stop delivering defensive weapons to Ukraine, according to this Polish security expert.<sup>954</sup> Other sources confirmed that the sending of lethal (defensive) weapons was a subject of discussion behind closed doors and in the public discourse.<sup>955</sup> Part of the reason why Poland had not pursued this avenue thus far (until 2016) can be explained by Polish concerns that the delivery of lethal weapons could have contributed to the situation in Ukraine further escalating, as

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<sup>950</sup> Buras, Piotr 2015: Analyse. Polen, der Ukraine-Konflikt und die Europäische Union, in: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2015, <http://www.bpb.de/205513/analyse-polen-der-ukraine-konflikt-und-die-europaeische-union>, (08.06.2019), translated by author.

<sup>951</sup> Smolar, Letter From Warsaw, 2015.

<sup>952</sup> Author interview 25.

<sup>953</sup> Ibid.

<sup>954</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>955</sup> Cf. author interview 19 and cf. author interview 20.

stated by Irenusz Bil from the Amicus Europae Foundation. In addition, he explained, Warsaw coordinated its policy toward Ukraine with its European allies France and Germany very closely until the change in government occurred in early 2015.<sup>956</sup> Yet, Bil underlined that Poland's decision to participate in NATO's Trust Funds designated for the support of Ukraine was a national one: "Poland and Ukraine share a strategic partnership; naturally, Polish decision-makers would contemplate ways how to support our partner in a moment of need. While discussions about arming Ukraine took place in private and the public, Poland's support of Ukraine since 2014 has largely been of political nature, including the coaxing of Western allies that Russian actions had to be countered by imposing sanctions through the EU and bolstering reassurance and collective defense through NATO."<sup>957</sup>

Nudging NATO allies to agree to some sort of enhanced presence in Poland and the Alliance's Eastern Flank was on Warsaw's agenda as soon as Russia's aggression against Ukraine became obvious. As the issue was at the center of Poland's efforts in NATO, and main NATO powers were not supportive of sending arms to Ukraine, Poland did not want to push the latter subject too far.<sup>958</sup> Yet, these two sources went on to underscore, there was no doubt in Polish decision-making circles about the necessity of supporting Ukraine bilaterally and via NATO's Trust Fund when the country came under attack beginning in early 2014: "Poland deemed it necessary to make it as difficult as possible for Russia to 'succeed' in Ukraine through united actions by the EU and NATO."<sup>959</sup> While another source, a high-ranking Polish official, did not deny that the United States and its European partners reacted in a united fashion to Russia's aggression in and toward Ukraine, he purported that the United States and many European countries were "overly moderate" in their support of Ukraine. This in turn had "hindered Polish efforts" to do more for Kiev which had "led to the deterioration of the political and strategic situation of Ukraine, both internationally and internally."<sup>960</sup> He went on to explain that Poland "positively assessed US involvement [in crisis management towards] Ukraine," at the

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<sup>956</sup> Cf. author interview 20.

<sup>957</sup> Ibid.

<sup>958</sup> Cf. author interview 19.

<sup>959</sup> Ibid.

<sup>960</sup> Interview questionnaire 1.

same time “we expected a bigger and more determined [role of Washington].”<sup>961</sup> What else Warsaw had expected of the United States and had planned in support of its neighbor to the East other than the participation in NATO’s Trust Funds and political backing of the new government in Kiev, the former official did not spell out. A security expert working with a European think tank had a slightly different take on Poland’s role assisting Ukraine: “Though the Polish government acknowledged that it had to help Ukraine in some form, Warsaw is surpassed in its support by other countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. One can only speculate whether or not the relatively little support Poland provided Ukraine with is responsible for the worsening of relations between the two countries.”<sup>962</sup> Regardless of the degree and rationale as to why Poland decided to support Ukraine rhetorically as well as in material terms, that is, through participating in NATO’s Trust Funds, the interviewed experts were unanimous in that it was a purely national decision and not brought about by external pressure: “President Barack Obama did not have any influence on Poland’s support for Ukraine. We considered [the country] to be [of] vital strategic interest [to us]. [Ukraine], independent of Russia, is one of the key conditions for Poland’s security and European security in general,” said a high-ranking Polish official.<sup>963</sup> A former Minister of National Defense confirmed this viewpoint: “Ukraine [is] (...) of fundamental importance [to Poland]. To have a friendly, democratic and prosperous country of such magnitude on our border is naturally of (...) national vital interest. Therefore, we shall always participate actively in all forms of assistance for Ukraine.”<sup>964</sup> This interviewee omitted to mention exactly which forms of assistance he referred to. A Polish diplomat confirmed the former official’s assessment in that Poland has been regarding the independence of Ukraine as vitally important for its own security since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Thus, it was a matter of course for Warsaw’s decision-makers to opt for contributing to NATO’s Trust Funds for Ukraine on its own terms.<sup>965</sup> In the words of a former Polish Ambassador to NATO, “Poland’s decision to support Ukraine via the Alliance’s Trust Funds as well as bilaterally in political terms had nothing to do with the Americans.”<sup>966</sup> He added that the Obama

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<sup>961</sup> Interview questionnaire 1.

<sup>962</sup> Author interview 26.

<sup>963</sup> Interview questionnaire 1.

<sup>964</sup> Interview questionnaire 2.

<sup>965</sup> Cf. author interview 22.

<sup>966</sup> Author interview 21.

administration had tried to portray Poland as a regional leader of Central Europe, responsible for the coordination of policy responses toward the crisis in Ukraine among others—very much to the dislike of Poland’s government: “Other Central European countries do not regard us as their regional leader which is why Poland does not want to be painted as such by the US government.”<sup>967</sup> Consequently, Warsaw did not organize a common Central Eastern European reaction to what had been happening in Ukraine since 2014 beyond attempts to be accepted to participate in the Normandy Format in addition to an informal coordination of policy responses with France and Germany—to no avail with regard to the former, however.

#### **6.4.5. NATO returning to its core business: A blessing in disguise for Poland**

Only a couple of weeks after Russia annexed the Ukrainian peninsula Crimea, American-Polish ties experienced a boost after relations between the two countries had soured during the first years of President Obama being in office, as discussed in Section 5.4.1. Then US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and his Polish counterpart, Tomasz Siemoniak, agreed on a “solidarity and partnership roadmap” on April 17, 2014, in response to Russia’s increasingly aggressive behavior in Europe.<sup>968</sup> The defense package included closer cooperation in the areas of “special operations forces, air force cooperation, and additional exercises and training.”<sup>969</sup> As part of the roadmap, “permanent presence of American detachments (on a rotating basis) in Poland” was proposed as well.<sup>970</sup> This part of the proposal referred to an aviation detachment entailing the first full-time stationing of US troops in Poland which was set up in 2012 at Lask Air Base.<sup>971</sup> Bolstering and rounding out the reinvigorated bilateral cooperation between Poland and the United States, President Obama asked the American Congress for an “additional funding of up to a billion USD for joint

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<sup>967</sup> Author interview 21.

<sup>968</sup> Cf. Bienczyk-Missala, Poland’s Foreign and Security Policy, p. 109.

<sup>969</sup> Pellerin, Cheryl 2014: U.S., Poland Defense Leaders Find New Areas for Cooperation, in: DoD News 2014,

<http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=122080> (08.06.2019).

<sup>970</sup> Bienczyk-Missala, Poland’s Foreign and Security Policy, p. 109.

<sup>971</sup> Cf. Pellerin, U.S., Poland Defense Leaders Find New Areas for Cooperation, 2014.

projects.”<sup>972</sup> While these proposals and the implementation thereof was met with appreciation in Warsaw, Polish politicians expected more to come from Washington: “America, we hope, has ways of reassuring us that we haven’t even thought about. There are major bases in Britain, in Spain, in Portugal, in Greece, in Italy. Why not here [in Poland]?,”<sup>973</sup> Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski wondered upon President Obama’s announcement of the US-led European Reassurance Initiative in Warsaw in June 2014.<sup>974</sup> Decision-makers who were politicized during the Cold War were becoming rarer, thus, so the argument went, the United States could attach less importance to Europe’s security.<sup>975</sup> Similar suspicions were held against Western European leaders that they might be “willing to accommodate Russia and rewrite the rules of Europe’s security system in line with Russian designs, leaving Poland isolated.”<sup>976</sup> Whether or not and if so which consequences Poland deduced from this seeming fear of not enjoying enough protection from its allies in the wake of a changed European security environment since 2014 is the subject of the following two sections.

#### **6.4.5.1. Poland’s role between security provider and beneficiary**

As a new government took office in Warsaw in 2015, an armed forces investment plan in the amount of more than \$40 billion was announced, building on the “Technical Modernization Program” (TMP) introduced in 2012: The “initial plan was determined to have underestimated procurement costs by half, which had led to the reduction of new purchases and their partial delay to a future date.”<sup>977</sup> According

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<sup>972</sup> Bienczyk-Missala, Poland’s Foreign and Security Policy, p. 109.

<sup>973</sup> Taylor, Adam 2014: Why Poland wants a U.S. Military Base, in: The Washington Post 2014,

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/06/03/why-poland-wants-a-u-s-military-base/?utm\\_term=.886f2b8bfee7](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/06/03/why-poland-wants-a-u-s-military-base/?utm_term=.886f2b8bfee7) (08.06.2019).

<sup>974</sup> N.B.: A former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in the Obama administration stated that “The NATO-Russia Founding Act is not the reason why the US has been arguing against permanent bases in Europe. If it turned out that permanent structures were less costly than rotational ones, I’m sure we would go for the permanent option,” cf. author interview 3.

<sup>975</sup> Cf. Kulesa, Lukasz 2016: Poland’s Deterrence and Defense Posture. Preparing for 21st Century Threats, in: Defense Intelligence Brief No.4, 2016, [https://cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id\\_plik=2343](https://cepa.ecms.pl/files/?id_plik=2343) (08.06. 2019), p. 4.

<sup>976</sup> Ibid.

<sup>977</sup> Kucharczyk, Maciej 2017: Modernizing Poland’s Armed Forces, in: The

to the updated plans, the Polish armed forces were supposed to be equipped with upgraded military helicopters, missile and air defense systems, modern artillery, army mobility, and communications and command systems in addition to a modernization of the navy by 2022.<sup>978</sup> The 2015 announcement was complemented by plans that were made public one and a half years later in December 2016 according to which the Polish Defense Ministry earmarked another \$ 14.5 billion to purchase new weapons and military equipment from 2017 to 2022. The “shopping list” included new air defense systems, 14 multi-purpose helicopters, 1.200 UAVs, three coastal defense vessels, two mine destroyers among others. The planned acquisitions were intended to be used in five areas that were determined to be in need of urgent modernization: air defense, naval capabilities, cybersecurity, tank and armored vehicles, and territorial defense capabilities.<sup>979</sup> While none of Poland’s strategic documents that were published between 2014 and 2016 categorically ruled out the possibility of engaging its armed forces in crisis management scenarios, the modernization of the army that had been launched in 2012 and was continued in 2015 indicates that territorial (collective) defense was developing into Warsaw’s top priority. The White Book 2013 unambiguously lists “guaranteeing defence of the state and ward[ing] off aggression”<sup>980</sup> as the number one task of the Armed Forces of Poland prior to crisis management operations and being deployed domestically. Equally unequivocally the document points out that NATO should re-focus on its original task, that is, collective defense: “Currently, the main challenge that faces NATO is the redefinition of its role in the post-Afghan period. It is hard to say whether the Alliance (...) will move on to a new phase of consolidation focused on the basic function of ensuring direct security of its members (...). What seems (...) useful is the consolidation of NATO around its underlying defensive function (...) and the performance of feasible activity that boosts the deterrence capacity of

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Warsaw Institute Review 2017, <https://warsawinstitute.org/modernizing-polands-armed-forces/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>978</sup> Cf. Defense World 2015: Poland To Invest \$40 Billion to Modernize Armed Forces By 2022, 2015,

[http://www.defenseworld.net/news/12988/Poland\\_To\\_Invest\\_40\\_Billion\\_To\\_Modernize\\_Armed\\_Forces\\_By\\_2022#.WoFnJ5OdXq1](http://www.defenseworld.net/news/12988/Poland_To_Invest_40_Billion_To_Modernize_Armed_Forces_By_2022#.WoFnJ5OdXq1) (08.06.2019).

<sup>979</sup> Cf. Adamowski, Jaroslaw 2016: Polish Defence Ministry Unveils \$14.5B Modernization Program, in: Defense News 2016,

<https://www.defensenews.com/congress/budget/2016/12/05/polish-defence-ministry-unveils-14-5b-modernization-program/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>980</sup> The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, 2013, p. 43.

the Alliance.”<sup>981</sup> In order to enable NATO to carry out collective defense and deterrence, the White Book goes on to remind its allies to spend an appropriate amount of money on defense which in Poland’s view should equal “close to” 2% of a nation’s gross domestic product.<sup>982</sup> One should bear in mind that the White Book was published in 2013—a year before NATO’s heads of state commonly agreed on the 2%-formula at the Alliance’s Wales Summit in September 2014. The additional funds the White Book advocates were consequently to go toward “the effectiveness of allied mechanisms designed for the purposes of collective defense,”<sup>983</sup> including the regular updating of contingency planning, carrying out Article 5 exercises as well as setting up allied infrastructure in all of NATO’s territory. Furthermore, NATO’s defense planning should be in line with not only preparing for the most likely scenarios (which back in 2013 were still crisis management operations) but also for less likely contingencies, “i.e. (...) for the most demanding collective defence missions.”<sup>984</sup> While the approach of “smart defense”<sup>985</sup> is highlighted as a possible way forward to “carry out common projects” to the end of strengthening NATO’s defense and deterrence posture,<sup>986</sup> the reading of the White Book coupled with the 2012 TMP as well as the developments that were to follow in 2015 underline that Poland was eager to modernize its national capabilities. Yet, the importance of NATO in Poland’s strategic thinking cannot be overestimated. According to the White Book, NATO is the primary determinant of European (and thus Polish) security, followed by the EU, American military presence in Europe and Russia.<sup>987</sup> Thus, the document cautions against undermining NATO’s coherence by “cherry-picking” (out-of-area) operations allies participate in as this sort of unequal burden and risk-sharing could sap the organization’s unity, which is the “(...) essential value of the Alliance (...).”<sup>988</sup> On a similar note, the security strategy delineates what from a Polish perspective is the most likely conflict scenario NATO could become embroiled in: “aterritorial conflicts.” By so doing, Poland anticipates the nature of what after the Russian annexation of Crimea would become known as

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<sup>981</sup> The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, 2013, pp. 123–124.

<sup>982</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>983</sup> Ibid., 2013, p. 157.

<sup>984</sup> Ibid.

<sup>985</sup> NATO, Smart Defence, 2017.

<sup>986</sup> The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, 2013, p. 157.

<sup>987</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 12.

<sup>988</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

hybrid warfare: “targeted strikes of purposefully moderate scale and range (...), aimed at forcing the attacked state to take political action in the circumstance of isolation from a larger international security system, e.g. without setting in motion a NATO operation in consensus-challenging situations.”<sup>989</sup> In light of this description, fearing for the Alliance’s political unity is only consequential. The theme of unity is perpetuated in the National Security Strategy (NSS) that was approved in November 2014. Therein, Poland explains that the “evolution of security in Europe favours coherence and solidarity, as well as [the] development of defence capabilities of NATO (...).”<sup>990</sup> What Poland conceives of as solidarity in an allied context is specified further on: “It is crucial for the North Atlantic Alliance to maintain (...) solidarity between Allies, which guarantee the fulfilment of its core mission—collective defense—(...).”<sup>991</sup> The strategy leaves no room for doubt about the strategic outlook Poland envisions for NATO: returning to its defensive function, “including strategic strengthening of the eastern flank of the Alliance.”<sup>992</sup> To that avail, the strategy goes on to advocate the reinforcement and reliability of NATO’s collective defense and deterrence posture through Polish diplomacy.<sup>993</sup> While it is reiterated that the Alliance is still the most important determinant of Europe’s security,<sup>994</sup> consolidating national capacities is prioritized over bolstering NATO’s collective defense provision, especially in cases in which “[a]llied (common) actions may be hindered (consensus-challenging situations).”<sup>995</sup> Drawing on this assessment, the NSS states that Poland’s primary national security interests include the “possession of effective security capacities ensuring readiness and ability to prevent threats, including deterrence, defence and protection against them (...).”<sup>996</sup> Membership in NATO is listed as the country’s second most important national security interest. Part of the reason why Poland attributes importance to the Alliance pertains to America’s presence therein: “It is important to preserve a significant and lasting

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<sup>989</sup> The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, 2013, p. 128.

<sup>990</sup> The National Security Bureau 2014, National Security Strategy 2014, 2014, [https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS\\_RP.pdf](https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf) (08.06.2019), pp. 19–20.

<sup>991</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>992</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>993</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 30.

<sup>994</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 19.

<sup>995</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>996</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

commitment of the United States in European security matters, within the framework of NATO and bilateral relations.”<sup>997</sup> With regard to the latter, bilateral cooperation, the NSS continues to state that Warsaw “will strive for the possibly broadest military presence of the US in Europe, including Poland (...).”<sup>998</sup> The document is straightforward in naming cooperation with the United States as a priority for Polish security. Thus, Warsaw would aim to increase the level of collaboration according to the NSS.<sup>999</sup> One-way cooperation intensified with the Obama administration came in the shape of allied and bilateral reassurance measures put in place in reaction to Russia’s annexation of Crimea. Poland would become a major beneficiary of these actions which is why only the most important decisions will be briefly reiterated at this point. For one, the American European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), announced in Warsaw in June 2014, would have its logistical hub in Poland.<sup>1000</sup> As part of the ERI, one combat brigade would be rotated through Poland and the Baltic Republics. In addition, the United States offered to assume responsibility for the allied battalion stationed in Poland as part of NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence which was largely made up of American troops (1000 out of 1335).<sup>1001</sup> Furthermore, Poland served as a host nation to the Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters in Szczecin as well as the Multinational Division Northeast HQ in Elblag.<sup>1002</sup> At the same time, Poland decided to contribute to NATO’s Reassurance activities in other countries which, for example, took the shape of “developing closer defense ties with Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia (...).”<sup>1003</sup> Poland participated in the Canadian-led battle group stationed in Latvia with a tank company

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<sup>997</sup> The National Security Bureau, National Security Strategy 2014, 2014, p. 21.

<sup>998</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>999</sup> Cf. The National Security Bureau, White Book 2013, 2013, p. 28.

<sup>1000</sup> Cf. Dickstein, Corey/Vandiver, John 2016: US to set up rotational brigade headquarters, new battalion in Poland, in: Stars and Stripes 2016, <https://www.stripes.com/news/us-to-set-up-rotational-brigade-headquarters-new-battalion-in-poland-1.418116> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1001</sup> Cf. NATO 2017: NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence, 2017, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_11/1711-factsheet-efp.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_11/1711-factsheet-efp.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1002</sup> Cf. NATO 2019: Boosting NATO’s presence in the east and southeast, 2019, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_136388.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm?selectedLocale=en) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1003</sup> Braw, Elisabeth 2017: What Poland Can Do For Europe. A Bigger Role in Continental Defense, in: Foreign Affairs 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2017-10-26/what-poland-can-do-europe> (08.06.2019) and cf. Bil, Poland, p. 335.

consisting of 160 troops, fighting vehicles, military police, and support elements.<sup>1004</sup> Polish troops as well as the contributing nations in Latvia<sup>1005</sup> were on a combat-ready mission.<sup>1006</sup> Poland also sent 230 troops to Romania's newly formed multinational brigade, thereby contributing to NATO's tailored Forward Presence on the Alliance's southeastern flank.<sup>1007</sup> Poland's presence in Romania constituted a training mission.<sup>1008</sup>

#### **6.4.5.2. Confirmation of Poland's long-standing threat assessment**

When examining the motives driving Poland to engage in reassurance measures, two areas have to be separated: the reassurance Poland benefitted from at home and reassurance activities that Warsaw participated in outside its borders. The issue of reassurance and collective deterrence ranked high on Poland's security and defense agenda prior to the watershed year of 2014. Two security experts working with the think tank PISM described that Poland's NATO policy prior to 2014 was mainly focused on reducing the Alliance's engagement in out-of-area operations: "In some ways, Polish diplomacy succeeded with regard to the New Strategic Concept in 2010 and the Defense and Deterrence Posture Review in 2012 both of which not only included but highlighted the importance of collective defense to NATO's objectives. In pushing for this outcome, Poland sought to make sure that the Alliance would at least be vaguely capable of its core task after a decade of crisis management operations."<sup>1009</sup> Adding to this list, they go on to refer to NATO's EAGLE GUARDIAN Contingency Plan as a successful Polish initiative for concentrating

<sup>1004</sup> Cf. Public Broadcasting of Latvia 2017: Composition of NATO battlegroup in Latvia laid out, 2017, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/defense/composition-of-nato-battlegroup-in-latvia-laid-out.a237242/> (08.06.2019) and cf. Canadian Army Today: Building a battlegroup, 2018 <https://canadianarmytoday.com/building-a-battlegroup/> (08.06.2019) and cf. NATO, NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, 2017.

<sup>1005</sup> N.B.: Albania, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain are the other contributing nations to the battlegroup in Latvia, cf. NATO, NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, 2017.

<sup>1006</sup> Cf. Army UK 2019: Deployments Baltics. Enhanced Forward Presence, 2019, <https://www.army.mod.uk/deployments/baltics/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1007</sup> Cf. Reuters 2017: NATO launches Black Sea force at latest counter to Russia, 2017, [\(08.06.2019\).](https://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN1CE0MJ-OCATP)

<sup>1008</sup> Cf. NATO, Boosting NATO's presence in the east and southeast, 2019.

<sup>1009</sup> Author interview 19.

the Alliance's mind on collective defense more assertively. It encompassed defense plans for Poland as well as the Baltic States and was agreed upon by allies in NATO's Military Committee in late January 2010.<sup>1010</sup> In the words of a former Minister of National Defense: "We managed to get some positive results like updated contingency plans for Poland and the Baltic states and [a] gradual reorientation of major NATO countries from [an] entirely mission-oriented military posture into more territorial defence posture."<sup>1011</sup> It was not only contingency planning in support of collective defense tasks that was prioritized by the Polish government prior to 2014—exercises in support of what Warsaw regarded as NATO's core task were also advocated for. The most successful push in this vein resulted in the 2013 Steadfast Jazz Live Article 5 exercise. Rounding out Poland's NATO agenda, Warsaw also tried to convince its allies of the necessity of developing more capabilities necessary for collective territorial defense.<sup>1012</sup> Drawing on the reference to convince other NATO member states to reduce the Alliance's out-of-area engagement, it is noteworthy that Poland was rumored to have had developed plans to withdraw unilaterally from the theatre in 2012 already. While in the end, these plans did not materialize, the Polish President's "desire (...) to pull out forces without the rest of the Alliance was perceived badly in the US,"<sup>1013</sup> according to a Polish security expert. Regardless of the failed attempt to retrench from NATO's largest crisis management operation ever seen in the history of the Alliance, Poland continued to "look beyond Afghanistan" as a way to re-balance tasks in favor of collective defense.<sup>1014</sup> Despite all these efforts and piecemeal successes of Polish diplomacy, bolstering NATO's collective defense pillar remained difficult until 2014 as the task was not high up on the Alliance's agenda.<sup>1015</sup> Underpinning this point, two PISM security and defense experts summarized Poland's NATO policy until 2014 in the following terms: "We were aware of the fact that most other allies did not care too much about collective defense prior to the Russian annexation of Crimea.

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<sup>1010</sup> Cf. Global Security: Eagle Guardian. NATO's undisclosed defense plan for the Baltic States and Poland is called Eagle Guardian, n.d., <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/eagle-guardian.htm> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1011</sup> Interview questionnaire 2.

<sup>1012</sup> Cf. author interview 26.

<sup>1013</sup> Author interview 25.

<sup>1014</sup> Author interview 26.

<sup>1015</sup> Cf. author interview 24.

Thus, we could only push the topic so much.”<sup>1016</sup> Marek Madej from the University of Warsaw came to a similar conclusion in that Poland knew that major investments in collective defense would not turn into a priority for its allies. Thus, Warsaw’s “mid-term goal was to stop the overstretch of NATO through expeditionary operations in service of achieving the long-term goal of collective defense dominating the Alliance’s agenda once more”, Madej added.<sup>1017</sup> Poland’s long-term goal had been in sight since 2014: “Our bargaining position in NATO became a different one after it has dawned on our (Western) allies that collective defense is very much back on the transatlantic security agenda,” two PISM researchers explained,<sup>1018</sup> although another Polish security expert specified that NATO’s renewed focus on its core task cannot be attributed to Polish diplomacy alone but to a rethink in the organization.<sup>1019</sup> The two think tankers affiliated with PISM continued to suggest that it was not without irony that the US President who had changed the missile defense plans designated for Poland, to the dismay of Warsaw, who had launched a “reset” with Russia, pivoted to Asia and partially withdrawn from Europe turned out to be the same President “making a historical decision regarding reassurance and deterrence when he announced the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) in Warsaw in June 2014, and [who had] agreed in 2016 on the first-ever deployment of US combat-ready troops to Poland.”<sup>1020</sup> An expert working with a European think tank added that Poland perceived and welcomed the Obama administration re-assuming leadership in NATO by balancing out allied priorities once more beginning in 2014. Warsaw also valued the circumstance that the United States chose Poland as the “heart of operations” of the ERI, according to this source,<sup>1021</sup> which in the words of another expert was for strategic reasons as the Baltic Republics neither had the strategic depth<sup>1022</sup> nor the necessary infrastructure to serve as a hub for American reassurance and deterrence efforts.<sup>1023</sup> Poland’s appreciation of serving as a node for

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<sup>1016</sup> Author interview 19.

<sup>1017</sup> Author interview 23.

<sup>1018</sup> Author interview 19.

<sup>1019</sup> Cf. author interview 25.

<sup>1020</sup> Author interview 19.

<sup>1021</sup> Author interview 26.

<sup>1022</sup> N.B.: For a discussion of the concept of “strategic depth,” cf., for example, Murinson, Alexander: The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy. In: Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 42/ 2006, pp. 945–964.

<sup>1023</sup> Cf. author interview 25.

the United States should not eclipse the fact that NATO efforts as a whole agreed upon at the Wales Summit in September 2014 fell short of Polish expectations. According to a member of the Polish security and defense community, “Wales was only a small breakthrough.”<sup>1024</sup> However, NATO’s next summit that was organized in Warsaw 2 years later was regarded as a success in substance and organizational efforts. Yet, while the decision to install four battalion-sized multinational battle groups (EFP) in Poland and the Baltic States was highly appreciated in Warsaw, the EFP troops were only seen as “politically important but of small military merit, providing a trigger only for a NATO reinforcement that still needs to be established.”<sup>1025</sup> This assessment was reiterated by another Polish security expert.<sup>1026</sup> The military insufficiency is partly outweighed by the circumstance that the United States decided to lead the battle group in Poland—a major achievement from Warsaw’s viewpoint.<sup>1027</sup> Apart from US military capabilities counting for much in Polish strategic considerations, having the Americans launch the ERI and assume responsibility for the EFP in Poland<sup>1028</sup> added to the appreciation of Warsaw against the backdrop of chilled bilateral relations until 2014.<sup>1029</sup> According to a Polish security expert, “Crimea undoubtedly brought home to Poland that it cannot defend itself without American assistance in light of an assertive Russia. While it is true that Poland has been striving for more national defense capabilities since 2012, this is not a quest for independence. NATO is and will remain a must for our security and defense structure.”<sup>1030</sup> While reassurance (and later deterrence) measures put in place by the US bilaterally and by NATO multilaterally bolstered Article 5 scenarios, part of the national capabilities Poland has invested in since 2012 have been aimed at limited conflict scenarios (below the Article 5 threshold) as outlined in the 2013 White Book, this Polish security expert continued.<sup>1031</sup> While Poland benefitted largely from reassurance activities organized through NATO and bilaterally by the US, the country decided to contribute to these measures beyond its borders as

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<sup>1024</sup> Author interview 24.

<sup>1025</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1026</sup> Cf. author interview 25.

<sup>1027</sup> Cf. author interview 24.

<sup>1028</sup> N.B.: 800 out of 1,200 troops of the EFP battalion stationed in Poland are American soldiers, cf., for example, author interview 25.

<sup>1029</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>1030</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1031</sup> Cf. ibid.

well. The reasons for this decision were threefold. Firstly, Warsaw sought to demonstrate to its allies that it was a reliable ally by participating not only in reassurance efforts on the Eastern Flank (Latvia) but also in NATO's Southeast (Romania) as well as its South (fight against ISIS): "We realized that we wouldn't be able to hijack the Alliance's agenda by gearing all its efforts towards reassurance and deterrence in the East. Participating in the fight against ISIS signals to the US and our other partners that we are interested in other allied concerns as well," commented an expert working with a European think tank.<sup>1032</sup> A Polish security expert characterized Poland's announcement that it would take part in the anti-IS Coalition shortly before NATO's Warsaw summit in 2016 as a "smart political move" inasmuch as this decision yielded the country more leverage for its own deterrence-minded agenda, especially with the Americans:<sup>1033</sup> "We know that we have to go to other places—whether it's in the East or South—if we expect allies to come to Poland. The Americans and other European allies for that matter certainly held the expectation that we would engage in reassurance and deterrence beyond our borders. Even if it weren't for these expectations, which one could call a tacit influence, it's a matter of course that we would have participated in the East and South since both are NATO efforts."<sup>1034</sup> A Polish diplomat argued in the same vein as he pointed out that Poland had understood it had to contribute something to measures that it had advocated for so strongly, that is, NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP): "It would have been a no-go not to participate by ways of sending troops to Latvia and Romania."<sup>1035</sup> He continued to lay out the Obama administration's push for the implementation of the EFP coupled with Washington's announcement to serve as a lead nation in Poland influenced Warsaw's decision making to send troops to Latvia.<sup>1036</sup>

Secondly and closely connected to the first rationale is the explanation that contributing to reassurance activities in NATO's East and South would strengthen Poland's position in becoming a strong partner for the US regarding the defense provisions Warsaw sought to establish on its soil.<sup>1037</sup> Finally, Poland recognized its

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<sup>1032</sup> Author interview 26.

<sup>1033</sup> Author interview 25.

<sup>1034</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1035</sup> Author interview 22.

<sup>1036</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>1037</sup> Cf. author interview 24.

chance to underline the regional dimension of Polish security and defense. Dispatching troops to Latvia and Romania would champion Warsaw's role as a proponent of Central and Eastern European cooperation according to an expert familiar with the issue.<sup>1038</sup> This source stressed that both the current as well as the previous government that was voted out of office in 2015 emphasized the importance of regionality in Polish security calculations. The previous government underpinned this through the strengthening of the Visegrad Battlegroup for example—a step in the direction of becoming a “stronger regional actor.”<sup>1039</sup> Thus, Poland’s decision to contribute to reassurance in the East through the Alliance’s EFP draws on internal considerations. However, it was confirmed that the circumstance that the Americans under Obama chose Poland as a hub for the ERI and as a host country for the EFP did increase Warsaw’s willingness to take on its share of the reassurance burden.<sup>1040</sup>

#### **6.4.6. Analysis**

##### **6.4.6.1. Back to the roots: (Collective) territorial defense reloaded**

NATO’s decision to return to its original founding task of collective territorial defense in reaction to Russia’s aggression toward Ukraine in 2014 met with Polish approval and enthusiasm seeing as Warsaw had tried to nudge the Alliance’s strategic outlook in exactly this direction since at least 2011/2012. The war in Ukraine, too, vindicated Poland in its perennial concerns about Russia’s malicious intentions vis-à-vis the former Soviet Union’s satellite countries, fears which had largely been dismissed by most Western allies until 2014 or at least not appreciated to the extent Warsaw had hoped for. Participating in allied war efforts, as in Libya, was out of the question.

The Komorowski doctrine provided the conceptual framework for this decision as Poland strove to concentrate its military efforts on national defense in view of its increased sense of insecurity. Consequently, in 2012, the Polish government launched the Technical Modernization Program (TMP) aimed at refocusing the

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<sup>1038</sup> Cf. author interview 24.

<sup>1039</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1040</sup> Cf. ibid.

country's defense efforts on national capabilities supporting the task of territorial defense, thereby shifting the army's outlook away from its years-long participation in expeditionary operations. Among others, the TMP sought to entail capabilities which would enable Poland to defend itself without allied support if push came to shove. The roots of the modernization program can be found in Poland's suspicion of Russian expansionist designs on its former sphere of influence including Central and Eastern Europe which were exacerbated by the short Georgian–Russian War in the summer of 2008. Coupled with a lack of allied investments in and attention to collective defense means, Poland was convinced it had to strengthen its armed forces for Article Five scenarios – the same was pushed for within NATO; from a Polish perspective, these attempts were to little avail. While Russia was a major influential factor on Polish security calculations, American actions under Obama did not go unnoticed in Warsaw either. The 2013 White Book specifically established a connection between the US pivot to Asia and what Poland regarded as a partial withdrawal from NATO Europe launched in 2012—a development the strategic paper cautioned should slow down if not be reversed as it would otherwise weaken American commitment to Europe's security. Interestingly, a sizable number of experts drew a link between the American pivot/partial US retrenchment from Europe and Poland's attempts to concentrate its defense efforts more directly on territorial protection. The reason this assessment stands out is because of the evaluation that the Komorowski doctrine, the conceptual framework of the "nation-alization" of defense efforts, was ascribed as a response to domestic reasons and not to any external influences. What appears as a contradiction at the face of it can be squared. Firstly, the Komorowski doctrine preceded the pivot and partial American material drawback, that is, the latter too could not have had a direct influence on the former, only in retrospect. Secondly, the army modernization plans can be viewed as a practical consequence of the conceptual framework of the doctrine. This means that the doctrine might very well be rooted in domestic calculations, that is, national threat perceptions shifting attention from crisis management to collective defense while the TMP can be influenced by external factors such as the pivot and what was perceived as a partial retrenchment. A similar combination of external and internal factors drove Poland's attitude and actions with regard to NATO's reassurance measures activated in 2014. Poland insisted on reassurance and that deterrence provisions be set up in Poland itself alongside other exposed

member states such as the Baltic Republics. Strategic documents as well as government declarations before and after 2014 abound with explanations as to why Poland and NATO as such should be allocating most of their resources to collective defense concepts and capabilities. The most salient rationale pertains to Poland's long-standing fear of Russian (military) incursions into Central and Eastern European states formerly part of the Warsaw Pact. Warsaw was driven by an inherently domestic conviction to bid to be included in NATO's Wales and Warsaw decisions. Consequently, Poland welcomed collective reassurance and deterrence reinforcements by NATO as well as by the US on a bilateral level. Explanations for Poland's decision to take part in reassurance activities in other allied countries, most notably Latvia and Romania, went beyond national security considerations according to the expert interview results. The motive most often referred to was Alliance solidarity with its partners in Europe as well as with the United States.

In conclusion, the US administration under Obama had a moderate impact on Poland's NATO policies and in extension national defense calculations, most notably the modernization efforts in relation to the armed forces. While the empirical findings indicate that in some topic areas Washington's actions (most notably the pivot and what was perceived as a partial withdrawal from NATO Europe until 2014) were more relevant than others, the overall picture remains the same. The drivers of Polish NATO policy between 2011 and 2016 were Alliance solidarity, the issue of burden-sharing but more importantly national security provisions in the form of territorial defense—three motives that had dominated the Polish Alliance agenda policy prior to 2011 as outlined in Section 6.4.1.

#### **6.4.6.2. Assessment of hypotheses**

The hypotheses which aim to help answer the overall research question of this dissertation (How did US actions vis-à-vis Europe impact NATO and defense policies of NATO allies?) will be examined in the following chapter. The data used to assess the validity of the hypotheses are drawn from the expert interview results. The reason for this methodology is because the hypotheses are geared toward the perception of decision-makers and members of the strategic community which is best captured through expert interviews. The majority of Polish experts did interpret American security policy (vis-à-vis Europe) until 2014 as a retrenchment from NATO

Europe. One reason for that interpretation was that they saw in the Obama administration's decision to "pivot" to Asia that which in Poland was regarded as a partial move away from its European allies. The other most frequently referenced decision pertained to the troop reduction in NATO Europe (mainly Germany) that was announced in 2012 and implemented in 2013. Complicating the overall picture from Warsaw's viewpoint was the Obama administration's decision to engage Russia in a "reset" in 2009 which Poland feared could play out at the cost of its own security. This fear was exacerbated by the US's reversal of missile defense plans that the Bush Junior administration had concluded with Poland. This mélange of events and decisions led the bulk of experts to profess that Poland had perceived an American retrenchment until the latter part of President Obama's tenure. Only one expert, a former ambassador to NATO, stated that the United States under the Obama administration did not perform a withdrawal from Europe. Instead, he underlined that the United States was gradually reducing its military assets in Europe. On a political level, however, a reduction of NATO Europe's importance to Washington could be witnessed. On the contrary, this source emphasized that the United States increased its political engagement with NATO Europe after Vladimir Putin's infamous Munich speech in 2007,<sup>1041</sup> Russian aggression toward Georgia in 2008, and finally after the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. In sum, it can be concluded that hypothesis 1 ("The Europeans did perceive an American withdrawal from NATO-Europe") clearly received much more support than hypothesis 2 ("The Europeans did not perceive an American withdrawal from NATO-Europe") although it must be added that all but one expert conceded that the withdrawal perception only held true until 2014. Only one expert, a currently active government official, professed the opinion that Poland interpreted the entire Obama presidency as being characterized by a retrenchment from NATO Europe. This source added that under Obama the United States lessened its traditional leadership in the Alliance. The resulting implications that the perception of a lessened engagement had on Poland's NATO policy in particular and its defense policy in general were ambiguous (hypothesis 3). Until the sea changes that 2014 introduced into the European security landscape, the experts interviewed offered different sets of implications that the withdrawal perception had on Polish decision-makers and the way it shaped policies. The *first*

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<sup>1041</sup> Cf. President of Russia 2007: Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, 2007, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034> (08.06.2019).

pattern can be described as a Europeanization attempt. Accordingly, Poland tried to be more supportive of CSDP efforts, especially when Warsaw held the EU presidency in 2011. Beyond 2011, Poland was more eager to push the CSDP's development forward. According to the *second* pattern, Poland tried to grow more self-reliant as a consequence of perceiving an American withdrawal from NATO Europe. Yet, the experts who came to this conclusion emphasized that focusing the country's defense efforts more on national deterrence capabilities must not be confused with striving for strategic independence. A *third* pattern of responses in reaction to the question of what implications a perceived withdrawal had on Poland's allied and (national) defense policies referred to Warsaw's attempts to strengthen bilateral relations with Washington. This implication, however, was largely ascribed to the years 2015 and 2016 after Poland had experienced a change in government. While some experts indicated that already under the government headed by Donald Tusk Poland was eager to buttress bilateral ties to the United States, with the PIS party taking over in October 2015, it became much clearer that Poland tried to secure its defense posture through closer relations with Washington.

In sum, it can be concluded that both the “positive” and “negative” scenarios included in hypothesis 3 were validated in parts as some experts pointed out that the perception of an American withdrawal from NATO Europe until 2014 galvanized a more pro-European stance (while strictly speaking not in a NATO framework). Others, however, stated that this perception resulted in Poland focusing more on national defense capabilities as well as a bilateral track. With the exception of one source, all the experts interviewed conceded that the perception of a (partial) American withdrawal changed with the onset of 2014—in fact, the majority professed that the Obama administration increased its engagement with NATO Europe's security, especially on the Eastern flank of the Alliance. US reassurance activities placed Poland at the forefront of American re-engagement which was met with gratitude and enthusiasm on Warsaw's part according to the interview results. While a sizable number of experts also referred to the efforts by NATO that had been under way since 2014 to reassure Poland, and other exposed countries in Central and (South-) East Europe for that matter, the interviews brought to the surface that the Polish government was particularly keen on bilateral American reassurance and deterrence measures instigated on Polish soil—especially following the change in government in Warsaw. Although the administration in power until 2014 was

said to be attempting to strengthen bilateral ties as well after the annexation of Crimea, this line of action became more obvious from 2015 onward. The implication of a perceived increase in US engagement in and with NATO Europe can neither be firmly placed in the “negative” nor “positive” hypothesis camp, although in tendency more proof for the former could be found. That is to say that Poland pursued a course of continuing to ramp up its national capabilities programs at a time (2014/15) when Polish decision-makers realized that the Obama administration had reversed its path of what Warsaw had interpreted as retrenchment until 2014. In addition, the emphasis on bilateral relations with Washington runs more counter to the “positive” than “negative” implication scenario. In sum, one can conclude that for the better part of the evaluation period of this thesis (2011–2016), Poland placed more emphasis on the build-up of national defense and deterrence capabilities as well as the strengthening of bilateral ties with the United States (although the latter part was especially stressed from 2015 onward). The interpretation of some of the indicators of Polish US support in NATO supports this assessment. To begin with, both the so-called 2%-goal and the 20%-goal were met in the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016—both metrics being an expression of American wishes for a more equal burden-sharing undertaken in NATO by European allies as the goal has been of crucial importance to the United States. Of similar rank is the allied provision to spend 20% of a nation’s defense budget on equipment as this metric provides information about the readiness of national forces.<sup>1042</sup> All NATO members have committed themselves to reaching both metrics at the Alliance summits in 2014 and again in 2016.<sup>1043</sup> While Poland only moved close to reaching the 2%-goal from 2011 to 2014, the country met the target in 2015 (2.22%) and 2016 (2.0%). Similar conclusions can be drawn with regard to the 20%-goal which was not met from 2011 to 2014; yet in 2015 (33.10%) and 2016 (21.6%), the target was even surpassed. Polish participation in allied exercises from 2013 to 2016 as well as the country’s commitment to bilateral and multilateral allied defense cooperation projects and capabilities indicates support of the American burden-sharing demand, too. For one, Warsaw contributed to NATO’s biggest collective defense exercises held since 2006 in 2013. While 2014 did not witness any such exercise, 2015 and 2016 did so to a greater extent. In 2015, Poland participated in 50% of all the major

<sup>1042</sup> Cf. Banks, Results are in, 2018.

<sup>1043</sup> Cf. NATO, Wales Summit Declaration, 2014 and cf. NATO, Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 2016.

allied exercises that were conducted that year; in 2016, the country even reached a score of 57%. In addition, out of five major bilateral and multilateral allied defense cooperation projects and capabilities that were analyzed for this study, Poland took part in three. It should be mentioned in this context that Poland sought to be a member of the NATO nuclear sharing arrangement as well.<sup>1044</sup> Regardless of how Poland perceived American engagement in and with NATO Europe, a tendency to prefer a bilateral course of action with the United States over acting multilaterally in NATO, could be delineated.

## 6.5. Turkey: A champion of involuntary unilateralism

The case study on Turkey is structured in three major blocs. Firstly, the main features of Turkey's NATO policy since its accession in 1952 will be broadly delineated: a preference for acting in an allied framework over bilateral cooperation with the United States; a willingness to go alone coupled with a fear of abandonment (by the United States); partial demonstration of alliance solidarity with Washington. The second part consists of exploring Turkey's actions and perceptions in four subject areas: NATO's air campaign over Libya in 2011; US pivot and partial retrenchment from NATO Europe; NATO's crisis management toward Ukraine; NATO's reassurance activities since 2014. These subject areas were also examined in the context of understanding US engagement in and toward NATO Europe under the Obama administration in Chapter 4. The third part of this case study includes an analysis of Turkey's NATO policy between 2011 and 2016 as well as an assessment of the hypotheses guiding this dissertation.<sup>1045</sup>

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<sup>1044</sup> Cf. Associated Press 2015: Poland considering asking for access to nuclear weapons under NATO program, in: The Guardian 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/06/poland-considering-asking-for-access-to-nuclear-weapons-under-nato-program> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1045</sup> N.B.: It should be noted at this point that access to strategic documents was much more limited as compared to the other two case studies countries, Germany and Poland. For one, most documents are not published at all. Those that are unclassified are for most parts not available in English. In addition, access to government officials across different ministries was limited as well as only a small number of people contacted responded to the author's interview request. Thus, the relative lack of official interview partners as well as strategic documents was made up for by secondary sources, cf., for example, Gazete Duvar: Türkei[s] nationale Sicherheitsstrategie. Es gab eine

### 6.5.1. Turkey's NATO history until 2011: A tale of feeling left alone

Turkey's aspirations to join the transatlantic security alliance are grounded in the country's efforts to become part of the Western community—a goal dating back to the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923. While, as opposed to its participation in World War I, Turkey remained neutral in World War II, Ankara was quick to choose sides in the burgeoning systemic confrontation that set in after 1945. Following the path Kemal Attatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, had laid out for his country, that is, of approaching the West, Ankara made clear that it wanted to join the US-led liberal order unfolding in the wake of World War II.<sup>1046</sup> The most salient Turkish signal directed at the United States was dispatched in March 1945 when the Soviet Union proclaimed territorial designs vis-à-vis Turkish Northeastern provinces and declared it wanted “privileged shipping rights to the Turkish Straits”<sup>1047</sup> These claims ran counter to the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits signed in 1936 by Turkey and the USSR among others granting the former control over the passage. As the fledgling Republic feared for its territorial independence at the hands of its long-time rival in the East, Ankara urged Washington for help in light of the expansionist designs the Soviet Union had on Turkey.<sup>1048</sup> Roughly a year after the Straits crisis had begun, the United States deployed the USS Missouri to Istanbul in April 1946 providing Turkey with (symbolic) support. It took the Truman doctrine to be promulgated in March 1947 for Moscow to cease its territorial claims to Turkey.<sup>1049</sup> As apprehensions over Soviet expansion goals in Europe and the Middle East grew in Washington, Turkey developed into a strategic asset for countering Moscow's actions, especially in the Middle East.<sup>1050</sup> It was against this backdrop that the Truman administration included

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Zeit, nicht wahr?, 2016, <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/analiz/2016/11/08/turkiyenin-ulusal-guvenlik-stratejisi-bir-varmis-bir-yokmus/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1046</sup> Cf. Kirisci, Turkey and the West, p. 29.

<sup>1047</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>1048</sup> Cf. Ozel, Soli: Afterword. Turkey's Western Trajectory. In: Gordon, Philp/Taspinar, Omer (ed.): Winning Turkey. How America, Europe, and Turkey Can Revive a Fading Relationship. 2008 Washington, D.C, pp. 85–100.

<sup>1049</sup> Cf. Kirisci, Turkey and the West, p. 29.

<sup>1050</sup> Cf. Aybet, Gülnar: The Evolution of NATO's Three Phases and Turkey's Transatlantic Relationship. In: Perceptions, Vol. XVII/ 2012, pp. 19–36, 28–29.

the protection of Turkey into the famous doctrine named after the 33rd President of the United States. Truman purports that Turkey's "integrity is essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East,"<sup>1051</sup> that is, thwarting Moscow's intentions to dominate the region at the expense of lessened US influence. Several Western European Alliance members were doubtful about the solidity of Turkey's democratic foundations resulting in initial reluctance over whether or not the country should be allowed to join the NATO. These concerns were soon to be eclipsed by strategic considerations when Turkey proved to be a valuable partner in supporting the West in the Korean War in 1950 by way of providing nearly 250,000 soldiers—this support swayed the more skeptical allies' minds about Turkey's accession plans.<sup>1052</sup> Acknowledging the military service Ankara had rendered in the Korea War conveyed to the Alliance the strategic importance of Turkey in curbing Communist/Soviet influences around the world. Informed by that understanding, Turkey was invited to become a member to NATO which it officially joined in February 1952.<sup>1053</sup> While the United States had started assisting Turkey militarily and economically<sup>1054</sup> prior to its NATO accession, both these means of support increased after Ankara had become a member state.<sup>1055</sup> Shortly after Turkey joined the trans-atlantic defense alliance, the United States began setting up military installations and air bases to use the country as a hub for gathering intelligence on the Soviet Union: "Nearly 16 intelligence bases were established in Turkey after the second half of the 1950s,"<sup>1056</sup> a move which can be seen as a reaction to Moscow's attaining nuclear weapons in 1949 particularly. Then, in 1959, the United States stationed 15 nuclear-armed Jupiter missiles on Turkish soil as part of the deterrence strategy

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<sup>1051</sup> Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library: Truman Doctrine. President Harry S. Truman's Address Before A Joint Session of Congress, March 12, 1947, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/trudoc.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1052</sup> Cf. Caglar, Ismail/Akdemir, Hülya Kevser: Turkey and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In: Noi, Aylin Ünver/Toperich, Sasha (ed.): Turkey and Transatlantic Relations. Washington, D.C. 2017, p. 35.

<sup>1053</sup> N.B.: Turkey tried to be included in NATO in 1949 already but failed, cf. Athanassopoulou, Ekavi: Turkey-Anglo-American security interests, 1945–52. The first Enlargement of NATO. Abingdon 1999, p. 145.

<sup>1054</sup> Cf. Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library, Truman Doctrine.

<sup>1055</sup> Cf. Gordon/Taspinar, Winning Turkey, p. 27 and cf. Kurc, Caglar: Between defence autarky and dependency. The dynamics of Turkish defence industrialization. In: Defence Studies, Vol. 17/ 2017, pp. 260–281, 262.

<sup>1056</sup> Caglar/Akdemir, Turkey and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, p. 37.

vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.<sup>1057</sup> Despite the risks associated with hosting US nuclear weapons on its territory in close proximity to the Soviet Union, Turkey arrived at the conclusion that the advantages of the Jupiter deployment prevailed. For one, the government in Ankara could demonstrate solidarity and loyalty with and to the United States as a reliable NATO partner.<sup>1058</sup> Furthermore, it is said that Turkey agreed to the stationing as the country depended on Washington for economic and military aid and did not want to turn down an offer the United States had been entertaining since 1957. Last but not least, Turkey hoped the Jupiter missiles would serve as a deterrent to the Soviet Union.<sup>1059</sup><sup>1060</sup> In the wake of the Cuban missile crisis in the fall of 1962, the US administration under President John F. Kennedy tacitly promised Moscow that it would withdraw the Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for the Soviet Union removing its intermediate range missiles (IRBM) from Cuba. As the deal was secretly negotiated, the Turkish government was not informed about the arrangement until the actual withdrawal. Not having been consulted by its American allies about a decision that came at the expense of Turkey's security prompted fears that the United States was readily "selling out" a partner in exchange for détente with the Soviet Union.<sup>1061</sup> Other prominent examples of dissent between the two allies included the so-called Johnson letter in 1964 authored by the US President the document was named after in reaction to Turkey dispatching war planes to Cyprus in the face of Greece attacking Turkish settlements in the North of the divided island.<sup>1062</sup> President Lyndon B. Johnson "urged Turkey not to use weapons supplied by the United States' military aid without NATO's consent."<sup>1063</sup> The second part of the letter relayed the message that the United States would not feel bound by its NATO commitment to protect Turkey were the country's military intervention to provoke a Soviet response.<sup>1064</sup> The US threat of abandonment did not prompt lenience on the part of Turkey; instead, Ankara "suspended

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<sup>1057</sup> Cf. Gordon/Taspinar, *Winning Turkey*, p. 27.

<sup>1058</sup> Cf. Criss, Nur Bilge: Strategic Nuclear missiles in Turkey. The Jupiter affair, 1959-63. In: *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 20/ 1997, pp. 97–122, 103.

<sup>1059</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>1060</sup> N.B.: The deterrent value of these weapons had been questioned prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis which lead to voices in the US arguing in favor of their withdrawal, cf. Criss, *Strategic Nuclear missiles in Turkey*, pp. 108, 114.

<sup>1061</sup> Kirisci, *Turkey and the West*, p. 37.

<sup>1062</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1063</sup> Akdemir/Caglar, *Turkey and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, p. 38.

<sup>1064</sup> Cf. Gordon/Taspinar, *Winning Turkey*, p. 27.

the use of its air bases, intelligence, and listening services, and prohibited its Western allies to stock their nuclear arms in Turkey. For instance, Turkey denied permission to American U-2 spy flights from the Incirlik airbase.”<sup>1065</sup> Another stumbling block impacting NATO revolved around Turkey’s military intervention in Cyprus in 1974 in response to a coup d’état on the island which was trumpeted by Greece. The United States reacted by means of an economic aid freeze, an imposition of an arms embargo (lifted in 1978) as well as the near removal of US nuclear guarantees.<sup>1066</sup> Turkey retaliated by making clear that American access to Turkish military installations had to be strictly embedded in a NATO framework.<sup>1067</sup> The described vignettes prompted Turkish fears of being abandoned by its most important security provider and ally. These concerns were to grow stronger after the end of the Cold War that had provided a unifying threat. Turkey had moved from being a flank state to becoming a front-line state which the first Gulf War in 1991 brought home to Ankara.<sup>1068</sup> The Turkish government was initially reluctant to allow the US to use its bases bilaterally as part of the air campaign against Saddam Hussein; instead, Ankara wanted to embed the war effort in an allied framework. Consequently, Turkey requested the use of NATO’s Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (AMF). Deploying the AMF to Turkey would serve as a deterrent against Iraq and a demonstration of solidarity on the part of Turkey’s allies. Secondly, the institutionalized framework Ankara insisted on would be granted.<sup>1069</sup> While some allies, including Germany and the United States, did contribute to the defense of Turkey via the AMF framework among others, what Ankara took away from the 1st Gulf War episode was “NATO’s poor performance in solidarity” which would lead to Turkey attempting to gear its security and defense policy toward reducing

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<sup>1065</sup> Akdemir/Caglar, Turkey and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, p. 38.

For an analysis of Turkey restricting US access Turkish military bases, cf., Bolme, Selin M.: The politics of Incirlik Air Base. In: *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 9/2007, pp. 82–91.

<sup>1066</sup> Cf. Güvenc, Serhat/Özel, Soli: NATO and Turkey in the post-Cold War world. Between abandonment and entrapment. In: *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 12/ 2012, pp. 533–553, 535 and cf. Gordon/Taspinar, *Winning Turkey*, p. 27.

<sup>1067</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 535.

<sup>1068</sup> Cf. Akdemir/Caglar, Turkey and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, p. 39.

<sup>1069</sup> Cf. Güvenc/Özel, NATO and Turkey in the post-Cold War world, pp. 537–538.

dependence on its NATO allies.<sup>1070</sup> The sense of having to rely on its own defense devices again became a prevalent topic in Turkish strategic thinking in 2003 in the wake of the US invasion of Iraq. Similar to the first Gulf war, Turkey requested allied defensive measures be put in place which some allies, among them Germany, refused to consider initially. Ankara deduced from that preliminary reluctance that it could not take NATO commitment to its security for granted.<sup>1071</sup> US–Turkish relations were arguably more severely damaged than Turkey's ties to the rest of the Alliance.<sup>1072</sup> Although the second Bush administration managed to smooth over the tensions US–Turkish relations had experienced after the American invasion of Iraq,<sup>1073</sup> the damage had been done. Hence, the Obama administration made restoring relations with Turkey one of its foreign policy priorities upon taking office in 2009.<sup>1074</sup> According to some observers, the first 2 years of Obama's first tenure did not bring about "an evident improvement in bilateral relations."<sup>1075</sup> The following sections will explore how US–Turkish relations played out in the context of four topic areas and events, respectively: NATO's air campaign over Libya, the American pivot to Asia, NATO's crisis management toward Ukraine and the Alliance's reassurance measures put in place since 2014.

#### **6.5.1.1. Indicators of Turkish US support in NATO**

The following data are drawn from secondary sources as they were not collected but put together and analyzed by the author. The assessment of the data helps us

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<sup>1070</sup> Güvenc/Özel, NATO and Turkey in the post-Cold War world, p. 538.

<sup>1071</sup> Cf. ibid., pp. 541–542.

<sup>1072</sup> Cf. Park, Bil: Turkey and the US – A transatlantic future? In: Dorman, Andrew, M./Kaufman, Joyce P. (ed.): *The future of Transatlantic Relations. Perceptions, Policy and Practice*. Stanford 2011, pp. 137–154, 137 and cf. Aybet, *The Evolution of NATO's three phases and Turkey's transatlantic relationship*, p. 30.

<sup>1073</sup> N.B.: In 2007, cooperation on fighting the PKK helped alleviate tensions, cf., for example, Seri, Emre: *Security Challenges of Turkish-American Relations in the Post-Bush Era*. In: Canan-Sokullu, Ebru (ed.): *Debating Security in Turkey. Challenges and Changes in the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham 2013, pp. 205–218, 209.

<sup>1074</sup> Cf. Poghosyn, Benjamin: *US-Turkish Relations in the Obama Era*. In: *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 158/ 2013, pp. 40–46, 40.

<sup>1075</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

understand whether and how the United States and its actions have an impact on the NATO and the defense policies of Turkey.

*Table 8: Defense budget (2+20% guideline):<sup>1076</sup> “indirect contributions.”<sup>1077</sup>*

Year	Defense expenditure as share of GDP (based on 2010 prices) “2%-goal” <sup>1078</sup>	Equipment expenditure as share of defense expenditure “20%-goal” <sup>1079</sup>	Defense expenditure (based on 2010 prices) <sup>1080</sup>
2011	■ 1.76 %	■ 24.6 %	■ 13,98 billion €
2012	■ 1.76 %	■ 21.2 %	■ 14,23 billion €
2013	■ 1.75 %	■ 26.7 %	■ 14,80 billion €
2014	■ 1.70 %	■ 24.9 %	■ 14,88 billion €
2015	■ 1.67 %	■ 25.9 %	■ 15,08 billion €
2016	■ 1.78 %	■ 25.6 %	■ 16,44 billion €

- Contributions to NATO common funding budgets<sup>1081</sup> → “direct contributions”:<sup>1082</sup>
  - The civil budget covers personnel expenses, operating costs, and capital and program expenditure of the International Staff at NATO Headquarters. Most member states fund the civil budget through their foreign ministry budgets. The budget is supposed to fund four major objectives: active operations; Alliance capabilities; consultation and cooperation with partners; and public relations. In addition, four support objectives are financed by the common

<sup>1076</sup> N.B.: The 2 %-metric is guiding the Alliance at least since NATO’s summit in Riga in 2006, cf. Techau, The Politics of 2 Percent, 2015.

<sup>1077</sup> Cf. NATO, Funding NATO, 2018.

<sup>1078</sup> Cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2017, p. 8; N.B.: These calculations are based on methodology that was used prior to December 2016 before Turkey adjusted its GDP calculation according to the European System of Accounts 2010, cf. NATO, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries, 2018, p. 8.

<sup>1079</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>1080</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>1081</sup> N.B.: Contributions to operations are not listed in the section of indicators as they are referred to throughout the discussion on the historical ties each case study country to NATO.

<sup>1082</sup> Cf. NATO, Funding NATO, 2018.

civil budget: providing support to the consultation process with allies; maintaining the facilities and site of NATO Headquarters; governance and regulation through the monitoring of business policies, processes, and procedures; and Headquarters security.

- The military budget funds the operating and maintenance expenditures of the NATO Command Structure. Most allies contribute to the common military budget through their national defense funds. The budget finances the International Military Staff, the Strategic Commanders, the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force, the common-funded portions of the Alliance's operations and missions among others.
- The NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP) finances major construction and command and control system investments beyond national defense requirements of allies. The NSIP contributes to the roles of the NATO Strategic Commands by providing installations and facilities such as air defense communication and information systems, military headquarters for the integrated structure and for deployed operations among others.<sup>1083</sup>

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<sup>1083</sup> Cf. NATO, Funding NATO, 2018.

Table 9: Turkish contributions to NATO's common funding.

Year	Civil budget <sup>1084</sup>	Military budget <sup>1085</sup>	NATO Security Investment Program <sup>1086</sup>
2011	■ 6,571,454 million €	■ 36,183,733 million €	■ 12,27 million €
2012	■ 7,858,757 million €	■ 43,979,434 million €	■ 12,24 million €
2013	■ 7,913,506 million €	■ 46,696,025 million €	■ 13,09 million €
2014	■ 8,961,037 million €	■ 48,988,465 million €	■ 13,30 million €
2015	■ 9,018,682 million €	■ 40,491,276 million €	■ 13,44 million €
2016	■ 9,765,662 million €	■ 41,924,410 million €	■ 14,80 million €

- Participation in exercises since 2013:<sup>1087</sup> The following enumeration lists the largest NATO-led exercises since 2013 in greater detail as they signify the importance of overall unity and solidarity within the Alliance:
- *Steadfast Jazz November 2013*: largest live exercise since 2006 (collective defense scenario, around 6,000 troops from allied and partner countries; around 3,000 participate in live exercise and 3,000 HQ personnel in command and control exercise; conducted at sea, in the air, and on land (three Baltic states, Poland); included HQ component provided by Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum:<sup>1088</sup> Turkey took part<sup>1089</sup>

<sup>1084</sup> N.B.: The nations' shares were calculated as cost-share of the initial budgets authorized for the selected year. The amount, therefore, does not constitute the actual payment by the respective nations during the year: the actual payments take other factors into consideration (amounts paid in advance, contributions paid voluntarily in advance, redistribution of refundable surpluses, etc.).

<sup>1085</sup> N.B.: The nations' shares were calculated as cost-share of the initial budgets authorized for the selected year. The amount, therefore, does not constitute the actual payment by the respective nations during the year: the actual payments take other factors into consideration (amounts paid in advance, contributions paid voluntarily in advance, redistribution of refundable surpluses, etc.).

<sup>1086</sup> Cf. NATO, Funding NATO, 2018.

<sup>1087</sup> N.B.: In November 2013, NATO conducted its largest live exercises since 2006 in a collective defense scenario which is why 2013 is used as a point of reference for the indicator "exercises," cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative.

<sup>1088</sup> Cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative, 2016 and NATO, Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013, 2013.

<sup>1089</sup> Cf. Vandiver, NATO forces mobilize across Eastern Europe for war games,

- *June 2015 Noble Jump*: in Zagan, Poland, over 2,100 troops from 9 nations involved, VJTF elements deployed for the first time:<sup>1090</sup> Turkey didn't take part<sup>1091</sup>
- *Trident Juncture October and November 2015*: in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Netherlands and Norway; with about 36,000 troops, 140 aircraft and 60 ships from over 30 allies and partner nations:<sup>1092</sup> Turkey took part
- *Anakonda in June 2016 in Poland* (included land air forces): around 31,000 troops from more than 23 nations (18 allies, five partner countries):<sup>1093</sup> Turkey took part

In 2015, Turkey participated in two out of 12 key NATO and allied multinational exercises (around 280 were conducted in total that year).<sup>1094</sup> Thus, in 2015, Turkey participated in 16% of all the major exercises that were conducted that year. In 2016, Turkey contributed to three out of 19 key NATO and allied multinational exercises (240 were conducted in total that year).<sup>1095</sup> In sum, Turkey's participation in key allied exercises equated a 15% ratio.

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2013.

<sup>1090</sup> Cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative, 2016.

<sup>1091</sup> Cf. NATO, Trident Juncture 2015, 2015.

<sup>1092</sup> Cf. NATO, Connected Forces Initiative and cf. NATO, Trident Juncture 2015, 2015.

<sup>1093</sup> Cf. NATO, Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2016.

<sup>1094</sup> Cf. NATO, Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2015.

<sup>1095</sup> Cf. NATO, Key NATO & Allied Exercises, 2016.

- Selection of most important allied defense cooperation projects and capabilities:

*Table 10: Turkish contributions to allied defense cooperation projects.*

Project	NATO-owned/nation-owned	Number participating member states	Turkey
■ Alliance Ground Surveillance	■ Half-half (group of allies acquiring system which NATO will operate and maintain on behalf of 29 allies) <sup>1096</sup>	■ 15 <sup>1097</sup>	■ No
■ Strategic Airlift Capability	■ Nation-owned	■ 10 <sup>1098</sup>	■ No
■ Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)	■ Predominantly nation-owned; only command and control systems of Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence eligible for common funding, thus NATO-owned <sup>1099</sup>	■ 9 <sup>1100</sup>	■ Yes (US BMD Radar)
■ Strategic Sealift	■ Nation-owned	■ 11 <sup>1101</sup>	■ No

<sup>1096</sup> Cf. Alliance Ground Surveillance, 2018.

<sup>1097</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1098</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf. NATO, Strategic Airlift Capability, 2017.

<sup>1099</sup> Cf. NATO, Ballistic Missile Defence, 2016.

<sup>1100</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1101</sup> N.B.: For a list of the other participating states, cf. NATO, and cf. Strategic Sealift, 2014.

Project	NATO-owned/nation-owned	Number participating member states	Turkey
■ Nuclear sharing arrangement	■ Nation-owned	■ 5 <sup>1102</sup>	■ Yes (host nation for American nuclear capabilities + provision of launcher system)

*N.B.: Nation-owned means funded/maintained by member states but made available to rest of Alliance; among the only NATO-owned military equipment is the AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control) fleet).*

### 6.5.2. The reluctant ally: Turkey's actions in Libya

Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union when NATO began adding crisis management to its mission, Turkey proved uneasy about the expansion of the Alliance's core task as Ankara feared that such a move would come at the cost of collective territorial defense. For Turkey, the main appeal of NATO membership beyond the Cold War days continued to lie in the help it could provide with defending against possible threats as it "border[s] countries such as Syria, Iraq and Iran, which had openly declared their hostility towards both the U.S. and NATO, and with whom Turkey had a troubled past."<sup>1103</sup> In order to remain to be seen as a reliable partner by its NATO allies and because of the close ties to the region,<sup>1104</sup> Turkey eventually agreed to NATO's decision to go "out of area" committing troops to the Alliance's first such mission in the Balkans beginning in 1995.<sup>1105</sup> Despite its initial reluctance, Ankara contributed to all of NATO's crisis management operations

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<sup>1102</sup> N.B.: In addition to Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey participate in NATO's nuclear sharing arrangement, cf., for example, Alberque, The NPT and the Origins of NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements.

<sup>1103</sup> Chappell, Gareth/Terlikowski, Marcin: Turkey in NATO and towards CSDP. In: The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs, Vol. 21/ 2012, pp. 141–156, 143.

<sup>1104</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1105</sup> Cf. Park, Turkey and the US, pp. 137–154, 143.

around the world that were undertaken from the mid-1990s.<sup>1106</sup> Soon after NATO embraced its new task of projecting stability beyond its borders, the Alliance decided to wage an air campaign against Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic in Kosovo in 1999. Turkey offered some of its airbases as a point of departure for allied aircraft designated for the operation in Kosovo, thereby underlining its "geographical value for the Alliance."<sup>1107</sup> Beyond, Ankara has been a contributing ally to NATO's Kosovo Force since the inception of the stabilization mission. Perpetuating its role as a reliable ally committed to NATO's mission, Turkey contributed troops to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan since 2002, before the mandate for the operation had been signed over to the Alliance in August 2003—at a time when other allies had not shown any interest in ISAF whatsoever.<sup>1108</sup> As a participating nation, Ankara assumed command for the whole operation twice, as the first country holding this position<sup>1109</sup> when it was not yet under NATO authority from June 2002 until February 2003 and again from February to August 2005, heading allied forces the second time round. In addition, Turkey assumed the Regional Command Capital for Kabul on a rotational basis with France and Italy from August 2006 to 2008 and then again from November 2009 to November 2012.<sup>1110</sup> While Turkey vehemently opposed the US-led Iraq War in 2003, Ankara nevertheless agreed to contribute to NATO's Training Mission-Iraq that was set up in 2004 at the request of the government in Bagdad in order to assist the country with the establishment of its armed forces after the war.<sup>1111</sup> In 2011, the Alliance went out of area once more, this time in the form of a combat operation again, when the Libyan dictator Muhammed Gaddafi began pointing weapons at portions of his own people in the face of a popular uprising. As the situation in the Northern African

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<sup>1106</sup> Cf. Oguzlu, Tarik: Making Sense of Turkey's Rising Power Status. What Does Turkey's Approach Within NATO Tell Us? In: Turkish Studies, Vol. 14/2013, pp. 774–796, 785–786 and cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs: IV. Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations, n.d., [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv\\_european-security-and-defence-identity\\_policy\\_esdi\\_p\\_en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_european-security-and-defence-identity_policy_esdi_p_en.mfa) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1107</sup> Güvenc/Özel, NATO and Turkey in the post-Cold War world, p. 539.

<sup>1108</sup> Cf. Chappell/Terlikowski, Turkey in NATO and towards CSDP, p. 143.

<sup>1109</sup> Cf. Gordon/Taspinar, Winning Turkey, p. 30.

<sup>1110</sup> Cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IV. Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations, n.d.

<sup>1111</sup> Cf. NATO: NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I), n.d., <https://shape.nato.int/page136952> (08.06.2019).

country evolved and rapidly worsened, Turkey initially stood by the regime insisting NATO should not become involved in an operation in Libya. This stance quickly changed, however. The two following sections will explore what Ankara made eventually contribute to Operation Unified Protector as well as the reasons for the change of heart.

#### 6.5.2.1. Shifting from blocker to supporter

Unlike the quick condemnation of the Tunisian dictator Ben Ali and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Turkey found it much more difficult to denounce long-time Libyan dictator Muhammed Gaddafi: "Libya has been one of Turkey's major economic partners, and Turkish businesses have invested billions of dollars there in the past few decades."<sup>1112</sup> As of 2011, Turkish businesses had invested in projects in Libya worth more than \$15 billion.<sup>1113</sup> As a result of these subsequent economic ties, between 25,000 and 30,000 Turkish citizens were estimated to be living in Libya when Gaddafi's crackdown on parts of his population began.<sup>1114</sup> The Turkish government feared that joining its Western allies in speaking out against the Libyan regime could endanger those Turkish nationals residing in the Maghreb country. Instead of supporting Western capitals in their condemnation of what was perceived as an impending "genocide,"<sup>1115</sup> Turkey positioned itself as a broker as "[Turkey attempted] to be able to speak with both sides of the conflict" in order to strike a "mutually agreeable settlement."<sup>1116</sup> During the initial days and weeks of the crisis in Libya, Turkey was adamant about finding a political solution to the conflict instead of even

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<sup>1112</sup> Akyol, Mustafa 2011: Turkey's Maturing Foreign Policy. How the Arab Spring Changed the AKP, in: Foreign Affairs 2011, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2011-07-07/turkeys-maturing-foreign-policy> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1113</sup> Cf. Yackley, Ayla Jean 2011: Turkey opposes any NATO operation in Libya, in: Reuters 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-turkey/turkey-opposes-any-nato-operation-in-libya-idUSTRE72D49D20110314> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1114</sup> Cf. Akyol, Turkey's Maturing Foreign Policy, 2011 and cf. Head, Jonathan 2011: Libya. Turkey's FM Ahmet Davutoglu outlines policy, in: BBC News 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12897878> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1115</sup> Reike, Ruben: Libya and the Responsibility to Protect. Lessons for the Prevention of Mass Atrocities. In: St Antony's International Review, Vol. 8/2012, pp. 122–149.

<sup>1116</sup> As quoted in Akyol, Turkey's Maturing Foreign Policy, 2011.

contemplating a military course of action carried out by NATO or a coalition of (Western) allies for that matter.<sup>1117</sup> So when NATO member states started talks on the possibility of the Alliance enforcing a no-fly zone over Libya (which at that point had not yet been sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council, UNSC), Turkey flat out refused to engage in such a contingency planning exercise.<sup>1118</sup> In this spirit, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a speech delivered in front of the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce underlined that “NATO’s intervention in Libya is out of the question. We are against such a thing”<sup>1119</sup> as Turkey suspected that an operation against Gaddafi’s regime could develop into an “Iraq-like invasion.”<sup>1120</sup> Reiterating this line of argument at an international forum, the Prime Minister publicly declared on March 14, 2011, that a “military intervention by NATO in Libya or any other country would be totally counter-productive,” adding that “foreign interventions, especially military ones, had in the past only deepened the problems”<sup>1121</sup> underlining Turkey’s proclivity for an exclusively political solution. In these remarks, Erdogan was responding to calls led by France in particular for establishing a no-fly zone over Libya the day before after Paris was able to secure the Arab League’s support.<sup>1122</sup> Yet, even after the body representing the regional “voice” had joined Western allies in requesting the UNSC mandate a no-fly zone “against any military action against the Libyan people,”<sup>1123</sup> Turkey remained firm. Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu pointed out in a statement on March 29 after Turkey had changed its stance that regional ownership was one of Ankara’s conditions for allowing NATO to assume responsibility for executing a no-fly zone.<sup>1124</sup> Hence, one could have expected Turkey to agree to the prospects of equipping the Alliance’s with a mandate to carry out such an operation. On March 17, the UNSC

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<sup>1117</sup> Cf. Yackley, Turkey opposes any NATO operation in Libya, 2011.

<sup>1118</sup> Cf. Cook, Steven A. 2011: Arab Spring, Turkish Fall, in: Foreign Policy 2011, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/05/05/arab-spring-turkish-fall-2/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1119</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>1120</sup> Taspinar, Ömer 2012: Turkey’s Strategic Vision and Syria, in: The Washington Quarterly 2012, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/turkey-taspinar.pdf> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1121</sup> Yackley, Turkey opposes any NATO operation in Libya, 2011.

<sup>1122</sup> Cf. Euractiv 2011: France steps up Libya no-fly zone efforts, 2011, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/france-steps-up-libya-no-fly-zone-efforts/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1123</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>1124</sup> Cf. Head, Libya, 2011.

ratified Resolution 1973 calling on the international community to employ all “necessary means” to stop the Gaddafi regime from further using violence against its own people.<sup>1125</sup> Two days later, Operation Odyssey Dawn, a trilateral air campaign carried out by France, the United States and the United Kingdom to decimate Libya’s air defense system was launched.<sup>1126</sup> At this point in time, NATO was heatedly debating whether or not it should assume responsibility for the enforcement of the operation. As of March 21, Turkey continued “resisting the measure [NATO involvement in implementing the no-fly zone] and is calling for a new review of other possible measures the alliance could take in Libya.”<sup>1127</sup> At the same time, Ankara had no trouble agreeing to NATO’s role in enforcing the United Nations arms embargo that had been put in effect in February already.<sup>1128</sup> While officially Turkey kept up its resistance, cracks in this stance became visible as a statement by Erdogan on March 21 demonstrates: “Our [Turkey’s] biggest desire is for this operation to be finished as soon as possible (...) Our biggest desire is for the Libyan people to determine their own future (...) Now the issue is NATO going into operation. If NATO is going into operation we have some conditions (...) NATO should go in with the recognition and acknowledgment that Libya belongs to the Libyans, not for the distribution of its underground resources and wealth (...) Our Libyan brothers possess every means to build a strong, stable, peaceful future. The Libyan

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<sup>1125</sup> United Nations 2011: Security Council Approves ‘No-Fly Zone’ over Libya, Authorizing ‘All Necessary Measures’ to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour with 5 Abstentions, 2011,  
<https://www.un.org/press/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1126</sup> Cf. Townsend, Mark 2011: Operation Odyssey Dawn commences to end Gaddafi onslaught on Benghazi, in: The Guardian 2011,  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/19/operation-odyssey-dawn-tomahawks-libya> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1127</sup> Spiegel Online 2011: Turkey Blocks NATO Mission in Libya, in: Spiegel Online 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/command-conflict-turkey-blocks-nato-mission-in-libya-a-752222.html> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1128</sup> Cf. Reuters 2011: Turkey wants Libyan intervention over quickly, in: Reuters 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-libya/turkey-wants-libyan-intervention-over-quickly-idUSTRE72K2RH> 20110321 (08.06.2019) and cf. NATO 2011: Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR NATO-led Arms Embargo against Libya, 2011,  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2011\\_06/20110608\\_Factsheet-UP\\_Arms\\_Embargo.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_06/20110608_Factsheet-UP_Arms_Embargo.pdf) (08.06.2019).

people should be given this opportunity before the operation turns into an occupation (...).”<sup>1129</sup> This statement underlines that Turkey was suspicious of some of its allies or the Alliance as a whole with regard to the reasons behind wanting to put NATO in charge of enforcing UNSC Resolution 1973. Three days later, the Turkish Prime Minister found even stronger and more condemnatory words warning against letting ulterior motives drive the desire to intervene in Libya under the guise of humanitarian grounds: “I wish that those who only see oil, gold mines and underground treasures when they look in [Libya’s] direction, would see the region through glasses of conscience from now on.”<sup>1130</sup> President Abdullah Gül backed up Prime Minister Erdogan claiming that “[t]he aim [of the air campaign] is not the liberation of the Libyan people (...) There are hidden agendas and different interests.”<sup>1131</sup> Both politicians left it to the Turkish Defense Minister at the time, Vecdi Gonul, to clarify which ally Ankara had in mind with these accusations: “[Turkey has] difficulty in understanding France’s leading role”<sup>1132</sup> in implementing UN sanctions. Apparently, Turkish decision-makers had trouble “understand[ing] France being so prominent in this process. We are having difficulty in understanding it being like the enforcer of the United Nation’s decisions,”<sup>1133</sup> according to the Defense Minister. Instead, Turkey sought to embed the enforcement of UNSC Resolution 1973 into a truly multilateral framework.<sup>1134</sup> Accordingly, and after initially coming out against an intervention in general, and NATO’s role in it in particular, Turkey made the case for the air campaign to be handed over to the Alliance on March 24. On this very day, Foreign Minister Davutoglu explained “[t]he coalition [France, UK, US] (...) is going to give up its mission as soon as possible and hand over the entire operation to NATO with its single command structure (...) In effect,

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<sup>1129</sup> Reuters, Turkey wants Libyan intervention over quickly, 2011.

<sup>1130</sup> Traynor, Ian 2011: Turkey and France clash over Libya air campaign, in: The Guardian 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/24/turkey-france-clash-libya-campaign> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1132</sup> Cody, Edward/De Young, Karen 2011: On Libya, France steps forward, in: The Washington Post 2011, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/on-libya-france-steps-forward/2011/03/24/AB7j-HBSB\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.6d9e03edfe11](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/on-libya-france-steps-forward/2011/03/24/AB7j-HBSB_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.6d9e03edfe11) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1133</sup> Reuters, Turkey wants Libyan intervention over quickly, 2011.

<sup>1134</sup> Cf. Aybet, The Evolution of NATO’s three phases and Turkey’s transatlantic relationship, pp. 32–33.

Turkey's demands and concerns have been met.”<sup>1135</sup> Going into greater detail, Davutoglu justified Ankara shifting its position on March 29, 2 days before the Alliance officially launched Operation Unified Protector over Libya: “We said that NATO can participate if there are two principles fulfilled: One is a UN Security Council resolution; second is regional ownership, especially participation of the Arab League and individual Arab countries.”<sup>1136</sup> The minister added that Turkey was opposed to unilateral actions as executed by France shortly after the passing of the UNSC Resolution allowing for military means against the Gaddafi regime. Apart from wanting to prevent individual countries and/or small groups of nations taking action in Libya, Turkey also sought to restrict the rules of engagement to avoid too many civilian casualties.<sup>1137</sup> By agreeing to have NATO assume responsibility for the operation, Ankara was able to influence the mandate, scope, and duration of the military campaign.<sup>1138</sup> Rounding out the political picture, Prime Minister Erdogan finally proclaimed in a press statement on May 3 that “we wish to see Libya's leader step down immediately and leave Libya immediately for his own sake and for the sake of his country's future (...) We have made it clear that Gaddafi must step down to ensure transition to constitutional democracy.”<sup>1139</sup> This message of condemnation came after Turkey had shied away from demanding Gadhafi's departure from power despite the atrocities the Libyan dictator had inflicted on parts of his people, particularly rebels in Bengasi.<sup>1140</sup> When Ankara decided to turn its decision around and support allied action it still refrained from participating in the air raids NATO member states with the support of partner nations carried out.<sup>1141</sup> Instead, after a vote in the Turkish parliament in late March,

<sup>1135</sup> France 24 2011: Turkey reluctantly joins NATO operation against Libya, in: France 24 2011, <http://www.france24.com/en/20110324-turkey-allows-nato-command-libya-military-operations-vote> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1136</sup> Davutoglu, Ahmet: Transformation of NATO and Turkey's Position. In: Perceptions, Vol. XVII/ 2012, pp. 7–17, 10.

<sup>1137</sup> Cf. Head, Libya, 2011.

<sup>1138</sup> Cf. Traynor, Turkey and France clash over Libya air campaign, 2011.

<sup>1139</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011: Press Statement by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, The Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey on Libya, 2011, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/press-statement-by-h\\_e\\_-recep-tayyip-erdogan\\_-the-prime-minister-of-the-republic-of-turkey-on-libya\\_-3-may-2011.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/press-statement-by-h_e_-recep-tayyip-erdogan_-the-prime-minister-of-the-republic-of-turkey-on-libya_-3-may-2011.en.mfa) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1140</sup> Cf. Townsend, Operation Odyssey Dawn commences to end Gaddafi onslaught on Benghazi, 2011.

<sup>1141</sup> Cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IV. Turkey's

four frigates, a submarine, two tanker aircraft, and four F-16 fighters were dispatched to contribute to enforcing the no-fly zone and an arms embargo as part of Operation Unified Protector.<sup>1142</sup> In addition, Turkey allowed the air component of the operation to be steered from Allied Air Command at Izmir.<sup>1143</sup>

### **6.5.2.2. Think twice: Turkey's U-turn on Libya**

Turkey had performed a U-turn on its attitude toward possible reactions to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Libya. Within a matter of a few weeks, Ankara went from outright opposition to any Western-led military action in the North African country to not only consenting to NATO assuming responsibility for the operation in the Alliance's decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council, but in addition contributing to it. The following pages will investigate what brought about this drastic change of mind. One major explanation rests with the role NATO began to play in late March 2011 in preparation to head the military operation in Libya in particular and allied intervention in general. While this was not officially announced by Turkish decision-makers, "Turkey's preference of NATO as a regional tool of multilateralism (...) over ad hoc coalitions or US led initiatives roam[ing] in the region [stretching from the Maghreb to Middle Eastern countries] (...)"<sup>1144</sup> was hinted at by Turkish scholar Gülnur Aybet. NATO could thus be regarded as a mechanism with which to control US actions in the described region from Turkey's viewpoint as the country had felt repercussions due to the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and was weary of its Western allies engaging Muslim nations militarily. According to a Turkish Foreign Ministry staffer, Ankara's NATO policy was, generally speaking, characterized by skepticism toward NATO interventions, particularly those taking place in Muslim countries. Hence, this interview partner

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International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations, n.d.

<sup>1142</sup> Cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IV. Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations, n.d. and cf. France 24, Turkey reluctantly joins NATO operations against Libya, 2011.

<sup>1143</sup> Cf. NATO 2011: Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR, 2011, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2011\\_03/20110325\\_110325-unified-protector-command-control.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_03/20110325_110325-unified-protector-command-control.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1144</sup> Aybet, The Evolution of NATO's three phases and Turkey's transatlantic relationship, p. 33.

added, Turkey tended to be vigilant whenever military actions are to be mandated—Libya was no exception in this regard.<sup>1145</sup> Murat Aslan, a researcher with the think tank SETA—Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research—emphasized that the past had shown that foreign military interventions did not guarantee bringing stability to a country, which is why Turkey was very careful when considering to agree or participate in a NATO intervention.<sup>1146</sup> Yet after the Alliance had agreed to take charge of the intervention in Libya, Turkey had a change of heart and announced it would contribute to Operation Unified Protector short of participating in the aerial combat actions.<sup>1147</sup> A retired Turkish Navy admiral, explained the reversal of Turkey's position by stating that "Turkey had been exposed to pressure from the United States and [other] allies to agree to NATO taking over from the trilateral coalition heading 'Operation Odyssey Dawn' in the North Atlantic Council."<sup>1148</sup> Murat Aslan elaborated along similar lines insomuch as France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States had pushed for the intervention at which point Turkey could not resist a NATO role in Libya any longer.<sup>1149</sup> These viewpoints stand in contrast to experts and officials denying that Turkey's change of heart was connected to outside influence: "I don't see that pressure exerted by other countries prompted Turkey to change its mind on NATO assuming responsibility in Libya," a Turkish government official explained.<sup>1150</sup> Hüseyin Bagci from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara pointed out that Turkey's decision to change its attitude on Libya "cannot directly be attributed to US influence."<sup>1151</sup>

The motive of alliance solidarity as a reason to re-think its approach toward a prospective role in Libya proved to be similarly controversial among experts. On the one hand, the think tanker Murat Aslan claimed that Turkey had given in to pressure exerted by some of its allies, namely France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States, to change its attitude due to alliance solidarity.<sup>1152</sup> A government official, on the other hand, claimed that in order to demonstrate alliance solidarity

<sup>1145</sup> Cf. author interview 27, Ankara, December 5, 2018.

<sup>1146</sup> Cf. author interview 28, Ankara, December 6, 2018.

<sup>1147</sup> Cf. Aybet, *The Evolution of NATO's three phases and Turkey's transatlantic relationship*, p. 33.

<sup>1148</sup> Author interview 29, Berlin/Ankara, December 11, 2018.

<sup>1149</sup> Cf. author interview 28.

<sup>1150</sup> Author interview 30, Ankara, December 7, 2018.

<sup>1151</sup> Author interview 31, Ankara, December 4, 2018.

<sup>1152</sup> Cf. author interview 28.

agreeing to NATO assuming responsibility at the North Atlantic Council would have sufficed. Once Turkey gave her consent to Operation Unified Protector in Libya, her contribution of critical capabilities was a demonstration of allied solidarity.<sup>1153</sup> According to this official, an internal re-assessment of the situation in Libya prompted Turkey to change its mind as the brutality the Gaddafi regime used against parts of its people increases.<sup>1154</sup> As the demonstrations wore on “(...) Erdogan, who had shifted gradually from criticizing the NATO operation to backing it, finally called on Gaddafi to step down, and welcomed the head of the Libyan opposition, Mustafa Abdul-Jalil, to Ankara later that month.”<sup>1155</sup> Initially, Turkey thought the Libyan people would be able to handle the situation by themselves without necessitating a (Western) involvement from outside, which Ankara did not favor as one government official explained.<sup>1156</sup> As the situation in Libya spiraled out of control, the Turkish administration began to realize that Gaddafi’s regime would collapse. Thus, policy-makers in Ankara became keen on being on the “right side of history,” especially after the infamous speech of the Libyan dictator in which he had threatened to hunt down every rebel in Benghazi as a Turkish War Studies Scholar pointed out.<sup>1157</sup> Following this logic, Turkey had hoped that after Gaddafi’s demise, a Muslim brotherhood-like political party would gain power in Libya. In fact, “Erdogan initially thought that the United States would act as a reliable partner in his efforts to re-model the Middle East according to his interests, i.e. installing and supporting Muslim brotherhood like actors that emerged in the wake of the Arab Spring,” as a German observer intimately familiar with Turkish security and defense policies and a military background pointed out.<sup>1158</sup> Based on that observation, Turkey would have been able to establish friendly relations with a post-Gaddafi Libya. That way, becoming involved in the reconstruction of the country after the end of the air campaign carried out by NATO was thought to be within reach.<sup>1159</sup> Beyond economic considerations with regard to a post-Gaddafi Libya, commercial

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<sup>1153</sup> Cf. author interview 30.

<sup>1154</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1155</sup> Akyol, Turkey’s Maturing Foreign Policy, 2011.

<sup>1156</sup> Cf. author interview 30.

<sup>1157</sup> Author interview 32, Berlin, October 8, 2018.

<sup>1158</sup> Author interview 33, Ankara, December 5, 2018.

<sup>1159</sup> Cf. author interview 32.

interests were at play already prior to NATO's operation as explained by then Foreign Minister Davutoglu in a speech delivered at Goldman Sachs in London in November 2011: "We did not look first at the economic interest [,] at the same time we have to protect the interest of our companies of course. For example [,] in Libya we faced a huge situation (...) [we had to consider] how to protect the rights of our companies."<sup>1160</sup> As demonstrated in the previous chapter on the actions Turkey took in and vis-a-vis Libya, Ankara had considerable business ties with Libya prior to the outbreak of protests in the North African country. Trying to secure these investments could have been a motivating factor in Turkey's initial reluctance to agreeing to a military engagement as such actions would have made "business as usual" impossible.<sup>1161</sup>

Closely connected to the economic interest argument, Turkish citizens working in Libya as a result of close business connections between the two countries had an impact on Turkey's considerations vis-à-vis the promotion and/or involvement of/in a military campaign against Gaddafi. As explained by Davutoglu in November 2011: "... In one week (...) we evacuated 25.000 Turkish citizens and around 10.000 foreign nationals including British and Europeans friends (...) That was the first responsibility."<sup>1162</sup> A Turkish War Studies scholar added to the evacuation argument: "Evacuating Turkish citizens from Libya was the biggest operation of this kind ever undertaken by Turkish authorities. The administration could not risk the launch of a military operation before every single last Turkish citizen was evacuated from Libya. Thus, Turkey had to come out against an intervention initially."<sup>1163</sup>

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<sup>1160</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011: Speech entitled "Vision 2023": "Turkey's Foreign Policy Objectives" delivered by H.E. Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey at the Turkey Investor Conference: The road to 2023 organized by Goldman Sachs (London, 22.11.2011), 2011, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-entitled-\\_vision-2023\\_-turkey\\_s-foreign-policy-objectives\\_\\_-delivered-by-h\\_e\\_-ahmet-davutoglu\\_-minister-of-foreign-af.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-entitled-_vision-2023_-turkey_s-foreign-policy-objectives__-delivered-by-h_e_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-af.en.mfa) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1161</sup> For example Akyol, Turkey's Maturing Foreign Policy, 2011.

<sup>1162</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Speech entitled "Vision 2023", 2011.

<sup>1163</sup> Author interview 32.

### **6.5.3. The specter of an American pivot to the Asia-Pacific region at the expense of Turkish security**

While the United States under Obama officially pivoted to the Asia-Pacific beginning in late 2011, signs of a Turkish rebalance toward this region can be found, too. Similar to American developments, Ankara's course of action involved economic, diplomatic as well as political-strategic initiatives leading scholars to assert that "Turkish foreign policy makers' efforts to establish relationships in the Asia-Pacific overlap with US attempts to rejuvenate its relationship with this region."<sup>1164</sup> The most obvious Turkish engagement with countries in the Asia-Pacific can be found in the economic realm, in particular with China.<sup>1165</sup> Attempts to establish closer ties with Beijing did not stop there, however.<sup>1166</sup> In September 2013, Turkey announced that it intended to purchase a Chinese Missile System: "(...) [A] Chinese defense company has won a US\$4 billion contract to help Turkey develop a long-range air and missile defence system, winning out over competing bids from U.S., EU, and Russian defense companies."<sup>1167</sup> This announcement came to the dismay of the United States, not least because the Chinese defense contractor had long been sanctioned by Washington over "alleged arms sales and defense cooperation with countries like Pakistan, Syria, North Korea and Iran."<sup>1168</sup> In the end, mounting US pressure prompted Turkey to walk away from the deal in 2015<sup>1169</sup> after Washington

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<sup>1164</sup> Kanat, Kilic Bugra: America's Asia-Pacific Strategy and Turkish-American Partnership. In: *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 14/ 2012, pp. 157–175, 162.

<sup>1165</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 162–163.

<sup>1166</sup> N.B.: For more information on Turkish economic and political engagement with other countries in the Asia-Pacific, cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1167</sup> Keck, Zachary 2013: Why Turkey's Buying Chinese Missile Systems, in: *The Diplomat* 2013, <https://thediplomat.com/2013/09/why-turkeys-buying-chinese-missile-systems/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1169</sup> Cf. Gall, Carlotta/Higgins, Andrew 2017: Turkey Signs Russian Missile Deal, Pivoting From Russia, in: *The New York Times* 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/world/europe/turkey-russia-missile-deal.html> (08.06.2019) and cf. Singh, Michael 2016: Is Turkey Pivoting to China? in: *The Washington Institute* 2016, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/is-turkey-pivoting-to-china> (08.06.2019).

warned its Turkish counterparts of consequences, such as the cancellation of manufacturing US military components and T-70 Black Hawk in Turkey.<sup>1170</sup> Consequently, Ankara announced it would build a national long-range air defense system; these plans were later scrapped, however. Instead, Turkey decided to go with an off-the-shelf option.<sup>1171</sup> Whether or not Turkey's decision to initially opt for cooperating with a Chinese defense manufacturer can be interpreted as a move away from its Western allies will be investigated in the following two sections, as some commentators point to the fact that the deal was said to be motivated by desire to strengthen domestic defense industry rather than geopolitical considerations. Accordingly, American defense companies would have been unlikely to agree to a co-production arrangement as well as a technology transfer with Turkish counterparts. This aspect, however, was the one the Turkish government was keen on.<sup>1172</sup> In addition to the bilateral strengthening of ties to other Asian nations, President Erdogan again expressed Turkey's interest in joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in September 2013: "If we get into the SCO, we will say good-bye to the European Union. The Shanghai Five [former name of the SCO] is better—much more powerful (...) If the SCO wants us, [we] will become members of this organization (...) we have common values with them."<sup>1173</sup> Although the SCO only includes China as a truly Asian-Pacific nation while the other seven member states are located in Central Asia,<sup>1174</sup> Erdogan's overture was interpreted by some as "... just one of a number of recent examples that suggest Turkey is embarking on its own Asian pivot of sorts."<sup>1175</sup> President Erdogan's bid for a membership in the SCO was backed up by remarks Foreign Minister Davutoglu delivered a couple of weeks later at the 12th Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue Member

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<sup>1170</sup> Cf. Bagci, Hüseyin/Kurc, Caglar: Turkey's strategic choice. Buy or make weapons? In: Defence Studies, Vol. 17/ 2017, pp. 38–62.

<sup>1171</sup> Cf. Kurc, Caglar: Between defence autarky and dependency. The dynamics of Turkish defence industrialization. In: Defence Studies, Vol. 17/ 2017, pp. 181–260, 274.

<sup>1172</sup> Cf. Keck, Why Turkey's Buying Chinese Missile Systems, 2013.

<sup>1173</sup> Turkey Renews Plea to Join Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in: The Diplomat 2013, <https://thediplomat.com/2013/12/turkey-renews-plea-to-join-shanghai-cooperation-organization/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1174</sup> N.B.: India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan are the other seven permanent members of the organization, cf. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2017, [http://eng.sectsco.org/about\\_sco/](http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1175</sup> Keck, Turkey Renews Plea to Join Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2013.

States which Turkey had joined shortly before the meeting: “We are determined to intensify our relations around the globe through effective multilateralism. Turkey today is forging closer ties with all countries and regions, among which Asia holds a prominent place. Turkey has a special standing as an Asian country among its many vocations.”<sup>1176</sup> He goes on to highlight the growing significance of the region, demanding that Turkey implement a broad spectrum of instruments to tighten relations with the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>1177</sup> The following sections will examine whether, and if so in what form, Turkey did in fact set out to “pivot” toward the Asia-Pacific at a time when its transatlantic ally, the United States, embarked on a similar course. In addition, light will be shed on the question of how Ankara reacted to Washington’s rebalancing strategy as well as the ensuing re-dedication of resources away from Europe to Asia.

#### **6.5.3.1. A revisit of old abandonment concerns**

Joining NATO came at the price of a concession from Turkey as the country had to bring its burgeoning defense industrialization to a halt. In exchange, however, the United States extended its security guarantees to Turkey.<sup>1178</sup> As the country could not rely on a domestic defense industry, it had to import weaponry from allies abroad, first and foremost from the United States. Apart from weapon deliveries and training to use these capabilities, Washington became involved in the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) defense modernization in the 1980s. At the same time, bilat-

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<sup>1176</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013: Remarks by Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey at the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Member States, 2013, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/remarks-by-mr\\_-ahmet-davuto%C4%9Flu\\_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey-at-the-12th-ministerial-meeting-of-of-the-asia-cooperation-dialogue-\\_acd\\_-member-states\\_-25-november-2013\\_-manama.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/remarks-by-mr_-ahmet-davuto%C4%9Flu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey-at-the-12th-ministerial-meeting-of-of-the-asia-cooperation-dialogue-_acd_-member-states_-25-november-2013_-manama.en.mfa) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1177</sup> Cf. ibid. and for further remarks on the issue, see, for example, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Statement by Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey at the 4<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, 2014, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/statement-by-mr\\_-ahmet-davutoglu\\_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey-at-the-4th-summit-of-the-conference-on-interaction-and.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/statement-by-mr_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey-at-the-4th-summit-of-the-conference-on-interaction-and.en.mfa) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1178</sup> Cf. Bagci/Kurc, Turkey’s strategic choice, p. 42.

eral defense industry cooperation took shape focusing on co-production among others.<sup>1179</sup> Banking its defense industry on deliveries from abroad “made Turkey highly susceptible to arms embargos as well as to restrictions on the use of certain military hardware.”<sup>1180</sup> This dependency lending itself to sensitivity toward arms embargos was brought to the fore in 1975 when the United States imposed a ban on weapons exports to Turkey in response to Ankara’s invasion of Cyprus a year earlier. The embargo, which was not lifted until 1978, rendered the NATO ally’s weaponry outdated and in a weakened condition.<sup>1181</sup> According to the Turkish scholar Gülay Günlük-Senesen, the US embargo instilled in Turkish decision-makers “an awareness of the need to become self-sufficient in arms production, to avoid the restrictions attached to military aid … since the reliance on imports entails the risk of an embargo or a severe scarcity of foreign exchange.”<sup>1182</sup> Thus, Turkey set in motion the erection of its domestic defense procurement industry in the early 1980s.

At the time, three rationales could be found to explain this decision. Firstly, by ways of a domestic defense industry base, Ankara would be able to acquire modern capabilities while, secondly, decreasing its dependency on allies and partners. The third effect that was desired was the boosting of Turkey’s economy as well as the increase of export revenues. Two additional patterns of explanation emerged after the end of the Cold War. For one, following the demise of the Soviet Union, Turkey’s threat perception shifted from external menaces to domestic challenges such as fighting the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK). Although the organization had already taken up arms against the Turkish state in 1984, the disappearance of the Soviet threat allowed and forced Ankara to focus on other perils more diligently. Exacerbating the situation at home was what Turkey perceived as poor alliance performance during the First Gulf War when Ankara was catapulted to the front line of the Alliance as a neighbor state of Iraq. The internal security challenge combined with regional threats as exemplified by an aggressive Iraq, Turkey feared it could find itself in a situation in which it would have to defend itself without allied

<sup>1179</sup> Cf. Kure, Between defence autarky and dependency, p. 273.

<sup>1180</sup> Bagci/Kure, Turkey’s strategic choice, p. 42

<sup>1181</sup> Cf. Karaosmanoglu, Ali L.: Turkey’s Security and the Middle East. In: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 62/ 1983, pp. 157–175, 158.

<sup>1182</sup> Günlük-Senesen, Gülay: Turkey. The arms industry modernization programme. In: Wulf, Herbert (ed.): Arms Industry Limited. The Turning Point in the 1990s. Stockholm 1993, pp. 251–267, 255.

support.<sup>1183</sup> Another reason why Turkey intensified expanding its defense industry after the Cold War pertains to the country's aspirations to develop into a regional power able to project power via military means, *inter alia*, since the AKP came into power in 2002.<sup>1184</sup>

Combining these three Cold War and two post-1989 rationales, Turkey felt it had a strong case for the modernization of its armed forces. This sentiment is captured in the country's Strategic Plans from 2007 through 2017 with the core element of these documents being the strive toward self-sufficiency, proclaiming the goal that by 2023 Turkey should reach the state of complete autarky. In 2011, the Turkish defense industry was able to meet the armed forces needs by 52%, and this number was raised by 10% by 2014.<sup>1185</sup> The AKP's 2023 Political Vision produced in 2013, a manifesto of the party that had been in power in Turkey since 2002, underlines that these levels are not enough yet: "Part of our 2023 Turkey Vision is to be able to manufacture our major defence needs by ourselves."<sup>1186</sup> On the goal of self-sufficiency, President Erdogan noted in 2016 that "we have significant strides towards self-sufficiency in the defence industry during the last 14 years. We have increased local and national participation levels from 20 to 60 percent. This is a stage but not enough. Turkey has lots to do towards localisation and nationalization."<sup>1187</sup> To that end, the 2012 Defense Strategy, produced and announced by the Under-Secretariat for the Defense Industry, laid out that the Turkish defense industry ought to "increase the share of domestic products in weapons systems and to move toward indigenous designs"<sup>1188</sup> as was reflected and repeated in the 2007 and 2017 Defense Strategies.<sup>1189</sup> In terms of concrete output, the 2012 five-year Defense Strategy went on to list several key projects for the Armed Forces including Turkish-made tanks, aircraft, satellites, destroyers, and helicopters.<sup>1190</sup> Then President Abdullah

<sup>1183</sup> Cf. Güvenc, Özel, NATO and Turkey in the post-Cold War world, p. 537.

<sup>1184</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1185</sup> Cf. as quoted in Bagci/Kurc, Turkey's strategic choice, p. 39.

<sup>1186</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>1187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>1188</sup> Kurc, Between defence autarky and dependency, p. 263.

<sup>1189</sup> N.B.: According to scholar Caglar Kurc, the "Strategic Plans 2017–2021 do not include any performance review. Therefore, it is difficult to [assess] to what extent Turkey reach[es] its goals of defense industry development," author interview 34, Berlin/Ankara, December 13, 2018.

<sup>1190</sup> Cf. Raufoglu, Alakbar 2012: Turkey Divided Over New Defense Strategy, in: Foreign Policy Journal 2012,

Gul complemented the strategic goals when he stated at the War Academy in Istanbul on April 5 that “as part of the defense strategy, the military should focus on the interoperational capacity of the land, sea, and air forces, increase combat troops, and develop the defense sector with particular emphasis on local procurement.”<sup>1191</sup> At this point, it suffices to say that these capabilities can both serve the purpose of collective/territorial defense as well as combatting terrorism. The next section will delve further into the rationale of why Turkey deemed it necessary to focus on these capabilities. Without doubt and to whatever end, Ankara was convinced of the need to move toward weapons independence. What becomes clear, too, is that Turkey in 2012 and beyond still depended on foreign supplies for technology transfer for its defense industry as it continued to “import military equipment in the more advanced stages of its defence industrialization as much [as] it did in the initial stages.”<sup>1192</sup> However, it is noticeable that Turkish producers moved from procurement of completed major weapon platforms toward licensed/co-production and local development of major weapons systems. Hence, the Turkish defense industry moved in the direction of limiting its imports to critical systems, sub-systems and components such as engines and radars.<sup>1193</sup> Among its supply partners, the United States continues to be the largest, followed by Germany. Undoubtedly, close defense cooperation ties between Ankara and Washington have their roots in the era of the Cold War:<sup>1194</sup> While Turkey wanted to become more independent in its military doctrines and defense planning, it nevertheless continued to seek and receive US assistance and guidance. This dependency finds its expression in the American share of arms exports which between 2000 and 2016 amounted to 40.3%. Among European

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<https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2012/04/20/turkey-divided-over-new-defense-strategy/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1191</sup> As quoted in Raufoglu, Turkey Divided Over New Defense Strategy, 2012.

<sup>1192</sup> Bagci/Kurc, Turkey's strategic choice, p. 44.

<sup>1193</sup> N.B.: Exception: Turkey has received variety of equipment under NATO's Cascade Programme which distributed surplus military equipment as force levels had been reduced under the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty in the 1990s; this included Main Battle Tanks, Armored Personnel Carriers and self-propelled guns, cf. *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>1194</sup> Cf. SIPRI 2016: Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2016,  
<https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Trends-in-international-arms-transfers-2016.pdf>, (08.06.2019).

allies, Germany was the largest exporter with 18.5% during the same time period.<sup>1195</sup> While the close defense industry relationship between Turkey and the United States was unabated until 2016, it is noticeable that Ankara began cooperating more closely with Asian nations (including South Korea, Japan, and China) in defense terms at the same time.<sup>1196</sup> Accordingly, for example, in 2013 Turkey bought the B-611 surface-to-surface missile design from China to produce the system domestically. A year earlier, Ankara agreed on a deal with South Korea that entailed purchasing parts of the design for Turkey's domestically built Altay main battle tank.<sup>1197</sup> Turkey was looking for defense cooperation partners closer to home, too. Accordingly, then-Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was in charge of concluding an agreement with Ukraine for the joint manufacturing of aircraft engines, radars, military communication, and navigation systems in early 2016.<sup>1198</sup> Whether or not this trend is down to the American announcement to pivot toward Asia in October 2011 will be discussed in the next subchapter. Although on the face of it, Turkey seems to have been undergoing a "pivot" toward Asia as well, this observation should not belie that Ankara continued to offer to host NATO systems on Turkish soil at the same time. In September 2011,<sup>1199</sup> Turkey agreed to be included in the Alliance's missile defense system European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) which was agreed upon in 2010 and launched in 2012.<sup>1200</sup> As the EPAA is a US-led project under the umbrella of NATO, Turkey has been hosting early warning US ballistic missile defense radars at Kürecik in Eastern Turkey since 2011. Ankara insisted on making sure the EPAA would become a NATO and not an exclusive US mission.<sup>1201</sup> Yet, Turkey was keen on retaining US forces and bases after the end of the Cold War.<sup>1202</sup> Despite large-scale troop reductions and base

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<sup>1195</sup> Cf. Kurc, Between defence autarky and dependency, pp. 273–274.

<sup>1196</sup> Cf. Bagci/Kurc, Turkey's strategic choice, p. 47.

<sup>1197</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1198</sup> Cf. Bechev, Dimitar 2017: Turkey's Ukrainian Gambit, in: *The American Interest* 2017, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2017/10/30/turkeys-ukrainian-gambit/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1199</sup> Cf. Poghosyan, US-Turkish relations in the Obama era, p. 44.

<sup>1200</sup> Cf. NATO, NATO Ballistic Missile Defence, 2016.

<sup>1201</sup> Cf. Aybet, The Evolution of NATO's three phases and Turkey's transatlantic relationship, pp. 32–33.

<sup>1202</sup> Cf. Chappell/Terlikowski, Turkey in NATO and towards CSDP, p. 150.

closures all over Europe, the US maintained some facilities (including tactical nuclear weapons) on Turkish soil,<sup>1203</sup> although “by mid-1994, the number of operational US bases and facilities (...) was down to four. Similarly, there was a dramatic drop in the number of dual-key nuclear weapons deployed in Turkey as well.”<sup>1204</sup>

#### 6.5.3.2. Feeling the need to increasingly going it alone

According to the Turkish political scientist Tarik Oguzlu “a (...) worrisome development from Turkey’s perspective has been the so-called pivoting to Asia strategy of the Obama administration. He goes on to outline that “Turkey’s anxieties have been fueled by the tendency of the (...) Obama presidency to retrench the USA from global affairs, most notably taking place in Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Even though such US inclinations appear to have increased Turkey’s room for maneuver in its neighborhood, they have also contributed to Turkey’s feeling of insecurity.”<sup>1205</sup> The fear of isolation and abandonment re-emerged time and again throughout Turkey’s NATO history as Section 6.5.1. has demonstrated. This concern began to grow, however, after the end of the Cold War and the subsequent disappearance of a common threat which had held together the Alliance as a whole and the United States and Turkey in particular—two allies whose differences could occasionally not be held in check (e.g., the Johnson letter of 1962, Cyprus crises of 1974). Part of the reason why Turkey still felt unsure about whether it could rely on US security guarantees was connected to American troop reductions that had commenced in the early 1990s in allied territory in Europe, including Turkey.<sup>1206</sup> The Obama administration continued this trend with the announcement to deactivate two combat brigades stationed in Germany and Italy in 2012; a couple of months prior to this announcement, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton laid the rhetorical foundation for America’s re-engagement with the Asia-Pacific. Yet, while this decision did not go by unnoticed in Turkey, evidence does not suggest that the pivot-announcement had a lasting effect on decision-makers in

<sup>1203</sup> Cf. Chappell/Terlikowski, Turkey in NATO and towards CSDP, p. 142.

<sup>1204</sup> Aykan, Mahmut Bali.: Turkish perspectives on Turkish-US relations concerning the Persian Gulf security in the post-Cold War era, 1989–1995. In: Middle East Journal, Vol. 50/ 1996, pp. 344–358, 345.

<sup>1205</sup> Oguzlu, Making sense of Turkey’s rising power status, p. 787.

<sup>1206</sup> Cf., for example, Kane, Tim: Global U.S. Deployment, 1950–2003. In: The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., 2004, p. 6.

Ankara. According to a government official, “nobody in NATO-Europe knew what the announcement of the pivot would entail. Turkey was fine with the announcement, assuming that US forces would continue to remain in Europe as Turkey regards the United States as the indispensable actor in transatlantic security affairs. Turkey did not want to see that the US’s re-calibration of its global commitments were [to come] at the expense of European security.”<sup>1207</sup> Similar arguments were voiced by academics. Professor Bagci from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara pointed out that the American decision to refocus its resources on another world region “did not prompt a particular concern in Turkey though the country realized that this move would have consequences on a global scale. American-Turkish relations in NATO were not affected by the pivot announcement and the materialization thereof, however.”<sup>1208</sup> Caglar Kurecik, Adjunct Instructor at Bilkent University in Ankara, made the case that the American pivot strategy did not have any impact on Turkey’s NATO policy whatsoever: “I have not registered any changes in Turkey’s attitude towards the US or NATO in conjunction with the pivot announcement.”<sup>1209</sup> One reason why Turkey did not feel concerned about the American announcement in the fall of 2011 could be connected to the circumstance that the country engaged in an Asia pivot of sorts itself in that Ankara began focusing more on other defense industry providers than the United States. In addition, the Turkish government instigated an initiative which aimed to make the country’s defense industry more autonomous by strengthening the domestic arms sector starting in 2012 (Capability Initiative/Defense Strategy). Seeking non-transatlantic procurement partners while at the same time strengthening the Turkish defense base were two goals that the attempted Chinese missile deal in 2013 would have been accomplished had the agreement gone through. Yet, the reasons for the 2012 Defense Strategy were not connected to the American pivot (announcement): “A direct link between the US rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific and the Turkish 2012 Defense Strategy does not exist. Turkey did and still does pursue a policy that would allow the country to become more autonomous, more independent of the United States. The pivot did not prompt this policy, however. Generally speaking, Turkey has been trying to improve its national production capabilities without stating a specific

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<sup>1207</sup> Author interview 30.

<sup>1208</sup> Author interview 31.

<sup>1209</sup> Author interview 34.

capability focus. The Turkish government has been striving to improve and domestically produce land, navel, and air systems without an expressed intent which tasks to use this capabilities for,” assessed the scholar Caglar Kurec.<sup>1210</sup> Ankara’s GMF Director Özgür Unluhisarcikli arrived at a similar conclusion in that Turkey has been increasingly trying to build up strategic autonomy by ways of procuring weapons and having partners other than NATO allies as a result of decreasing Turkish confidence in NATO.<sup>1211</sup> He added that the decision to increase the country’s strategic autonomy “is partly linked to the United States pivoting away from the Middle East starting with the Obama administration. Turkey saw this as an opportunity to fill a vacuum left behind by the Americans to establish itself as a more important regional actor.”<sup>1212</sup> The induction ceremony of a landing dock platform in 2015 undergirds the two academics viewpoints with regard to the autonomy argument. Erdogan stated on this occasion that the establishment of this platform would allow Turkey “to conduct military and humanitarian operations in every corner of the globe whenever necessary. A developing and growing Turkey has to increasingly make its presence felt abroad.”<sup>1213</sup>

Of at least equal standing as that of attaining the capability to project power abroad is Turkey’s desire to protect itself at home. One component of this since the end of the Cold War with the ensuing and growing instability in the region was the development of Ballistic Missile Defense systems. The necessity for such systems was firstly brought home to Turkish decision-makers during the Iraq War in 1991. On this and subsequent occasions (e.g., Iraq war 2003), Turkey asked for NATO missile defense support but did not receive the help it had hoped for, at least not enough from Turkey’s perspective.<sup>1214</sup> Yet, Turkey decided to contribute to NATO’s missile defense system in 2010 as a high-ranking US diplomat explained: “For the SM2 Aegis ships and the land based interceptors in Poland and Romania [according to the Obama team’s plans that were put in place after they had scrapped the Bush

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<sup>1210</sup> Author interview 34.

<sup>1211</sup> Cf. author interview 35, Ankara/Berlin, December 21, 2018.

<sup>1212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1213</sup> As quoted in Bagci, Kurec, Turkey’s strategic choice, p. 56.

<sup>1214</sup> Cf. Black, Ian 2003: Nato deadlocked as France and Germany refuse to back down, in: The Guardian 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/12/iraq.nato> (08.06.2019).

administration's missile defense plans] to work for a forward-deployed radar became necessary. Thus, Turkey was approached about hosting such a system on its soil. Ankara had two concerns about the Obama administration's plans in this respect one of which was the oil and gas dependence on Russia and Iran. Secondly, Erdogan wanted to demonstrate solidarity with the Alliance.”<sup>1215</sup>

However, this NATO missile defense system did not contribute to Turkey feeling secure vis-à-vis the upheavals occurring on its Southern border in Syria. On the contrary, with the Syrian Civil War entering its second year in 2013, Turkey became increasingly nervous about the situation on its southern border. While some allies provided Turkey with BMD support (Patriot missiles from Germany, the Netherlands and the United States) in response to the worsening situation in Syria in early 2013, Ankara felt that the aid did not suffice: “The Chinese missile deal that was close to conclusion in 2013 [though it did not materialize in the end] served as a means of signaling to the US and NATO that Turkey could take another route as the administration in Ankara was not happy about allied support at the time,” explained a Turkish War Studies Scholar.<sup>1216</sup> Turkey’s dissatisfaction with the Alliance in general and the United States in particular was not limited to their response vis-à-vis Syria. According to this expert, Turkey perceived a “lack of political leadership” during the Obama years in NATO at large.<sup>1217</sup> His assessment was reiterated by a retired brigadier general who had served at the Alliance’s Headquarters from 1988 to 1991 and 2003 to 2004 and continues to follow developments in NATO very closely: “The United States did withdraw from its traditional leadership role in NATO—leaving a critical gap which is still to be filled—though it did not retract from its commitment to NATO [completley], that is Article V.”<sup>1218</sup> This source continued pointing out that the Obama administration had neglected to focus on NATO affairs from the beginning of his first term in office in 2009.<sup>1219</sup>

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<sup>1215</sup> Author interview 37, Washington, D.C., April 6 and 12, 2018.

<sup>1216</sup> Author interview 32.

<sup>1217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1218</sup> Author interview 36, Ankara, December 6, 2018.

<sup>1219</sup> Cf. ibid.

#### 6.5.4. Torn between the principle of territorial integrity and Russia

Shortly after Ukraine gained the status of an independent nation state on August 24, 1991, Turkey recognized the country's newly established status on December 16 that same year. Ankara and Kiev instigated bilateral diplomatic ties a few months later in early 1992.<sup>1220</sup> While Russia and Turkey share a troubled history, Ankara has been prioritizing relations with Moscow over Kiev, mainly for reasons of trade and energy needs.<sup>1221</sup> Against the backdrop of Turkey's economic and energy related interests in Russia as well as a historically grown sense of avoiding provocation toward the neighbor to the north-east, Ankara, as other allies for driven by similar reasons, was initially skeptical about the idea of enlarging NATO in the early 1990s. The Alliance's most southern member state emphasized that "NATO's 'open door' policy should not restore tensions with Russia (...) Still, Turkey ultimately agreed to expand NATO to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in 1999 and has since supported every round of enlargement."<sup>1222</sup> Yet, policymakers in Ankara did not abandon the logic behind its initial hesitation toward the Alliance's expansion per se as opening the door for Georgia and Ukraine was viewed with more reservations "(...) mainly for fear of antagonizing Russia."<sup>1223</sup> A case in point was Ankara's decision to restrict "the nature and level of US naval presence in the Black Sea during the [2008 Georgian-Russian] crisis, in accordance with Moscow's preferences (...)."<sup>1224</sup> At the same time, Turkey has been a keen advocate for admitting countries of the Balkans into the Alliance as their membership was not as thorny an issue with Russia as expanding NATO by former Soviet Union states.<sup>1225</sup> In addition, the Republic of Turkey as the successor to the Ottoman Empire has had traditionally close political, economic, and cultural links to its

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<sup>1220</sup> Cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Relations between Turkey and Ukraine, n.d., <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-ukraine.en.mfa> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1221</sup> N.B.: Russia provides 53% of Turkey's overall gas imports, cf. The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies 2018: Gas Supply Changes in Turkey, 2018, <https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Gas-Supply-Changes-in-Turkey-Insight-24.pdf>, p. 1. (08.06.2019).

<sup>1222</sup> Chappell/Terlikowski, Turkey in NATO and towards CSDP, p. 142.

<sup>1223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1224</sup> Park, Turkey and the US, p. 148.

<sup>1225</sup> Cf. Benitez, Jorge 2015: Turkish Leaders Make Bold Statements at NATO Meeting, in: Atlantic Council 2015, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/turkish-leaders-make-bold->

former subjects in the (Western) Balkans.<sup>1226</sup> Driven by similar motives as those supporting the membership of former Yugoslav countries, Turkey displayed eagerness to include newly independent countries in Central Asia in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative established in 1994 hoping to “militarily reach out to its long lost kin states.”<sup>1227</sup> Using this instrument of establishing political and military ties with former adversary countries would allow forging a “ring of friendly countries around Turkey (...) without directly dealing with Russia”<sup>1228</sup> as the PfP format was not an official precursor to NATO membership. Forging a “ring of friendly countries” in its immediate and mediate neighborhood served as a decisive argument swaying Turkish military and political leaders to speak out publicly in favor of NATO enlargement before the first round was formalized in 1997.<sup>1229</sup> Yet, as hinted at above, a prospective Ukrainian membership was treated with special care by the Alliance and Turkey in particular. Although Ankara supported the cultivation of closer ties between NATO and Kiev, Turkey’s stance on membership was ambiguous.<sup>1230</sup>

#### **6.5.4.1. Supporting Crimean Tatars in the presence of superior Russia**

Turkey and Ukraine moved closer on a bilateral level in 2011 by ways of establishing a strategic forum. A year later, in October 2012, then Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu at the Ambassador’s Conference of Ukraine praised the “strategic partnership” developing between Ankara and Kiev; meanwhile, the minister

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statements-at-nato-meeting (08.06.2019).

<sup>1226</sup> Cf. Aydintasbas, Asli 2019: From Myth to Reality. How To Understand Turkey’s Role in the Western Balkans, in: European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Brief 2019, [https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/from\\_myth\\_to\\_reality\\_how\\_to\\_understand\\_turkeys\\_role\\_in\\_the\\_western\\_balkans.pdf](https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/from_myth_to_reality_how_to_understand_turkeys_role_in_the_western_balkans.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1227</sup> Güvenc/Özel, NATO and Turkey in the post-Cold War world, p. 547.

<sup>1228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1230</sup> Cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey’s and NATO’s views on current issues of the Alliance, n.d., [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/ii---turkey\\_s-contributions-to-international-peace-keeping-activities.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/ii---turkey_s-contributions-to-international-peace-keeping-activities.en.mfa) (08.06.2019); N.B.: In the run-up to NATO’s Warsaw summit in 2016, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavusoglu stated “We favor NATO expansion ... And we would like to see the 2016 summit aimed at expansion,” Benitez, Turkish Leaders Make Bold Statements at NATO Meeting.

encouraged both countries to move closer together still, both politically and economically including a free trade agreement and visa liberation.<sup>1231</sup> Building on a bilateral relationship which was growing stronger in the years prior to 2014, Turkey was quick to react to events in Ukraine and on the Crimean Island in particular. Only a few days after pro-Russian gunmen took control of critically important buildings in Simferopol, the Crimean capital,<sup>1232</sup> in late February 2014, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu warned on March 1 that "if Ukraine breaks up, this will not be limited to that country. Georgia, Moldova and Belarus will be affected instantly,"<sup>1233</sup> thereby raising the world's attention to possible regional repercussions of dividing Ukraine. Clearly, with Turkey's geographical proximity to the listed countries, all bordering the Black Sea like Turkey, Ankara expressed its worries that developments in Crimea could have a destabilizing impact on the region, including the country's own stability. While the minister pointed out that Russia's "strategic interests" in Ukraine and Crimea should be acknowledged, without specifying what these interests would amount to, he underlined that Kiev's territorial integrity should be upheld, including Crimea's status as an autonomous Republic of Ukraine.<sup>1234</sup> A few days later Davutoglu reiterated his message alongside Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Rasit Meredow at a joint conference in Ankara on March 7: "The exclusion of any ethnic or political side may cause further unrest in the country and pose a threat throughout the Black Sea basin."<sup>1235</sup> Stressing the importance of the Black Sea in the context of the unfolding crisis in Crimea was of critical importance to Turkey as the country's Black Sea coast is located opposite

<sup>1231</sup> Cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012: Speech Delivered by Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey at the Ambassador's Conference of Ukraine, 2012, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-mr\\_-ahmet-davuto% C4%9Flu \\_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey-at-the-conference-of-ambassadors-in-ukraine\\_-2-october-2012\\_-kiev.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/speech-delivered-by-mr_-ahmet-davuto% C4%9Flu _-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey-at-the-conference-of-ambassadors-in-ukraine_-2-october-2012_-kiev.en.mfa) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1232</sup> Cf. BBC New 2014: Ukraine crisis. Timeline, in: BBC News 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1233</sup> Hürriyet Daily News 2014: Turkish FM Davutoglu warns over partition of Ukraine, in: Hürriyet Daily News 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-fm-davutoglu-warns-over-partition-of-ukraine--63110> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1234</sup> Cf. ibid.

<sup>1235</sup> Hürriyet Daily News 2014: Ukraine split may destabilize Eurasia, Davutoglu says, in: Hürriyet Daily News 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ukraine-split-may-destabilize-eurasia-davutoglu-says-63314> (08.06.2019).

the Crimean Peninsula. With tensions growing in the North, Ankara had reason to watch developments on the Ukrainian Island carefully and emphasize that steps ought to be taken to resolve the crisis peacefully. Along these lines, the Turkish Foreign Minister during a working visit to Kiev from February 28 to March 1 urged that “all problems in Crimea should be solved through dialogue within the unity of Ukraine. Crimea should be a center of welfare, tourism and relations among cultures not of military tension.”<sup>1236</sup> In Turkey’s mind, part of a non-violent solution to the crisis was to work toward “Ukraine (...) not be[ing] divided into eastern, western, or pro-Europe, pro-Russian borders”<sup>1237</sup> as the Turkish Foreign Minister on May 7, 2014, formulated his government’s opinion at a Council of Europe meeting in Vienna. Pursuing such a course of action would allow a tight-rope to be walked as Ankara was interested in remaining on good terms with Russia while at the same time defending the inviolability of a nation state’s borders inwardly and outwardly. At the behest of a peaceful transition of power in the country, Davutoglu reminded the government in Kiev of democratic principles to be respected lest further unrest should spread further still: “While protecting its unity, the Ukrainian government should take steps to make reforms that would give rights to all of its people with different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.”<sup>1238</sup> Already in March during a working visit to Kiev, Davutoglu delivered a message about how Ankara expected events in Crimea to precede, a message directed at Kiev and Moscow: “Turkey is ready to contribute to decrease the tension and to settle the problems in Crimea (...) Let’s keep the Crimean Peninsula as a peninsula of peace and mutual welfare. All groups should coexist peacefully. It is of great importance for us that Crimean Tatars live in peace together with other groups in Crimea as equal citizens within the unity of Ukraine (...) Turkey is ready to provide every support for the bright future of both Ukraine and Crimea.”<sup>1239</sup> The fate of the Crimean Tatars was

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<sup>1236</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014: Foreign Minister Davutoglu “Turkey is ready to contribute to decrease the tension and to settle the problems in Crimea,” 2014, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-davutoglu-turkey-is-ready-to-contribute-to-decrease-the-tension-and-to-settle-the-problems-in-crimea.en.mfa> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1237</sup> Daily Sabah 2014: FM Davutoglu encourages Ukraine’s unity, in: Daily Sabah 2014, <https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2014/05/07/fm-davutoglu-encourages-for-ukraines-unity> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1239</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Minister Davutoglu “Turkey is ready to contribute to decrease the tension and to settle the

of particular importance to the Turkish government when referring to protecting the rights of minorities in Ukraine. The reason for that can be found in the fact that Turkish people and Crimean Tatars had descended from the Turkic people—both groups speaking the Turkish language. Thus, the government did not grow tired of stressing that Crimea was the homeland of Crimean Tatars not only of ethnic Russians.<sup>1240</sup> Illustrating this point, Mevlüt Çavusoglu who superseded Davutoglu as Turkish Foreign Minister in August 2014 reiterated the following during a visit to Kiev on November 10, 2014: “The condition of Crimean Tatars is of particular concern to Turkey. Unfortunately[,] today Crimean Tatars are held under pressure by the de facto administration [the separatists].”<sup>1241</sup> To reinforce his government’s message of concern for the well-being of the minority group after the status of the Ukrainian peninsula was upended, the minister pointed out that “Turkey does not recognize [the] illegal annexation of Crimea and will continue to do so in the future.”<sup>1242</sup> The situation of Turkey’s kin was implicitly brought forward as one motive to explain why in March 2015 President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced in a joint press conference with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in Kiev that Turkey was ready to support Ukraine financially: “We (...) wish for the continuation of Ukraine’s stance of protecting the rights of all ethnic and religious minorities, especially Crimean Tatar Turks, who have proved their loyalty to their country during this crisis.”<sup>1243</sup> The aid offer included a \$50 million loan to help Kiev balance out its budget deficit, the other part, \$10 million, was assigned to humanitarian aid for the displaced population due to the war in the eastern part of the country. Erdogan used the opportunity to underline what his former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu had emphasized on numerous occasions while still in office: “We have expressed our views on Ukraine’s territorial integrity, including Crimea, on every

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problems in Crimea”, 2014.

<sup>1240</sup> Cf. Daily Sabah, FM Davutoglu encourages Ukraine’s unity, 2014.

<sup>1241</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014: Foreign Minister Çavusoglu is in Ukraine, 2014, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-cavusoglu-is-in-ukraine.en.mfa> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1243</sup> Zinets, Nathalia 2015: Turkey offers \$50 million loan to Ukraine, urges protection of Crimean Tatars, in: Reuters 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-ukraine-idUSKBN0MG0VZ20150320> (08.06.2019).

platform.”<sup>1244</sup> By that the Turkish head of state meant to underline that Ankara supported Ukraine’s status as an independent and sovereign state which is why he went on to back the Minsk II agreement: “We support the consensus signed in Minsk on February 12 [based on Ukraine’s territorial integrity] (...).”<sup>1245</sup> Still a year later, in March 2016, President Erdogan in a joint press conference with Ukrainian Petro Poroshenko once more emphasized that Turkey would not recognize the annexation of the Crimean peninsula: “(..) I ask Russia, who called you to enter [eastern] Ukrainian territory?”<sup>1246</sup> As the Russian occupation of Crimea is closely linked to the situation of Crimean Tatars in Turkey’s mind, the Turkish head of state made sure to raise the issue again: “We are supposed to keep [the issue of] violations of rights of all sects facing similar problems in Crimea on [the] international agenda (...) We will act in cooperation, through steps within diplomacy and law for overcoming the unlawful situation in Crimea.”<sup>1247</sup> By mentioning the “violation of rights of all sects,” Erdogan was referring to accusations of Crimean authorities having persecuted and harassed Crimean Tatars after the Russian annexation in March 2014 as this minority did not accept and protested the outcome of the referendum. These claims were brought forward not only by Tatarian political leaders but also by the High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay in May of the same year.<sup>1248</sup> While the Turkish government stressed the need for a diplomatic solution of the conflict in Ukraine, other forms of support were implemented and perpetuated as well. For example, ties between the countries’ navies were intensi-

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<sup>1244</sup> Daily Sabeh 2015: Turkey to provide \$50 million loan, \$10 million grant to Ukraine. Erdogan, in: Daily Sabeh 2015, <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2015/03/20/turkey-to-provide-50-million-loan-10-million-grant-to-ukraine-erdogan> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1246</sup> Daily Sabeh 2016: Turkey won’t recognize Russia’s unlawful annexation of Crimea. President Erdogan, in Daily Sabeh 2016, <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2016/03/09/turkey-wont-recognize-russias-unlawful-annexation-of-crimea-president-erdogan> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1248</sup> Cf. Luhn, Alec 2014: Vladimir Putin tells Crimea’s Tatars their future lies with Russia, in: The Guardian 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/16/vladimir-putin-crimea-tatars-russian-ukraine> (08.06.2019); for further reading on the issue, cf. Human Rights Watch 2017: Crimea. Persecution of Crimean Tatars Intensifies, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/14/crimea-persecution-crimean-tatars-intensifies> (08.06.2019).

fied after 2014 with the Turkish side assisting their Ukrainian counterparts in training.<sup>1249</sup> In a similar fashion, Ankara also participated in NATO's Trust Funds for Ukraine that were established in reaction to Russia's aggression toward the country. Like Germany and Poland, Turkey signed up to contribute to the Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4) project started in July 2015 with the purpose to modernize Ukraine's C4 capabilities. Other projects Turkey participated in included Cyber Defense to help Ukraine establish technical capabilities to fend off cyber-attacks. While Ankara contributed to initiatives financially and with manpower, Turkey did not serve as a lead nation—including the already mentioned projects as well as the others the country participated in (Logistics and Standardization, Medical Rehabilitation, Military Career Transition).<sup>1250</sup>

#### 6.5.4.2. Cautious not to rock the boat

Ankara did condemn Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea as well as Russia's crucial role in instigating and perpetuating the Civil War in Ukraine. In addition, Turkey provided bilateral support to Kiev and contributed to NATO's Trust Funds for Ukraine. While these funds had existed already, this form of support was increased and strengthened following the crisis year of 2014. Following the Russian aggression toward Ukraine, one of the means of supporting the country was the establishment of Trust Funds. Turkey joined other NATO allies in this regard. A Turkish government official underlined that Turkey has traditionally been supportive of NATO's partnership programs, including the outreach the Alliance maintained with Kiev.<sup>1251</sup> A Turkish War Studies scholar argued along similar lines: "Crimea was not just about the illegal Russian annexation but also showed that NATO's open door policy vis-à-vis Georgia and Ukraine had failed since the Alliance could not protect these aspirant members from Russian aggression—a policy Turkey was a major supporter of in the past."<sup>1252</sup> Thus, it was a given for Turkey to join the rest

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<sup>1249</sup> Cf. Bosphorus Naval News 2015: Multinational Maritime Security Center of Excellence Trains Ukrainian Sailors, in: Bosphorus Naval News 2015, <https://turkishnavy.net/2015/06/23/multinational-maritime-security-center-of-excellence-trains-ukrainian-sailors/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1250</sup> Cf. NATO, Summary of Ongoing NATO Trust Funds, 2017.

<sup>1251</sup> Cf. author interview 30.

<sup>1252</sup> Author interview 32.

of NATO in bolstering Ukraine's Trust Funds following 2014. In addition, a Turkish government official emphasized that Turkey had increased its participation in NATO's Air Situation Data Exchange (ASDE) program after the illegal annexation of Crimea.<sup>1253</sup> The ASDE mechanism was launched in 2001 with the aim to provide "a means for the reciprocal exchange of filtered air situation information between NATO and a Partner country."<sup>1254</sup> Initially, a hub for swapping information had been established in Hungary after Ukraine joined the program in 2008, a second followed in 2011 in Turkey. In response to the evolving crisis in 2014, NATO followed up a Ukrainian request in that the Alliance extended the area it covered to provide Ukraine with information.<sup>1255</sup> In addition to supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity, Turkey also stood up for protecting the rights of Crimean Tatars. The lines of argumentation as to why Ankara enhanced its support for Ukraine and began helping Crimean Tatars both rhetorically and materially are twofold. Firstly, Turkey's actions vis-à-vis Ukraine and Crimea, respectively, were compelled by the motive of "expressing solidarity with Ukraine, both bilaterally and through NATO while making sure that the Tatars did not suffer under the Russian annexation" as a Turkish government official explained.<sup>1256</sup> Professor Bagci from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara took a similar approach arguing the "reason we're supporting NATO efforts to support Ukraine is down to Turkey wanting to express Alliance solidarity with its partners."<sup>1257</sup> Özgür Unluhisarcikli from the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Ankara added that Turkey's motivation to participate in any NATO operation is fueled by a desire "to level the playing field with its allies. Thus, Ankara's Alliance engagement is closely tied to demonstrate alliance solidarity."<sup>1258</sup> On the flipside—and this is the second line of argument that was given to explain Turkey's contributions to NATO's Trust Funds for Ukraine in general and Turkish bilateral support in particular—Turkey's contributions to these funds were rather of symbolic because Ankara did not want to provoke Moscow

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<sup>1253</sup> Cf. author interview 30.

<sup>1254</sup> NATO 2008: Ukraine joins NATO Air Situation Data Exchange programme, 2008 [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_7802.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_7802.htm?selectedLocale=en) (08.06.019).

<sup>1255</sup> Cf. NATO, NATO's practical support to Ukraine, 2015.

<sup>1256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1257</sup> Author interview 31.

<sup>1258</sup> Author interview 35.

unnecessarily.<sup>1259</sup> Furthermore, it was said that while Crimean Tatars were of importance to Turkey as they shared a similar heritage, a large portion of Crimean Tatars are angry with Ankara as they had hoped for more Turkish support which did not come. According to Professor Bagci from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, it was unlikely that greater support would be granted to Crimean Tatars as Turkey did not want to aggravate Russia needlessly.<sup>1260</sup> Thus, the explanation as to why Turkey decided to support Ukraine and in some respects Crimean Tatars is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, Turkey wanted to grant aid to Ukraine and Crimean Tatars in particular to support the latter as they shared a similar Turkic lineage. On the other hand, Turkey was cautious about keeping its support in check in order not to provoke Russia: “Crimea is very important to Turkey. Yet, the support of Crimean Tatars is very low-profile because Turkey knows that Russia has the upper hand on the island. This situation is very unlikely to change and Ankara is aware of that,” a Turkish War Studies scholar commented.<sup>1261</sup> He added that “no American influence was necessary for Turkey to opt for supporting NATO’s approach towards Ukraine as well as Turkey’s bilateral support of Ukraine and Crimean Tatars.”<sup>1262</sup> Turkey’s approach toward Ukraine in- and outside the NATO framework was informed by the principle of being of two minds. While Turkish officials, including President Erdogan, supported the principle of territorial integrity which Russia had violated by annexing Crimea, Turkey “has deepening trade ties with Russia and has been reluctant to openly criticize Moscow’s actions in Ukraine ‘(...) nobody should expect from this visit [Erdogan’s trip to Kiev in March 2015] a step from Turkey that could strain ties with Russia’, a (...) a[n] official said ahead of the meetings with Poroshenko.”<sup>1263</sup>

#### **6.5.5. Torn between fears of abandonment and fears of entrapment**

Turkey was and is equally a provider and recipient of reassurance measures organized under the aegis of NATO preceding the latest instigation of collective defense

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<sup>1259</sup> Cf. author interview 31.

<sup>1260</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1261</sup> Author interview 32.

<sup>1262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1263</sup> Zinets, Turkey offers \$50 million loan to Ukraine, urges protection of Crimean Tatars, 2015.

activities. Both roles Ankara occupies in the Alliance's reassurance context are explored in the following section. On the point of being a provider to NATO's reassurance, 2 years after the second enlargement round to the East which entailed the accession of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania among others, Turkey decided to participate in NATO's Baltic Air Policing exercises, which was launched on March 29, 2004, with the agreement of the three Baltic Republics into NATO.<sup>1264</sup> From April 1 through to July 31, 2006, Ankara was in charge of the 9th rotation patrolling the airspace of the Baltic States as well as Slovenia. To that end, the Turkish Airforce dispatched four Quick Reaction Aircraft (F-16) as well as about 80 troops to Lithuania's Siauliai International Airport.<sup>1265</sup> In addition to contributing to reassuring NATO allies, Turkey received support from its partners, too. The war in Syria with its spill-over effects on Turkey is certainly one prominent example in this regard which will be explored in greater detail below. Turkey's role in the Black Sea is another. In accordance with the 1936 Montreux Convention, Turkey is the guardian of the Black Sea providing Ankara with the right to control access to this body of water.<sup>1266</sup> Thus, Turkey is a key player in thwarting Russian influence in the Black Sea—at least in theory. Similar to Turkish actions vis-à-vis Ukraine, “Ankara is wary of confronting Russia—a country on which it is heavily dependent in terms of energy (...).”<sup>1267</sup>

#### **6.5.5.1. Turkey's balancing act: Between reassurance and dialogue**

In response to Russia's covert and overt aggression against Ukraine and its provocative behavior toward predominantly North-Eastern NATO member states, Turkey

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<sup>1264</sup> Cf. Defense Aerospace: Turkish Military Personnel to Take Over Execution of NATO Air Policing Over the Baltic States, 2006, [http://www.defense-aerospace.com/article-view/release/67692/turkey-to-deploy-f\\_16s-over-baltics-\(mar-29\).html](http://www.defense-aerospace.com/article-view/release/67692/turkey-to-deploy-f_16s-over-baltics-(mar-29).html) (08.06.2019) and cf. NATO 2018: Air policing. Securing NATO airspace, 2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_132685.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132685.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1265</sup> Cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations and cf. Defense Aerospace, Turkish Military Personnel to Take Over Execution of NATO Air Policing Over the Baltic States.

<sup>1266</sup> Cf. Simón, Luis: NATO's Rebirth. Assessing NATO's Eastern “Flank.” In: Parameters, Vol. 44/ 2014, pp. 67–79, 75.

<sup>1267</sup> Ibid., pp. 75–76.

decided to participate in allied reassurance which was set in motion in 2014. Consequently, in May 2015, then Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu offered on behalf of the Turkish government to assume responsibility as the framework nation for the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force in 2021.<sup>1268</sup> Upon the conceptualization and establishment of the VJTF—one of the major outcomes of NATO's Wales Summit in September 2014—Turkey had agreed to be rotationally in charge of the newly agreed on allied task force. The other nations sharing responsibility with Turkey for the leadership and maintenance of the “spearhead”-force include British, French, German-Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and Polish troops.<sup>1269</sup> Following the other critical summit in the 2014–2016 period, the Alliance's gathering in Warsaw in July 2016, the so-called enhanced forward presence was implemented which entailed the stationing of four multinational battalions to the three Baltic Republics as well as Poland. Unlike the German and Polish government, Ankara did not agree to contribute to any of the four multinationally structured battle groups designed to reassure the host countries and deter Russia from infringing on their territorial integrity at the same time. Yet, reassurance and deterrence measures which followed the Wales and Warsaw summits were not limited to or exclusively designed for the Eastern flank of the Alliance. The territorial reach of these activities included the Southern-Eastern as well as the Southern flank of NATO, too. As part of the Readiness Action Plan introduced at the Wales summit, the Headquarters Multinational Division South-East (HQ MND-SE) was established in December 2015 in Bucharest, Romania.<sup>1270</sup> Organized under the operational control of Joint Force Command Naples, Italy, the HQ MND-SE's mission is to command and control collective de-

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<sup>1268</sup> Cf. Erkus, Sevil 2018: Turkey takes heavy agenda to NATO Summit, in: Hürriyet Daily News 2018, <http://www.hurriyedailynews.com/turkey-takes-heavy-agenda-to-nato-summit-134423> (08.06. 2019); cf. NATO 2016: NATO's Readiness Action Plan, 2016, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_07/20160627\\_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf) (08.06.2019); cf. Erkus, Sevil 2015: Turkey offers to take lead in NATO's rapid reaction forces, in: Hürriyet Daily News 2015, <http://www.hurriyedailynews.com/turkey-offers-to-take-lead-in-natos-rapid-reaction-forces--82662> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1269</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1270</sup> Cf. NATO 2015: NATO activates new Multinational Division Southeast headquarters in Bucharest, 2015, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_125356.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_125356.htm?selectedLocale=en) (08.06.2019).

fense operations covering the Southern-Eastern terrain of the Alliance. To complement the establishment of the headquarters, NATO allies decided to set up a Romanian-led multinational brigade in Craiova (Romania) as part of the so-called tailored forward presence (TFP) which is led by the HQ MND-SE;<sup>1271</sup> mirroring the enhanced forward presence, the TFP is designed to bolster collective defense in the Southeastern territories of the Alliance.<sup>1272</sup> Alongside 14 allies, Turkey provided the headquarters with warrant officers and non-commissioned officers.<sup>1273</sup> In addition and following numerous calls for action by Turkish President Erdogan,<sup>1274</sup> NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced in late October 2016 that several states, including Turkey, had agreed to present plans to increase naval and air patrols in the Black Sea region.<sup>1275</sup> NATO's increased presence in the Black Sea exemplified Turkey's role as both a provider and recipient of the Alliance's reassurance measures launched since 2014. While Ankara contributed to the presence in the Black Sea it also benefitted from it as the country is located on the shores of the Black Sea—a body of water which Erdogan claimed had turned into a "Russian lake" since the annexation of Crimea.<sup>1276</sup> Turkey benefits greatly from allied actions that secure member states as located on NATO's most Southern flank, the

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<sup>1271</sup> Cf. NATO 2018: Romania's Multi-National Brigade. Bolstering NATO's Tailored Forward Presence, 2018, <https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2018/romanias-multinational-brigade-bolstering-natos-tailored-forward-presence-> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1272</sup> Cf. NATO, Boosting NATO's presence in the east and southeast, 2019.

<sup>1273</sup> Cf. NATO: Headquarters Multinational Division Southeast/ HQ MND-SE. About, n.d., <http://www.en.mndse.ro/about> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1274</sup> Cf. Celikkan, Erdinc 2016: Erdogan will go to NATO Warsaw Summit with critical messages on Black Sea, Syria, in: Hürriyet Daily News 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erdogan-will-go-to-nato-warsaw-summit-with-critical-messages-on-black-sea-syria-100583> (08.06. 2019); cf. Kucera, Joshua 2016: Erdogan, In Plea To NATO, Says Black Sea Has Become "Russian Lake," in: Eurasianet 2016, <https://eurasianet.org/erdogan-plea-nato-says-black-sea-has-become-russian-lake> (08.06.2019); cf. Sahin, Kaan 2017: Die russische Option. Kann die Türkei eine Allianz mit Russland schmieden? In: Arbeitspapier Sicherheitspolitik, No.17/ 2017, S.4, <https://www.baks.bund.de/de/arbeitspapiere/2017/die-russische-option-kann-die-tuerkei-eine-allianz-mit-russland-schmieden> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1275</sup> Cf. Touma, Ana Maria 2016: NATO Boosts Eastern flank to Reassure Nervous Allies, in: BalkanInsight 2016, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/nato-boosts-eastern-flank-to-reassure-nervous-allies-10-27-2016> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1276</sup> Cf. Kucera, Erdogan, In Plea To NATO, Says Black Sea Has Become "Russian Lake", 2016.

Turkish government has been preoccupied with the Civil War in Syria raging since 2011 pushing Ankara to call for Alliance support. Accordingly, Turkey asked for allied political consultations under the Washington Treaty's Article 4 in the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in the summer of 2012 after the Syrian government had shot down a Turkish aircraft.<sup>1277</sup> While no concrete actions were taken at the Council meeting in reaction to Syrian intrusions into Turkish airspace, the government in Ankara addressed a letter to NATO's then Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in November in which the country asked for Alliance support to be better equipped for the threat emanating from the neighbor to the South. In the letter, Ankara requested the dislocation of NATO Patriot missiles to its territory to help it defend itself from further Syrian attacks. The government clearly stated the missile system was only to be used for defensive purposes as the Patriots Turkey asked for were capable of intercepting missiles as well as aircraft—the latter function of the system could thus be used for the enforcement of a no-fly zone, a step Turkey had been calling for vis-à-vis the border region with Syria for a while.<sup>1278</sup> Then Turkish President Abdullah Gül undergirded his government's intentions with regard to the requested missile system: "When these type[s] of potential dangers are out there [referring to the war in Syria], all the necessary precautions are taken. One of these precautions is to take measures to counter ballistic missiles, medium and short-range missiles (...) Therefore, for defensive purposes (...) these types of contingency plans, have for a long time been considered within NATO."<sup>1279</sup> The President's argument was reiterated by the country's then Defense Minister a couple of weeks later: "We asked for Patriots from NATO taking into account the critical situation that emerged on our border with Syria (...) The aim is for the protection of the widest possible area in Turkey."<sup>1280</sup> After Turkey's call was granted by the

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<sup>1277</sup> Cf. NATO 2012: NAC Statement on the shooting down of a Turkish aircraft by Syria, 2012, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_88652.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_88652.htm) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1278</sup> Cf. BBC News 2015: Turkey PM. Syria no-fly zone needed, in: BBC News 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33868627> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1279</sup> Reuters 2012: Turkish President says NATO mulling missiles for Turkey, in: Reuters 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/syria-crisis-turkey-border/update-1-turkish-president-says-nato-mulling-missiles-for-turkey-idUSL5E8M8BWP20121108> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1280</sup> Reuters 2012: Turkey expects NATO Patriot missile decision within week, 2012, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-syria-crisis-turkey-nato/turkey-expects-nato-patriot-missile-decision-within-week->

NAC on December 4, 2012,<sup>1281</sup> Dutch and German Patriots along with military personnel to operate the missiles arrived in Turkey in late January 2013 – the system was set up in Kahramanmaraş, a city about 100 kilometers away from the Syrian border to support Turkey's air defense against missile threats from the Southern neighbor.<sup>1282</sup> Dutch and German troops were later joined by American forces. All these countries carried out the mission for a three year period before withdrawing their Patriot systems from Turkey in late 2015 and early 2016, respectively.<sup>1283</sup> The Dutch government ended its troops' mission in 2015 and was replaced by Spanish forces. After Berlin and Washington followed Den Haag's example and brought home their soldiers and Patriot systems as well, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Cavusoglu stated on February 1, 2016, that “we welcome Spain's decision to extend its Patriot [missile] deployment to Turkey in 2016 and we expect more announcements shortly.”<sup>1284</sup> Spanish forces were joined by Italian forces alongside their air defense system ASTER SAMP/T in early June 2016.<sup>1285</sup> As of March 2017, Spain stationed surface-to-air missile batteries in Adana, while Italy provided a similar system located in Kahramanmaraş—both batteries are under allied command and are plugged into NATO's air defense system.<sup>1286</sup> The “Support and Assurance for

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idUKBRE8AN08E20121124 (08.06.2019).

<sup>1281</sup> Cf. Bundeswehr 2016: Türkei – AF TUR (Active Fence Turkey), 2016, [http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/einsatzbw/start/abgeschlossene\\_einsaetze/aftur/?ut/p/z1/hU5NC4IwGP4tHbzufZmV2m2dpESChHSXmLpmsZyspf38DE9B0nN7PnmAQw68Ff1VCXc1rdAjL\\_j6vA2TLKERpdne95HFaZQu4yUipXD6FCjjTNgCMdaQjFuBPMbARyBA7-JXrxIZ6zT0\\_hFRfR5C0Yi21vJgKjYJO-BKm3K6ztrSDxVwKy\\_SSkuedpQb57rHxkMPh2EgyhilJamlh78\\_ajXk4yLC0N3zAf2V7hO2eANUE1Kd/dz/d5/L2dBIEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/#Z7\\_B8LTL2922\\_TK330AHN9N4H40027](http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/einsatzbw/start/abgeschlossene_einsaetze/aftur/?ut/p/z1/hU5NC4IwGP4tHbzufZmV2m2dpESChHSXmLpmsZyspf38DE9B0nN7PnmAQw68Ff1VCXc1rdAjL_j6vA2TLKERpdne95HFaZQu4yUipXD6FCjjTNgCMdaQjFuBPMbARyBA7-JXrxIZ6zT0_hFRfR5C0Yi21vJgKjYJO-BKm3K6ztrSDxVwKy_SSkuedpQb57rHxkMPh2EgyhilJamlh78_ajXk4yLC0N3zAf2V7hO2eANUE1Kd/dz/d5/L2dBIEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/#Z7_B8LTL2922_TK330AHN9N4H40027) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1282</sup> Cf. Hürriyet Daily News 2013: Dutch and German Patriots arrive in Turkey, in: Hürriyet Daily News 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/dutch-and-german-patriots-arrive-in-turkey-39572> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1283</sup> Cf. Özüm, Emre 2016: NATO to boost defence presence in Turkey after Russian violation, in: Daily Sabah 2016, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2016/02/02/nato-to-boost-defense-presence-in-turkey-after-russian-violation> (08.06.2019); cf. Bundeswehr: Türkei – AF TUR (Active Fence Turkey); cf. TRT World 2016: Italy deploys air defence system to Turkey, in: TRT World 2016, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/italian-defence-system-deployment-de-stresses-turkey-125934> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1285</sup> Cf. TRT World, Italy deploys air defence system to Turkey, 2016.

<sup>1286</sup> Cf. NATO 2017, NATO's defence and deterrence and cf. NATO,

Turkey" (also referred to as "Tailored Assurance Measures for Turkey")<sup>1287</sup> package, which the Patriot deployment is but one part of, was augmented in December 2015 by the Alliance in reaction to heightened tensions between Ankara and Moscow following the Turkish shooting-down of a Russian fighter jet in Turkish airspace on November 24 the same year.<sup>1288</sup> Apart from the continuation of the Patriot deployment to protect Turkish airspace, NATO member states agreed to dispatch allied owned AWACS aircraft for surveillance purposes, enhance air policing over Turkey, and increase naval presence, including maritime patrol aircraft, in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea; Germany and Denmark volunteered to provide ships for the latter part of the mission.<sup>1289</sup> The Turkish government seemed to be content with the assurance package NATO member states had mustered for its Southern flank partner as Turkish Foreign Minister alluded to on February 1, 2016: "All security actions indicate the strong commitment of Turkish allies to the defense of the country."<sup>1290</sup> The Turkish General Staff published on its website in March a message underlining that the Alliance's reassurance mission is "displaying NATO's support to Turkey and the alliance's unity and solidarity and providing deterrence vis-à-vis potential hostile threats against the alliance's territorial integrity."<sup>1291</sup> The statement went on to implicitly commend some of the concrete steps that had been taken to bolster Turkish defense: "In line with the Syria crisis and developments taking place in the region and within the content of reassurance measures for Turkey, a NATO AWACS plane has begun conducting [surveillance] duty in Turkish airspace from March 12 to March 15 (...) These duties are planned to be conducted

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Augmentation of Turkey's Air Defence, 2017,  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_01/20170113\\_1701-factsheet-patriot\\_en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_01/20170113_1701-factsheet-patriot_en.pdf) (08.06.2019).

<sup>1287</sup> Cf. NATO: NATO Assurance Measures, n.d., <https://shape.nato.int/nato-assurance-measures> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1288</sup> Cf. Emmott, Robin 2015: Exclusive. NATO agrees Turkey air defense package, seeks 'predictability', in: Reuters 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-turkey-nato-exclusive-idUSKBN0U123520151218> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1289</sup> Ibid. and cf. Özüm, NATO to boost defense presence in Turkey after Russian violation, 2016.

<sup>1290</sup> Özüm, NATO to boost defense presence in Turkey after Russian violation, 2016.

<sup>1291</sup> Hürriyet Daily News 2016: NATO begins periodic surveillance of Turkish airspace, in: Hürriyet Daily News 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/nato-begins-periodic-surveillance-of-turkish-airspace-96366> (08.06.2019).

regularly and within certain periods in the coming months too.”<sup>1292</sup> Indeed, AWACS flights patrolling Turkish airspace were extended. Apart from NATO-owned capabilities, bilateral requests were met with affirmation, too. In early November 2015, the US government agreed to send six F-15C fighter jets to the Turkish base in Incirlik to “conduct air patrols to assist in defense of the Turkish airspace.”<sup>1293</sup>

#### **6.5.5.2. Turkey's role between providing and receiving alliance solidarity**

As in the case of Poland, Turkey is a hybrid country with regard to NATO's reassurance measures that were set in motion in the fall of 2014, since Ankara was both a beneficiary of and contributor to allied defense and deterrence activities. In particular, Turkey benefited from the “Support and Assurance for Turkey” (also referred to as “Tailored Assurance Measures for Turkey”) package that was put together in reaction to Ankara's calls for reassurance and defense activities in response to the worsening situation in Syria. The Patriot missile deployments in Turkey are part of these measures. The reasons Turkey asked for the installment of these missiles and similar actions such as AWACS surveillance flights covering Turkish airspace are self-evident: Ankara felt threatened in light of the spill-over effects from the Syrian war; Turkish concerns were increased even during and after the country shot down a Russian airplane in November 2015 which, according to Turkey, had violated Turkish airspace. What is not self-evident however are reasons why Turkey not only benefitted from NATO's reassurance offensive but also agreed to contribute to them. According to Professor Bagci from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey participated in NATO's reassurance activities as a means to demonstrate alliance solidarity with other allies such as Romania where Turkey decided to contribute to the staffing of NATO's newly established Southeast Headquarters.<sup>1294</sup> Özgür Unluhisarcikli, director of the GMF's Ankara branch, underlined that every Turkish participation to any NATO operation and/or

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<sup>1292</sup> Hürriyet Daily News, NATO begins periodic surveillance of Turkish airspace, 2016.

<sup>1293</sup> Brook, Tom Vanden 2015: U.S. fighter jets sent to Turkey to protect Americans, deter Russians, in: USA Today 2015, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/11/10/fighter-jets-russia-isil-syria-vladimir-putin/75538698/> (08.06.2019).

<sup>1294</sup> Cf. author interview 31.

mission is entrenched in a desire to demonstrate solidarity with its allies.<sup>1295</sup> A Turkish government official widened the scope of Turkey's reasoning by ways of pointing out that the shooting down of a Russian airplane in 2015 underlined NATO's deterrence effect in protecting Turkey. He continued to stress that without NATO membership the situation could have escalated further. Consequently, appreciating the deterrent effect and the concept of alliance solidarity NATO offered Turkey had not changed during time Obama was in office. Thus, Turkey expected the Alliance to display solidarity on different flanks after 2014, according to this government official. This source concluded his elaborations on the topic of solidarity within the Alliance by emphasising that Turkey's willingness to support other allies was not conditioned on the rest of NATO backing Ankara in turn.<sup>1296</sup> A Turkish War Studies scholar approached the topic in even broader terms still as, according to him, "contributing to NATO operations of whatever kind is an integral part of Turkey's foreign policy. Thus, Turkey does not need convincing from any other country, including the United States, to agree to participate in NATO's reassurance measures."<sup>1297</sup> Turkey's participation in NATO's Air Policing, NATO's Response Force and the VJTF were but a few examples of Turkish contribution to allied missions. Doing so was not a policy vis-à-vis NATO's eastern flank but vis-à-vis the Alliance at large to have a leverage at hand in order to receive something from its allied partners in exchange.<sup>1298</sup> Turkey did not receive what it had hoped for in 2016 according to this expert's estimate, however: "Turkey felt abandoned by the United States and other allies as well in controlling the situation in Syria."<sup>1299</sup> A German observer intimately familiar with Turkish security and defense and a military background recalled in this context that the Obama administration had decided to rely on Kurdish forces in the fight against the Islamic State although Turkey had offered itself as a partner to prevent the United States collaborating with the YPG. This decision clearly burdened US-Turkish relations and prompted the perception in Turkey that the United States was less of a reliable partner and had instead "developed into an opponent by ways of supporting Kurdish strives for autonomy in

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<sup>1295</sup> Cf. author interview 35.

<sup>1296</sup> Cf. author interview 30.

<sup>1297</sup> Author interview 32.

<sup>1298</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>1299</sup> *Ibid.*

Syria.”<sup>1300</sup> Another field of action, which bore potential for causing dissent between Turkey and NATO in general and Turkey and the United States in particular, relates to the Black Sea according to a retired two-star admiral: “Turkey has never welcomed to grant the US a permanent presence in the Black Sea.”<sup>1301</sup> At the same time, Turkish President Erdogan called for an allied presence in this body of water after Turkey had shot down a Russian airplane in November 2015. In the words of the retired two-star admiral, “this decision was a sort of balancing ‘fallback position’ as Turkey felt pressured into agreeing to NATO’s non-permanent presence in the Black Sea, e.g. the Alliance’s Maritime Standing Group 2 (...) which Turkey participated in to control these activities from the inside. That way, Turkey could contain unnecessary incidents with Russia as Turkey had [a] negative (...) past (...) [regarding] that sea (...) [dating back to November 1914] which involved the Ottoman Fleet (...) engaging in (...) battle with the Russian naval vessels of the Black Sea Fleet which resulted in Turkey (...) join[ing] World War I. In sum, it was not alliance solidarity that motivated Ankara to be part of NATO’s presence in the Black Sea.”<sup>1302</sup> One Turkish government official had a different take on Turkey’s perception of NATO’s reassurance measures that were extended to include the Black Sea in reaction to calls from Bulgaria and Romania as these countries also border this body of water. According to him, Turkey supports NATO’s presence in the Black Sea in all realms (air, land, sea) and is trying to contribute to all of them. Underpinning this argument, he pointed out that Ankara supports the land component of protecting NATO’s Southeastern flank, including the Black Sea, by ways of deploying Turkish staffers to the HQ in Romania, among other things. While Turkey’s air activities were limited in scope, he continued, the country had a constant maritime presence in the Black Sea, thereby contributing to NATO’s Maritime Standing Group 2. The reasons for that engagement were three-fold, according to this official. Firstly, Turkey wanted to make sure that allied activities in the Black Sea were non-escalatory; secondly, Turkey wanted to make sure that all of NATO’s measures were in compliance with the 1936 Montreux convention. Last but not least, Ankara wanted to contribute to alliance solidarity by ways of having a deterrent effect vis-à-vis Russia in the Black Sea following calls from NATO partners

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<sup>1300</sup> Author interview 33.

<sup>1301</sup> Author interview 29.

<sup>1302</sup> Ibid.

Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>1303</sup> According to Professor Bagci from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, “Turkey pursues a ‘balance-of-power’ policy towards Russia and NATO in the Black Sea. That means that Turkey will always try not to offend Russia too ostensibly. While Ankara agreed to some NATO activities taking place in the Black Sea, allowing more would cause too many problems with Russia from Turkey’s perspective.”<sup>1304</sup>

### **6.5.6. Analysis**

#### **6.5.6.1. Dragging along: Alliance solidarity by default**

Turkey’s NATO policy in the examination period of this dissertation was characterized by three features. Firstly, Turkey wanted to use NATO as a multilateral tool to reign in individual allies such as the United States; the Libya campaign serves as a case in point in this regard. Secondly, outside pressure, mainly coming from the United States, had an impact on Ankara’s NATO course. Thirdly, Turkey was motivated by the desire to demonstrate alliance solidarity. All three patterns speak to Turkey’s desire to become more autonomous—a desire dating back to the days of the Cold War. The country’s 2012 defense strategy aimed in parts at making the country more independent by strengthening its domestic defense industrial base as well as diversifying its suppliers from abroad. Turkey’s sense of developing a more autonomous defense base at home intensified after the end of the Cold War as the unifying threat, the Soviet Union, disappeared. Turkey concluded from this changed situation that it should aim to take better care of its security on its own. At the same time, Turkey did not deny that it still needed US support in terms of weapons supplies as well as NATO in general as a defense organization. This sort of balancing act is reflected in other areas of Turkey’s security and defense policy as well. Ankara was keen on not provoking Russia unnecessarily as Turkey was and is astutely aware that Moscow has the upper hand in the Ukrainian theater, including the annexed peninsula Crimea. At the same time, Ankara was equally keen on supporting the principle of territorial integrity (of Ukraine) not least because this is a principle Turkey does not want to see violated vis-à-vis its own territory. Hence, Turkey found

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<sup>1303</sup> Cf. author interview 30.

<sup>1304</sup> Author interview 31.

itself in a delicate position after the Russian annexation of Crimea and its involvement in starting and stoking the war in Eastern Ukraine. Three lines of argumentation could be detected to explain Turkey's actions vis-à-vis Ukraine. First off, Turkey was driven to demonstrate solidarity with its allies once NATO member states had determined supporting Ukraine in non-lethal ways was to back up condemnations of Russian actions toward its neighbor. Secondly, wanting to show solidarity with Crimean Tatars emerged as another line of argument to explain Turkish activities with regard to Ukraine and its reaction to the annexation of Crimea. Thirdly, referencing Russia surfaced as another pattern to explain Turkey's actions, rather than its attempt to approach the Ukrainian crisis in a balanced fashion, that is, condemn Russian actions and act in concert with its allies while at the same time not acting too boldly. Turkey turned out to be both a provider to and a recipient of NATO's reassurance measures which were set in motion beginning in 2014. Beginning with the provision side of things, Turkey announced in 2015 that it would participate in being a rotational lead nation for the Very High Readiness Action Task Force, which was declared to be established at NATO's Wales Summit in September 2014. While Turkey did not volunteer to become a lead nation to head one of the four enhanced forward presence multinational battalions, Ankara agreed to send warrant and non-commissioned officers to the Headquarters Multinational Division South East located in Bucharest, Romania, which was activated in September 2015. Part of the task of the Romanian Headquarters was to coordinate and increase allied maritime presence in the Black Sea, including air patrols. Together with Romania and Bulgaria who border the Black Sea as well, Turkey began calling on NATO for exactly these activities to ensure this strategically important body of water for Ankara would not fall under Russian dominance. In this regard, Turkey benefitted from allied reassurance and deterrence measures directly as the Alliance heeded calls to increase its presence in the Black Sea. Three patterns of reasoning were discerned to explain why Turkey contributed to and asked to receive NATO's reassurance measures. First and foremost, Ankara decided to contribute to NATO's reassurance measures to demonstrate solidarity with its allies. This, experts claimed, was one of the guiding principles of Turkey's NATO policy. A second talking point that was raised in the context of allied reassurance referred to the war in Syria: Turkey was said to have felt abandoned by the United States in particular and the Alliance at large in reacting to the war raging in the country to its South. While this pattern does not explain why Turkey contributed to reassurance measures itself, it does shed light

on Turkey's perception of these activities in more general terms. The same goes for the third pattern that emerged: Turkey bore in mind not to provoke Russia unnecessarily by contributing to allied reassurance and deterrence measures which were and are by and large aimed at Russia.

#### **6.5.6.2. Assessment of hypotheses**

The hypotheses which aim to help answer the overall research question of this dissertation (How did US actions vis-à-vis Europe impact NATO and defense policies of NATO allies?) will be examined in the following section. The data used to assess the validity of the hypotheses are drawn from the expert interview results. The reason for this methodology is down to the hypotheses being geared toward the perception of decision-makers and members of the strategic community and which is best captured through expert interviews. With the exception of two, the majority of interviewed experts did not concur with the assumption that Turkey had perceived an American withdrawal from NATO Europe during the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016 (hypothesis 2). A German observer intimately familiar with Turkish security and defense policies and a military background as well as the director of the GMF office in Ankara claimed that Turkish decision-makers had perceived a partial disengagement from military affairs affecting NATO Europe on part of the Obama administration (hypothesis 1). One expert supporting the assumption of a perceived partial American withdrawal specified that Turkey had felt abandoned by the Obama administration by and large. Yet, this interviewee pointed out that one had to distinguish between the military and politicians in this regard. The former had had "very intensive ties to the US military" during the Obama years while "politically speaking things stand differently."<sup>1305</sup> According to this expert, Turkish sentiments of abandonment arose with regard to different approaches toward Syria. While until 2014 Turkey and the United States pursued similar policies vis-à-vis Syria, that is, the removal of Assad, differences began to appear after the rise of the Islamic State which the Obama administration decided to fight against in a coalition with Syrian Kurdish fighters—a decision that prompted Turkish-US relations to go sour, especially in light of Turkey offering itself as a partner to fight the Islamic State which the United States declined. In a similar fashion, the other expert validating hypothesis 1 qualified his assessment as well by way of pointing out that

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<sup>1305</sup> Author interview 33.

given its geographical position, Turkey's position was more focused on the Middle East policy of the Obama administration. Against this backdrop, the interviewee asserted that Turkey had perceived a US withdrawal from the Middle East rather than from Europe leaving Turkey with the impression of being left alone by its transatlantic partner. By and large, those supporting the perceived withdrawal hypothesis embedded their assessment into an "abandonment" narrative. Among the group of experts supporting hypothesis 2, three patterns of caveats emerged. *First off*, while a US withdrawal was said not to have been perceived by Turkey, a lack of American leadership in NATO and beyond was detected. A Turkish War Studies scholar explained this pattern of assessment: "What we saw during the Obama years was a weak presidency in terms of political leadership."<sup>1306</sup> A retired Turkish brigadier general added that while the United States under Obama did not withdraw from its general commitment to NATO, the administration withdrew from its traditional leadership role in NATO so as to give way to European allies assuming more responsibilities within the Alliance. From this experts' viewpoint, the Obama administration had not put its focus on NATO from the get-go.<sup>1307</sup> A *second* pattern in the context of confirming the non-withdrawal hypothesis can be described as "Turkish bias." According to a Turkish government official, the American presence in Turkey is mostly built on a bilateral foundation with few exceptions (e.g., NATO's Land Command in Izmir).<sup>1308</sup> In addition, Turkey does not host US combat land troops as do its European allies. Based on this background, Turkey did not perceive a US withdrawal from NATO Europe, that is, Turkey. On the contrary, this expert explained that the Americans under Obama's leadership had brought new capabilities to Turkey in the wake of the war in Syria, though. He did not disclose exactly which additional capabilities had been deployed to Turkey though. Fitting into the "Turkish bias" line of argument, a retired Turkish Navy admiral clarified that even if a US withdrawal from NATO Europe had taken place, it would not affect Turkish policy as Turkey's security and defense posture was not supported by the United States presence in Europe to begin with.<sup>1309</sup> The *third* qualifying pattern of supporting hypothesis 2 can be coined "no, but...." One interviewee

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<sup>1306</sup> Author interview 32.

<sup>1307</sup> Cf. author interview 36.

<sup>1308</sup> Cf. author interview 30.

<sup>1309</sup> Cf. author interview 29.

explained that while assumptions about a US withdrawal from NATO Europe between 2011 and 2016 were not definitively grounded in reality, Washington's interest in European security weakened during the Obama years.<sup>1310</sup> The patterns of argumentation notwithstanding, none of the interviewees who, in the majority of cases, argued against the perception of an American withdrawal from NATO Europe and/or Turkey in the evaluation period of this dissertation (2011–2016) pointed out that 2014 characterized a watershed moment in US attitudes toward its European allies. While the interviewed experts were nearly unanimous in denying that Turkish decision-makers had perceived a US withdrawal, the interviewees' assessments of the implications of this perception varied and were fragmented. Consequently, neither the strand of hypothesis 3 (If the United States has been decreasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, no-, positive-, or negative implications on the Europeans' NATO policies were the result), nor the string of hypothesis 4 could be validated or falsified completely. Instead, two new patterns of assessment emerged which were not reflected in either hypothesis.<sup>1311</sup> *Firstly*, two experts – one a retired brigadier general, the other a retired Navy admiral – explained that US positions vis-à-vis (NATO) Europe had no impact on Turkish NATO policies whatsoever seeing as the US presence in Europe did not support Turkey's security to begin with. Thus, no direct link between American troops and material in Europe and Turkish security and defense policies existed.<sup>1312</sup> The other expert went one step further by claiming that "it does not make any difference which US president is in charge since NATO does not matter much to the Turkish security establishment. Because NATO is traditionally regarded as an American tool for its global ambitions [and] not as a stand-alone institution where Turkey has an equal voice and political power."<sup>1313</sup> The *second* pattern of explaining implications of how American engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe was perceived is closely linked to the first. Accordingly, a government official proclaimed that Turkey's NATO policy did not change during the years Barack

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<sup>1310</sup> Cf. author interview 31.

<sup>1311</sup> N.B.: Given that this thesis uses the method of process tracing which allows for "evaluating prior explanatory hypotheses, discovering new hypotheses, and assessing these new causal claims" the emergence of new patterns is in line with the methodological framework of this study, cf. Collier, Understanding process tracing, p. 824.

<sup>1312</sup> Cf. author interview 29.

<sup>1313</sup> Author interview 36.

Obama was in office and as such remained central to the country's defense policy.<sup>1314</sup> Some scholars arrived at a similar conclusion.<sup>1315</sup> Only one of the original "implication" hypotheses (hypothesis 3.3.: If the United States has been decreasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, negative implications on the Europeans' NATO policies resulted) was validated by three experts although two issued their assessments with caveats which will be explained shortly. Ankara's GMF Director Özgür Unluhisarcikli, one of those experts clearly supporting hypothesis 3.3., stated that due to a perceived US retrenchment from the Middle East, "Turkey wanted to become less dependent on NATO and the United States."<sup>1316</sup> He added that there is no reason to distinguish between the Alliance and the United States as the latter equals the former from Turkey's viewpoint.<sup>1317</sup> As part of attempting to become more independent in defense matters, Turkey had initiated a rapprochement with Russia for example. Principally taking the same line as suggested by hypothesis 3.3., two other experts qualified their assessment by adding that Turkey had perceived a political US leadership withdrawal from NATO instead of a disengagement in military terms. As a consequence, they suggested that Turkey had signaled to its NATO allies, in particular the United States, that it had other options in terms of security precautions; the Chinese missile deal—which ultimately failed in 2013—was cited as one example underpinning the "taking another route" paradigm. In sum, three patterns of explaining Turkish attitudes toward NATO in reaction to US actions vis-à-vis Europe could be discerned: attempting to become more independent, maintaining the status quo, the irrelevance of NATO to Turkish allied and defense policies. Factoring in the relevant indicators for Turkish support of the United States in NATO, the picture becomes more complicated. While Turkey almost met the 2%-goal throughout the years from 2011 to 2016 (on average the defense budget equaled 1.73% of the country's GDP) and exceeded the 20%-goal—both tacit demands of the United States—Ankara contributed very sporadically to important NATO exercise in 2015 and 2016 after training together had become more important again. Hence, part of the relevant indicators support the argument that US actions in NATO matter little to not at all to Turkish defense policy (participation in exercises) as well as the verification of hypothesis 3.3., that

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<sup>1314</sup> Cf. author interview 30.

<sup>1315</sup> Cf. author interview 31.

<sup>1316</sup> Author interview 35.

<sup>1317</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

is, attempts to become less dependent on NATO due to a perceived decrease of US political and material commitment to the Alliance. At the same time, one could make the argument that (nearly) complying with two allied provisions, the Obama administration was adamant about (2%- and 20%-goal) challenges the interpretation that Turkey tried to distance itself from NATO following either a perceived increase or decrease of US engagement in NATO Europe. Yet, spending almost 2% of one's GDP on defense and more than 20% of one's defense budget on equipment does not say much about whether or not these expenditures are in support of NATO goals.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the assessment of the hypotheses, which were partly validated, partly falsified, brought to the fore the fact that American engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe had little to zero impact on Turkey's NATO policy during the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016 as validated first and foremost by the results of the expert interviews. Instead, Ankara's NATO course was guided by the country's threat perception which was predominantly focused on its immediate neighborhood, that is, the war in Syria having spillover effects on Turkey. In addition, and closely linked to Turkey's national threat assessment, decision- and policy-makers felt abandoned by its NATO allies, especially the United States, in dealing with the crisis in Syria. Consequently, Turkey began shifting more of its defense efforts on producing national capabilities—a course of action one can delineate in Turkey's NATO history time and again whenever the country felt left alone by its allies in general and the United States in particular. Thus, Turkey started exploring defense (industry) cooperation options beyond NATO partners, especially after 2012. At the same time, however, Ankara did not turn its back on the Alliance altogether so as to call upon alliance solidarity from its partners when deemed necessary.

## 7. Conclusion: A mixed American track record

The concluding chapter of this dissertation has a threefold purpose. Firstly, the findings of the three case studies on Germany, Poland, and Turkey will be summarized and compared. Part of this task involves assessing the hypotheses in light of each case study. In a second step, a conclusion will be reached with regard to the research question guiding this dissertation (How did US actions vis-à-vis Europe impact NATO and defense policies of European allies?) In addition, the impact the research results have on the theoretical approaches undergirding this dissertation, that is, Glenn Snyder's alliance dilemma model and elements of neoclassical realism as according to Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell will be analyzed. Finally, coming full circle with the "research puzzle" laid out in the introduction, a reevaluation of this dissertation will be undertaken to assess its shortcomings. Drawing on this assessment, pointers for future research will be drawn to underline the compatibility of this dissertation in the context of the research fields it is embedded in. On a final note, the implications of this research for the future of NATO as a transatlantic organization will be underlined. To remind the reader of the hypotheses guiding this research, they are listed below:

1. The European allies did perceive an American withdrawal from NATO Europe.
2. The European allies did not perceive an American withdrawal from NATO Europe.
3. If the United States has been decreasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies,
  - 3.1 no implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted.
  - 3.2 positive implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted. *It is expected that the European allies will comprehend that a lessened US engagement in NATO Europe means that they increasingly will have to take care of their security by themselves.*
  - 3.3 negative implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted. *It is assumed that a lessened American engagement in NATO Europe will not facilitate a "European pillar" within the Alliance. Instead, it is expected that the American withdrawal will result in a nationalization of European NATO*

*member state's defense efforts. The rationale behind such a course of action could have roots in an attempt to keep the United States invested in European security by conjuring the specter of uncooperative European defense. After all, one of the key motives for the United States to engage with Europe after World War II has been to keep the continent at peace.*

4. If the United States has been increasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies,
  - 4.1 no implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted.
  - 4.2 positive implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted. *It is expected that an increased US engagement in NATO will incentivize European allies to do more themselves for their security. The rationale behind such a course of action could have its roots in an attempt to keep the United States invested in European security as a "reward" for doing more themselves.*
  - 4.3 negative implications for the Europeans' NATO policies resulted. *It is expected that an increased US engagement in NATO Europe means will result in European allies doing less for their own security. The rationale behind such a course of action could have roots in a complacent attitude.*

## 7.1. Summary and comparison of case study results

### 7.1.1. Germany

The case study on Germany brought to the fore that the hypotheses guiding this research could partly be validated and partly be falsified. Most importantly in this context, the majority of interviewed experts as well as the content analysis of strategy documents and the like did support hypothesis 2, that is, that a US withdrawal from NATO Europe was not perceived. What stood out as well was the validation of both hypothesis 3.2. and 4.2., that is, the assumption that both the perception of a withdrawal as well as the perception of an increased US engagement would entail positive implications, that is, more German engagement to provide for NATO's security and defense posture. Two patterns of explanation emerged accounting for the fact that Berlin increased its NATO activities, especially since 2013, during the evaluation period. *Firstly*, decision-makers in Berlin independently recognized that

Germany had to contribute more decisively and substantially to transatlantic security due to their own economic power and decades during which allies, most of all the United States, had guaranteed Germany's security. *Secondly* and closely connected to the first pattern, Germany regarded NATO as a lever to influence US policies toward NATO. Only by bringing more to the "transatlantic table" itself could Germany convince American decision-makers to remain committed to the Alliance and thereby German security. Taking both patterns in conjunction with the assessment of the hypotheses, it can be concluded that Germany tried to persuade the United States during Obama's tenures to "stay on board" (Snyder's "abandonment" argument). In conclusion, the case study showed that American allied actions in and beyond NATO Europe played a role in Germany's NATO policy considerations. Yet, it can also be concluded that the US's direct impact on Berlin's alliance actions, as validated by the results of the expert interviews and the content analyses of official documents, was little to moderate in the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016. Rather, a rethink in government circles, paying closer attention to European allies' sensitivities in combination with Russian aggression in Europe, is said to be mainly responsible for a shift in Germany's NATO policy. Furthermore, regardless of a perceived American withdrawal and/or a perceived increased commitment, Germany's NATO policy became more active, especially since 2013.

### **7.1.2. Poland**

The case study on Poland revealed that some hypotheses guiding this research could overwhelmingly be verified, while the interpretation of others was more ambiguous. The majority of interviewed experts conferred with hypothesis 1, that is, that Poland perceived a US withdrawal from NATO Europe; yet, with the exception of one expert, all others conceded that this assessment only held true until 2014. After the annexation of Crimea and Russia's active part in the war in Ukraine, an American "return" to Europe was perceived. The interpretation of the implications of both patterns of perceptions—a perceived decrease (hypothesis 3) as well as a perceived increase of American engagement (hypothesis 4)—are ambiguous. Focusing on hypothesis 3, three patterns of explanation can be delineated. *Firstly*, in reaction to a perceived US retrenchment, Poland attempted to Europeanize its security and defense policy, that is, the country supported the bolstering of the EU's Common

Security and Defense Policy. *Secondly*, a pattern of attempting to rely more on national defense provisions emerged. This, however, as the interviewees promoting this line of argument stated, ought not to be confused with Polish efforts to strive for strategic independence. *Finally*, the perception of a decreased American engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe was said to entail a bilateralization of Poland's defense policy with the United States. The analysis of the implications of a perceived increase of US engagement was not unequivocal either. Similar to the patterns in the context of hypothesis 3, a perceived increase was said to entail either the bilateralization of Poland's defense policy with the United States or the attempt to rely more on national defense provisions. Thus, regardless of whether an increase or decrease of American engagement was perceived, the implications were rather negative, that is, they did not entail Poland bolstering its defense efforts to strengthen NATO. Hence and in sum, it can be concluded that for the better part of the evaluation period of this thesis (2011–2016), Poland placed more emphasis on the build-up of national defense and deterrence capabilities as well as the strengthening of bilateral ties with the United States (although the latter part was especially stressed from 2015 onward) as American military support was judged to be more potent than NATO. This conclusion suggests that US impact on Poland's defense and NATO policy tended to be moderate. At the same time, Poland did not need any convincing to invest in defense capabilities in and outside NATO given the threat assessment Warsaw arrived at. In addition, the analysis of the gathered data suggests the assumption that Poland tried to persuade the United States during Obama's tenures that they "stay on board" (Snyder's "abandonment" argument).

### 7.1.3. Turkey

In conclusion, it can be stated that the assessment of the hypotheses, which were partly validated, partly falsified, brought to the fore the fact that American engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe had little to zero impact on Turkey's NATO and defense policy during the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016 as validated first and foremost by the results of the expert interviews. Accordingly, the majority of interviewed experts supported hypothesis 2, that is, the assumption that Turkey did not perceive an American withdrawal from NATO Europe. In conjunction with this assessment, three patterns of qualifying caveats emerged though. Firstly, while it was not stated that the United States had relinquished its commitment to NATO in

general, a lack of leadership in the Alliance was perceived. The *second* caveat pattern focused on an exclusive Turkish perspective by contending that (a) US military presence in Turkey scarcely existed and (b) US troops in NATO Europe did not support Turkish security. *Thirdly*, while a materially grounded withdrawal was denied, a retrenchment “in spirit” was registered by some experts as it was said that the United States’ interest in European security was waning during the Obama years. The assessment of the implications of either a perceived decrease (strand of hypothesis 3) or increase (strand of hypothesis 4) of American engagement was fragmented as no majority for the validation or falsification of either could be detected. Hence, a clear-cut analysis of America’s impact on Turkey’s NATO and defense policy could not be drawn. Instead, Ankara’s NATO course was guided by the country’s threat perception which was predominantly focused on its immediate neighborhood, that is, the war in Syria and the spillover effects it had on Turkey, most notably the fight against the so-called Islamic State and the PKK. In addition, and closely linked to Turkey’s national threat assessment, decision- and policy-makers felt abandoned by its NATO allies, especially the United States, in dealing with the crisis in Syria. Consequently, Turkey began shifting more of its defense efforts to producing national capabilities—a course of action one can delineate in Turkey’s NATO history time and again whenever the country felt left alone by its allies in general and the United States in particular. Thus, Turkey started exploring defense (industry) cooperation options beyond its NATO partners, especially after 2012. At the same time, however, Ankara did not turn its back on the Alliance altogether so as to be able to still have a say in allied matters and to be able to ask its partners for alliance solidarity (fluctuation between Snyder’s “abandonment” and “entrapment” argument).

#### **7.1.4. Comparison: From similar to most different cases**

In the following section, the three case studies are juxtaposed to evaluate the commonalities as well as differences in terms of the impact US actions in Europe had on Germany’s, Poland’s, and Turkey’s respective NATO and defense policies between 2011 and 2016. Beginning with the commonalities, it can be concluded that all three were driven by concerns of abandonment although all case study countries regarded the prospects of a perceived and partial American retrenchment differently and thus drew differing conclusions. On balance, Germany did not interpret US

actions vis-à-vis Europe as an attempt to reduce its engagement—on the contrary, since 2014, German decision-makers as well as academics registered an increase of American engagement with NATO Europe. According to the case study results, Germany increased its NATO activities which validates hypothesis 4.2. (If the United States has been increasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, positive implications on the Europeans' NATO policies resulted). The assumption is supported by the rationale that an increased US engagement in NATO would incentivize European allies to do more themselves for their security in an attempt to keep the US invested in European security as a “reward” for contributing more to the transatlantic burden themselves. The analysis of the data on Germany plausibly suggests that the country was first and foremost motivated by an internal re-think leading to the conclusion that Germany had to revive its European and transatlantic partners by lifting more of the common burden, mostly by strengthening the Alliance. Following the logic of the underlining hypothesis, it stands to reason that Germany hoped the United States would recognize its increased contributions to international security in order to still be supported by its American allies. In fact, this assumption was alluded to by a number of German interview partners.

Looking at the analysis of the case study on Poland, the specter of an American withdrawal from NATO Europe was more present than in Germany—at least until 2014. Apart from a palpable minority, Polish experts conceded that the United States had been re-engaging with NATO after the illegal annexation of Crimea and the ensuing war in Ukraine. Seeing as Poland has been increasing its NATO activities since 2014 after nudging the Alliance to re-focus its efforts on collective defense since at least 2008, hypothesis 4.2. (If the United States has been increasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, positive implications on the Europeans' NATO policies resulted) can be validated with respect to the Polish example, too. Drawing on this hypothesis, it is plausible to conclude that Polish decision-makers regarded increasing its efforts in NATO as a two-fold necessity: because the changed security environment since 2014 demanded it and because it was hoped that proving to the United States that Poland could contribute more to allied burden-sharing would result in Washington continuing to invest in European security as a reward for doing more themselves. However, unlike Germany, Poland did not solely react “positively” to how the country perceived US

engagement with NATO Europe as Warsaw put increasing efforts into nationalizing its defense policy by jumpstarting procurement projects not earmarked for NATO prior to and after 2014. In addition, Poland had been working toward increasingly bilateralizing its defense policy with the United States during the evaluation period, especially since 2015 when a center-right government came into office. In view of these results, hypothesis 3.3. can be validated (If the United States has been decreasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, negative implications on the Europeans NATO policies were the result). The logic behind hypothesis 3.3. is as follows: a lessening of American engagement in NATO Europe will not facilitate a “European pillar” within the Alliance. Instead, the perception of a (partial) American withdrawal would result in attempts to nationalize defense efforts. The rationale behind such a course of action might be rooted in an attempt to keep the United States invested in European security by conjuring the specter of uncooperative European defense. After all, one of the key motives for the United States to engage with Europe since World War II has been to keep the continent at peace. In Poland’s particular case, one might add that the country’s main motivation to join and stay in NATO has been US membership (and dominance). Thus, it is consequential to strengthen ties with the United States bilaterally if and when Poland perceives Washington to be less engaged in the Alliance as it used to be. A similar logic applies to nationalizing efforts: without a US dominance in NATO, it is logical to assume that Poland would increasingly try to provide for its security on its own as the value of the Alliance would be less compelling.

The strongest validation of hypothesis 3.3. can be found in the Turkey case study. Its attempts to nationalize defense policy, including the establishment of a domestic industrial base for procurement, date back to the early 1970s. During the evaluation period of this thesis, these efforts grew especially strong after 2012 with the worsening of the Civil War in Syria and the effects the chaos had on neighboring Turkey. Although the data do not overwhelmingly suggest that Turkey’s efforts to do more nationally (while not relinquishing its NATO commitments altogether) as well as looking for arms suppliers elsewhere, mostly importantly in Asia, were prompted by a perceived American withdrawal, it nevertheless stands to reason that fear of abandonment drove Turkey’s policy-makers to pursue a more inward-looking defense policy. Another factor facilitating such moves was and still is the war in Syria

which has been perceived much more of a menace to national security by Turkey than by its allies. Quite openly, some interviewees conceded that Turkey had felt abandoned by the United States and the rest of its allies in handling the spillover effects the fighting in Syria had on Turkey. Thus, the logical consequence was to rely more on its own as the reliability of its traditionally most important and potent ally, the United States, was waning from Turkey's viewpoint. Unlike Poland, Turkey did not try to bilateralize its defense policy with the United States, neither did Ankara root for Washington to become re-engaged with Turkey's defense in particular and other Europeans security in general. Hence, the rationale ungirding hypothesis 3.3. is a different one with regard to Turkey, that is, nationalizing its defense policy was not designed to be a move to draw the United States back in. This conclusion is in line with concerns over entrapment which were detected in the case study on Turkey, especially with regard to NATO's reactions to the crisis in Ukraine and the ensuing reassurance policy since 2014 as Ankara was eager to ensure Russia would not be provoked unnecessarily by allied actions while at the same time contributing to all NATO missions and operations. Thus, it can be concluded that Turkey oscillated between fears of abandonment and fears of entrapment although the former tended to be slightly more pronounced than the latter.

Apart from the fear of entrapment having driven Turkey almost equally as fears of abandonment unlike Germany and Poland, the degree of impact American actions had on NATO and defense policies of these three allies are the major difference between the case studies. American actions inside and beyond NATO Europe did play a role in Germany's NATO policy considerations. Yet, it must be concluded that the US's direct impact on Berlin's allied actions was little to moderate in the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016. Rather, a rethink in government circles, facilitated and stoked by the pre-political arena (think tanks and the like), paying closer attention to European allies' sensitivities in combination with Russian aggression in Europe is mainly responsible for a shift in Germany's NATO policy. However, it should also be noted that Germany welcomed (some experts said needed) political backing coupled with American military infrastructure in order to assume a leading role in NATO's reassurance activities—but this does not mean that Germany needed to be convinced by the Obama administration to take the lead the way it did. Appreciating US material and political support did not result in Ger-

man attempts to bilateralize its defense policy with the United States though. Instead, the country pursued multilateralization by increasing its own contributions to strengthen the Alliance as a whole. Poland needed even less convincing than Germany did because of the threat assessment with Russia since 2014 upending the European security landscape. Already prior to the annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine that Russia had been involved in, Poland had been working toward NATO acknowledging that Moscow posed a threat to Poland's and thus the Alliance's security. Yet, American actions vis-à-vis NATO Europe and beyond did have a more significant impact on Poland's allied policy as compared to Germany's. For one, Poland complied more diligently with American "demands" that European allies to contribute more to transatlantic burden-sharing which the indicators of Poland's support of the United States in NATO plausibly suggest. At the same time and reinforcing the conclusion that the US's impact on Poland's NATO policy was moderate, Warsaw was eager to strengthen bilateral ties with Washington in- and outside of NATO implying that Poland had more confidence in American security guarantees and cooperation than in the Alliance as a whole—an attitude dating back to the days when the country joined NATO in 1999 and certainly reinforced by American actions in and vis-à-vis NATO Europe under the Obama administration. Poland's attempts to nationalize and even more so bilateralize its defense policy during the evaluation period points to the fact that the country put less trust in NATO as a whole than in the bilateral security guarantees extended to Warsaw through Washington. The results of the case study on Turkey stand in stark contrast to Poland as American engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe had little to zero impact on Turkey's NATO policy during the evaluation period from 2011 to 2016 as validated first and foremost by the results of the expert interviews. Instead, Ankara's NATO course was guided by the war in Syria having spillover effects on Turkey and the notion of being abandoned by the United States first and foremost. Turkey thus began shifting more of its defense efforts on producing national capabilities—a course of action one can delineate in Turkey's NATO history time and again whenever the country felt left alone by its allies in general and the United States in particular. Thus, Turkey started exploring defense (industry) cooperation options beyond NATO partners, especially after 2012. On a spectrum from zero to high US impact on Turkey can be found on the lower, Germany in the middle and Poland on the upper part of the scale. More generally speaking, while differences between Germany and Poland were detected, they are closer to most similar cases

than most different cases, whereas compared with Turkey the other two countries are clearly most different as case studies. Turkey is a special case in NATO in general and in particular during the evaluation period of this study as threat assessments varied starkly.

## **7.2. Impact of thesis results on research question and theory**

### **7.2.1. Obama's impact on NATO Europe: Ranging from multi- to unilateralism**

The following section discusses the results of the case studies on the research question guiding this dissertation: How did US actions vis-à-vis Europe impact the NATO and defense policies of European allies? Factoring in the findings of all three countries, Germany, Poland, and Turkey, it can be concluded that on average the impact varied between nil through moderate as explained in the previous chapter. On some of the four topics (NATO's operation in Libya; pivot/retrenchment; crisis management toward Ukraine; reassurance) that were discussed in each case study, American impact was more palpable than with regard to others depending on the ally under scrutiny. On average and regardless of the subject area, the highest impact could be detected with regard to Poland, the lowest with regard to Turkey; Germany occupied the center field. On a more abstract level, the Obama administration's engagement with its NATO allies and beyond Europe (most importantly the announcement to pivot toward the Asian-Pacific theater) had the effect of multilateralization (Germany), bilateralization (Poland), and unilateralization (Turkey) on the NATO and defense policies of the case study countries. Thus, the Obama administration's mark on these three countries was not a unified one; instead, and as predicted in the introduction chapter, all three reacted differently to American engagement with NATO and US actions beyond Europe. One can deduct from that finding that the United States did not prompt these allies in particular to close ranks. Rather, a tendency to drift apart could be detected. Yet, it cannot be plausibly claimed that American actions can exclusively be held responsible for this development. Instead, a combination of domestic factors, developments in international security, most notably since 2012 (for Turkey with the war in Syria) and 2014 (for

Germany and Poland with the annexation of Crimea), respectively, as well as American actions contributed to the phenomena of transatlantic security drifting apart rather than moving closer together. While Germany, Poland, and Turkey do not represent the Alliance as such, they are arguably important players within NATO as well important allies for measuring US commitment to NATO Europe. *Firstly*, they each represent a flank and thus hold an attitude toward the United States and the Alliance more generally: Poland is the major player in the so-called Eastern flank camp, having emphasized the necessity to refocus NATO's efforts on collective defense since 2008 at the latest (Georgian–Russian War) and insisting on a strong American role in NATO; Turkey is arguably the most “southern” ally bordering on one of the most contested hot spots in the world, the Middle East, affecting transatlantic security and has been fluctuating between emphasizing collective defense and crisis management as NATO's main task while attempting to become less dependent on the Alliance and thus the United States as the former more or less equals the latter in Turkey's mind; Germany is placed in the center of NATO Europe moving in-between “flanks” and as such regards itself as a balancer in the Alliance, thus neither favoring collective defense nor crisis management, at least officially (examining Germany's allied actions at least since 2013, one could come to the conclusion that Berlin is emphasizing collective defense more than crisis management in light of the country's pronounced role in NATO's reassurance measures since 2014 and limited resources). *Secondly*, given their locations and the “flanks” they represent, all three are of importance to the United States and its NATO policy as all of them are regarded as hubs and stepping stones for the United States to either bolster the Alliance's defense posture or to enter other theaters that are of significance to American security goals, most importantly the Middle East. Thus, the level of engagement with these three countries can be seen as an indicator of US commitment to Germany, Poland, and Turkey in particular and NATO in general.

In conclusion, US engagement vis-à-vis (NATO) Europe had the effect of a multi-, bi- and unilateralization of the NATO and defense policies of Germany, Poland, and Turkey. All three countries shared the feature that they were guided to a degree by a notion of American material and political retrenchment from NATO Europe as well as differing threat perceptions. Thus, all three drew different conclusions

from this twofold set of influencing factors. As mentioned above, while a mono-causal explanation (i.e., US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe) was neither suspected nor detected to explain the case study countries' NATO and defense policies in terms of actions and motivations, American actions affecting the security of those three allies did play a part as the case study results revealed. At the same time, the impact of US actions cannot be overestimated.

### **7.2.2. The alliance security dilemma: A useful model for NATO**

The following pages examines the impact the results of the case study findings have on the theoretical framework this dissertation is embedded in, beginning with Glenn H. Snyder's alliance security dilemma, the core idea of which consists of a country's fluctuating fear of being abandoned or entrapped by one's ally. The so-called twin fear of the materialization of either characterizes Snyder's alliance security dilemma: attempting to avoid one outcome increases the chances of the other fear occurring. To avoid being abandoned by one's allies requires increasing one's commitment and support of a partner state whose temptation to defect will be reduced in turn due to an increase in security. However, attempting to avoid abandonment increases the risk of entrapment. The most obvious responses to avoiding entrapment include moving away from an ally, reducing one's commitment or threatening to withhold support. The case study results revealed that all three subscribed to a notion of a partial American withdrawal at least up to a certain point during the evaluation period, thus suggesting they were guided by the fear of abandonment rather than the fear of entrapment. The results of the case study on Germany and Poland plausibly suggest that both countries acted in a way that indicated a fear of abandonment. Thus, hypothesis 3.2. (If the United States has been decreasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, positive implications on the Europeans' NATO policies are the result) as well as hypothesis 3.3. (If the United States has been decreasing its engagement in NATO Europe from the viewpoint of its European allies, negative implications on the Europeans' NATO policies are the result) could be verified with regard to Germany (verification of hypothesis 3.2) and Poland (verification of both). Both hypotheses are based on the assumption that the perception of an American withdrawal will prompt allies to attempt to influence the United States to recommit to the security of NATO Europe either by doing more themselves in the Alliance framework or by nationalizing their

defense policies. Both courses of actions are strategies to counteract (perceived) abandonment. Thus, the actions of Germany and Poland are in line with Snyder's model and can be explained using his theoretical approach. The case of Turkey stands out insomuch as both the fear of abandonment (with regard to reacting to the Civil War in Syria) as well as the fear of entrapment (with regard to NATO's reassurance activities directed against Russia) could be detected. The reaction that followed the fear of abandonment was not in line with Snyder's model: Turkey did not attempt and incentivize to draw the US back in as did Germany and Poland either by contributing more to the Alliance's defense posture (Germany and Poland) or by ways of re-focusing defense policy on national and/or bilateral efforts (Poland). While Turkey did nationalize and even more so diversify its defense policy by attempting to strengthen its domestic industrial base and by searching for defense cooperation beyond the NATO spectrum, the goal differed from Poland, that is, Turkey was and is striving toward greater independence from NATO in general and the United States in particular. On the other hand, Turkey's reaction to a fear of being entrapped by the United States and NATO was in line with Snyder's assumptions as Ankara tried to strike a balance between supporting the Alliance while at the same time not provoking Russia. One assumption this research was guided by was Snyder's postulation that the greater one's dependence is, the lower one's bargaining power is in turn. Applied to the results of the case studies, Germany and Poland revealed a relatively high dependence as their fears of abandonment outweighed their fears of entrapment. In addition, the actions they took in reaction to American engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe plausibly indicate they wanted to prompt the United States to re-engage with them, that is, maintain its security provider status, or at the least continue sharing the burden with its European partners. Whether these strategies paid off and the United States did in fact increase its commitment—which in fact and in perception it did following 2014—cannot be covered by this thesis as answering this question would turn the independent and dependent variables of this research upside down. Only a follow-up study can answer whether in fact Germany's and Poland's reactions enticed the desired effect; only then could one evaluate whether these two countries have a low bargaining power as supposed by Snyder's model. As Turkey did not react according to Snyder's assumptions in case of fears of abandonment, it cannot be stated whether Ankara turns out to be highly dependent on its ally the United States. The bargaining power

of the United States under the Obama administration vis-à-vis the case study countries however as measured by the “impact” results turns out to vary from low to moderate on average as both the studies on Germany and Turkey revealed that the US’s impact on the NATO and defense policies of these two countries was moderate to low. Another assumption of Snyder’s according to which the most fundamental common interest of allies is to preserve an alliance was kept in mind throughout this study, too. While it was not the focal point of this study to examine this assumption in depth, the case study countries’ attitude toward NATO more generally should be taken into account nevertheless as the overarching goal of this study is to make a statement about the possible future course of the Alliance. Thus, it is noteworthy that the actions, that is, NATO and defense policies combined—putting aside the rhetoric used—of two of the three cases under study, Poland and Turkey, did not suggest that the preservation of NATO was their highest goal as they turned out to be working toward bilateralizing and nationalizing their defense policies, an approach which has the potential to undermine the cohesion of the Alliance in the long-run. Germany on the other hand, which neither attempted to bilateralize nor nationalize its NATO and defense policies, worked toward strengthening the Alliance by contributing more to its defense posture and thus its preservation.

Finally, it should be noted that testing Snyder’s model was a guiding principle of this thesis. Applying the alliance security dilemma to two allies separately as was carried out here, the model proved to be helpful to better understand the dynamics of a bilateral relationship within an alliance. Yet, it only allows the impact one ally has on another at a time to be studied as the model cannot be used as a “two-way” street. This is a clear limitation of the model as mutuality is to be expected in a relationship between two allies. Adding elements of neoclassical realism to the equation helped to peek into the “black-box” of the individual allies’ motivation in order to better understand the reasons guiding their actions.

### **7.2.3. Outlook and limitations**

Drawing on the previous section, these final pages will discuss what this dissertation could not deliver as well as suggestions for further research. As indicated above, this study did not evaluate national decision-making processes leading to the case study counties respective NATO and defense policies. Accordingly, how a

decision was reached was not considered, nor who exactly took a particular decision. For one, it was not deemed necessary to dive deeply into a country's so-called black box, that is, domestic dynamics and changes—including during the evaluation period this study is based on—*influencing security and defense policies of a given state as scrutinizing the motives behind actions (the “perception” section in each case study)* gave the researcher enough insights into why some decisions were made while others were not in order to plausibly understand how US engagement impacted the case studies of this dissertation. Secondly, reconstructing decision-making processes thoroughly as according to a process-tracing research design would require access to archives in order to learn about what “actually happened behind-the-scenes.” Gaining such intimate knowledge would involve access to transcripts of off-the-record conversations between decision-makers at the top-level of nation states as well as conversations between state leaders, diary entries of state leaders, classified memorandums and the like, which depending on how much they pertain to matters of national security are kept under wraps for decades. Hence, it should be left to historians to reconstruct and evaluate decision-making processes as opposed to political scientists studying contemporary phenomena. In addition, autobiographies written by state leaders or biographies drawing on off-the-record conversations with state leaders provide insights into the motives driving decision-makers. These two genres were taken into consideration for this study. Next to national decision-making processes, the impact European member state’s policies had on the US’s position in NATO as well as its NATO policies were not considered in this study either. To undergo such an examination would require reversing the determinants of this study’s research design, that is, to switch the independent and dependent variables. This is a task worthwhile in order to better understand the impact European member state’s actions have on the United States as this would allow greater insights into the dynamics of NATO as whole—after all, the United States was still considered to be the Alliance’s *primus inter pares* during the Obama presidency from 2009 up until 2016. Hence, further research could and should be conducted on the question of European members’ influence on the US’s NATO position and its policies, including the case study countries of this study: Germany, Poland, and Turkey were selected because they were deemed to be of great importance

to US defense decisions as well as vice versa.<sup>1318</sup> Expanding the scope of further research recommendations, additional studies should be conducted on the implications of this dissertation's results on the Alliance's coherence and future course, most notably the revelation that the US engagement vis-à-vis NATO Europe during the Obama years brought about the multi-, bi-, and nationalization of the NATO policies of Germany, Poland, and Turkey. These findings disclose much about the case study countries attitudes toward the concept of burden-sharing as well as the transatlantic bargain which was one of the overarching goals of this dissertation. Firstly, the United States cannot claim that all of Europe is idly standing by while Washington is picking up the burden-sharing bill. While the United States is still contributing more than any other member state to the budget and capability pool of NATO, European member states are catching up, most notably Germany and Poland. Secondly, while Berlin and Warsaw do contribute more to NATO overall, their motives are very different. While Germany attempts to strengthen multilateral structures in general, including NATO, Poland is more interested in strengthening its defense and NATO policy by bolstering bilateral ties with the United States—especially since 2015 when PIS, a right-wing party, came to power. Turkey, on the other hand, is mostly interested in nationalizing its defense policies as it feels this course of action serves its security interests best as opposed to concentrating its efforts on NATO. Drawing on these results, one could gain further valuable insights into future developments of the Alliance as a whole, including the mark the Trump presidency will leave on NATO's European member states.

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<sup>1318</sup> N.B.: According to Emil Durkheim's "division of labor" concept (1984) it is important that a study such as this dissertation is compatible for further research. While the "notion of treating clusters of research in terms of their distinct roles in a scholarly "division of labor" is not meant to suggest that there is some consensus on what the collective product of social scientific research ought to be, or on how individual scholars should develop and deploy their skills and expertise. In fact (...), research products do not lend themselves to aggregation in the way that the roles and tasks of individuals would in a complex organization designed to achieve pre-given objectives. Nevertheless, since methodological debates have such a powerful and divisive impact on the work and lives of social scientists (...), the analogy seems useful at least for the purpose of articulating a flexible view of social science in which the ideals of unity and pluralism are reconciled not through essentially similar methodological principles but through a shared awareness of the distinctive payoffs and limitations associated with different kinds of endeavors.", cf. Sil, Research communities, constrained pluralism, and the role of eclecticism, p. 319.



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For the first time, this book examines the comparative impact of the Obama administration on the NATO and defense policies of European allies. Germany, Poland and Turkey serve as case studies to evaluate American policies vis-à-vis NATO Europe. All three are representative for the Alliance in various ways. Thus, the results of this book offer an outlook for NATO Europe and the Alliance as a whole. Despite the fact that all three countries are highly dependent on American security guarantees in theory and practice, the results of this study reveal different national responses.

Indeed, the book demonstrates multi-, bi-, and unilateralization attempts in reaction to US engagement in and vis-à-vis NATO Europe. Hence, a better understanding of current developments within the Alliance as well as the basis for the future debate about the transatlantic organisation are provided.

Aylin Matl  works for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.; most recently, she worked for the foundation's Israel office in Jerusalem. Previously, Aylin Matl  was a research associate at the chair of international relations and European politics at the Martin-Luther-Universit t Halle-Wittenberg.

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