TURBULENCE ACROSS THE SEA

Transatlantic Relations and Strategic Competition

Edited by
Elie Baranets and Andrew R. Novo
With a Prologue by Sir Hew Strachan

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PROLOGUE

The Return of Great Power Competition

From Strategy to Geopolitics

Hew Strachan

On 20 February 2023, almost a year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the president of the United States, Joe Biden, walked through Kyiv with his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymir Zelensky. On a crisp, clear day, they were pictured in front of St. Michael's Cathedral, its white walls, blue-green detailing, and gold domes directly reflecting the sun and indirectly the blue and yellow of Ukraine's flag. The symbolism did not end there. St. Michael's looks across to Kyiv's oldest ecclesiastical complex, the eleventh-century monastery of St. Sophia, a Byzantine structure modeled on Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. St. Michael's was built shortly after St. Sophia's. In 1937 it was torn down by the Bolsheviks and its riches distributed to Russian museums. Rebuilt in 2001, it is representative both of Ukraine's recovery from Russian rule and of its cultural independence.

"Kyiv stands," Biden said that day in the Mariinsky Palace. "And Ukraine stands. Democracy stands. The Americans stand with you and the world stands with you."[1] But the world did not. The next day, a study by the European Council on Foreign Relations reported on a survey of public opinion in nine European Union (EU) member countries, the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, India, and Turkey. It found that the war in Ukraine had made the "West" more united and that public views against Russia in the EU states, and especially in the United States and

United Kingdom, had hardened. Over three-quarters of Britons saw Russia as an adversary or rival, as did 71 percent of Americans and 65 percent of Europeans. What the war had also done, however, was to widen the gulf between the "West" and the great powers of Asia. Biden's assertions were not even universally shared within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In Turkey, 73 percent of respondents said the war had left Russia as strong as it was before, or stronger, and 69 percent saw Russia as an ally or "necessary partner." In China, 76 percent agreed with these views, and in India, the most populous democracy in the world, 77 percent agreed.[2]

The global order was not aligned with democracy. In truth, it rarely has been. In 1919 Woodrow Wilson was welcomed in France by delirious crowds, their enthusiasm spawned by the promise of a future without war. Wilson's Fourteen Points, set out a year before in January 1918, proposed that states would be formed on the basis of national self-determination and that their differences would be subject to settlement not by war but by arbitration in the League of Nations. Wilson had originally wanted democratic government to be a necessary qualification for membership in the League of Nations, but Britain, an imperial power, insisted on the inclusion of India, although it was not self-governing. Britain's reliance on its colonial strength contrasted with France's insouciance about its position in the Levant when compared with the security of its eastern frontier. In 1919, both Entente allies demonstrated how persistent European great power politics—and their corollary, the pursuit of the balance of power—could be in the face of American idealism.

Wilson's ambition to break with the patterns of nineteenth-century international relations, however, was definitively undermined not by either Britain or France but instead by the frustrations of two other victors in the First World War and their manifestations outside Europe, not within it. The Paris peace agreements had global ambitions but in practice gave more attention to their delivery in Europe alone. In 1919, Japan discovered that Wilson's apparent egalitarianism was limited by its assumption of white supremacy, its refusal to recognize Japanese claims, and its readiness to broker compromises rather than seek confrontation with British and French colonialism. In 1932–33, Japan defied the League of Nations in pursuit of its ambitions in China, and in 1935–36, Italy followed suit in Ethiopia. By then, neither Japan nor Italy could be described as a democracy in the sense that it was understood in the United States, even if both their governments rested on populist support. Both too were ready to use aggression. In 1928, the Kellogg-Briand Pact had outlawed war as an instrument of national policy, but within five years states could disregard

that prohibition with relative impunity. The global order created in 1919 had started to unravel before the post-war European order—before Hitler secured power and Germany began to rearm.

Nonetheless, Wilsonianism survived.[3] After the Second World War, the victorious powers, again largely guided by the United States, tried once more to create a new global order, similar, if updated, to the League of Nations. The United Nations rested on a worldwide community of independent and sovereign states with equal rights, even if its executive committee, the Security Council, was made up of the principal victors in the war: China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Again, empires confused—without fully confounding—the democratizing ambitions of America, as the Belgian, British, Dutch, French, and Portuguese fought both to hold onto the colonies that they had retained during the war and to reassert control over those that they had lost. They failed, but the process of decolonization lasted almost thirty years. Beginning with India in 1947, it was largely complete when the Portuguese left Africa in 1975. By then the world had long been divided by the Cold War, which in turn gave ideological shape to postcolonial conflicts in Asia and Africa.

Only with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 did the Wilsonian promise come close to fulfillment, and then only briefly. As the United States embarked on its so-called unipolar moment, it used its power with circumspection and care. When in August 1990 Saddam Hussein ordered Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, declared, "If we let [Iraq] succeed, no small country can ever feel safe again. The law of the jungle would take over from the rule of law."[4] Her words were—not unlike the persistence of Wilson's legacy in the United States—an echo of the First World War: in August 1914, the British government, then for the last time under Liberal leadership, described Germany's invasion of Belgium in similar terms. The US president in 1991, George H. W. Bush, was more cautious than Thatcher. Fearful of the "West" acting in isolation, he was initially reluctant to respond to the conflict with force. Saudi Arabia eased his worries by becoming the fulcrum for a regional Middle Eastern coalition, which embraced the Gulf states and Egypt. The formation of the military alliance against Iraq then marched in step with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. Resolution 660 of 2 August 1990 demanded that Iraq unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait. Four days later, Resolution 661 authorized economic sanctions, and on 25 August, Resolution 665 imposed a blockade. On 25 November, Resolution 678 approved the use of force to liberate Kuwait. In other words, as three

of the Security Council powers—Britain, France, and the United States—prepared troops and committed them to a war in the Gulf, they did so with the express approval of the other two, China and the Soviet Union.

By contrast, just over three decades later, on 24 February 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the United Nations Security Council proved powerless. Article 1 of the UN Charter bans the use of war except in cases of national self-defense. In launching an invasion of Ukraine, Russia, which went on to succeed to the chairmanship of the Security Council by monthly rotation in April 2023, breached an international law that it was obliged to uphold. Unable to express its reactions through the Security Council, the United Nations did so in its General Assembly. On 2 March 2022 it passed a resolution to reject Russia's invasion and to demand that it withdraw and uphold international law, by a vote of 141 member states to 5 (of which one was Russia; the others were Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, and Syria). As significant, however, was the fact that 35 states abstained. They included another Security Council member, China. On 12 October 2022, the voting pattern was identical: the General Assembly rejected as illegal Russia's annexation of four provinces in eastern Ukraine. Although the majority of the world's states consistently condemned the Russian invasion, those on the fence did not come off it. In a third vote to mark the first anniversary of the invasion, opinion even moved marginally in Russia's favor, with Mali and Nicaragua bringing the number of its open supporters to 7. The abstainers fell to 32, but those backing the motion also fell—back to 141.

Despite a concerted diplomatic effort to remove the suggestion that Ukraine's supporters were "western" powers, united by NATO and/or the EU, many states that were not "Western" preferred to see the war in Ukraine as a matter of concern for Europe alone. However, affected economically by the threat caused by the war to grain supplies from Ukraine, some states in the Global South abstained from voting in the General Assembly. Above all, when the voting patterns within the United Nations were broken down not by individual states but by their aggregate population sizes, half the people of the world were not prepared to oppose the invasion by condemning Russia. China and India, as the world's two most populous nations, were crucial here—not just because of their size but also because of their economic clout with other countries.

The war in Ukraine may have rallied NATO and given direction to the EU after February 2022, but it also reinvigorated what during the Cold War was called the nonaligned movement. Several countries were reluctant to follow a coalition led by the United States, given its recent propensity to use force to seemingly little positive effect. Since 2001

the United States has intervened in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya and has deployed special forces into other states and launched drone strikes against targets within them. So persistent has been the American use of armed force that what George W. Bush called the "global war on terror" has been rebranded by both commentators and jurists as the "forever war." In other words, the United States is charged with a readiness to use force without geographical or chronological limits.[5] By contrast, although China has implied that it is ready to use military force in the western Pacific, it has not actually done so.

In many respects, this narrative is at odds with what successive presidents—from Obama to Biden by way of Trump—have wanted to achieve. Obama, a "Hamlet on the Potomac" in Jonathan Freedland's memorable phrase,[6] wanted to get out of both Iraq and Afghanistan. He set in motion the withdrawal that then enabled the rise of ISIS and so triggered a renewed US commitment to Iraq and the region. Trump pursued a deal with the Taliban, whom the Bush administration would not allow Hamid Karzai to bring into the Afghan provisional government in 2001–2 on the grounds that it was a terrorist organization. On becoming president, Biden then accepted the deal, so forfeiting the commitment to human rights, especially those of women, that many in the United States and its allies had backed. American engagement with Ukraine proved similarly half-hearted. Between 2014 and 2022 neither the United States nor NATO was ready to give Ukraine the guarantees it needed to deter Russia, and after the invasion of February 2022 they were fettered in their responses by their fears of escalation. The reality has been that since 9/11 the rhetoric surrounding the US use of war has not been matched by the levels of its political or military commitment. The United States and its partners have relied on the deterrent effects of words and of limited military action but not on the substance of major war.

In the process, the "Western" powers have contributed to the weakening of the very institution that in 1945 they helped create in order to protect global order. In 2005 the United Nations endorsed the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, so creating an obligation to intervene in states whose civilian populations are at risk—potentially from their own governments. Prompted by the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and by the failure of the United Nations Protection Force to prevent Bosnian Serbs from slaughtering Muslims in Srebrenica in 1995, the United Nations agreed to breach the principle of state sovereignty—on which it was founded—in order to honor the moral imperative to save individual lives enshrined in international humanitarian law. The moral obligation is clear; the practi-

cal implications are less so. The implementation of R2P is dependent on a Security Council resolution.

Only rarely since the 9/11 attacks in 2001 has the Security Council shown the unity it displayed over the Gulf War in 1990–91. In November 2001 the United States secured the support of the United Nations for its actions in Afghanistan at a conference convened in Bonn, but it did not win the Security Council's approval to invade Iraq in 2003. When in February 2011 the Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi turned against his own people during the Arab Spring, the United Nations Security Council invoked R2P for the first time. In March 2011, the United Kingdom and France secured a further resolution that imposed a no-fly zone over Libya as Gaddafi's forces approached Benghazi and authorized member states to take further steps, if required, to protect civilian lives. The resolutions ruled out any foreign occupation and did not authorize regime change. Britain and France, backed by the United States, provided air support to the insurgent forces in Libya and toppled Gaddafi.[7] They had pushed the envelope beyond what China and Russia had accepted. As a result, they could not persuade the Security Council to invoke R2P to intervene in Syria, as another Arab tyrant used chemical weapons against his own people in 2013. In the process, the "Western" powers not only weakened the United Nations but also began to blame it for their own failure to be more effective. The authority of the Security Council was being eroded long before Russia committed the cardinal sin of directly breaching the charter itself, first in 2014 and later—even more flagrantly—in 2022.

On 24 February 2022, despite Russian aggression, far too many UN member states remained convinced that over thirty years earlier the United States had given the Soviet Union good reason to believe that it—and NATO—would stay out of its western backyard and especially Ukraine. This claim reflected the cautious and careful diplomacy of the United States in the early 1990s, which sought to reassure Europe that a reunified Germany would not again become a continental hegemon and convince Russia that it would not be exposed to attack from the west, as it had been in 1812, 1914, and 1941. The United States found itself under increasing pressure first from Germany and then from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. For all of them, NATO membership became a corollary of the renewal of a powerful Germany in central Europe: a way of containing it while also legitimizing its militarization. Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia also needed security guarantees against Russia. Additionally, the legacy of Soviet domination after 1945 left a particularly long shadow on the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, each too small to defend

itself without allies. They were enfolded into NATO's Partnership for Peace program in 1999.

Russia was never given a direct guarantee about the status of the eastern European states. In February 1990, James Baker, the US secretary of state, and Mikhail Gorbachev, the first secretary in the Soviet Union, had agreed that NATO would not expand, but that understanding was never ratified. In December 1991, 90 percent of Ukrainians (in a turnout of 84 percent) voted for independence, and even in Russian-speaking areas the support for separation never fell below 50 percent. George H. W. Bush recognized the result without hesitation, although the United States continued to treat Ukraine as belonging in Russia's sphere of influence. However, as the 1990s progressed, the United States grew both more confident in its own Cold War success and more certain that NATO had a future after its conclusion. The United States was also worried by the consequences of the Soviet Union's disintegration. Boris Yeltsin, Russia's president, displayed alcohol-induced behavior that was increasingly erratic, a major worry given his control of a major nuclear arsenal. At the end of the decade, Russia showed that it was ready both to use force and to do so with extreme brutality in Chechnya. In 2008, following Russia's invasion of Georgia, George H. W. Bush's son, now himself president, proposed that Georgia and Ukraine be considered for NATO membership. The other members were not keen on the proposal. When they met in Wales for a NATO summit in September 2014, in the aftermath of Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine, their position remained unaltered.[8]

None of this was new to Biden; when he stood with Zelensky outside St. Michael's Cathedral on 20 February 2023, he brought with him the experience both of long service in the US Senate, which began in the Cold War, and as Obama's vice president during his country's post-9/11 wars of intervention. His age shaped his responses in a way that might not have been the same for those of a younger president. He had accepted the need for the United States to pivot to Asia and the Pacific, as articulated by Obama in January 2012. Indeed, this prioritization was one factor determining his decision to abandon Afghanistan in 2021. But he also still believed, as some Americans no longer did, in the need for the United States to shore up the security of Europe. As the war in Ukraine unfolded in 2022, many of those Europeans, especially Germany, Poland, and the Baltic states, behaved in ways that successive US administrations had urged them to, by taking greater political responsibility for their own defense and security. The paradox was that they did not have the resources. They had not invested sufficiently in their own military capabilities—or had bought too readily

from the United States equipment that they could not dispose of as they wished—to be able to act effectively as independent actors. Brexit compounded the problem. Britain, which had seen itself as the bridge between the United States and Europe and had elevated NATO as the best instrument for the delivery of that policy, had left the EU in 2019, potentially weakening its voice in that relationship. At its Madrid summit in 2022, as war raged in Ukraine, NATO, conditioned by the United States' fear of escalation, focused more on its own defense through deterrence, while the EU endeavored to shed its reputation for bureaucratic inertia by flexing its muscles to equip Ukraine.

Just as revealing of the reasons for these confusions were the words of both Biden and Zelensky at their other high-profile meeting, when Zelensky, not Biden, did the traveling. On 21 December 2022, the two met in Washington. Biden, introducing the Ukrainian president at their joint press conference, stated that "in their bones" Americans knew that "Ukraine's fight is part of something much bigger." They realized, he went on, that "if they stand by in the face of such blatant attacks on freedom and democracy and on the core principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the world would surely face worse consequences."[9] Biden's use of Wilsonian ideas, making this a war not only for democracy in general but also for America's sense of its manifest destiny, was aimed at his American electorate and the US Congress that represented it. Zelensky's response, although not going so far, also deployed the themes of the US-led global democratic order: more than once he stressed that a "terrorist" state had violated the rule of international law. Fusing Russia, the enemy of the Cold War, with the global war on terror fed Americans with calls to action that had become familiar since 1945 and especially since 9/11.

The implicit point of reference has been, and was on this occasion, the Second World War, America's "good war" fought by the "greatest generation." In a narrative that forgets how reluctant Americans were to fight in 1941 (as in 1917) or how substantially the United States profited from both world wars, hindsight is privileged over contingency. The Holocaust has become the supreme validation of America's war for democracy and freedom, despite the fact that saving the Jews played no part in Washington's decision to go to war, just as it did not for Britain and France in 1939. After all, the persecution of the Jews—however appalling its implementation before the US entry in the war—did not reach its "Final Solution" until the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942, a meeting and a set of conclusions shrouded in utmost secrecy. The United States entered the Second World War in response to events in the Pacific, with the attack on

Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Britain and France did so for reasons that were not dissimilar to those that had prompted them in 1914: a war in eastern Europe, which might have been local and limited but had repercussions for wider European security. The contemporary parallels are instructive. For most Europeans in 2022 (or certainly in 2014), Ukraine, like Serbia in 1914 and Poland in 1939, was "a faraway country about which we know nothing."[10]

This historical lens matters, because it brings us back to great powers and their balance within Europe. Like Serbia in 1914, invaded by Austria-Hungary in what the Habsburg Empire hoped would be a limited and local war, and like Poland in 1939, invaded by Germany in a war that it too gambled on remaining limited and local (at least in the short term), Ukraine is fighting a war for national survival against a potentially stronger neighbor. Like Austria-Hungary and Germany, Russia has no interest in this war escalating geographically, temporally, or militarily. Zelensky's response to Biden on 21 December 2022 may have said that his country was fighting on behalf of "the global free world" and that its victory would strengthen "global security," but these were Biden's aims, not his. For Ukraine, they were means, not ends: means to shore up external support in a war for Ukraine's national independence against an "imperial" (Zelensky's word) power. Ukraine is fighting not for the free world but for itself, not for global but for national security, for its territorial and cultural integrity—and all these aims have assumed sharper identities and broader bases as a direct consequence of Russia's invasion.

We have become too accustomed to explaining the reasons for war in the twentieth century in terms of competing ideologies and value systems with claims to validity that extend beyond the national and local and that overplay the political and the universal at the expense of the geographical and economic. In the First World War, France declared it was fighting for the principles of the French Revolution, which it equated with the civilization of the nineteenth century, with the rights of man and with liberty, equality, and fraternity. Britain, following Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium, fell back—as Thatcher unconsciously echoed in 1990—on the rights of small nations and the rule of international law. Both France and Britain presented the war as one waged against Prussian militarism, a theme that resonated when deployed by the two countries' propaganda campaigns in neutral America. In the Second World War, the ideological enemy was fascism, even if it was a collection of ideas expressed in more specifically national terms than the two political philosophies that opposed it. Unlike fascism, both Communism and liberal democracy had utopian

visions of perpetual peace as their eventual outcome if either were successful. Each had been at odds with the other since 1917: Wilson's Fourteen Points, it is important to remember, were a response to the Bolsheviks' call for a peace on the basis of the status quo ante, without annexations and indemnities. As much as they became a definition of American war aims directed against the Central Powers, in the first instance the points were an attempt to regain the moral high ground from international socialism for the allies.

The intensification during the Cold War of the clash between Communism and democracy, between a state-directed economy and the capitalist free market, empowered a lazy adoption of equivalence between the post–Second World War present and the prewar past. The Cold War became a global struggle for ideological dominance that occasionally waxed hot, most directly in Korea and Vietnam, most dangerously in Cuba, and more frequently through local proxies in the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. In reality, this third dimension, the so-called global Cold War, encapsulated local and domestic struggles for power in which each side professed ideological conformity so as to mobilize the support of one of the two superpowers.[11] The United States and the Soviet Union may have thought they controlled the narrative, with "western" values facing up to Communism. But often the tail was wagging the dog, with the subordinate ally calling the shots.[12]

What this approach, with its focus on political ideologies and their claims to global influence, leaves out of account is the specifically geographical labeling that shaped the confrontation of the Cold War. The "West" faced a threat from the "East," and the West formed an alliance that defined itself in terms of its common ocean, the North Atlantic. The Soviet Union responded with its own treaty organization, also given geographical precision as the Warsaw Pact.

An earlier generation might have interpreted the Cold War through the prism of geopolitics. Its hub was Euro-Asia, the land mass that stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This was the "world island" or the "heartland," in the words of Halford Mackinder, the founding father of geopolitics in the English language. Germany and Russia had competed for its dominance in two world wars. In late 1919, it is worth recalling, Mackinder was dispatched by the British government to "South Russia" (as the Foreign Office called it)—an area that included Ukraine, then briefly an independent republic. His task was to establish the economic base for the White Russian forces pushing north toward Moscow to oust the Bolsheviks. A "state, and not merely an army, must be set going," Mackinder told

Anton Ivanovich Denikin, the White Russians' commander, and he went on: "The riches of South Russia are such that this could be done in a few months with Western help."[13] Mackinder's mission proved extraordinarily short-lived and conspicuously unsuccessful, but his one attempt to put theory into practice does not explain why geopolitics fell out of fashion.

Geopolitics, albeit not under that title and in a version focused on maritime empire rather than continental power, had gained a foothold in the United States just before Mackinder began to produce his most significant works. In 1890, Alfred Thayer Mahan's *The Influence of Seapower upon History* had "pointed out . . . that if a nation be so situated that it is neither forced to defend itself by land nor induced to seek extension of its territory by way of the land, it has, by the very unity of its aim directed upon the sea, an advantage as compared with a people one of whose boundaries is continental."[14] It was an argument to which Mackinder, a Liberal Imperialist, in a country dependent on the sea, was susceptible. After all, as Mahan acknowledged by taking it as his role model, the British Empire was founded on maritime preeminence. Mackinder's and Britain's problem was the growth of continental empires through the railway. The United States—not that Mahan put it like this—did not have Britain's problem. It was both a maritime and a continental power.

In 1897, Mahan's friend Theodore Roosevelt was appointed assistant secretary of the Navy, and the two exchanged views in the runup to the Spanish War of 1898. In 1902, now as president, Roosevelt secured American rights over the Panama Canal, then under construction. Mahan had made the case for a maritime strategy that would enable the United States to exploit its direct access to both of the world's major oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific, and to use the canal, completed in 1914, to pivot between the two.

During the Second World War and under the presidency of another Roosevelt who had won his political spurs as assistant secretary of the Navy, the United States mobilized around the application of its economic strength, secure in its continental base, and used its access to both oceans to project airpower and sea power at a distance.[15] Nicholas Spykman, a Dutch-born professor of international relations at Yale, built on both Mackinder and Mahan to develop his own geopolitical theory. He stressed the importance of the "rimlands" rather than the heartland. These were the coastal areas surrounding the Euro-Asian heartland, which—unlike the interior—were the hubs for economic activity. Spykman argued that a country should design its security policy around its geography. This for him was geopolitics. Spykman's principal book, *The Geography of the Peace*,

published in 1944, was designed to shape postwar thinking. But Spykman died the year before its appearance, in 1943, and its impact was accordingly curtailed.[16]

Edward Mead Earle's foundational text for post-1945 strategic thought, *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*, was also published in 1943. Although it contained a chapter on geopolitics, that chapter focused—perhaps naturally enough given its wartime context—on Karl Haushofer, a former general and a Nazi based in Munich. The opening sentence read—damningly—"geopolitics is a creature of militarism and a tool of war."[17] Not least as a result, geopolitics went out of fashion in the English-speaking world after 1945. To understand the Second World War and to prepare the United States for its aftermath and America's role within it, Earle turned not to geopolitics but to strategy. "Strategy deals with war, preparation for war, and the waging of war," Earle stated. But this was only an opening gambit. He went on to say, "The highest form of strategy—sometimes called grand strategy—is that which so integrates the policies and armaments of the nation that the resort to war is either rendered unnecessary or is undertaken with the maximum chance of victory. It is in this broader sense that the word strategy is used in this volume."[18]

The tendency to see great power rivalry in terms that were absolute, worldwide, and potentially fatal, established by the two world wars, was consolidated by the dropping of the two atomic bombs in 1945, two years after Earle published these definitions. The need to avoid war through the threat of its use by way of deterrence, which Earle anticipated, was consolidated by Bernard Brodie and others from 1946. "Strategy" and "grand strategy" became the terms of choice to explain what was going on. Their end point was war, even if the war might be one of extinction. Strategy, however imprecise by comparison with the discipline imposed on geopolitics by geography, became the basis for policy guidance and academic debate. It spread its wings and grew both in esteem and dogma as the Cold War intensified.

Strategic thought was not ready for the end of the Cold War, which its principal makers had endowed with a level of permanence. Nonetheless, it remained the tool with which to interpret and shape events in its aftermath, especially following the 9/11 attacks in 2001. The US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan and their missteps only intensified that search for strategy and the belief that, if done well, it could deliver success, particularly for a power with overwhelming military preponderance. The greater the confusion, and the greater the self-doubt that followed from the lack of quick success, the more strident the demand for strategy to provide solu-

tions. The United States sought to reenergize the debate around grand strategy as it struggled to give shape to what it was doing. In hindsight, the Cold War, perversely but gradually, became transformed in people's minds into an era of stability and order, no longer a time of recurrent crisis and great existential danger, when the security of nations was held in thrall to nuclear weapons.

The whole situation became an exercise in frustration, however creative. In a world in which alliances proved more fluid and transient than they had in the Cold War, not least because the salience of the nuclear threat was diminished and the clear geographical divide became foggy, the adversary did not conform to type. Entrepreneurs pursued profit in Russia, and the Chinese economy began to boom. Strategic direction proved ever more elusive. The boundaries between war and peace became uncertain. The vocabulary that underpinned strategy came to rest less on certainties and more on ambiguities. Alliances became "coalitions of the willing," wars of necessity were rebranded as wars of choice, and the distinction between war and peace was eroded by concepts like "hybrid war," "irregular warfare," and "gray-zone warfare." Even victory and defeat were rendered passé, with the result that wars had no clear end but went on "forever."

When seeking to address current concerns about the revival of great power competition and the fear of great power conflict, macro explanations and long-term trends are as important as recent events, like the war in Ukraine, or incipient threats, like that of a Chinese assault on Taiwan. A good departure point for this sort of context is international law's presumption that frontiers are inviolable. They are not—or not to the point that they are worth a war, judging by NATO's responses to Russian infringements since 2008. NATO stresses its readiness to defend the territorial integrity of its own member states, as embodied in Article 5 of the Atlantic Charter, but then discounts breaches of others' borders or regards them as sufficiently atypical as not to be worthy of serious attention. When Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 and annexed what it calls Southern Ossetia, it took the "West" by surprise, despite the warnings NATO had received and in part addressed at its Bucharest summit earlier that year. When Obama succeeded Bush at the end of that year, he sought conciliation, not confrontation. Responses were not that different in 2014 when Russia infringed the principle of state sovereignty once again, by invading Ukraine and annexing Crimea.

Both conflicts were about land and its possession. *Pace* Biden's remarks in December 2022 and February 2023, the clearest definitions of Ukraine's war aims are spelled out in territorial, not ideological or global, terms. In

the early stages of the Russian invasion of 24 February 2022, Ukraine was committed to the restoration of the frontier on the "frozen" front, stabilized under the terms of the Minsk Agreement of 5 September 2014 and ruptured by Russia. By autumn 2022, Zelensky had publicly committed himself to the recovery of the border established when Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, including Crimea. During the winter of 2022–23, with battle lines set much farther west than they had been a year earlier, Ukraine could not readily accept diplomatic negotiations before military action had recovered more of the territory it had lost: possession is nine-tenths of the law.

It is as though, in the rejection of imperialism and the recasting of war as a means not for acquisition but for political primacy, the "West" has forgotten the dominant cause of war over much recorded history: its use for the capture or recovery of territory. When states were less regularly identified in national or ethnic terms, these exchanges of land were both less intense in their implications and more frequent in their occurrence. The land was the monarch's, not the people's. On 10 July 1827, while he was writing *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz described war as of two types, one committed to overthrowing the enemy and "forcing him to sign whatever peace we please" and the other "*merely to occupy some of his frontier-districts* so that we can annex them or use them for bargaining at the peace negotiations."[19] Clausewitz and his contemporaries saw the more limited form of war, defined in terms of its territorial outcomes, as typical not of the wars of the French Revolution and of Napoleon but of the wars of the eighteenth century up until 1789. Self-evidently, in 2022, Zelensky was not so relaxed about the geographical consequences of war—nor was Vladimir Putin. The latter's intentions in invading Ukraine belonged more to Clausewitz's first type of war than they did to his second.

The peace treaties following Napoleon's wars in 1814–15 rested on the presumption that state territory could be traded and that this was a normal outcome of war. They set in motion a pattern of state consolidation in nineteenth-century Europe. The redistribution was most dramatic in Germany, where over 300 city-states were reduced to 39 and Prussia was expanded, not least westward so that in the future it could thwart French imperialism. The new kingdom of the Netherlands, uniting Belgium and the Dutch provinces, even if cut short when Belgium secured its independence in 1839, fulfilled a similar function to France's north. In other words, the viability of states was understood not least in military terms, and they were dependent on geographical unity, economic resilience, and population size. Neither democratic government (which was deemed to have caused

war in 1792, not prevented it) nor ethnic and cultural unity was a criterion for state formation. Although the 1848 revolutions rested in part on liberal nationalism, they did not undermine these principles of state consolidation, as the unifications first of Italy in 1859 and then of Germany in 1871 testified. Prussia, the architect and pivot of the new Germany, was already a "great power" in 1815, and so ranked with Austria, Britain, France, and Russia. Italy may have been both a late and an uncertain candidate for "great power" status, but it aspired to join the other five as the arbiters and stabilizers of the international order until 1914. All were Christian by confession. The Ottoman Empire was not—an outlier both because the bulk of its possessions lay outside Europe and because it was Muslim.[20]

After the First World War, the process of state consolidation was put in reverse. The Ottomans had begun to lose their foothold in the Balkans from 1878. In 1918 it forfeited the Levant and Arabia. More dramatic within Europe itself was the collapse of Austria-Hungary, a multinational empire. Separatism was supercharged by Woodrow Wilson's commitment to national self-determination, however hard it was to determine ethnic demarcations on the ground. Eastern and central Europe saw the creation of newly independent states sandwiched between Soviet Russia, which was not invited to Paris and was committed to world revolution, and a revisionist Germany, which was committed to overthrowing the Paris peace settlement. The new states, located in the "shatterzones" between the two countries, were to provide comparatively easy pickings.[21] Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine secured political independence after the Bolshevik Revolution, but Ukraine was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1923, and the latter annexed the three Baltic states in 1940. Poland was treated well in Paris and repelled the Bolsheviks but only until 1939, when it was divided between the Soviet Union and Germany. By then the latter had already swallowed Austria and Czechoslovakia.

The principle of subdivision rather than consolidation acquired fresh impetus after 1945, especially following the European powers' withdrawal from empire and the creation of newly independent states across Asia and Africa. When the United Nations was formed in 1945, it had 51 members; in 2023 it had 193, an almost fourfold increase. Smaller states with fewer resources find it inherently harder to generate military mass and therefore are more reliant than more self-sufficient states on the provisions of the UN Charter to create a first line of collective defense. Some states supplement UN membership with the protection of a regional alliance, NATO being the preeminent postwar example. Its membership stood at 16 at the end of the Cold War but by 2023 had reached 31, with Sweden standing on

the threshold and Ukraine not far behind. In other words, unlike the great powers system of the nineteenth century, today's instruments for the maintenance of international order confront an exponentially larger challenge. They are juggling the demands and differences of far more states, possessed of greater diversity in terms of religious faith and ethnicity. Their reach is more open-ended. NATO is no longer as geographically constrained as its name suggests. It deployed "out of area" to Afghanistan between 2005 and 2014, and in 2022 at its Madrid summit it resolved to treat China as a systemic threat. Since its inception, the United Nations has faced an even more daunting task: it is responsible for the world, not just Europe.

Such large organizations with broad, and even global, remits contain diverse views as to how seriously to respond to the challenges that confront them. Those NATO powers closer to Russia, preeminently the Baltic states and Poland, experienced Soviet rule in the Cold War and take the military threat posed by Moscow more seriously, for the reason that they are physically nearer to the country, than the states of western Europe—a point which was evident from 2014. Similarly, European states, distant from the Pacific, were initially reluctant to follow the United States' lead in accepting that China presented a strategic challenge. In 1967 Britain had decided to withdraw its forces from east of Suez, recognizing its own economic weakness and the need to prioritize European defense. In 2015 the British prime minister, David Cameron, acted within the spirit of that decision when he welcomed President Xi of China on a state visit to promote trade between the two countries. His government saw China not as a threat but as an opportunity. However, in 2023, despite a much-diminished defense budget, the United Kingdom's "Integrated Review Refresh" described China as "an epoch-defining challenge to the international order."[22] In 2021, following the publication of the original "Integrated Review," branded "Global Britain," the United Kingdom had deployed a carrier strike group to the Pacific. Nobody presented the dispatch of the carrier strike group as a reversal of the 1967 decision, and so it was not clear whether it was an instrument to deter China from asserting itself in the western Pacific or a post-Brexit marketing ploy to win trade in South Asia, especially India. Even Pacific states, like Australia and Singapore, have found themselves pursuing contradictory policies, caught between the pressure to prioritize either their defense relationships with the United States or their economic relationships with China but in practice wanting the best of both worlds.

Talk of a return to great power competition in light of recent developments evokes some precedents from earlier eras that no longer match the circumstances. This means not that the title "great power" itself is

now redundant but rather that today's conceptualization needs to take into account two factors that did not figure in nineteenth-century or early twentieth-century Europe.

The first is that only a small minority of states have the capacity to embark on, and to prevail in, an interstate war on their own. Most cannot fight without allies. The list of those that can do so may stop with the United States and China, although others—like Ukraine—may find that they have no option. Even the United States and China recognize the need for allies in order to give legitimacy to their use of military power. The United States has tested that hypothesis; China has not—but the number of nonaligned states in the United Nations General Assembly that abstained in the voting on Ukraine demonstrates how effective a recruiting sergeant Chinese loans can be. China exposes how flawed is the liberal notion that an autocratic state cannot be effective in the market, therefore reaffirming the inadequacy of using ideological divisions, at least in isolation, to define the current international order. Stress on the economic virtues of free trade as a response to China's global assertiveness rings hollow as democratic governments struggle to curb inflation and to return to growth, while dallying with protectionism (albeit often disguised) and trumpeting the need for greater self-sufficiency.

That last call, with its concerns for food and energy security, introduces the second point—the impact of climate change on the ranking of powers in the international order. Geographical size now matters in ways that it did not when the presumptions of free trade discounted supply-side vulnerabilities as well as military ones. Britain abandoned self-sufficiency in food production following an agricultural depression in the 1870s. Food could be imported from overseas cheaply because of free trade and securely because it was carried in British ships, registered and insured in London. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have dented faith in the market to guarantee imports in the same ways. Climate change promises an even more enduring shift. A country will need to hold within its own territory sufficient resources in sufficient different or temperate climatic zones to give it resilience. The United States and China have both; so too do Brazil and Russia. For those that do not, the resources of their neighbors will look increasingly attractive, therefore encouraging migration for economic reasons at the individual level and possibly war for territorial control at the state level. The effects could be interlocking: more war—especially for the control of resources—could cause more population displacement.

None of this is inevitable: climate change itself does not have to cause war. Individuals may fight over water or food, but a state decision to go to

war is still a political act. States can agree between themselves how they manage resources. Those at the headwaters of the Nile, the Euphrates, or the Indus need to address—and hitherto largely have—their requirements in conjunction with their neighbors downstream. Seagirt states have the option under the UN Charter on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to extend the maritime resources available to them through the redefinition of coastal waters by adding a "contiguous zone" of twenty-four nautical miles and an exclusive economic zone of two hundred nautical miles. The extension of continental shelves and claims to submerged islands complicate further the idea that the sea is a "global commons." More of New Zealand's potential resources now lie under the sea, given its long coastline split over three islands, than on land. For some countries, notably those in the South China Sea, UNCLOS has given rise to overlapping claims that have generated friction and could lead to conflict. The same applies to the melting of the Arctic polar ice cap and the claims to territorial waters and rights of passage that have followed.

The point here is Spykman's point: that geography is determining security. As we talk so readily of globalization, a trend reinforced by the internet, the speed of communications, and the flow of information (whether true or fake), we need to recognize the countervailing trend to regionalization. Physical security may in part depend on global considerations and their management (especially in relation to global warming), but for most of us it is more powerfully and obviously determined by events in our own backyards. When Biden told Zelensky that the world stood with him and his country, he was using the world as hyperbole, as a figure of speech. Those states that have most actively supported Ukraine with weapons and aid can be largely (but not exclusively) defined in terms of geographical proximity and by membership in NATO or the EU. For Mongolia, to the east, not the west, a landlocked state sandwiched between Russia and China but reliant on cross-border trade, the war in Ukraine presents only difficulties. It cannot afford to offend its more powerful neighbors, but at the same time, if it trades with Russia, it suffers the effects of Western sanctions. In May 2022, Nomin Chinbat, Mongolia's culture secretary, said of her country's decision to abstain in the General Assembly's first vote on the war that it "was a decision our country had to make because of our geopolitical position."[23]

"Geopolitical" is an adjective that the English-language press has come to use with increasing frequency over the last decade. It does so without exactness: sometimes it seems to be a synonym for "international" or "political," sometimes for "strategic"—another word that is used without preci-

sion and that in some respects “geopolitical” has supplanted. But Nomin Chinbat’s use was precise. It reflected the point made by Spykman in 1942 in *America’s Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*: “Geography is the most fundamental factor in the foreign policy of states because it is the most permanent.”[24] In 2012 Robert Kaplan used that quotation in *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle against Fate*, a book specifically designed to alert an American readership to the impact of geopolitics and regionalism.

The date of *The Revenge of Geography*’s publication probably marks the point at which geopolitics began to recover from the nadir to which it had been consigned by its association with Haushofer and its rejection by Earle’s *Makers of Modern Strategy*. In the “West,” only France, thanks to scholars like Philippe Boulanger and Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, had kept alive the evolution of geopolitical thought and its relationship to strategy.[25] Kaplan’s opening chapter acknowledged the prehistory of geopolitics, reviving Spykman and going back to Mackinder, who established geography as an academic discipline in the United Kingdom. Other popular books have followed Kaplan’s, most notably *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need to Know about Global Politics* by Tim Marshall. “Geopolitics,” Marshall wrote in 2015, “look at the ways in which international affairs can be understood through geographical factors; not just the physical landscape . . . but also climate, demographics, cultural regions and access to natural resources.”[26]

That is not a bad way of presenting geopolitics, even if its contemporary use by commentators is much less reflective and frequently of doubtful relevance. The point here is that the revival of geopolitics serves to remind us that the differences set by geography have not been simply obliterated by the generalities of globalization. Moreover, the growth in the use of the term, not least in discussions of great power politics, may—at least subconsciously—be symptomatic of the inadequacies of some of the other frameworks that we apply to our discussions of international affairs. Where we find ourselves in the world may not be a bad place to begin.

NOTES

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3. See Tony Smith, *Why Wilson Matters: The Origins of American Liberal Internationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).
4. Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990–1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (London: Faber, 1993), 111.

5. The term was popularized by Dexter Filkins, *The Forever War: Dispatches from the War on Terror* (London: Bodley Head, 2008); on legal arguments, see Mary L. Dudziak, *War-Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Orde F. Kittrie, *Lawfare: Law as a Weapon of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); and Samuel Moyn, *Humane: How the United States Abandoned Peace and Reinvented War* (London: Verso, 2022).

6. Jonathan Freedland, "Enough of Playing Hamlet: Obama Nees to Act Now," *The Guardian*, 3 September 2013.

7. Mark Muller Stuart, *Storm in the Desert: Britain's Intervention in Libya and the Arab Spring* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2017), 45–63.

8. M. E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia and the Making of the Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), esp. 54–51, 129–30, 348.

9. Joe Biden, "President Biden Hosts a Joint Press Conference with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy," The White House, 21 December 2022, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEPBoAKqCfs.

10. Reflecting the phrase used by Neville Chamberlain of Czechoslovakia on 27 September 1938 in a radio broadcast: imdb.com/title/tt2061550/.

11. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

12. Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), makes this point.

13. Gerry Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 208.

14. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower upon History 1660–1783* (1890; New York: Sacamore Press, 1957), 25.

15. See Phillips O'Brien, *How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

16. See Olivier Zajec, *Nicholas John Spykman: l'invention de la géopolitique américaine* (Paris: Sorbonne Université Presses, 2016).

17. Derwent Whittlesey, "Haushofer: The Geopoliticians," in Edward Mead Earle, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 388. In Britain, Colin Gray and Geoffrey Sloan, eds., *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), provided the exception to prove the rule.

18. Earle, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, viii.

19. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 69; emphasis in the original.

20. For a survey that focuses on the contribution of the great powers to relative stability in Europe, see F. R. Bridge and Roger Bullen, *The Great Powers and the European States System, 1815–1914* (London: Longman, 1980).

21. Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz, eds., *Shatterzones of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottonian Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

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24. Robert Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle against Fate* (New York: Random House, 2012), 29.

25. Philippe Boulanger, *La géographie militaire française (1871–1939)* (Paris: Economica, 2002); Philippe Boulanger, *La géographie: Reine des batailles* (Paris: Perrin, 2020); Philippe Boulanger, *Géographie militaire* (Paris: Ellipses, 2006); Hervé Coutau-Bégarie and Martin Motte, eds., *Approches de la géopolitique de l'antiquité au XXIe siècle* (Paris: Economica, 2013); Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, *Traité de stratégie* (Paris: Economica, 1999; six subsequent editions—see book 6 on *géostratégie*).

26. Tim Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need to Know about Global Politics* (2015; London: Elliott and Thompson, 2016), x.

PART 1

Introduction

ONE

Coping with Strategic Competition

Elie Baranets and Andrew R. Novo

On June 1, 2022, with war raging in eastern Ukraine, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg thanked American secretary of state Anthony Blinken for his "strong personal engagement for our transatlantic bond in this pivotal time for our security" (US Department of State 2022). Cooperation between the United States and Europe in opposing Russia's war on Ukraine was critical both practically and symbolically. In symbolic terms, America's reaffirmation of the transatlantic bond during a major global security crisis provided a renewed sense of geopolitical stability after the four tumultuous years of the Trump administration. In practical terms, the transfer of weapons and equipment from NATO nations on both sides of the Atlantic to Ukrainian forces during the first half of 2022 was instrumental in blunting the initial Russian advance on Kyiv.

Across eastern and central Ukraine, Ukrainian forces fought Russian forces to a standstill, inflicting heavy losses and forcing the Kremlin to scale back its operational plan. Furthermore, NATO's unified response demonstrated the enduring power possessed by Europe and the United States when the two sides of the Atlantic alliance work in coordination, as well as the strategic necessity of that cooperation. For the United States, operating in the European theater *without* European support is unthinkable. At the same time, the defense of Europe is not feasible without the United States. Poland's foreign minister, Zbigniew Rau, expressed this sen-

timent in late June 2022, bluntly stating, "The current crisis clearly shows that without the United States, Europe cannot defend itself" (The First News 2022).

Coordination and cooperation remain key areas of policy focus both in Europe and the United States as nations on both sides of the Atlantic grapple with the realities of the continued war in Ukraine and the broader strategic competition among major powers. This world of strategic competition was in evidence before Russia's invasion created, in Secretary Blinkin's words, "a new security landscape in Europe" (US Department of State 2022). Designed to contain and deter Russian military aggression in Europe, NATO never had to confront a Russia military operation of this scale on the European continent during the Cold War. Nor did the Soviet Union ever carry out such extensive military operations in the face of potential nuclear escalation. With these two caveats, the "new security landscape" of 2022 has common elements with the world before 1945 (Cunliffe 2020), in which states contested dominance through all means at their disposal, including not only military force, when it was deemed necessary, but also economic sanctions, espionage, misinformation campaigns, and attempts to undermine opposing governments.

Based on these statements, the bonds between the United States and Europe seem both solid and key to all. European leaders have repeatedly claimed that strong transatlantic relations are as essential as they are real. From Wolfgang Ischinger declaring to Vice President Kamala Harris at the 2022 Munich Security Conference that "without the United States considering herself a European power, we're actually quite powerless" (White House 2022) to European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen asserting that "the transatlantic partnership stands stronger and more united than ever" (European Commission 2022), most European political actors converge with their American counterparts to assess the centrality of transatlantic relations. Three key ideas follow from these statements.

First is the reality underpinning the admissions of Ischinger and Rau: European powers, at present, lack the military capabilities and political will to act decisively in international politics to confront a major power like Russia without the support of the United States. America's continued commitment to Europe is therefore essential to European security both in a broad sense and for the territorial integrity of the European Union (EU).

Second, we see a renewed sense of unity across the Atlantic established through an emphasis on shared "values," most prominently democracy, peaceful cooperation through diplomacy rather than the use of force, and a

respect for state sovereignty. These concepts will be elaborated throughout this volume.

At the same time, we can identify a third, but less encouraging, point. The vocal reaffirmation of transatlantic bonds in this time of crisis may represent an attempt to elide the significant challenges and potential points of division that are still present in Europe and North America. The much-touted unity remains vulnerable. Relying on self-fulfilling prophecies or history to preserve transatlantic relations may not be sufficient. Significant damage to transatlantic relations was done during Donald Trump's term of office. Trump distanced himself from multilateralism and dealt with United States' long-term allies as if they were liabilities. Russia's war in Ukraine has not elicited the same reaction across the alliance. Turkey, although a NATO member, has been less than supportive of Western sanctions. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan criticized Europe's participation in the sanctions regime against Russia, saying that it was "reaping what it sowed" during the rapid increase of energy prices during the war (Reuters 2022). Turkey has opposed sanctions and expanded trade, tourism, and investment with Russia, even working to move capital in and out of Russia in circumvention of sanctions. Turkey has also tried to position itself as a leader in diplomatic efforts to resolve the war, without success.

President Macron of France has also attempted to continue dialogue with Russia. This policy is meant to outflank Turkey's efforts, to some degree. It has also brought criticism from Ukraine's most ardent supporters (*The Economist* 2022). Italy, under Prime Minister Mario Draghi, was a staunch critic of Russia's invasion. Draghi's successor, Giorgia Meloni, has supported this line, but elements within some of Italy's most influential political parties—Giuseppe Conte of the Five Star Movement (now in opposition) and Matteo Salvini of the Lega (a coalition partner of Meloni)—have been openly supportive of President Vladimir Putin and critical of Italy's support for Ukraine, using the guise of "pacifism" to oppose the government's policy of supplying Kyiv with weapons on the excuse that weapons only prolong war. Germany, Europe's largest power, has promised much and delivered little to Ukraine in terms of heavy weapons (*Business Insider* 2022), largely because of its continued energy dependence on Russia. The debate in January and February 2023 over sending Leopard I tanks was resolved by a compromise in which European countries would pay to refurbish tanks in Germany's inventory and deliver a limited number (perhaps only between twenty and twenty-five) by the end of 2023 and another sixty or so by 2024 (Sprenger 2023). A handful of American M1A1 tanks

were also promised by the US Department of Defense as a way to demonstrate unity across NATO on the issue of sending such a heavy weapons system to Ukraine.

Beyond political cycles and political rhetoric, and beyond the immediate crisis in Ukraine, the specter of long-term renewed great power competition remains the factor that will likely define transatlantic relations in the decades to come. Specifically, the rise of China and the way Western powers are going to deal with it will be crucial for the fate of the Western alliance. China's rise could bring Europe and the United States as close as they were during the darkest days of the Cold War. It could also lead to fissures along lines of perceived economic interest, diverging security assessments, ideological barriers, or protectionism, creating a hyper form of *Ostpolitik* on a global scale in which Europe looks east to China for trade, investment, and partnership at the expense of its relationship with the United States. The purpose of this book is to explore these complex challenges. It presents perspectives from both sides of the Atlantic and looks at the transatlantic relationship in terms of both the sectors and the nations that will define that relationship in the future.

"Inter-state strategic competition . . . is now the primary concern in U.S. national security" (US Department of Defense 2018). From an American perspective, interstate strategic competition is about competition between the United States and China and, to a lesser extent, between the United States and Russia. How Europe fits within such a national security concept remains an open question for American policymakers. European policymakers have struggled with how to position themselves as well. In one interpretation, Europe will be a key battleground, as it was in the Cold War, a home of key American allies, and a major counterweight to an American geopolitical rival that is also recognized as a threat by Europe. However, a countervailing widespread belief exists that America's confrontation with China will be primarily Asian in scope. A true Pacific "pivot" will push Europe to the geopolitical margins in favor of allies like South Korea and Japan, who are closer to the action. Such a withdrawal could be compounded by the fact that contrary to the situation in both world wars, no European state is a serious candidate for the status of great power today, nor does any single one threaten European stability, let alone the international order. A Europe that is whole, free, at peace, and eager to trade with both Washington and Beijing does not need to take sides in a new Cold War and, in fact, would probably prefer to remain as politically neutral as possible.

A potential deterioration of transatlantic relations could happen in

many different, and sometimes opposite, ways. For example, the more the US-China rivalry turns to military competition, the more the United States could be encouraged to prioritize East Asia over Europe. This would reduce the importance of Europe from the perspective of leaders in Washington. Conversely, if the United States and China were to adopt more cooperative policies, they would both become less dependent on Europe for economic partnership. Both scenarios, while based on opposite assumptions, nevertheless converge in their broad outcomes. In other words, assessing whether US-China relations tend toward cooperation or conflict is not enough to draw direct conclusions regarding the state and evolution of transatlantic relations.

In spite of these potential forces, there is no reason to be fatalistic and predict an ineluctable decline in transatlantic relations. The power of both of the aforementioned factors is far from irresistible for several reasons. First, the change of administration in the United States has significantly improved the prognosis for relations between Europe and the United States, even if the reasons that underpinned Trump's election have not disappeared. Populism's appeal still exists within the United States and more generally within Western democracies. Populism's enduring power in Europe, along with the United States, raises the thorny issue that in the future, American Atlanticism may have to overcome European skepticism about NATO, the EU itself, transatlantic relations, or the perceived merits of the liberal international system more broadly.

Second, as will be shown in this volume, the return of great power competition does not mean that Europe has to become a theater of secondary importance. There is not just one way for the United States to check China's power, as there is not just one role for European actors to be considered in this contest. Europe has an enormous population and boasts two nuclear powers. The EU as a bloc boasts the third largest economy in the world with nearly $18 trillion, just behind China and the United States. Recent European statements suggest that in capitals across the continent, leaders are nearly as concerned with rising Chinese power as are policymakers in Washington for reasons of ideology, national security, and economic integrity. This suggests that it is unlikely Europe will maintain a passive role in international politics as China continues to rise.

Third, transatlantic links have been strengthened after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 to the potential benefits of future defense cooperation. Many European actors, most notably Germany, have started to value defense capabilities more than they used to and to increase, or pledge to increase, their spending in this sector. There is also a recognition,

not least in Germany, that the belief that integration through trade and energy could be divorced from political risks was mistaken. As Germany's former minister of finance Wolfgang Schäuble confessed, "I was wrong. We were all wrong" (Wintour 2022). This realization may make European states more skeptical about economic integration with China, while at the same time leading them to become more capable militarily. Such an outcome would certainly demonstrate their continued role as invaluable allies to the United States.

A fourth, and perhaps more important, post-invasion change that could keep the United States and Europe close together is linked to a nonmaterial process: the emergence of common threat perception. By supporting Ukraine, the United States and most European actors have not just stood on the same side; they have, more importantly, stood *against* the same side and now have a common adversary. This matters when considering the logics of identity building (Geis, Brock, and Müller 2006); for "us" to exist sometimes requires an "other" to oppose, an "other" that is different from "us." While the obvious "other" in this case is Russia, China, in its support for Russia, has placed itself in a position antagonistic to the EU and to the United States. As the United States and Europe continue to work more closely together, they see China moving closer to Russia, reinforcing the discussion of "strategic competition" that emerged in American national security documents.

What makes this new enemy different from "us" is an open question. The answer will differ depending on the various narratives that transatlantic actors will implement over the years. If no coherent and exhaustive narratives emerge (Krebs 2015) across and/or within these states, this "we feeling" might not last. If such narratives appear, however, and if they are shaped in terms of political regimes and norms that the "other" goes by, then the common cause of Europe and the United States against Russia may be directed against other authoritarian regimes—most prominently against China. Such a tendency was evident even during the 2021 Summit for Democracy, which predated the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Its rhetoric, aimed at "strengthening democracy and defending against authoritarianism," reveals the tendency to focus on ideology within "strategic competition" (White House 2021).

Framing discourse this way is common in the United States, a place where idealism and foreign policy go hand in hand. In Europe, such rhetorical elements are often considered naive and unnecessarily Manichean. Therefore, identical narratives will probably not emerge on opposite sides of the Atlantic. However, these narratives may converge enough so that

focusing on liberal norms and a democratic political regime could make sense to most transatlantic partners. In other words, even though Russia and China are separate entities, today's common positioning is fueled with ideological and political principles that may shape tomorrow's strategic dilemmas. Increased economic and political cooperation between China and Russia reinforces this.

Certainly, the alignment of threat perceptions within Europe leading to increased capabilities could also make it more autonomous and less likely to depend on the United States. However, at the time of writing, any genuine "strategic autonomy" on the part of the EU, or of any individual European actor, is far from being achieved (Meijer and Brooks 2021). Based on recent experience, we can expect Europe to lean on the United States in the security domain for the foreseeable future, not least because the threat of a powerful Russia working in collaboration with an even more powerful China is too great for Europe to manage on its own.

Cooperation between Russia and China is integral to how we conceptualize the discourse of a new Cold War. Their partnership increases the resemblance between the new Cold War and the old Cold War. However, if in the old Cold War China and Russia were on the same side, with Russia as the senior partner, in the new Cold War China will be the senior partner. Russia's preeminence meant a focus on Europe, whereas China's preeminence should lead to a focus on Asia. If in the old Cold War Russia's preeminence shaped a conflict grounded in the ideological antithesis of Marxist revolution versus capitalist democracy, China seeks to recast this conflict as a rivalry between corrupt capitalism and unstable democracy, on the one hand, and a stable, centrally planned economy governed efficiently by a one-party state, on the other.

During the old Cold War, the primacy of Europe did not preclude competition, or even violence, in Asia, as evidenced by the wars in Korean and Vietnam. From one perspective, it might have made violence in Asia *more likely* since Asia's secondary role made escalation *less likely*, emboldening the superpowers to act and take risks. In a new Cold War, an Asian focus might increase the likelihood of violence in Europe. This could be reinforced by the continued growth of Asia in relation to Europe in both economic and population terms. Whether it plays a primary role in the rivalry or not, Europe, will remain an important player in great power strategic competition in the twenty-first century.

This book aims to make sense of the transatlantic relationship in the context of strategic competition from a number of perspectives and disciplines. It is divided into three parts. The first part frames elements of

discussion analyzing great power competition and transatlantic relations from both the historical and the theoretical perspectives. The second part of the book focuses on various actors (Britain, France, Germany, and the EU itself), while the third section looks at various sectors from cybersecurity to Chinese foreign direct investment in Europe.

History, as Andrew Novo argues in chapter 2, has shown that competition among great powers does not mean only military conflict and that conflict and competition themselves take many forms. Using the rivalry between Sparta and Athens during the fifth century BCE as a case study, he describes the timeless economic and ideological elements of great power rivalries, the critical importance of alliances and their shifting dynamics, and the ways violence among great powers is often concealed or carried out through proxies to avoid escalation. We see these timeless elements at play in contemporary great power competition and look to understand their dynamics.

Given the return of strategic competition among the great powers, there is an inherent tension between the need for Europe to act as an actor and the need to build strong transatlantic relations. This tension is addressed by Carolyne Davidson from a historical perspective in chapter 3. She argues that, historically, great power competition played a role in inspiring European nations to work more closely together to provide a counterweight to the US role in NATO. This is the logic behind French efforts at "strategic autonomy," a concept backed by other states within the EU, but perhaps with divergent definitions of what the term means. Europe's need to coordinate strategy among its members in confronting Russia during and after its war against Ukraine will naturally push the EU to look to its own backyard rather than to rivalry between the United States and China. This focus, however, will require some degree of balancing and cannot be pursued effectively without American support. Russia's "no limits" friendship with Beijing and China's own inroads into European markets make strategic myopia untenable.

As this last example illustrates, all accounts of transatlantic relations, and how they are affected by great power competition, are based on implicit assumptions on international relations theory. In chapter 4, Elie Baranets attempts to make some of these assumptions explicit. Studying this field is helpful for understanding the logic of great power rivalry. The chapter argues that one would benefit from integrating the notion of prestige, whose role has been crucial in the transformation of balance of power theories. Here, Robert Gilpin's work allows us to discriminate between the different changes that a rising power like China could seek. The recent

literature on status helps further clarify the conditions under which states are the most likely to undertake these changes.

Fine-grained analyses are then used to understand the position and importance of other state and non-state actors more specifically. In chapter 5, Benjamin Pommer explains the underlying determinants of Germany's role in this strategic competition. Due to historical, economic, and geographical factors, Germany has acquired the status of "honest broker" in many international disputes. Berlin could use this posture to help establish a more coherent transatlantic security position regarding the ambitions of both Beijing and Moscow. However, as Pommer argues, this potential has not been fully exploited. The chapter lays out the political reasons for this suboptimal situation and identifies the challenges for Germany to overcome them.

Also struggling to escape European inertia is France. In chapter 6, Samuel B. H. Faure shows how Paris has tried to convince its European allies to instill change in order to decrease Europe's military and industrial dependence on the United States in a context where Washington is perceived as shifting its strategic priorities. Using methods inspired by public policy, Faure argues that France's representatives in general, and President Macron in particular, have reframed the US-China rivalry to this end and have used various tools at the intergovernmental level. The task is not easy for France. Many smaller European states fear being isolated from the United States and dominated by Paris. As a result, they are reluctant to follow France's lead, which, Faure concludes, suffers from a lack of legitimacy.

Another ambitious narrative that needs to be given substance and that stands at the crossroads between great power competition and transatlantic relations is that of "Global Britain." In chapter 7, Thibaud Harrois unpacks this narrative and analyzes how Brexit has affected Britain's role on the international stage. More specifically, Harrois shows the contradictions between Britain's various goals. Indeed, Britain's vision of its own identity allows for cooperation with China, while safeguarding international security, getting closer to the EU, and promoting liberal values. As London's latest public announcements do not provide concrete information on Britain's future commitments, it would be interesting to see how London eventually decides to face these strategic dilemmas.

Complementing this approach, Delphine Deschaux-Dutard and Bastien Nivet argue, in chapter 8, that the EU is responding to the challenges posted by strategic competition on the world stage. Deschaux-Dutard and Nivet argue that the EU exerts geopolitical influence as a "normative power." The EU has successfully built institutions and global influence.

It is working to mitigate the tensions inherent in the diverse approaches to expanding military capabilities and the domestic pressures exerted by populist movements.

After having examined key transatlantic actors, the volume turns to the study of various strategic sectors, such as economics, which exerts a powerful influence on contemporary geopolitics. In chapter 9, Peter Thompson explains how Chinese foreign direct investment in Europe has brought both opportunities for economic cooperation and concerns from the United States, as well as divisions within European countries. In spite of the scale of Chinese investment in Europe, it cannot proceed without serious geopolitical consequences and resistance from both European actors and the United States.

One of the most critical aspects of Chinese investment in Europe has been in the technology sector. In chapter 10, Lucie Béraud-Sudreau and Samuel B. H. Faure argue that technological sovereignty is at the heart of the growing rivalry between China and the United States. While the internationalization of European companies is limited in China, it is significant in the United States and Europe at a similar level. Béraud-Sudreau and Faure believe that there is a fragmentation between two clusters of companies, one constituting a European defense industrial base, the other choosing internationalization in the United States. The growing rivalry between the United States and China may exacerbate this split among European companies and their host states with regard to their position vis-à-vis the dominance of the United States.

In chapter 11, David G. Haglund and Dylan F. S. Spence take a deeper look at the issue of a return to "techo-nationalism" by exploring the case of Huawei 5G networks in Canada, arguing that the promise of Sino-American cooperation during the 1990s has evaporated in the face of new geopolitical conclusions. While Sino-American relations declined precipitously under President Trump, Haglund and Spence argue that there is continuity with the Biden administration's belief that China is America's most dangerous rival on the world stage. The consequences of renewed "techno-nationalism," they argue, are twofold. First, economies unlucky enough to be on the wrong side of technological trends will not prosper. Second, this backwardness has the potential to exacerbate international friction and trigger violence.

Last, in chapter 12, Benjamin Oudet examines the consequences of great power competition on intelligence cooperation among transatlantic partners. Oudet shows how crucial intelligence is for international politics in general and identifies the dilemmas for states to share intelligence

in particular. He emphasizes the distance between the geopolitical context and the institutionalized framework within which intelligence actors have learned to work together. Therefore, as Oudet argues, one should not expect the return of great power competition to decisively affect the way transatlantic intelligence relations occur.

In conclusion, the return of strategic competition among the great powers makes transatlantic relations as critical to world security as they have ever been. While many wonder whether transatlantic relations might deteriorate in the face of domestic populist pressures, different attitudes toward Russia, or different responses to China, it might be better to ask whether transatlantic relations may just look different in the years ahead. Various actors—particularly on the European side of the Atlantic—may choose to ensure their national security in their own ways. On the American side of the Atlantic, a deep and continued commitment to Europe remains a key national security priority and one that will be successfully integrated into managing relations with both Russia and China.

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PART 2

Framing the Debate

TWO

What's New under the Sun?

Evolving and Eternal Elements in Great Power Competition

Andrew R. Novo

Russia's attack on Ukraine in 2022 highlighted the fact that great power competition is once more at the forefront of geopolitics. Both the United States and the European Union spent considerable effort to conceptualize how to react to Russia's aggression. Establishing a coherent, unified, and effective response that, at the same time, controls the risk of nuclear escalation is challenging. Definitional questions have proven similarly challenging. Much of the world characterized Russia's operations in Ukraine as a "war"; Russia, of course, claimed to be involved in a "special military operation" and prosecuted individuals who did not conform to this official line (Simon 2022). Individual American and European nationals took up arms in defense of Ukraine. American and European weapons, including sophisticated, modern systems, poured into the country. At the end of April 2022, President Biden requested $33 billion in military aid for Ukraine (Franck 2022). At the same time, the European Union and the United States have imposed substantial economic sanctions against Russia. All these actions have the double aim of preserving Ukrainian sovereignty while seeking to weaken Russia and to undermine its ability to wage war against its neighbors. The American defense secretary, Lloyd Austin, openly stated as much in a public talk in Germany in April 2022 (Rubin 2022).

These developments show that while the Biden administration has

diverged from the Trump administration's approach to international affairs, it has not abandoned the view that the United States is once more engaged in great power competition or "strategic competition" (Overfield 2021). Such competition is a familiar phenomenon. Great power competition is back, and the world is once again a multipolar space in many ways (Blagden 2015, 334). The existence of multiple great powers means competition, if not conflict, among those great powers as well as the concomitant challenge of defining where their interests are threatened by strategic rivals and how best to respond.

Within the context of competition, today's great powers are using a familiar assortment of tools. While changes in technology have modernized various features, the essential elements remain consistent, including the *ways* in which great powers compete and the *issues* over which they compete. This chapter lays out four enduring aspects of great power competition beyond the wars that great powers wage against each other as a framework in which we can place the subsequent chapters in this volume, which approach the issue of strategic competition from more specific perspectives. These four dimensions are (1) economic competition, which takes the forms of competition for markets and natural resources as well as the use of economic tools to undermine rivals and adversaries; (2) ideological competition revolving around how other states within the system should organize themselves; (3) diplomatic competition for allies and partners; and (4) competition through concealed violence and proxy forces. This is not an exhaustive list of the facets of great power competition outside of open warfare. These four aspects of competition highlight the variety of ways in which great powers compete, and *have always competed*, with each other. War, a fifth area of competition, has played a prominent role in strategic competition among great powers, but it is neither the only way for great power competition to manifest itself nor its inevitable result. To push back against the presentism that often overrides such discussions, we demonstrate how these aspects of competition have been present throughout history by tracing their existence in one of the earliest recorded cases of great power competition, Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* (1972).

Using Thucydides and the rivalry he analyzes between Athens and Sparta is limited in two fundamental ways. First, it obviously *predates* the modern, nuclear age. Second, and perhaps just as significantly, it represents a famous case where rivalry *led to war*. These aspects of difference are linked. Scholars have often argued that nuclear weapons make a war between nuclear-armed great powers less likely (Waltz 1981). Neverthe-

less, even without nuclear weapons, great powers throughout history have understood the stakes, costs, risks of escalation, potential benefits, and necessity of engaging with their rivals. They have always been confronted with the significant pressures of rivalry and the potentially enormous costs of conflict. Despite the differences of millennia, they have often competed with each other in remarkably similar ways. As a result, lessons derived from earlier examples endure and remain instructive. Based on this acknowledgment and the examples of the past, we can, perhaps, develop a better understanding of how great power competition is likely to develop in our own times and ways to prevent it from escalating into a destructive war.

Fundamentally, Thucydides contributed the idea that disruptions in the distribution of power within the international system can be a catalyst for conflict. Whether imagined as "power transition theory" in the work of Robert Gilpin (1981) or as "the Thucydides Trap" by Graham Allison (2017), the applicability of the experiences of Sparta and Athens to more contemporary times endures.

Growing Rivalries

America's *Interim National Security Strategy Guidance* from March 2021 argues that the United States faces "a world of rising nationalism, receding democracy, growing rivalry with China, Russia, and other authoritarian states" (Congressional Research Service 2021, 1). For the Biden administration, the essence of a "growing rivalry" is the heavy investment of Beijing and Moscow "in efforts meant to check U.S. strengths and prevent us from defending our interests and allies around the world" (2). Strategic "competition," however, remains a nebulous concept. China and Russia aim "to check U.S. strengths" while preventing the United States "from defending our interests." Both checking strengths and defending interests require elaboration if we are to understand where the actual points of friction are among the major players in today's world.

Within the formulation laid out, competition and conflict are distinct phenomena. An open and direct armed conflict between the United States and China or between the United States and Russia *could occur* under conditions of strategic competition, but competition has far more facets than armed conflict. In addition, competition does not automatically lead to open conflict. In fact, as we have seen in the American and European response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while major powers often look to check the power of their rivals, they seek to do so in ways that mitigate

the likelihood of an escalation to open war, precisely because war among major powers (whether in a nuclear age or before) is a costly and dangerous business.

America's congressional report identifies thirteen areas of "emphasis" for American defense policy, which reinforce the distinction between competition and conflict. Seven areas apply to various aspects of armed conflict: "U.S. and allied military capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region"; "U.S. and NATO military capabilities in Europe"; "new U.S. military service operational concepts"; "capabilities for conducting so-called high-end conventional warfare"; "maintaining U.S. superiority in conventional weapon technologies"; "innovation and speed of U.S. weapon system development and deployment"; and "mobilization capabilities for an extended-length large-scale conflict." The remaining areas point to other sorts of *competition* not involving direct military-to-military confrontation: "grand strategy and the geopolitics of great power competition"; "organizational changes" within the Department of Defense; "nuclear weapons, nuclear deterrence, and nuclear arms control"; "supply chain security"; and "capabilities for countering so-called hybrid warfare and gray zone tactics" (Congressional Research Service 2021, i). This recalibration of focus encourages an examination of strategic great power competition across a wide spectrum, highlighting the distinction between conflict and competition as well as the diverse areas in which competition can take place. The congressional report also underlines the importance of alliances within the framework of strategic competition. Competition can exist *among* allies, but the dynamics of balancing partners, attempting to win new allies, and maintaining existing relationships remain core elements of great power competition at the strategic level.

Economics, Markets, and Prestige: A Competition for Hegemony

Great powers are considered "great" because of the high level of power that they possess, which distinguishes them as superior to other powers in the international system. In general terms, a state with hegemonic ambitions will possess multiple facets of power, including "military capabilities, control over raw materials, markets, and capital; and competitive advantages in highly valued goods" (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990, 287–88). These will provide that state with the ability to use both direct and indirect forms of power "to influence actors to achieve desirable outcomes for the hegemon" (Dirzauskaite and Ilinca 2017, 18). These forms of power can be employed

simultaneously or separately. Like great powers, hegemonic powers are understood to exercise a "predominance" (Brem and Stiles 2009, 2) over other states through a degree of "military and economic supremacy" (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990, 288).

Through this lens we see that great power competition can also be understood as a question of "hegemonic" rivalry (Lebow and Strauss 1991). Practically by definition, it will have both military and economic elements. Thucydides demonstrates this in his description of the causes for the outbreak of the war between Athens and Sparta. A dispute in the small city of Epidamnus (modern Dürres in Albania) served as the spark for the conflagration that follows. Epidamnus was a colony of Corcyra, a powerful island-polis, which possessed the third largest navy in the Hellenic world. Corcyra, in turn, was a colony of Corinth, the second most powerful state in the Peloponnese and a close ally of Sparta. When Corcrya refused to take sides in the dispute, the deposed Empidamnian democrats appealed to Corinth, as the mother colony of Corcyra, for aid. Corinth consented and sent a force to reinstall the democratic regime. Corcyra opposed this. Confronted with the possibility of war with Corinth, the Corcyraeans oligarchs (now in power) appealed to Athens for assistance.

Events in Epidmanus had important implications for multiple great powers: Corinth (and therefore Sparta) and Athens. Corinth's interest in the conflict between Epidamnus and Corcyra was multifaceted, involving political prestige, security concerns, and economics. Trade was a significant element for the economies of both Corinth and Athens. Corinth was famous for its wealth in the classical period. Much of this wealth derived from trade, and much of that trade was conducted with partners to the west (Zimmerman Munn 2003, 195). Corcyra lay astride an important trade route from the Greek peninsula to Sicily and Italy. Corinth exported pottery to Sicily and Italy, as did Athens (195). Corinth also exported pottery to the Sicilian market, and their merchants *competed* with Athenian merchants for that market. Whether this competition was the direct cause of the military *conflict* between Corinth and Athens is debated by historians, but an economic element of competition existed between Corinth and Athens (Munn 2003, 195; Bury and Meiggs 1975, 238–41). Access to natural resources also played a role in sharpening Athenian-Corinthian relations. Athens imported grain from Sicily, and its large urban population depended on imported grain for its survival. In fact, the ability of Sparta to cut off Athenian supplies of grain from Sicily and the Black Sea eventually starved Athens into submission at the end of the Peloponnesian War.

Economic competition between great powers today in terms of trade

and natural resources has similar echoes. Much has been made of Chinese attempts to acquire natural resources, including rare earth minerals and oil from Africa, and to increase trade relations between China and various African countries at the expense of trade between the United States and Africa (Dollar 2016). China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, created in 2013, is viewed by some "as an instrument for China to counter the hegemonic intrusion of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region and American dominance in international finance and also to displace Japan as the natural 'bloc leader' of Asia" (Haga 2021, 7).

Economic tools can also be used to harm and undermine competitors. From Thucydides, we see the example of the Megarian Decree. Athenian leaders accused the Megarians, a member state of the rival Peloponnesian League, of cultivating sacred land and harboring runaway Athenian slaves (Thucydides 1972, I.139). In retaliation, the Athenians passed a decree that excluded citizens of Megara from Athenian markets and harbors. As in the case of the Athenian-Corinthian competition for export markets, historians debate the *causal relationship* between the Megarian Decree and the outbreak of war between Athens and Sparta. Nevertheless, it had negative impacts on Megarian citizens and demonstrates the multifaceted nature of competition among the great powers—Athens, Corinth, and Sparta—where coercive economic measures were used to achieve political successes within the context of their rivalry (MacDonald 1983, 385–86).

China, the European Union, Russia, and the United States have similarly used economic tools in the context of their great power rivalries. The US-China "trade war," begun during the Trump years with its mutual tariffs and threats, is an obvious recent example of these forces in action. At the same time, economic means have been at the forefront of American and European responses to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russian individuals and corporate entities are subject to both personal and economic sanctions from travel bans to asset freezes (European Council and Council of the European Union 2021). Russian banks have been blocked from accessing international markets. Major infrastructure projects for the importation of Russian natural gas, like Nord Stream 2, have been halted. Even before the February 2022 assault on Ukraine, Britain's prime minister, Boris Johnson, explicitly linked Germany's participation in the project to Europe's battle to maintain peace and stability in Europe in the face of Russian aggression in Ukraine (Ambrose 2021). In May 2022, with the war in eastern Ukraine still raging, the European Union was considering a total ban on the importation of Russian oil and natural gas as an economic tool to strike back at Russia, although such drastic action is unlikely to materialize in the near term.

Ideology

Influence exerted by great powers has both material and nonmaterial elements. While sanctions, trade, and natural resources are inherently tangible, an ideology is intangible. Nevertheless, ideology remains a critical component of great power competition. America's *Interim National Security Strategy Guidance* clearly sketches the ideological contours of today's competition, describing "a world of rising nationalism, receding democracy, [and America's] growing rivalry with authoritarian states" represented by China and Russia (Congressional Research Service 2021, 1). These sentiments are echoed by the European Union in its report analyzing competition with China. Published by the European Union in July 2021, "A New EU-China Strategy" highlights the EU's commitment "to rules-based multilateralism and core democratic values." These core European values are presented in stark contrast to China's "unitary, one-party communist state [that] does not share democratic values such as individual freedom, freedom of speech and freedom of religion." China has "a track record of human rights violations" and is aiming to "become a global leader in terms of composite national strength and international influence" (European Parliament 2021, 5). On this last point, China and the European Union are in agreement. Like the European Union and the United States, China frames today's strategic competition in ideological terms. Xi Jinping, for example, has "argued that socialism with Chinese characteristics was 'blazing a new trail' for other developing countries seeking to modernize and preserve their sovereignty" (Tobin 2020, 2).

Russia's leader, Vladimir Putin, has also adopted an ideological tone in describing his country's differences with the West. Putin has openly claimed that liberalism, as practiced by Western countries, has "outlived its purpose." According to Putin, liberalism's present incarnation with its present (misguided) focus on liberalized immigration and promotion of "a mindless multiculturalism embracing, among other things, sexual diversity is antithetical to the culture, traditions, and traditional family values of millions of people making up the core population" (Barber, Foy, and Barker 2019). Putin paints Russia, under his administration, as a defender of those traditional values against the dangerous liberalism of the European Union and the United States. Russia's renewed assault on Ukraine in February 2022 apparently reaffirmed this divide. Curiously, however, during the initial phases of the war, Russia's rhetoric did not focus on reacting against the spread of multiculturalism. Instead, Russia put forward the even more far-fetched accusation that Ukraine was a hotbed of neo-Nazism (Berger 2022).

China, Brazil, and other countries with illiberal leadership leaned toward Russia. Liberal democracies, on the other hand, took sides against Russia's invasion. Previously neutral democratic states like Finland and Sweden—the former practically synonymous for its declared neutrality—dramatically reversed course. Appalled by Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine, both Finland and Sweden handed official letters of application to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg on May 18, 2022 (NATO 2022).

Opposing visions for social and political organization were as true in the ancient world as they are today. Thucydides writes of this division in describing the rivalry between Athens and Sparta, before the outbreak of war and then again at its beginning. In 465 BCE, following an earthquake, a number of helots and some of Laconia's *perioikoi*[1] revolted against Spartan political control. At first, the Spartans appealed to the Athenians to come to their aid. Shortly after an Athenian force arrived, however, the Spartans sent them home, fearing that "if they stayed on in the Peloponnese, they [the Athenians] might listen to the people in Ithome [where the rebels had fortified themselves] and become the sponsors of some revolutionary policy" (Thucydides 1972, I.102). Fear of a "revolutionary policy" on the part of Athens was rooted in the ideological division between the two poleis. The more egalitarian democracy practiced by Athens was viewed as a dangerous model by conservative Sparta, whose own constitution mixed elements of monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy. This ideological divergence is subsequently reinforced in the funeral oration of Pericles. Here, Thucydides, through Pericles, paints a picture of an Athens that is not only different from Sparta but superior to it—with superior laws and institutions, creating a superior society and superior citizens. Athens, as Pericles argues, is "a model to others" and "an education to Greece." Pericles argues that the Athenian system's freedom, openness, and meritocratic democracy stands in contrast to the hidebound, secretive, and stratified society of Sparta (II.37–41).

Thucydides both argues for an ideological difference between Athens and Sparta and implies an ideological antagonism between the two states. This combination of difference and antagonism is played up by contemporary historian Victor Davis Hanson. In *A War Like No Other*, Hanson interprets the Peloponnesian War as a struggle between "antithetical" polities with origins in the manner in which "Athens began to combine its lust for power with a radical ideology of support for democracy abroad" (2005, 6, 13). Hanson may overstate the case both for the differences between Athens and Sparta and for the *primary* role of ideology in the struggle. Ath-

ens, for example, was not above fighting against other states with democratic constitutions. Syracuse, for example, was a democracy when Athens attacked it in 415 BCE (Robinson 2000, 193–94). That said, ideology certainly played a role in the competition between Athens and Sparta, which was at the heart of the unrest within the Hellenic world during the fifth century. During the Great Peloponnesian War, Athens eliminated the oligarchy in Mytilene and brought that polis under its direct control (Novo and Parker 2020, 134). More famously, Athens conspired with democratic forces within Melos to overthrow that polis's oligarchic rulers before sending out a group of their own citizens to colonize the island and establish a democratic system there (134). Melos was a target of Athenian aggression not only because of its strategic location and its oligarchic government but also because of its diplomatic relationship with Sparta. Though initially neutral in the war, Melos was a Spartan colony, and Athens was concerned about the possibility that it might ally itself more closely to the Peloponnesian cause. Melos is useful in illustrating another aspect of strategic competition. In any competition among great powers, alignments and changes in alignments are likely to play a central role in both mitigating and sparking conflict. As a result, great powers are likely to compete over allies in a number of ways.

Alliances: New Friends, Old and New Conflicts

By framing strategic competition in terms of defending "allies," the congressional report acknowledges the important role that alliances and diplomatic alignments play in great power competition (Congressional Research Service 2021). While great powers are the primary actors in the drama, they are not the sole actors. As powerful as they are, they still have a need for friends and allies. Great powers often seek to expand their influence, win new allies, and even pull allies away from their rivals. These dynamics mean that alliances are an essential component of great power competition in times of both war and peace. Because alliances are dynamic within the structure of the international system, changes in alignments can precipitate conflict in various ways. Consider, for example, the way the Soviet alliance with Nazi Germany in August 1939 paved the way for the German invasion of Poland and the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe. For centuries, Russia had served as a counterweight to the eastward expansion of Germany. In 1939, the Soviet Union considered Western powers' appeasement of Nazi Germany and proceeded to make their own deal to partition

Poland (as their ancestors had done) and much of eastern Europe between them. This agreement, codified in the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, shocked many observers who considered such a realignment impossible. It was not impossible and served as a spark for a European war.

Alliances have also been a focal point of the competition between the United States and Russia. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the continual eastward expansion of NATO has been a source a tension between Washington and Moscow. This was true in 1999, when three of the key countries of the Warsaw Pact (the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland) joined the alliance (MacFarlane 2001, 284–85). It remained true in 2004, when other Warsaw Pact countries (Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia) and even *former Soviet Republics* (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) joined as well (Marten 2017, 11). More recently, Russian anxieties over NATO's and the European Union's tightening bonds with Georgia and Ukraine have led to open Russia aggression against both countries, aimed in no small part at preventing their membership in the two organizations. In 2016, a coup d'état backed by Russia and Serbia was foiled in Montenegro. Its purported purpose was to prevent Montenegro from joining NATO (Bechev 2017, 70–71). Russia's war in Ukraine, while undermining the prospects of Ukraine for joining NATO, has spurred the membership applications of both Finland and Sweden.

Alliances are also prominent in US-Chinese relations. Chinese attempts to establish financial and technological influence among traditional American allies, whether in Canada, Asia, or the Indo-Pacific, are currently a concern for Washington, as ably articulated later in this volume. Chinese economic expansion into Europe such as purchasing a large share of the Greek port of Piraeus or bringing Italy into the Belt and Road Initiative in 2019 has raised eyebrows on both sides of the Atlantic. It has also been a source of tension between the United States and its European allies. While the United States progressively views China as a direct threat that must be countered and contained, Europeans may not universally share this view. As a result, many European countries do not appear to be as completely on board with sharing the costs and risks inherent in a new Cold War. Thus, while the United States and Western Europe have been able to present a largely unified front against Russia and have maintained unity in opposing Russia's attack on Ukraine, there are fears that the NATO nations will be divided in how they deal with Chinese power.

In Asia, China's expansion has also called existing diplomatic alignments into question. The Philippines, one of America's few formal treaty allies in Asia, underwent a back-and-forth under President Duterte, alternatively

criticizing and courting both the United States and China. Duterte's successor, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., has openly called for improving relations with China (Rising and Gomez 2022) although the United States and the Philippines sped up the implementation of the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement and added four new basing locations as the result of a meeting in February 2023.

Thailand has experienced shifts in its policies toward China and the United States, both during the Cold War and since its end. Thailand must balance its traditionally close relationship with the United States and its increasing economic integration with China. It must, to some extent, live with the reality of growing Chinese power, recognizing the way in which that power can both help Thailand and represent a challenge for it (Zawacki 2017).

Both in Europe and in the Pacific, allies are open to realignment. In both regions, the great powers are working hard to compete over those allies because the ability to win and keep allies remains a salient feature of the great power game. This fluidity was evident during the great power competitions of the twentieth century. At the outbreak of the First World War, Italy abandoned the Central Powers while the Ottoman Empire was persuaded to make common cause with them. Italy joined the entente powers in 1915 as the United States did in 1917. Britain, France, the United States, Russia, Japan, and Italy were the major combatants against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Ottoman Turkey. Twenty years later, these major powers realigned so that Britain, France, the United States, China, and Soviet Russia fought against Japan, Italy, and Germany. During the Cold War, Britain, France, the United States, Italy, and West Germany aligned against Soviet Russia and China.

Thucydides offers two separate stories at the start of his narrative that show the provocative role that shifting alliances can play in great power competition. During the dispute between Corcyra and Corinth over Epidamnus, the Athenians are confronted with the choice of whether to accept Corcyra as an ally. Corcyra appeals to Athens because it is under threat from Corinth, Athens's rival. But Corinth was also an ally of Sparta. Athens's choice was therefore directly related to its great power competition with Sparta. Athens could refuse the Corcyraean offer of alliance and see Corcyra fall to Corinth, thereby strengthening the Peloponnesian League and Sparta. Or Athens could accept Corcyra as an ally, risking war with Corinth and an even wider conflict with Sparta. Accepting an alliance with Corcyra, while Corcyra was at war with Corinth, also left Athens open to the accusation that it was breaking its existing treaty with Sparta. In

the context of its great power competition with Sparta and, according to Thucydides, because Athens expected war with Sparta, "Athens had no wish to see the strong navy of Corcyra pass into the hands of Corinth. . . . So, with these considerations in mind, Athens made her alliance with Corcyra" (Thucydides 1972, I.44). One of the first key steps toward war, at least in Thucydides's conception, is therefore the choice of Athens to bring a new power into its alliance system, an ally that was perceived as a threat by a key Spartan ally.

A line from Athens's choice to war was soon in bright relief. Athenian policy, and the subsequent defeat of the Corinthian expedition against Corcyra, made Corinth lean on Sparta for support. Demanding war with Athens, Corinthian emissaries to Sparta made the radical threat that they would "turn in desperation to some other alliance" if Sparta did not declare the peace with Athens at an end (Thucydides 1972, I.71). Defecting from the Spartan alliance was a genuine threat on the part of Corinth. Corinth was an essential ally of Sparta because of its wealth, manpower, and naval strength. Later, it would demonstrate that the threat of realignment was not an empty bluff when it did follow through on engaging in radical political realignment in the period following the Peace of Nicias in 421 (Novo and Parker 2020, 50–52, 103).

In 431, Spartan policymakers well understood that they needed to confront Athens to placate Corinth. They did so partially out of the fear that Corinth would precipitate a dramatic realignment of the Greek balance of power by moving away from its alliance with Sparta. Spartan policymakers were acutely aware of the importance of allies. Allies are the centerpiece of the genuinely Laconic speech by the Spartan ephor Sthenelaidas in favor of war with Athens. Within the single paragraph attributed to him by Thucydides, he mentions allies *five* times, using them to underpin each aspect of his argument:

> He begins by accusing Athens of acting aggressively towards Sparta's allies. He justifies Sparta's power to counter Athens in terms of its own "good allies" who should not be betrayed to the Athenians. Instead, he argues, they are obliged to "come to the help of [their] allies quickly." And he concludes his speech with the exhortation for the Spartans, again, to not "betray" their allies. (Novo and Parker 2020, 93)

In the great power competitions of today, we must consider which allies have the greatest potential to switch sides and which changes in the align-

ment structure are most likely to elicit fear among the great powers and therefore most likely to push policymakers toward conflict. These fears can be an extremely potent driver of conflict, particularly in a multipolar system, as argued by Waltz (Hopf 1991, 476). At the same time, the costs of open conflict between great powers remain high. In some instances, this leads even great powers to proceed with caution and to disguise violence to avoid escalation.

Concealed Violence

Although great powers fight with some degree of regularity, they recognize the cost of violence when they engage in conflict with other major powers. This recognition often means that great powers are reluctant to enter open, armed conflict with other great powers. Such sentiments were captured by the Spartan king Archidamus on the eve of the Great Peloponnesian War. Archidamus warned the Spartans that a swift victory over Athens was unlikely and that, instead, they would leave the war "to our children after us" (Thucydides 1972, I.81). A desire to avoid the potential for enormous costs in a great power conflict sometimes makes rivals *conceal* their involvement in conflict. This concealment is often an innovative attempt to avoid triggering an escalatory response from rivals while still acting to further a state's interests.

In 432, as Athens and Sparta drew closer to the outbreak of the Great Peloponnesian War, a dispute began involving the polis of Potidaea. Potidaea, located in northern Greece on the westernmost leg of the Chalkidiki peninsula, was a tribute-paying ally of Athens. It was also a city with Corinthian magistrates who were sent out annually from Corinth. Athens, as Thucydides tells, by this time had "no illusions about the hatred felt for her by Corinth" (I.56). Athenian forces had already clashed with the Corinthian fleet in the Adriatic Sea at the battle of Sybota (433) as part of the Corcyraean Civil War; tensions were running high. When the Athenians demanded that the Potidaeans expel the Corinthian magistrates and refuse to allow anyone sent from Corinth to replace them, the Potidaeans refused and openly revolted against Athenian control. The Athenians responded by sending a force of one thousand hoplites and thirty ships to put down the revolt, laying siege to Potidaea (I.57–58).

Athens's actions were not surprising—it was trying to maintain control of its empire. In past cases of revolt (e.g., Thasos in 465), Athens had similarly responded with force and openly escalated to armed conflict. But

this use of force came against much smaller opponents. Corinth's response, however, was unusual. Despite Athenian actions, Corinth did not declare war on Athens. It did not send its military forces out to deter Athenian interference in the affairs of Potidaea, to support the revolt, or to lift the siege. But Corinth was not entirely passive either. Thucydides records that the Corinthians "sent out a force of volunteers from Corinth itself and mercenaries from the rest of the Peloponnese" (I.60). This was a novel solution to the problem of wanting to avoid provoking an open war with Athens while still providing material support to Potidaea's revolt. As one modern historian characterizes it, "The Corinthians exercised a measure of restraint . . . [and] engaged in a quasi-covert action by hiring mercenaries and providing support to those of their citizens who were willing to fight as volunteers" (Rahe 2020, 62).

There were two essential parts to the Corinthian response: "volunteer" combatants to distinguish them from designated members of Corinth's armed forces and mercenaries hired as military contractors. Both measures were designed to mitigate the need for direct Corinthian military involvement and to disguise Corinth's role in the escalating violence. These distinctions were important because Corinth did not want to be in the position of breaking the existing Thirty Years Peace between Sparta and its alliance and Athens and its allies. Athenian and Corinthian forces had already clashed at sea during the Corcyra crisis, and it appears that Corinth still felt the need to move cautiously while still protecting its interest in Potidaea. Proxy warfare in Potidaea was preferable to open escalation against Athens.

These concerns to keep even armed conflict below a certain threshold while at the same time maintaining some deniability of involvement to avoid escalation and a broader conflict remain features of great power competition. In the contemporary world, we have witnessed similar actions by great powers when one side or the other wished to avoid direct engagement in hostile action. In 2014, during Russia's attack on Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, Russia made use of the now infamous "little green men." Like Corinth's "volunteers," these Russian "volunteers" were citizens acting for purportedly individual interests rather than as part of a coherent operation sponsored by a government. Entering Crimea, they were nevertheless able to support pro-separatist Ukrainian forces and to seize key areas. Throughout the process, Russia was able to maintain a degree of deniability. By claiming that these forces were "volunteers," Russia was able to confuse governments in NATO and delay a potential response (Schnaufer 2017, 13).

Following the seizure of Crimea, Russia escalated its involvement

in Ukraine with the war in Donbas, where Ukrainian resistance stiffened. In addition to the "little green men," Russia deployed mercenary units (Vishnevetskaya and Ostaptschuk 2014). Russia doubled down on this approach with the creation of a military contractor firm, the Wagner Group, hoping to use it "to fight a covert war, hide casualties from the Russian people, and mitigate the international repercussions of a gross violation of a neighbor's sovereignty." Essentially, Wagner provided "advantageous and politically palatable ways to fight the wars in Ukraine and Syria" (Reynolds 2019, 1–2). It is likely that Corinth's "volunteers" to Potidaea would recognize similarities with the "little green men" of 2014 and that the mercenaries recruited from the Peloponnese would find commonalities with the hired guns of the Wagner Group.

Since February 2022, such indirect means are prominent in Ukraine once more, although the Wagner Group has a much more open role and there is no doubt among most of the international community that they are essentially an arm of the Russian government. On the other side, however, the United States and the European Union are engaged in proxy warfare and irregular operations, looking to use their military resources to combat Russia without putting their own soldiers into battle. The West, led by the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and the European Union, has provided billions of dollars of military equipment to Ukrainian forces: bulletproof vests, helmets, ammunition, small arms, machine guns, antiaircraft and anti-tank shoulder-fired missiles, artillery, and, by early 2023, the promise of battle tanks. In addition, the United States has provided Ukraine with near real-time intelligence to target Russian troops and counter Russian assaults (Dilanian et al. 2022). Volunteers from the United States and Europe have also made their way to Ukraine. By May 2022, some twenty thousand volunteers from fifty-two countries were fighting for the government in Kyiv under the banner of the "International Legion" (Abend 2022).

Competition and conflict across a wide spectrum of activities is thus the norm of great power struggle from our earliest records to the present. As in the past, competition takes multiple forms across a variety of the capabilities possessed by the various contenders. Nevertheless, it is important to note that while competition often takes place in the sphere of economics, economic pressures do not always lead to violence. For each case of embargo or trade war being a step toward direct military confrontation—as in the cases of the Megarian Decree and of the expanding US embargo on Japan in 1940–41—there are instances where the employment of economic means of competition has not led to war. In this latter category, US-led

sanctions against Iran and the trade disputes between the United States and China come readily to mind.

Ideological differences remain extremely difficult to bridge. They played a role in the violence between Athens and Sparta and more recently in the conflict between liberal and illiberal states seen most prominently in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Ideology underpinned the conflicts of the Cold War and seems to be a major factor driving competition between China on the one side and the United States and Europe on the other. It underpins conflict but does not necessarily cause it. Alliance shifts are serious geopolitical changes, often causing escalation in competition among great powers. In great power competition, where the margin for error is low, or perceived to be low, great powers are extremely sensitive to alignment changes. This is also clearly demonstrated by Russia's attitude toward Ukraine's movement toward the European Union and NATO. The conclusion would be that alignment shifts in the context of great power competition should be pursued with caution. Perhaps counterintuitively, escalation through the use of proxies does not always lead to open conflict between the great powers themselves. In a way, that is not surprising since the premise behind the use of proxies is to prevent escalation between the great powers themselves in the first place.

As the century progresses, we will continue to see economic competition, competition for spheres of influence through ideology and alliances, and violence, both in concealed form and by proxies, to further national interests. The world will be fortunate if such violence remains constrained and concealed, restricted to economic measures and proxies, rather than breaking out into open warfare among the great powers themselves. As King Archidamus warned, it is likely we would leave such a war to our children, with all the devastation it would entail.

NOTE

Disclaimer: The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Department of Defense, the US National Defense University, the College of International Security Affairs, or any other US government agency.

1. *Perioikoi* refers to a social class within ancient Sparta. Literally, "those living nearby," they were not citizens and were inferior to the Spartiate "*homoioi*" or peers. *Perioikoi* were businessmen, traders, and craftsmen. They were responsible for their own local government at the town level, but under Spartan control in matters of foreign policy. In times of war, they fought as armored, heavy infantry.

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THREE

Stuck in the Middle with You

A Historical Perspective on NATO and Great Power Competition

Carolyne V. Davidson

Great power competition has defined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO was created as a tool of one great power (the United States) to deter and defend against another (the Soviet Union). Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has grown to incorporate states formerly controlled by one of those great powers. Most recently, facing a resurgent Russia, NATO has extended membership to historically neutral Sweden and Finland. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time, to support the US "hyper-power" after a non-state actor attacked on September 11, 2001, using asymmetric tools (Vedrine 2001). This chapter examines how NATO has navigated a history marked by its position as stuck in the middle of great power competition, particularly in terms of how the European (non–great power) NATO member states have navigated their alliance with a superpower.

The 2022 NATO Strategic Concept states that "strategic competition, pervasive instability and recurrent shocks define our broader security environment" (NATO 2022). The summary of the 2022 US National Defense Strategy identifies that "deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary, prioritizing the PRC challenge in the Indo-Pacific, then the Russia challenge in Europe" is one of three national

security priorities. To meet this priority, the US Department of Defense stresses, "we will collaborate with our NATO Allies and partners to reinforce robust deterrence in the face of Russian aggression" (US Department of Defense, 2022). In the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, scrutiny of NATO's history seems appropriate: did expanding the alliance provoke Vladimir Putin to take belligerent action (Goldgeier and Shifrinson 2023)? Did NATO fail to deter Russia? On balance, it seems clear that NATO has now returned to being an essential instrument for the United States in competing as a great power and for Europe in securing the continent from malign Russian intent.

For Russia and China, a central part of their twenty-first-century version of competition is the delegitimization and dismantling of America's alliance system (Ye 2022). NATO, consequently, is a specific target for Russian and Chinese attention, particularly in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The newest phase of NATO enlargement, the German commitment to increasing defense expenditure, the pledge to expand the NATO Response Force sevenfold, and the degree of unity in the alliance that Vladimir Putin is widely acknowledged to have underestimated have all marked the importance of the contemporary role of NATO in strategic competition (Deutsche Welt 2022; Reuters 2022).

With the return of "strategic competition" between great powers as the primary descriptor in the contemporary strategic environment per the 2022 US National Security Strategy, what points of continuity and change might we glean from a historical reassessment of the impact of great power competition on NATO (*US National Security Strategy* 2022)?[1] How have European efforts at closer integration and what is now termed "strategic autonomy" from the United States shaped transatlantic relations and NATO as a competitor at critical junctures? Finally, is NATO's resilience threatened or renewed by a return to great power competition? This chapter assesses these questions based on an examination of the foundations and purposes of NATO in the 1950s and the debates on both sides of the Atlantic on the evolving role of European strategic autonomy through the pivotal period of the 1960s and 1970s.

Foundations, Purposes, and Structure: NATO's Origins in Great Power Competition in Europe

NATO was never designed simply as a military construct of allies organized for collective defense; great power ideological competition even in the ini-

tial phases of the Cold War made that impossible. In his history of the first five years of NATO, Lord Hastings Ismay, the first secretary-general, emphasized that in signing the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, not only had the twelve initial signatory states "marked the beginning of a revolutionary and constructive experiment in international relations," but they had committed to "immediate and continuous collective action, *not only in the military, but also in the political, economic and social fields*" (Ismay 1956, ix). Ismay knew that if it was to be an effective "experiment," the alliance would have to compete in far more than the military domain in order to remain credible in the ideologically driven context of the Cold War. Ismay also recognized, however, that "our community of free nations, with interests extending to many parts of the world, is bound to be constantly faced with new problems requiring new solutions" and stressed that the alliance would need "a great deal of imagination and energy . . . and to tighten in all fields the bonds between member states on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean" (x). These are three essential themes in the analysis of the impact of NATO on great power competition: the idea of NATO and European integration as "experimental" but vital to international relations; the tension between European versus global security interests; and the imperatives of cohesion facilitated, paradoxically, by autonomy.

Ismay knew that managing the relationship between the smaller NATO member states and the larger European states, particularly France, Britain, and, by 1955, West Germany, would be demanding on him as NATO's first secretary-general. The bigger fear, however, was how the European member states of NATO would handle the transatlantic relationship as the United States (the great power within NATO) competed with the USSR (the great power outside NATO) in Europe and in the global arena.

NATO transformed how Europe thought about its security and defense, but it also transformed the debates on Europe's future within US foreign policy. In 1949, as Robert Ferrell has emphasized, the United States had the *potential* to become a military giant, but it was not a given that the giant would offer a security umbrella to Europe (Ferrell, 1991). George Kennan, for example, considered his inability to minimize the creation of NATO as one of his greatest failures (Gaddis 2011, 607). By the time the Washington Treaty was negotiated in 1949, Kennan had concluded that US efforts should be prioritized toward Europe becoming a "third force which [could] absorb and take over" after the United States and the USSR had withdrawn from the continent. Otherwise, Kennan was convinced, NATO "would solidify Europe's disunity for decades to come," because

great power competition within an alliance structure would ensure that Germany remained divided (326, 333).

What, then, of US efforts to encourage European efforts at *economic* integration to bolster security? If the United States continued to prioritize those efforts over military spending, to Kennan's thinking, it was like "asking [the Europeans] to walk a sort of a tight-rope and telling them that if they concentrated on their own steps and did not keep looking down in to the chasm of their own military helplessness we thought there was a good chance that they would arrive safely on the other side" (Gaddis 2011, 334). Herein lies an enduring challenge for a Europe tested by great power competition today: should the EU's clout as a great power measured by economics and trade be the priority to foster greater security, or should investment in military capabilities take priority to build NATO's collective defense capability to promote stability and security?

As early as 1965, Henry Kissinger, then still an academic at Harvard, recognized in a series of lectures for the Council of Foreign Relations, that "in an alliance of sovereign states, a measure of disagreement is to be expected." Part of the "trouble" the future National Security Advisor saw in the NATO partnership was "current disputes so complex they really involve basic assumptions about the nature of Atlantic relationships, the future of Europe and the relative influence of the various partners" (Kissinger 1966, 4). In a democratic alliance where all member states in theory had equal voices, the United States still expected to dominate as much as lead and *assumed* that the major European states would not raise significant objections to that domination provided the United States shielded them from a resurgent Germany or a belligerent Soviet Union. The Cold War, however, teaches us that "great power competition" is more appropriately termed "strategic competition" because when great powers compete, smaller powers can become more important than their relative size in the fight for influence and reach. Even within the NATO structure, smaller European powers were able to punch above their weight because of the US impression of the value of a united NATO front to deter the Soviet Union.

Through the 1950s, Western Europe was widely believed, on both sides of the Atlantic, to be reliant on the United States for its freedom. From the foundation of NATO, that reliance was understood to be unhealthy, and in many ways that understanding inspired the closer integration of Europe outside of NATO. Great power competition played a huge role, consequently, in inspiring European countries to work more closely together to provide a counterweight to the United States' role in NATO. That coun-

terweight was designed to give Western European countries more autonomy to decide the course of their foreign and security policy outside of the diktats of *either* great power, whether they be competing or cooperating in ways that impacted European security. Great power competition necessitated NATO, but it also set the stage for a consistent tension between a European wariness of its reliance on the United States and a US suspicion of any effort from the Europeans that might result in them "going rogue."

The Suez Crisis of 1956 demonstrated the risk of allies acting outside of a NATO construct designed to constrain national ambitions that might jeopardize the spheres of influence that the post–World War II "settlement" in Europe had created (Trachtenberg 2003). European states that retained global interests and ambitions, and did not feel compelled to consult the United States on taking actions they felt were in their best interests, risked escalation in the great power competition of the Cold War. Suez also tested the idea that NATO operations would be contained to Europe despite European countries having interests "out of area."

By 1955, foreign ministers from Portugal, the Netherlands, and France all advocated for NATO to take a role outside of Europe. Italy and Germany supported a role for NATO in the developing world to prevent the Soviets from gaining support, a position that gained some sympathy in the United States. While the US Senate had ratified the Washington Treaty with the understanding it "was not to be construed as an endorsement of the colonial policies of other NATO countries," allies on both sides of the Atlantic agreed that Soviet influence in North Africa and the Middle East posed a threat to NATO interests, a fear that seemed justified when Egyptian president Abdel Nasser nationalized access to the Suez Canal and shut off Egypt's oil pipelines. How should NATO, reliant on Egyptian oil to fuel its armed forces and Europe's economic recovery, respond without triggering a fight between the Soviet Union and the United States over Egypt?

The British and French initially suggested a triangulated response with the United States, but US diplomats wanted to include additional NATO allies in consultations. US secretary of state John Foster Dulles, however, saw the risks of escalation as too great and concluded it was "essential NATO per se should not appear [to] become involved in deciding future courses of action re Suez," to avoid accusations that NATO was an alliance that supported colonialization. In this instance, the United States chose the military to prioritize deescalating the risk of moving from competition to conflict between the great powers over supporting NATO allies with colonial interests. When Britain and France worked with Israel secretly to take military action, landing British and French paratroopers in Egypt,

Eisenhower was left asking, “How could we possibly support Britain and France if in doing so we lose the whole Arab world?” (Sayle 2019, 32–33).

Only the crisis precipitated by Soviet tanks rolling into Hungary in November 1956 provoked a sufficient refocus to breathe oxygen back into NATO. As Sayle concludes, “A common enemy and common outrage cauterized the alliance’s wounds” (2019, 36). Sayle’s historical assessment connects with recent rhetoric on the impact of the Russian war in Ukraine in focusing and unifying NATO. Over the longer term, however, French skepticism of the US loyalty to its NATO allies never recovered from the Suez Crisis, and the 1950s and 1960s offer cautionary tales about assuming European unity within NATO in the face of a Russian power bent on disruption of the alliance.

Cold War Tests: Great Power Competition and the Origins of European Strategic Autonomy

“European strategic autonomy” has recently become a central focus of discussions on NATO and transatlantic relations, but it is neither a new concept nor a new challenge, particularly in the context of great power competition and the impact of that competition on third parties. What does seem to be more novel is an understanding on *both* sides of the Atlantic that more autonomous *capacity* for Europe is gaining momentum, and even on *consultation and decision-making* there seems to be more willingness to allow the European Union (EU) to take foreign policy–relevant decisions, but in close partnership with NATO where possible. Where in the past a bifurcation between economics and trade through the EU, versus security and defense through NATO, used to exist, at least in theory, now both organizations and their respective member states seem to recognize that collaboration makes sense. Russia’s war in Ukraine has shifted the understanding of strategic autonomy in Europe toward one that is couched more in resilience within Europe than in autonomy in decision-making from the United States. With that shift in mind, this section examines two themes: the reasons France, in particular, thought Europe needed to have more autonomy from NATO as a US-led alliance, and the emphasis placed on unity among the NATO member states as a strategic imperative during the Cold War.

In his well-received “Declaration of Interdependence” speech of July 4, 1962, John F. Kennedy outlined a “Grand Design” for the United States and Europe, built around, he claimed, “two pillars of democracy of

equal weight with leaders of equal voice" (Griffiths 1999, xvi). Kennedy's death, however, created profound uncertainty in Western Europe about what Lyndon Johnson's presidency might bring for transatlantic relations. Against the backdrop of increasing US engagement in the Indo-Pacific due to the Vietnam War, the US rhetoric surrounding "burden sharing" in the face of European postwar recovery grew in urgency.

With President Charles de Gaulle's withdrawal of France from the integrated military command structure of NATO in March 1966, his recognition of China, and overtures to the Soviet Union, the question of how much plurality of opinion in a democratic alliance was tolerable came to the fore. The percentage of Germans who saw "the basic interests of their country as in agreement with the US" plummeted from 70 percent in 1965 to 16 percent in 1966, fueled by the unpopularity of the Vietnam War (Schwartz 2003, 141). De Gaulle's criticism of US engagement in Vietnam was representative of staunch concerns about European dependence on a United States that he believed was "more and more threatening for the peace of the world" (Bozo 2001).

LBJ made it clear (despite pressure from leading NATO advocates, including Dean Acheson and Charles Bohlen) that rather than punishing France for de Gaulle's stance he preferred the path of tolerance. However, in a brief to the National Security Council, Johnson acknowledged that "we are fast approaching a day of reckoning. . . . We can't get the American people to support our NATO policy when they see the actions taken by the French, British, and Germans" (US Department of State 1964–68, 512, document 13). Domestic political support had to inform the US stance on NATO.

Thomas Schwartz's research offers an important corrective to the impression that LBJ's foreign policy was subsumed by concerns about Vietnam and consequent disinterest in European security, however. Johnson worked to overcome significant criticism under pressure from important NATO member states to advance and solidify NATO despite the French withdrawal. Other European states, through the 1967 Harmel Exercise, also rallied to the NATO cause, with the Harmel Report building a credible Atlanticist multilateral framework for deterrence and détente—a much easier sell for the United States at home and abroad. De Gaulle had banked on NATO becoming obsolete in an age of détente; instead, as LBJ claimed, NATO had given the impression of successfully defeating the French challenge, and while de Gaulle successfully vetoed the United Kingdom's second application to join the European Community (a vote that required unanimity), it was France that looked increasingly isolated.

In 1965, Henry Kissinger published a short monograph, *The Troubled Partnership: A Re-appraisal of the Atlantic Alliance*. In the lectures on which the monograph was based, Kissinger argued that NATO was central in the great power competition of the Cold War. He also highlighted the degree to which interstate relations within NATO represented a bellwether of transatlantic relations. Kissinger openly asserted that "because [the United States is] the strongest nation of the Atlantic Alliance, our acts have greater consequences for good or ill, than those of our Allies" (97). He also posed the revelatory central questions in his treatise: "How much unity do we want?" and "How much pluralism can we stand?" (5).

By the 1970s, Europe, post-Cuba and post-Vietnam, was much more inclined—and able—to pursue its own interests, particularly because of a widely held perception that the United States was in decline. That pursuit, however, remained principally in the economic domain. Kissinger went as far as to suggest that the "end" of "American hegemony" was in Europe's economic recovery and unification: "obviously," he suggested, "the stronger the economic unit, the more formidable its bargaining power" (1966, 7). This concern motivated Kissinger by the time he was President Richard Nixon's national security adviser to push to tie the "transatlantic bargain" to trade as much as to the security that US investment in NATO provided. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber's best-selling book *Le Defi Americain* (*The American Challenge*; 1967), however, pointed to the degree to which Europe had fallen behind the United States in technology, trade, and investment and the dominance of the United States on the continent. Servan-Schreiber pushed European states to cooperate more closely in technology and industry to reduce their reliance on the United States as an industrial great power; the threat, he warned, came through a technology gap that NATO could not bridge because of the reliance European states had on US investment. Similarly, Hubert Zimmermann, in his study of this technological development, contrasts the Kennedy era of interdependence with the advent of European policy decisions in the 1970s that "signaled the end of a relationship based on cooperation and the beginning of a new one based on competition," in turn leading to "a new impetus to European integration" (2003, 129).

While some Cold War historians argue that analogies between the contemporary security environment and the Cold War do not apply because post–World War II Europe and Russia were both so much weaker than today, Kissinger understood the danger of assuming that the imbalance between the United States and Europe in NATO would remain the status quo. He warned against "nostalgia for the patterns of

action that were appropriate when America was predominant and Europe impotent" (Kissinger 1966, 5). When Kissinger found himself in a position to shape US approaches to Europe, however, he found how hard it was to break that nostalgia.

Before he was in office, Kissinger argued that structural challenges had created an artificial division of labor caused by an American focus on "a rationalization of efforts for an objective so much taken for granted that it requires no debate," whereas Europeans "are not content with acting simply as advisors in an American decision-making process." Europeans, Kissinger suggested, were more focused on strategic autonomy, namely, "a structure in which [European leaders] have autonomous *responsibility*" (emphasis added). In a similar vein, he warned that while "acquiescence in American strategic hegemony" can "represent a sincere commitment to Atlantic partnership," it could alternatively "disguise a neutralist wish to abdicate responsibility" (Kissinger 1966, 22). Kissinger's use of the term "responsibility" rather than "capability" is important to emphasize here. He perceived European states as assuming the role of a surly teenager asserting the word "whatever" in answer to US pressure to prepare for an increase in tensions with the Soviet Union. This apathy worried Kissinger, as the teenager worries his or her parent, because, he argued, unless "centralization of strategy is coupled with an effective sharing of political decisions . . . the practical consequence could be a growing sense of irresponsibility among our Allies" (22). If European member states did not perceive the same degree of threat to Europe as the United States did, they might act, Kissinger feared, in a way that would damage the US interests that NATO was designed by the United States to protect.

It is easy to hear in Kissinger's warning some of the more recent American rhetoric accusing European states of abdicating their responsibilities and not spending enough on defense (Gates 2011). The challenge for European member states has, however, long been the sense that even where they did try to voice their opinions or take responsibility, their voices were ignored by the great power member state that had no need to listen to them. From the Iraq War in 2003 to the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, some European states felt that their concerns for the impact of American actions outside of NATO consultation, as required by Article 4, posed more of a threat to their security than a meddling Russia or a growing China (Gordon and Shapiro 2004). In 2023, polling such as that conducted by the EU's "Eurobarometer" demonstrates the diversity of European opinion on the war in Ukraine and the role of both the United States and NATO in the conflict (European Commission, Eurobarometer, 2023).

The new dynamics of calls from some European countries for more autonomy from the great powers of the United States, Russia, and China are, nonetheless, motivated by a sense of the need to take responsibility for European security that has grown from concerned voices, particularly on NATO's eastern flank and the Baltic states. Other states, notably Turkey, are clearly motivated to inculcate more autonomy in order to demonstrate at home and abroad that they are not obligated to tailor their foreign policy toward any great power. These voices have grown in volume because of great power dynamics that have destabilized the European continent politically, economically, and militarily: between a US president who threatened NATO withdrawal, a Russian president who has called for NATO to halt adding members along Russia's border and used this argument to justify expanding conflict in Ukraine, and a Chinese president who is increasingly demonstrating that Chinese economic integration in the European Union can be used to punish even small states like Lithuania that dare to acknowledge Taiwan's status as an independent power (Hioe 2021).

With European states stuck in the middle again, calls for those states that are willing to take responsibility *and* are able to act autonomously are growing in volume. For the United States, the priority will be to channel those calls toward a stronger (though still pliable) European pillar in NATO, but for France, dreams of an EU genuinely engaging in defense operations independently of NATO may continue to grow in rhetorical, if not practical, strength. Some discussion has reemerged in an effort to resurrect the Berlin Plus arrangement within NATO, whereby the EU could "borrow" capabilities where the alliance declined to engage militarily. This arrangement made the European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) mission in Bosnia possible in 2004. The fundamental issue with Berlin Plus, however, was that it perpetuated the focus on capabilities rather than autonomous decision-making or responsibility. The opposite was true for President Obama's efforts to "lead from behind" to incentivize European countries to engage in military operations, particularly after the return of France to NATO's integrated military command in 2009. The most well-known and controversial operation connected with the philosophy of "lead from behind" was the French effort in Libya in 2011 to oust Muammar Qaddafi. While some NATO advocates praised the operation as the "right way to lead an intervention," Obama was roundly criticized at home for failing to lead in a way that was expected of the United States as a great power (Daalder and Stavridis 2012).

The most effective middle ground, one that has already seen careful construction at the start of the twenty-first century and is now being vis-

ited much more assertively in 2023, may be closer EU-NATO cooperation. Great power competition thrust the EU into an enhanced role in the security of Europe. With greater European influence in NATO should come greater responsibility that has long been sought by the United States. It remains questionable, however, whether greater European influence and responsibility for European security will translate into any degree of decoupling from US priorities and preferences for decisions on European security, particularly in the wake of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Kissinger was not shy about using the term “paternalism” to characterize the relationship of the United States to Europe, criticizing the United States for “a certain self-righteousness and impatience with criticism” (1966, 6). That, he suggests, had a damning impact on “strategic autonomy,” because European allies focused on “influencing American decisions rather than developing conceptions of their own” (6). The answer to Kissinger’s criticism has been seen in the EU’s effort to develop first its 2016 “Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy,” along with the subsequent implementation plan, and then the “Strategic Compass” designed, according to Josep Borrell (2021), the EU’s high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, as “a political proposal to prevent . . . ‘strategic shrinkage,’ or the risk of being always principled but seldom relevant.” As the United States focuses, once again, on China as the “pacing threat,” the question remains whether great power competition with China will facilitate EU-NATO cooperation, a Europeanized NATO, or a disengaged United States motivated to give the EU and NATO’s European states more autonomy in *both* decision-making and deployment of capabilities. On the European side, it remains to be seen whether a revanchist Russia failing as a great power pushes Europe to put weight behind both NATO and EU efforts to plan and do more for European security and defense.

China and Great Power Competition: Korea, Vietnam, and the Impact of Asia on NATO

The impact of events in Asia on NATO has typically been overshadowed by the more recent debate in the 1990s about NATO’s ability to go “out of area,” or to evolve into a global NATO, along with the debate on an appropriate “division of labor” between the European and North American “branches” of NATO. The contemporary arguments that European allies should anticipate US disengagement from NATO while the US focuses on China ignore the reality that NATO has managed US engagement in Asia

since the alliance's inception. From the Korean War in the 1950s, to French ties to Vietnam in the 1950s, to anti–Vietnam War sentiment in Europe in the 1960s, as well as Nixon's opening to China and the push for Japanese NATO membership in the 1970s, transatlantic concerns about US engagement in Asia at the expense of security commitments in Europe have traversed NATO's history. Member states on both sides of the Atlantic have long had *global* security concerns and have viewed great power competition from a *global* perspective: indeed, the United States has used NATO to encourage European member states to avoid navel-gazing despite political concerns about prioritizing colonial relationships over NATO values rooted in respect for national sovereignty.

British prime minister Winston Churchill wrote to US president Harry Truman at the start of the Korean War stressing his hope that the United States would not become too heavily involved in that conflict, "for it is in Europe that the mortal challenge to world freedom must be confronted" (Gilbert 2005, 396). Heavily involved the United States did, of course, become, with consequences that Walter LaFeber argues amounted to "one of the key changes in the perception of NATO by American and West European officials . . . to use NATO to resolve problems beyond the geographical bounds of the alliance" (1991, 34).

LaFeber quotes US secretary of state Dean Acheson acknowledging his nostalgia for a time "in China when [if] things got rough we'd just send in a gunboat and shell hell out of them to protect our holdings." By 1952, Acheson was left complaining that "the US is in a helluva fix today. The United States needs allies," because otherwise it would be impossibly overstretched (LaFeber 1991, 35). This *need* for allies had an important impact in the early 1950s on what the United States would tolerate and even encourage based on the need to cement allied commitments to contain the Cold War superpowers and sustain stability in both Europe and the developing world. As outlined early in this chapter, that tension emerged in the Suez Crisis. However, four years prior to that crisis, on December 17, 1952, the North Atlantic Council adopted a resolution expressing "its profound admiration for the courageous struggle being waged indefatigably by French forces," emphasizing "that the resistance of the free nations in South East Asia as in Korea is in fullest harmony with the aims and ideals of the Atlantic Community" and concluding that "the campaign being led by the forces of the Union Française in Indochina deserves the unrestricted support of the Atlantic governments" (North Atlantic Council 1952).

The Cold War context of great power competition shifted what the United States would tolerate under the banner of NATO. Three months

after the declaration, however, an article in the Paris newspaper *L'Aurore* spoke to another shift: "If America were to take on the cost of defending Indochina," the journalist argued, "France could concentrate all its efforts in Europe and Africa without needing help from anyone" (Grosser 1982, 133). This was the tightrope the United States then found itself struggling to walk: how to contain communism effectively in Southeast Asia while facilitating French accommodation of West Germany within NATO and encouraging France to focus the limited resources it had on the European theater.

Great power competition—in the context of the Cold War—meant acknowledging the need for US allies as well as strengthening and reassuring European allies in order to facilitate containing communism. It also meant acknowledging that some member states still had global interests they were ill-positioned to maintain. The delicate balancing act of strengthening NATO coherence and capacity while leveraging European assistance to maintain stability in the developing world tied the United States incrementally into operations in Asia during the Cold War (LaFeber 1991, 42).

The Vietnam War marked a period where, beyond having a distracted US NATO leader, Europeans worried an Asian conflict was weakening the United States to the point that a declining superpower as head of NATO would bring an end to the alliance. Despite the Sino-Soviet split, the assumption endured that if the Vietcong prevailed in Vietnam, the influence of communism would equate to a loss of US influence and, with that decline, a loss to the Western European competitive edge against the USSR. Today, the global interconnectedness of the reputation of the United States and European security endures, now rooted in a shared Sino-Russian interest in toppling the United States from the apex of the international system and bringing European ideals down with it. Charles de Gaulle's recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1964 offers an instructive historical case study of French maneuvering to try and situate his country above the perceived "trap" of great power competition in the Cold War.

In 1963, de Gaulle had declared the peak of Cold War tensions to be over, and with that change, he suggested, Europe needed to break free of its respective "blocs." When de Gaulle recognized the PRC, the first state to do so since 1950, he caused diplomatic uproar. Historians disagree on de Gaulle's motivation for making this move: whether it was simply "common sense," as the general argued himself; whether it was part of his strategy of "grandeur" to remind the rest of the world that France was a global player;

or whether the gesture was designed to challenge US global hegemony and demonstrate French autonomy.

Garret Martin has shown that de Gaulle wanted to be a player in Southeast Asia. Moreover, closer ties with China could facilitate the ability of France to move past the sense of being held hostage to great power competition between the United States, China, and the USSR (2008). By March 1963, after the Cuban Missile Crisis resolution and the failure to pull West Germany closer to France and away from US demands, de Gaulle stressed, "We need fall-back allies. It has always been the policy of France. . . . I made an alliance with Russia to strengthen us against Germany. And one day I will make an alliance with China to strengthen us against Russia" (61).

While de Gaulle was attentive to the opportunities presented by the Sino-Soviet split, the Chinese saw opportunity in the obvious growing rift between the United States and France. From the Chinese side, the desire to lessen dependence on the Soviets also encouraged the search for trade relationships in Europe. Between 1961 and 1963, China's imports from France more than doubled (Martin 2008, 57). China went as far as to cautiously endorse the European Economic Community because "it was directed primarily against the United States not socialist states" (62). When de Gaulle's plan to recognize the PRC came to fruition and he informed the United States and other key allies of his intentions, the reaction in the Johnson administration was predictably hostile. Johnson, however, acknowledged he had no control over French foreign policy, and while US secretary of state Dean Rusk tried to prevent the move by encouraging Taiwan not to break relations with France (a precondition for French recognition of China), he was unsuccessful.

Kissinger's assertion in 1966 that "the United States, with its global responsibilities, sees in Communist China an objective threat to its interests" continues to be relevant today. Kissinger explained that China was—to de Gaulle— "a distant country," with peace more likely to stem from "the establishment of a more stable equilibrium," to which "France and Europe must contribute . . . not as the object of policy but as its author" (1966, 61). Here is the critical argument for analysis of the impact of strategic competition on the transatlantic relationship. Central both then and now is the acknowledgment that both sides of the Atlantic feel they have a stake in the *global* order within which NATO plays a pivotal role and that any significant move made by the United States, by the European Union as a collective, or by its constituent European states could have security implications for the transatlantic area.

In recognizing the PRC, de Gaulle demonstrated his conviction that

the Cold War was only temporary and the priority for France was to position itself for a return to multipolarity. The implications for NATO were significant: if a key state within the alliance repudiated the rationale and permanence of blocs, the political foundations of the alliance might be in question, and yet that was not how subsequent events played out. The case study is also important because of enduring concerns today for the United States to influence European relations with China to meet US priorities: great power competition in this context manifested in ways more relevant to the trade focus of the EU than to NATO.

In a speech delivered in Munich in May 1971, John Connally, the US secretary of the treasury, spoke of the "military shield" that the United States had provided Europe and connected it explicitly with the expectation that "more equitable trading arrangements" should be associated with this US expense (1971). The backdrop to this bombshell was the Vietnam War and the balance of payments crisis that fighting the war had fueled. As Timothy Sayle has shown, Connally's speech came at a time when the Strategic Arms Limitation treaty negotiations talks, a key plank of détente, were creating a rising fear in diplomatic circles that, according to one British diplomat, "the Americans may be thinking in terms of doing a deal direct with the Russians, over the heads of Western Europe" (2019, 175). Those fears began to crescendo when Nixon announced he would visit the PRC in 1972, without discussing the visit with the NATO member states individually or through the organization.

By 1973, Kissinger recognized that the Vietnam War had created a puzzle over how to balance trade and security with Europe in a way that would allay congressional calls for US troops to be brought home from the continent and avoid pushing European states toward thawing their relationship with the USSR.

This was the context that fueled the infamous "Year of Europe" speech delivered by Kissinger in April 1973, in which he argued that "Europe is not carrying its fair share of the burden of the common defense" and castigated the Europeans for their criticism of Vietnam. "Europeans appeal to the United States to accept their independence and their occasionally severe criticism of us in the name of Atlantic unity," he argued, "while at the same time they ask for a veto on our independent policies." The speech was, unsurprisingly, not well received by European allies but was directed at a domestic audience as much as a European one (Sayle 2019, 179). Nonetheless, the nine members of the European Economic Community, in a rare fit of unified motivation, agreed they would need to collaborate

on a response, precisely what Nixon and Kissinger had hoped the "Year of Europe" would avoid.

The advent of war between Egypt, Syria, and Israel diverted attention to another NATO crisis; however, several European NATO members denied the United States access to air bases to allow the US Air Force to operate in support of Israel. This denial, while infuriating to Kissinger, brought home to him that NATO was essential to facilitate US interoperability. As Sayle concludes, even after the Cold War ended, "American officials would work to ensure that the Europeans did not construct a military organization or policy that would compete for resources with SACEUR's [Supreme Allied Commander Europe] plans for the defense of Europe" (2019, 190).

In October 2021, NATO secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg insisted:

> We don't regard China as an adversary or an enemy. We need to engage with China on important issues such as climate change. . . . We need to discuss arms control with China. So, we need to engage politically with China. At the same time, we see the rise of China. We see that China soon will have the biggest economy in the world. They already have the second largest defense budget. They have the largest navy already. They are investing heavily in new modern capabilities, including nuclear capabilities. They are leading in the use of many new disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence—also integrating that into new very advanced weapons systems. And we see a much more assertive China, for instance, in the South China Sea. All of this matters for our security and therefore NATO has to respond to that. (Heath, Reingold, and Noguchi 2021)

In general, the orthodox perspective among European member states rests on the foundation that NATO cannot ignore China but should not engage in a way that suggests China is an enemy of NATO. Thomas Wright summarizes his assessment in a way that resonates with many European states when he argues that while China is "very assertive in the South China Sea [and] somewhat assertive in the rest of East Asia," it is "generally cooperative on global issues," including climate change, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation (2017, 71).

Both Russia and China have been widely described as powers seeking to undermine the status quo in ways that Europe and the United States see as problematic. Obama's pivot to Asia, coupled with his push for Europe to take on more responsibility for security in its near abroad, and the threat of

a US withdrawal from NATO by President Trump should, perhaps, have focused attention on a division of labor between Europe's security effort and that of the United States. The reality of a twenty-first century marked by more interconnectedness than other periods of strategic competition, and the capacity of China to extend its influence to Europe, means that NATO, and transatlantic relations, cannot be divided neatly between different areas of focus. At the NATO Summit in June 2022, the US secretary of state, Anthony Blinken, captured the American concern with this overlap when he emphasized that China "is seeking to undermine the rules-based international order that we adhere to, that we believe in, that we helped build. For the first time, we have China as a feature of the [NATO] Strategic Concept, a concern that all of the countries in NATO have" (US Department of State 2022). This language is replicated in the NATO Strategic Concept itself and is tied to both Russia and China: "The deepening strategic partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to [NATO's] values and interests" (NATO 2022, 5).

The diversity within Europe, however, in terms of both threat perception and the various historical experiences of individual nation-states necessarily means that there is not a singular approach despite NATO efforts to articulate a unified strategy. Cold War history shows that neither the United States nor its allies should be surprised by these shifts; NATO and the EU find clearer roles at times of heightened great power competition, ones that can be enhanced if the various member states are open to collaboration against efforts to divide them and challenge the relatively stable order they have played a critical role in establishing and sustaining, despite a diversity of global interests and perspectives.

NOTE

1. In President Joe Biden's *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, published in March 2021, the US government moved away from describing the security environment as one characterized by "great power competition," choosing instead to use the term "strategic competition." For example, the report emphasizes the priority to "strengthen our enduring advantages, and allow us to prevail in strategic competition with China or any other nation" (INSS 2021, 20). This term predates Biden, however. In the 2018 National Defense Strategy, "long-term strategic competition" is mentioned fourteen times (US Department of Defense 2018). The term "strategic competition" is also preferred throughout the 2022 National Security Strategy (NSS 2022).

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FOUR

What Is Europe Caught in the Middle Of?

A Theoretical Look at the US-China Competition

Elie Baranets

China's global rise is not a new phenomenon. It is just recently, however, that the United States has elevated it to a fundamental challenge, supplanting the threat of global terrorism. Many chapters in this volume show that transatlantic relations can be central to the United States in terms of great power competition.[1] Still, as Washington has switched its strategic priorities, it is redefining its links with its international partners. Depending on how the US-China rivalry evolves, investing in Europe to manage security concerns can appear less attractive to the United States than it once was.

In other words, the evolution of transatlantic relations is linked to the direction of the US-China rivalry. This rivalry depends on implicit assumptions about the logic and motives behind great powers' behavior. These implicit assumptions are of fundamental interest to the field of international relations (IR). As a discipline, IR has been particularly attentive to the relations between great powers from its institutional creation in the aftermath of the First World War to the present. Theoretical debates have largely focused on the nature of these relations, on the origins of the competition they trigger, and on their consequences. Not all theorists agree on what levels of conflict and cooperation might result from great power rivalry in general or from the rivalry between

the United States and China specifically. An overview of some of the theoretical implications is useful to understand the current and changing situation and to assess some likely consequences, one of them being the direction of transatlantic relations.

Before trying to understand better how great power competition works, one must clarify the expression. The first and obvious option for understanding the term is to consider that great powers are the powerful states within the international system. Because there is no universal definition of power in IR, this apparently straightforward choice might be trickier than it seems. Some argue that power is essentially made of resources (Mearsheimer 2001, 55–60), while others consider it to be a relational concept (Baldwin 2016). Happily, there is no need to settle this issue here since, paradoxically, the "great power" label is only loosely and indirectly related to power. Prestige, rather than power, is what makes a state a great power. Being powerful can be useful to becoming a great power, but only as much as this provides prestige. As will be shown later, not all elements of power are useful, and, conversely, prestige comes not only from power but also from specific behaviors and discourses. Eventually, being a great power is a status, one that is acquired when other states, and most notably other established great powers, consider you as one (Lebow 2010).

Finally, great power competition refers both to the competition between great powers and to the competition to become one. The parties involved include existing great powers as well as states that can be expected to become great powers in the foreseeable future, through this very competition, a competition that would also be used by others to prevent this scenario from happening. In this chapter, the concerned states are both, but only, the United States and China.

The question then arises of how to categorize other important international actors. I do not consider, even though this is a close and disputable call, either the European Union or Russia to be great powers.[2] Hypothetically, a European Union that benefits from a costly military competition between Washington and Beijing could at a later stage assert itself as a great power. It would then end up being roughly as, and maybe more, powerful than either of the two, just as the United States ended up being the top power in the international system after the two world wars. In the unlikely event that a united Europe benefited from this scenario, it would be one of the outcomes of today's great power competition, not its intrinsic component. Obviously, Europe affects, and is affected by, great power competition. But it is no great power itself, nor is it trying to become one through this competition.

Commonly mentioned when studying great power competition is Russia. Again, I would, perhaps controversially, not grant Russia the status of a great power, in spite of its nuclear arsenal and conventional military capabilities. Russia's relations with the United States, China, and Europe are important to our topic, but Russia's role is largely tangential to the larger role played by China. For reasons of clarity and parsimony and also because I deem it relevant, I use the expression "great power competition" to qualify the rivalry between the United States and China only, as there are no other serious candidates to the status of great power in today's international system. Russia can, and probably should, be integrated into any broad reflection on contemporary great power competition—but solely as it influences the various actors' strategies, not because it is a great power itself. Russia seems to perceive itself as a great power and is engaged more than ever in a show of force to bring concrete commitments to its ambitions. This surely grants the country some attributes of a great power. But being engaged in power politics does not make you a great power, as will be discussed in more detail below. Russia's geographic location, capabilities, and long-term geopolitical aspirations make it a (regional) rival to European powers rather than a (global) rival to China or to the United States. Because the US-China competition pushes the United States away from Europe to East Asia, it leaves more room for Moscow's ambitions in Europe.[3] European powers are then facing a challenge and several dilemmas of how to deal with this situation, one of which is the importance and the orientation to give to transatlantic relations.

To better apprehend what is at stake with this issue, it is commonly argued that great power competition and alliances are not only a matter of power. They are also a matter of states' other material motives, such as economic interests and technology primacy, and nonmaterial ones, such as emotions and values. But aggregating factors this way hardly helps: if everything matters, nothing really does. Some factors must be put aside or, at least, subsumed by others.

While this chapter cannot address every dimension and answer all these questions thoroughly, it will give analytical priority to some factors over others. The spotlight will be on some of the theoretical perspectives that could help us think about this topic in a coherent and relevant way. It first presents several major balance of power theories and how they have coped with contemporary processes. Then it focuses on Robert Gilpin's (1981) perspective on hegemonic transition, which seems particularly relevant to today's evolutions. Finally, it goes further in this direction by integrating

the recent literature on status while showing that this provides a promising theoretical framework.

Balance of Power Theories over Time

When assessing the current, or any, competition between nations, the balance of power comes to mind spontaneously.[4] "If there is any distinctively political theory of international politics, balance-of-power theory is it," writes Kenneth Waltz (1979, 117). Not only does this notion seem adequate to describe such an empirical situation, but it is also quite representative of what IR has to offer. Most balance of power theorists assume the anarchic nature of the international system. This highly uncertain environment leads states to be particularly attentive to the distribution of power among themselves, either for its own sake (Morgenthau [1948] 2005) or because it is the main, if not the only, way for them to guarantee their security (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). While aligning with a powerful actor is a common domestic strategy, it is considered suboptimal on the international stage. In an environment deprived of higher effective authority, a power that could dominates others would pose serious threats to them. Therefore, states are supposed to prioritize balancing over bandwagoning.[5]

States can typically resort to balancing in two ways: internal balancing when increasing their own capacities and external balancing when making alliances with other states. Because external balancing makes your strategy depend on other actors, internal balancing is considered more efficient and reliable, although not always feasible. Either way, the positive prospect of free riding on another state and/or the negative prospect of another state free riding on you could discourage you from injecting your own resources to balance any other power. Besides, the targeted state can try to increase the cost for other states to balance against it. China's "wedge strategy" aims precisely at dividing European powers and making the prospects of defection even greater. At the very least, its goal is to make European powers think in a similar way. To this end, China quite successfully increases the cost of balancing against it and decreases the cost of defection, using economic tools, among others (Lind 2019, 12–14).

Arguably, balance of power theories can be deemed relevant to account for most major international contests involving great power as far back as historical accounts of these situations can be found, at least in the Western world, from Ancient Greece until today.[6] Its golden age was probably the Concert of Europe: in the relatively peaceful nineteenth century, European powers managed to contain each other's expansion attempts through bal-

ance of power strategies. In accordance with this, many key IR thinkers believe that the most stable systems were the ones with multiple poles of power (Morgenthau [1948] 2005; Kaplan 1957; Aron, 1966).

But is it reasonable to analyze contemporary international politics through such an old prism? If the long-lasting use of this notion speaks in favor of its relevance, the world has also faced significant changes since the expression was coined and popularized. No longer multipolar, the international system is probably (still) unipolar (Harris 2019) and in the process of bipolarization. Either way, contemporary IR theories tend to consider that neither war nor instability depends directly upon any configurations in terms of polarity. Besides, growth in terms of power and balancing strategies is sensitive to technological innovation in terms of communication and military capabilities. Even its scale has changed, as great power competition now occurs worldwide rather than at a regional level.[7]

However, these evolutions have not made balance of power strategies obsolete. Rather, they affect the way they are elaborated. But what about other, more fundamental, changes? Invasions are much less profitable than before, notably since the Industrial Revolution (Gat 2012). Situations of economic interdependence have increased; global concerns, such as climate change, have risen. Because they challenge the zero-sum game perspective that the balance of power generally assumes, these changes might trigger a paradigm shift. This is even truer after considering the growing importance of moral considerations associated with the spread of liberalism worldwide.[8]

In other words, these evolutions interfere with the inherent logic of the balance of power. If they don't replace it, they do introduce a distinct set of constraints and incentives for states and empower different international actors. Writing about foreign policy during the Concert of Europe, Morgenthau ([1948] 2005, 210) writes that "the balance of power during that period was amoral rather than immoral. The technical rules of the art of politics were its only standard. Its flexibility, which was the result of imperviousness to moral considerations, such as good faith and loyalty, a moral deficiency that to us seems deserving of reproach."

Admittedly, balance of power theories have been quite sensitive to evolutions in terms of power configuration and technology. As the international context changed, the dominating proposition that multipolar systems were the most conducive to stability eroded. The long period of peace that characterized the Cold War brought credibility to alternative positions. Because great powers are satisfied with the status quo and have limited interactions with each other, Kenneth Waltz (1979) considered that bipo-

lar systems are the most stable of all. In this environment, great powers' strategies are particularly intelligible, reducing the risk of misperceptions, some of which can lead to severe tensions. One of the conditions for this perspective to make sense is that states are assumed to seek security. Morgenthau thought differently. He considered that states, just like individuals for that matter, are power, rather than security, maximizers. But what if, in a distinct temporal logic, power and security were not the states' main goals?

Balancing Power over Time and the Role of Prestige

Contrary to Waltz, but in conformity with many major IR theorists, Robert Gilpin believes that multipolar systems are less unstable than bipolar systems. When multipolar systems can cope with minor changes, bipolar ones can hardly absorb them without endangering the "delicate balance between the great powers" (91). Gilpin, however, only makes this claim in passing, as he would rather insist on another dimension of the distribution of power: change. Much more instructive than looking at the distribution of power at any given time is the assessment of how the distribution of power *changes* over time. Why would China seek change? What kind of changes could it pursue, through what processes would it pursue these changes, and how would other actors react to China's ambitions and behavior? Answering these questions through a dynamic perspective seems more promising than doing so through a static one.

This kind of angle is brought up by power transition and hegemonic stability theorists (Organski 1958; Kugler and Lemke 1996). Today, this is associated with Graham Allison's expression of the "Thucydides's Trap" (2017), which captures the risk of war after the rise of a state threatening the leading power of the international system. Unfortunately, this does not do justice to the benefit that IR theory could bring to the discussion. Besides the fact that this work might be said to be based on a dubious reading of Thucydides (Kouskouvelis 2017) and fallacious historical analogies (Novo and Parker 2020), it is also analytically inconsistent. Ad hoc arguments are frequent in Allison's work, since the various claims he makes rely on contradictory assumptions. Regarding the future of US-China rivalry, any scenario appears as possible, due to the possible interference of any factors that can come into play without any leading principles being identified. Right or wrong, no coherent theory is to be found here.

To understand change, a look at Gilpin's work offers much more solid and consistent insight. According to Gilpin, three types of changes must be differentiated. The first, and most fundamental one, is "systems change"

and concerns the nature of the major international actors. In many ways, today's realities suggest that the next great powers will no longer be nation-states but other entities. To be sure, the current great power competition does spotlight the key role of non-state actors. In a context where cyber-security has become a major concern, the "Big Five" tech companies—Google (now Alphabet), Amazon, Facebook (now Meta), Apple, and Microsoft, or GAFAM—and the Chinese equivalent with the big four—Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent, and Xiaomi, or BATX—are the poles in the now central digital warfare dimension of great power competition, as is Huawei regarding 5G technology.[9] Be that as it may, these non-state actors do not surpass the state as much as they are used by it in order to reach the goals it has set. Non-state actors also look inept in developing and mobilizing military power. They hardly represent the identity aspirations of the peoples, who still rely on the state to solve various crises, be they economic, health, or security related. Systems change, in other words, is unlikely to occur out of the current great power competition.

More likely are the second and third options, labeled "systemic changes" and "interaction change," respectively. The former consists of changing the governance of the international system. The latter, which is both the most modest and the most frequent of all three types of changes, consists of revising the process through which states interact. It concerns one aspect of governance in particular—"rules and rights"—without disrupting the others.

For each scenario, modalities of change are closely linked to governance, which is a major concern for great powers and a key concept in Gilpin's theory. Governance consists of three components: the distribution of power, the hierarchy of prestige, and the set of current "rules and rights" that characterize interactions between states. Like any social structure, governance reflects the power relationships between its members. It is partly designed to best serve a given state's interest at a time when it is the dominant power of the system. Subsequently, this hegemonic power can take advantage of both profitable norms and high prestige, which is just what the United States has done using the post–Second World War governance it shaped on an international scale.

The probability of change depends on the differential growth of power in favor of a rising power over the hegemonic power. This change is unlikely during the early stages of the hegemonic power's ascendency. Expansion, which is territorial, political, and/or economic, is very profitable at that point. It allows economies of scale and gives access to a vast quantity of resources helping the hegemonic power generate significant

economic surplus. This increases the state's power even more and encourages further expansion.

This spiral is not perpetual, however. In the long run, the dominant power's capacities increase more slowly than those of its challenger(s). Eventually, "centrifugal forces" appear, and expansion is made both harder and less profitable for the hegemon. Developing states progressively acquire the means to be less dependent on other economies and opt for protectionist policies. Besides, the hegemonic power suffers from fragmentation from within. Expansion becomes less attractive to many domestic actors. A wealthier society is one that "grows conservative, less innovative, and less willing to run risks" (Gilpin 1981, 154). Once aligned, private and public interests start diverging. Rising states, on the other hand, benefit from expansion without, at that point, having to pay a big price for it. The economic surplus they generate helps them narrow the gap with the dominant power in terms of capacities. And, so, the distribution of power transforms.

Yet, the governance remains unchanged and still serves the hegemonic power's interests and prestige. Unsatisfied with this disjuncture, challenger states might consider that it would be both profitable and possible to change that situation. If Gilpin's ideal type categorization is relevant, then the orientation of great power competition in the next years, if not decades, mostly depends on whether China will be seeking ambitious systemic change or limited interaction changes regarding the liberal international order (LIO);[10] it will also depend on China's ability to achieve change and on the reaction of other actors in this process. The evolution of US power reflects this "S curve." So does China's, whose trajectory indicates it is not at a turning point yet, also suggesting that countervailing forces to expansion have not emerged.[11] Though not completely linear, China's curve of power is rising fast enough to create a favorable differential growth compared to the United States.

Note that assessing whether change would be profitable is not an objective matter. The expected costs of such an option are the ones perceived by the elite, whose nature and interests depend on a state's political regime. As already mentioned, Gilpin takes into account domestic factors to understand the "S-shaped curve" of power. He now replicates the practice to elucidate a state's strategic orientation. By doing so, he separates himself from many realists, especially structural ones, who are reluctant to grant domestic factors much explanatory power.

Although this sophisticated version of realism is less deterministic about the influence of systemic factors than neorealist accounts, it is not underdetermined either since the factors at play are well identified. The gener-

ated predictions are accurate enough while the relative scarcity of factors ensures that the proposed explanation remains clear and useful. In other words, Gilpin's theory offers a sound compromise between parsimony and precision, something that newer, perhaps more fashionable perspectives, such as Allison's, fail to deliver.

Other visible works can be associated with this perspective, some of which did not obtain high visibility at the expense of rigor, such as Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (1987). In the book's study of how economic growth is linked to rise in power in a cyclic fashion, Kennedy's viewpoint is remarkably close to Gilpin's, whom he cites regularly. That being said, it is hard to identify what set of assumptions and established hypotheses this work is based on, in order to help us think in a coherent and systematic fashion. In other words, when looking for theory, Gilpin remains key. Admittedly, Gilpin does not answer all questions. He is agnostic regarding what leaders want, or, to be more accurate, he refuses to draw a clear hierarchy between different purposes. While most scholars acknowledge that states (incarnated by their leaders) can follow several objectives, excluding some of them to focus on a few could increase a theory's explanatory power. The state's status is one of these objectives that deserve closer attention.

Taking Status Seriously

Because they give more importance to the meaning of events than to their objective properties and because they consider that identity shapes interest and thus has analytical priority over it, constructivists authors in IR are inclined to put status at the fore (Ringmar 1996; Wendt 1999; Lebow 2008). But they are hardly the only ones to do so. Realist authors such as Morgenthau and Gilpin have also granted prestige great value. According to Morgenthau, prestige is a major concern for states. It allows them to reach their objectives at lower cost than if they were relying on power only; it is also a safety net when they make mistakes. Prestige, as previously explored, is even more key to Gilpin's theory. Furthermore, prestige is relevant when it comes to great power competition. As neoclassical realist William Wohlforth (2009, 37) puts it, "The rising challenger's dissatisfaction is often difficult to connect to the material costs and benefits of the status quo, and much contemporary evidence revolves around issues of recognition and status."

To be sure, prestige and status are two distinct notions. Prestige is the "reputation for power," as Gilpin (1981, 31) puts it, and as Morgenthau

seems to understand it as well, while status "refers to the position that an actor occupies within a social hierarchy" (Ward 2019, 3), through standing and membership (MacDonald and Parent 2021, 360). But standing and membership must be granted based on something. This indicator, in international politics, is linked to beliefs about power, that is, prestige. In other words, prestige and status are two different angles to look at the same object: prestige is the essence, while status provides the metrics. This proximity is admitted in the recent literature where Gilpin's hypotheses on prestige have been implicitly assimilated to hypotheses on status (MacDonald and Parent 2021, 377).

Status is essential when discussing what a great power is: a label that a state can get when, after getting enough prestige, it joins a highly selective club. Therefore, for the sake of this discussion, it is important to focus on who the great powers are to other states rather than on who they are to external observers such as scholars. And status does matter a lot to states, even more so that, according to most, it is both a means to get other goods and an end in itself (Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 15; Renshon 2016, 521–22). While this may be true, assuming this double function is not optimal for coherent and parsimonious theorizing, which is best realized when states are assigned with clear objectives or when, at least, a hierarchy between those objectives is established. In this chapter, I assume that prestige stands at the top. I will not deny that states use prestige to get other benefits. But when they do, this is the consequence of their high status more than the reason why they wanted to acquire prestige in the first place. This hierarchy of objective does not need to be accurate empirically. It is reasonable to consider that, for instance, when physical survival is at stake, status becomes subsidiary. But since states' survival is rarely at stake, giving analytical priority to prestige over other motives is useful in most cases.

The great power status might depend on power more than other statuses do since the term appears in the very label. It is also easier to appear powerful when you are so. But this is not about power only. There is probably less gap in terms of power between the United States and China today than there ever was between the United States and the USSR during the Cold War (Mearsheimer 2021). Yet, the United States and the USSR used to share the great power competition stage, while China has not yet become a peer to the United States.[12]

The assessment of who the great powers are is based on an elusive process. The selected criteria tend to be those elements of power that, rightly or wrongly, are considered decisive in shaping the domination of the victor of the last great power contest. This biased teleological perspective grants some

elements of power with more importance than others, even though they may not be relevant to the next contest (Hironaka 2017, 4–16, 29–30, 54–55). In other words, even when assessing a state's power, prestige matters.

Of course, winning the last great power competition offers a unique opportunity to be perceived as a great power afterward. Therefore, prestige comes not only from your capacities but also from your accomplishments. More generally, prestige is sensitive to your behavior and commitments and possibly discourses. While not exactly a self-fulfilling prophecy, since it requires more than claiming to be a great power to become one, acting like a great power is partly what makes you so (Hironaka 2017, 56–59). Not only does prestige help identify who the great powers are, but it might well be what the competition between them is about.

Not every state approaches status with the same amount of turmoil. Conflicts come from status anxiety, which is more common when a state's position in the social hierarchy is ambiguous. More generally, stratified hierarchies, as frequently observed on the international stage, are less prone to status anxiety than open ones.[13]

Cooperation, the literature says, is harder to achieve when status is at stake. While not necessarily a zero-sum game (Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 251), the quest for status can become one if perceived so. This may be sufficient to trigger a very conflictual interaction that would be both dangerous and unnecessary. Status competition then involves scarcity, a condition without which the status in question would not be valuable (Renshon 2016, 520). This is even truer of the very picky great power status, which is, more than others, a positional good.

Yet, claiming that the quest for status makes cooperation harder is incomplete since it must be compared to something. While status rivalry may make cooperation harder than economic rivalry, is it really more dangerous than contests over power or security? "It is far harder to manage competition for status than for most material things," argues Wohlforth (2009, 66). But one can look at concerns over status with less pessimism. Shouldn't rising powers believe that fighting a member of the club they want to get into is no good way to get admitted into this very club (Lebow 2010, 93–94)? What if the factors that increase your prestige have changed over time (Renshon 2017, 56; Ward 2019, 213) and are less related to military achievements and capacities and have more to do with other aspects, such as a state's capacity to mediate conflicts (Viskupič 2021)?[14] Admittedly, Russia and China seem to be particularly inclined to use force as a way to claim the status they believe is due to them (Larson and Shevchenko 2019).[15] Note that the two countries are in a different position, however,

since there is little doubt that China could get into a small club of great power. The question is whether it will have a VIP seat within it.

What conditions make the quest for prestige conflictual and/or appear as a zero-sum game is a question over which no scientific consensus has emerged, as is more generally the case regarding what situations related to status are the most conflictual. To know better, it is possible that the state-as-a-unitary-actor assumption shall be relaxed, as proposed by Simon Ward (2019), who focuses on how individual actors react to the status of the state with which they identify. When doing so, focusing on elites more than on the large public seems to make more sense, as "there are good reasons to believe that most people either do not know or do not care what other countries think about them" (MacDonald and Parent 2021, 375). It will be both interesting and useful to follow the directions that this growing literature takes in this regard.

Conclusion

Transatlantic relations have been under increased scrutiny lately, as their direction appears more and more uncertain in a context of renewed great power competition. To see things more clearly, therefore, requires us to delineate what great power competition is and what it is about. To this end, it would be easier to assume that US-China relations are stable. But it would also be unrealistic. Studying to what extent transatlantic relations depend on US-China competition does not only imply that the growing importance of this issue has consequences on transatlantic relations. It also means that variations of the former affect the latter. These variations, of course, are induced by the evolving status of each of the two great powers and the likely changes in terms of polarity they create. But even if the structure of the international system at some point becomes stable—let's say, bipolar in a few years—great power competition can still take many distinct forms, with more or less hostility, economic interdependence, different levels of cooperation between the two great powers when addressing common matters and global issues, and so forth, all of which might influence transatlantic relations. These different configurations grant European actors a varying degree of importance, making them look at great power competition in contrasting ways. They may equally well divide or unite European actors, affecting their choice about with whom to side.

A closer look at the field of IR might help understand the inherent logic of great power competition and, therefore, this issue. Such an approach can

be embraced in many different ways, each with its limits, notably regarding the number of theories that must be left aside. This chapter is no exception. So much has been written that it will be absurd to pretend to synthesize it exhaustively. Although very common and widespread, balance of power theories can differ from each other substantially. Not all are based on the same mechanisms, nor do they rely on the same assumptions or agree on what configuration is the most preferable for peace and stability. This chapter has provided a summary of how balance of power theories have evolved in this regard, how some of them have dealt with change in the distribution of power, before trying to integrate the notion of prestige. By doing so, it showed that considering the US-China competition as being mostly over status is a relevant framework, one that is reminiscent of the work of classical theorists such as Robert Gilpin but one that could also benefit from the findings of the contemporary literature on status. Recent research supports the idea that states are expected to show status dissatisfaction when they perceive a gap between the position they believe they deserve given their capacities and the amount of prestige they actually enjoy (Renshon 2017, 53–55; Ward 2017, 824). This is compatible with Gilpin's theory, which predicts that conflicts over prestige are more likely when the rise of a state has affected the distribution of power but not the international governance, which still reflects the hegemon's supremacy.

The corollary question, of course, is to find out whether China will seek to change the international system. Wondering whether China is a revisionist or a status quo power is not original. Note, however, that when this question arises, it is usually not clear what kinds of changes it takes to jump from one category to the other. Seeking to change international governance is generally enough to make you appear as a revisionist in the eyes of pundits and scholars. This is problematic. Drawing a distinction between systemic and interaction change, as Gilpin does, helps make the difference between those changes that imply challenges to the international order and those that imply limited changes within the existing order.

Interestingly, the LIO has been recently challenged by the hegemon itself. Not only has former US president Donald Trump criticized it, but many domestic actors have lost their enthusiasm about it. This does not mean that the United States no longer wishes to be the leader of the LIO. Rather, it suggests that it may not be inclined to pay a high price to defend this status quo (Rovner 2022). So, what if, after all, China won't have to struggle to change the existing order simply because its leader was not willing to fight for it? Beijing's fundamental opposition to the LIO is sometimes associated with a domestic political goal: the Chinese Communist

Party's quest to remain the sole political force in China. Assuming that this makes China a state that must absolutely leave the LIO, one could also conclude that it will seek to shape its own international order, one that will coexist with the LIO rather than try to overthrow it (Owen 2021).

In any case, it cannot be ruled out that Beijing's ambitions are not completely established yet and that they could vary depending on domestic pressures and above all on how other states interact with them on this issue. It is in that way that reflections on status are profitable.

NOTES

1. For a reflection on what the shift from counterterrorism to great power competition changes in terms of transatlantic relations cooperation, see Benjamin Oudet, chapter 12, this volume.
2. This view is not uncontested. For more on whether the European Union is a power, see Delphine Deschaux-Dutard and Bastien Nivet, chapter 8, this volume.
3. Whether Europe is able to guarantee its own safety without relying on the United States, i.e., to achieve "strategic autonomy" especially vis-à-vis Russia, is a matter of debate between those who believe it can (Posen 2020) and those who do not (Meijer and Brooks 2021).
4. The balance of power has several definitions. A narrow definition is to consider it as the state of equilibrium among different states in terms of power. Another and broader definition considers it as any situation as long as it is perceived through the distribution of power between states. This is what the chapter means by it. From there, balance of power strategies refer to states' actions in this regard. Balance of power theories refer to theoretical academic works on this issue.
5. Yet, bandwagoning strategies remain frequent empirically. This anomaly for structural realists is not one to neoclassical realism: state's actions are not automatic reactions to the distribution of power. Rather, it lies at the interaction between systemic and domestic factors; see Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell 2016.
6. See Andrew Novo, chapter 2, this volume.
7. This parameter might seem irrelevant to this discussion. After all, what matters is the existence of a system regardless of its size. But this criterion becomes worth noticing when considering that geography, especially oceans, is a key factor to states' strategies given the practical difficulties to perform amphibious landings and the way this factor influences threat perception and, therefore, the logics of alliances (Mearsheimer 2001).
8. That being said, economic interdependence is not new and has not prevented balance of power strategies, or wars, from occurring, starting with the First World War. Likewise, the recent health crisis has shown that, far from putting their rivalry on hold to deal with a virus that targets them both equally, China and the United States were still engaged in power competition, even using the pandemic as a proxy to this contest (Baranets 2020).
9. For more on this, see David G. Haglund and Dylan F. S. Spence, chapter 11, this volume.

10. There are reasons to believe that the LIO is here to stay. It is strengthened by the economic interdependence it generates (Deudney and Ikenberry 2018), making China a satisfied, and thus a status quo, power, one that will undertake limited changes. Besides, what China has to offer in terms of ideological principles that would be universal and attractive enough to become an alternative to liberal governance is not clear. But there are also reasons to believe that this order is less enduring, either because domestic forces in China push for revisionism (Foot 2020; Weiss and Wallace 2021) or because, paradoxically, the United States has distanced itself from the LIO it has yet shaped. For examples of Chinese and US decisions taken in contradiction to the LIO, see Weiss and Wallace 2021, 638. On the LIO and the contested elements of its definitions, see Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021.

11. Or at least not fully emerged. Surveys on Chinese public opinion have started to show that it is not necessarily supportive of all kinds of expansions (Liu and Shao 2021). Let's remember, however, that the importance of domestic countervailing forces depends on the political regime. Public opinion from authoritarian China is all at once more likely to be shaped by the central state and less likely to influence its decisions. That being said, public opinion is not the only domestic force likely to interfere with foreign policy, and other actors might come into play, no less so within autocratic systems than within democracies.

12. Why this is so is open for discussion. One possibility is that the Chinese Communist Party has no universal model of society to give the world. The USSR had one, which enhanced its attractiveness and probably benefited its reputation for leadership and, therefore, its prestige. Another is that Moscow had managed to develop a broader network of alliances than Beijing has. Note that the two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive; more specifically, the latter can be a consequence of the former. Last, the United States' prestige has been enhanced after it prevailed in its contest against the USSR, making it harder for its next competitor to reach the same status.

13. This leads to prudence when importing findings from social identity theory (SIT), which is based on more horizontal interindividual interactions in social psychology, to IR. On the risk of applying SIT when poorly understood, see Hymans 2002.

14. This does not mean that wars for status are rarer than wars for power or security. It seems, on the contrary, that they happen more often when at least one great power is involved (Lebow 2010). However, this means that a world in which states struggle for status is not necessarily less cooperative than a world in which they struggle for power or security.

15. The current war in Ukraine, it is safe to say, was waged for reasons linked to status, which can explain the failures of so many predictions that did not assign Putin with motives of the sort. While this strengthens the thesis that prestige plays a greater role than usually assumed, this also shows that it can make international politics very conflictual.

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PART 3

Major Actors

FIVE

Return of the "Honest Broker"?

Examining Germany's Potential as Transatlantic Anchor Point in the Light of Strategic Competition

Benjamin Pommer

> I do not regard the procuring of peace as a matter in which we should play the role of arbiter between different opinions . . . more that of an honest broker who really wants to press the business forward.
>
> —Otto von Bismarck, speech to the Reichstag, February 19, 1878

One of this book's central themes is how a US-dominated understanding of "strategic" or "great power" competition has shaped transatlantic security relations. It is necessary to examine the role of crucial state actors beyond the United States, Russia, China, and "violent and criminal nonstate actors and extremists" (CRS 2021, 2–3). Among these "other" actors, perhaps none is more critical to transatlantic relations than Germany. As the largest economy within the European Union (EU), Germany remains a critical international actor with the potential to utilize its unique position at the heart of the EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the global economy to benefit transatlantic relations.

Germany's current position on strategic competition presents a chance to strengthen the Western bloc against Russian or Chinese influence. Hence, the strategic potential rooted in economic power, regional influence, and multilateral tradition must be utilized to its full extent by German

decision-makers to contribute to Western cohesion and resilience. Externally, several European countries perceived Germany's ambitions to pursue a value-based foreign policy as naive and domestically motivated. Central and Eastern European partners and the Trump administration considered the German approach harmful to European security. This chapter, however, considers the German perspective to examine the rationale behind the German course and discuss German ways for rebuilding transatlantic and European cohesion.

The war in Ukraine reflects a low point for the postwar European security system. On a macro level, Russia's war in Ukraine concerns the future balance of power in Europe, the sovereignty of nonaligned countries, and the actual impact of transatlantic cooperation on regional security. Despite US intentions to focus on strategic competition with China, the Russian attack made Europe the key (hot) battleground. As US resources for projecting national power were limited, the United States pressured all prominent European actors or stakeholders, particularly Germany, to take a more active role in the defense of Ukraine and the confrontation with Russia. In the months immediately preceding and following the Russian invasion, Germany had a window of opportunity to unfold its potential as an *honest broker* to press the business of European security forward.

Notably, the German strategy—or the lack thereof—for supporting Ukraine and countering Russian actions posed several challenges. Paradoxically, one-third of domestic German audiences and some intellectuals still perceive the German government's pace and number of arms supplies—especially tanks—as going "too far" (Ehni 2023). In contrast, many actors in Ukraine saw the German approach as hesitant, undermining the actions of its NATO allies. Altogether, Germany's hesitance regarding Russian energy boycotts and the delivery of arms to Ukraine has affected both German influence and the Western position on supporting Ukraine. The German government either has showed the lack of political will to hatch a strategic plan or, considering public opinion in Germany, has conducted a salami technique to maintain cohesion within the governing coalition's electorate (Moulson 2023).

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, German chancellor Olaf Scholz proclaimed the *Zeitenwende* (turning point) for the unique historical sentiment in (West) Germany regarding military means, including using military force, exporting military goods, and executing national power (Blumenau 2022, 1912–13). With the increasing support of Ukraine with materiel and sophisticated weapons systems, Germany has not only changed its policy for arms exports but also started to lean on the United States as *the*

power to consult before deciding actions with international implications (Jordans, Grieshaber, and Kullab 2023)—two strong indicators of an actual turning point in German foreign relations.

According to the first German National Security Strategy (NSS), Germany considers "strengthening the European Union's ability to act" and "consolidating the transatlantic alliance" fundamental security interests that shape its foreign political activities (Federal Government 2023a, 21). Despite the German potential to proactively handle European security, Franco-German efforts to manage the conflict between Ukraine and Russia in 2014 needed substantial US support. Although US involvement had increased before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the United States' leading role also undermined the position of European powers in handling European security matters. More recently, the German government has intensified collaboration with the United States, particularly regarding heavy arms supplies for Ukraine. This renewed collaboration indicates a revived understanding among German politicians that European security results from solid transatlantic cooperation and "our close partnership based on mutual trust with the United States of America" (Federal Government 2023a, 21). Overall, Germany has the unique opportunity to adjust its foreign strategy and multilateral efforts to strengthen the position of democratic actors in strategic competition, both in Europe and in other contested regions.

Literature Review and Definitions

Before reviewing the literature about geopolitics and geo-economics, this chapter requires a definition of great power competition. In this analysis, I place Germany within the competition paradigm to analyze and evaluate the German influence potential. Competition and cooperation can be determined as natural conditions in which states act in international relations (Kandrík 2021). Great power competition allows for building a framework of the interrelation between great powers—in this case, the United States, Russia, and China. Additionally, the concept helps middle powers develop an idea about how to position themselves and structure their foreign politics within international relations dominated by great powers. To define the role of a middle power in strategic competition, the German potential for influence, with a strong focus on transatlantic relations, is analyzed in this chapter.

Looking at the most negative historical experiences with its geopolitical

approach, what value can this strategic concept add to the Federal Republic of Germany's foreign policy? For my analysis, I use the term *geopolitics* to label any nation-state's foreign strategic approach founded on a geographical assessment that affects national interest without considering this assessment to be deterministic (Brill 2008, 35). Furthermore, geopolitics are rooted in countries' historical relationships within their area of interest and utilized as political justification for influence activities, including but not limited to military actions (Wigell and Vihma 2016, 609). Geographic or topographic attributes are not relevant per se; humans evaluate those and give features of geography a political or social role, therefore, conceptualizing geographic space for political purposes (Helmig 2019, 5). Another aspect attributed to geopolitics is the idea that power, infrastructure, and geographical space are closely related. According to this definition, infrastructure and networks, such as power grids, supply lines, and digital communications, are considered means of power projection with implications for the physical, cyber, and cognitive space (Westphal, Pastukhova, and Pepe 2021, 7). This geopolitical understanding is relevant for Germany because of the high dependency on energy connectivity and safe import conditions. Especially for Germany, energy politics are security politics. Consequently, Germany's *integrated security* approach ought to appreciate its geopolitical situation regarding transportation lines, secured infrastructure, and geographical proximity between suppliers and demanders to be effective.

In addition to geopolitics, the concept of *geo-economics* is helpful to frame Germany's or any other country's strategy for designing security politics with global partners, especially in Europe, North America, and Asia. One definition, mainly applicable to state actors, is that geo-economics substitutes political with economic means or instruments to achieve the desired, nondisclosed geopolitical ends (Wigell and Vihma 2016, 609; Blackwill and Harris 2016, 8). Geo-economics can also focus on private foreign investments and similar means, leading a state's approach to project economic power (Klement 2021, 23). In Germany's case, such an indirect or passive approach placing the automotive (China) and energy sector (Russia) in the front row of foreign economic engagement risked the country's political goals and international credibility, as the so-called private energy project Nord Stream 2 showed.

Monetary measures and other tools can be applied even in peacetime to prevent further malign actions or to deter attacks (Miller 2007, 8). However, any applied economic instrument must be consolidated and coordinated between partner countries and domestic stakeholders, weighing positive

and negative outcomes (see fig. 5.1). Otherwise, friendly actors risk failing their geopolitical ends linked to the targeted state that friendly actors intend to influence. In Germany's strategic situation, weighing options is vital, as the German global trade network and the high dependence on exports are both opportunities and threats. For instance, German-backed sanctions might unfold a practical economic impact on the targeted actor, such as Russia.

In contrast, the German dependency on Russian energy imports made German decoupling efforts risky for Germany, both politically and economically. The decoupling discussion has received further spin with Germany's new *Strategy on China of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany*, indicating that a strategic shift in German foreign economic politics will only be a partial turnaround (Federal Government 2023b, 25). Another pillar for influencing the security situation in certain regions, I submit, is foreign aid with a strong emphasis on the security sector (see fig. 5.1), utilizing the German defense industry and military training facilities responsibly to provide "support for partners facing direct threats" (Federal Government 2023a, 45). Therefore, with its most significant element of national power, its economic strength, Germany possesses a power source to influence other actors in the same way other states would utilize military power. Nevertheless, before that, the German government's claimed ambition could only be compelling if translated into tangible foreign actions.

In 2016, Germany ranked in the top five of three different indices, the Foreign Bilateral Influence Capacity Index, the Global Power Index, and the Gross Domestic Product (Moyer et al. 2018, 3). The ranking reflects an external or peer assessment of states' relations between influence capacities and coercive capabilities (15). However, measuring the degree to which countries execute their *influence* on other actors can only build the foundation for operationalizing this influence in foreign policy. The pure potential is meaningless if countries lack the political will to influence systems and actors. States might conduct "influence activities" in foreign affairs by utilizing *power resources* (Meierding and Sigman 2021, 3). Meierding's and Sigman's influence development process incorporates the power resources into these influence activities, mainly diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME), that generate influence through specific power mechanisms to change the behavior of a targeted state or government (5).

These purpose-driven measures allow state actors to develop diverse foreign strategies—facilitated through soft or hard power—to influence other countries without necessarily using malign techniques. Germany does not yet fully use its resources to form alliances, strengthen relations,

	Positive	Negative
Trade	• Grant access • Free trade agreements • Government purchase • Licenses	• Sanctions—deny access • Embargo/boycott/quotas • Deny licenses • Subsidies • World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute settlement
Finance	• International financial institution (IFI) contributions • Open capital markets • Ballout packages • Debt forgiveness	• Freeze assets • Capital controls • Currency manipulation • Financial sanctions—secondary sanctions • Sell foreign debt holdings
	Monetary policy	
Aid	• Official Development Assistance • Private contributions • Public health programs	• Conditional aid • Tied aid
Policy	Regulation	

Fig. 5.1. Economic instruments. (Data from Troxell 2018, 10.)

or contain malign influence. This fact is remarkable, as the German Foreign Ministry has developed a new idea of feminist foreign policy politics without outlining the influence measures to achieve the set goals (Brechenmacher 2023). Due to the progressive value-based perspective on international politics, German idealist foreign policy seems to be directed primarily at domestic audiences.

Overall, I consider geo-economic measures and impactful negative economic instruments (see fig. 5.1) as legitimate means for Germany—in a multinational coalition—to deter, influence, or even contain actors that violate international laws or agreements, as Russia did by invading Ukraine. Forming economic and financial strongholds for democratic or nondemocratic partners, if necessary in specific scenarios, I submit, builds a basis for combined efforts in security politics. From a German perspective, this means exerting more effort and power to strengthen transatlantic relations and other multilateral partnerships by improving economic relations between the United States and Europe to prevent any “trade war” between the two. The following section will focus on a historical case to explain Germany’s unique role and which elements of this role matter for contemporary European security politics within strategic competition.

The Role of German History in European and Transatlantic Security

In 2023, the Federal Republic of Germany still shares strategic commonalities with the German Empire but has completely emancipated itself from former imperial aspirations (see table 5.1). Bismarck saw Germany as a conductor in the European concert of powers aiming to broker deals that would balance European relations in German favor. Nevertheless, Bismarck and his successors could never settle the orientation struggle, whether Germany should belong to the West or the East. Instead, Germany followed a unique national path.

Although Bismarck used Germany as an honest broker to press business forward, it has been challenging for German governments since the German unification of 1871 to find and consolidate a brokering position. Between 1871 and 1945, Germany built up economic and military power to dominate neighboring countries and domestic opposition. How Germany presented its owned power internationally also undermined any credibility as an honest broker in the security business. The roots of Germany's power sources lie in the historical development that Germany took after 1871, which still determines Germany's role in Europe.

German economic growth was based on the emergence and reemergence of large industrial companies, mainly in the automotive and chemical sectors, and medium-sized engineering companies with increased global relevance. Germany's economic rise was a direct result of building up applied sciences colleges and technological universities (Braun 2011, 20). Despite the German Empire's global aspirations, the protectionist mindset among the German states led to an oligopolistic development in the energy and power grid sector (Glatz 2010, 73). This development has significantly influenced German energy politics and infrastructure at home and in Europe. In addition to the negative backlash of Russian energy measures against European countries, the German and European energy market structure, with a high private energy sector dominance and overly complex distribution policies, caused significant ramifications. Therefore, the constant supply of strategic energy resources is as essential to European security as transparent regulatory policies for the Euro-transatlantic energy market that requires more flexible structures to avoid external influence on pricing mechanisms. Affordable and sustainable energy supplies, I submit, will significantly impact the legitimacy and stability of democratic countries.

Unfortunately for hesitating German strategists, access to safe and secure markets is only feasible if Germany, depending on this access (see

TABLE 5.1. German Geostrategic Continuities and Discontinuities

Selected Geostrategic Factors	German Empire	Federal Republic
Geographically centered between the West and the East	X	X
Access to safe and secure (export) markets	X	X
Demand for natural resources to fuel economy	X	X
Special role claimed in Europe and the world	X	
Aligned with one value-based or ideological bloc		X
Military means legitimate for achieving national ends	X	

table 5.1), actively contributes to safety and security by supporting regional partners and countering malign actors. Between 1945 and 1990, the two German states were the primary area of contestation between the United States, the Soviet Union, and their European allies. In contrast, the benefits (West) Germany gained from multilateral security efforts and cross-bloc economic ties, that is *Ostpolitik*, helped ease tensions between the Germanies and the USSR (Giegerich and Terhalle 2021, 28–29). These experiences shaped many generations of politicians in Germany, sometimes ignoring that economic ways would only make a foreign strategy work when founded on other pillars, such as credible collective deterrence with strong military forces. Especially the United States pushed rearmament in the 1950s, allowing West Germany to regain its national sovereignty and some leeway in international politics.

In addition to the United States, other partners and allies demanded that Germany take over more responsibilities within the European security complex (Beier 2018). The opportunity for a new German role came in 1990, when the two German states and the former allies of World War II consolidated German reunification by signing the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (also called the Two-Plus-Four Agreement). As a result, the Federal Republic of Germany regained its full sovereignty, which included a continuous NATO membership and strengthened Western integration. Germany also returned to its former status as a central European epicenter of political and economic trends, but this time as a stable democracy (Brill 2008, 35–36). Although the fall of the Iron Curtain in Europe and Germany's reunification happened more than thirty years ago, caveats about the German position in Europe have prevailed among neighboring countries and Germans themselves. Both the special relation-

ship with Russia and Germany's decoupling efforts since the Russian attack on Ukraine serve as examples for these caveats (Boyse 2023).

Despite all reservations among smaller Central and Eastern European countries, the Federal Republic of Germany is now territorially satiated but multilaterally oriented and firmly integrated into the West, culturally, politically, economically, and militarily. On the other hand, some aspects of German history endure to determine Germany's perspective and role in Europe. As Germany has profited from a stable multilateral order that allows trade relations in its favor, German governments have been firmly committed to maintaining that order (Federal Government 2023a, 49). However, German governments will be judged domestically and internationally by the degree to which they walk the talk. In the next section, I analyze the geostrategic situation determining Germany's role in the Euro-transatlantic security environment following the historical analysis from this section.

Germany's Geostrategic Situation

In addition to the historical analysis in the previous section, I submit that an evaluation of Germany's geostrategic factors is necessary. In this section, I elaborate on the identified factors in light of current security-related events in Europe (see table 5.1).

Germany is a Central European power balanced between the West and the East. Its geographic position and infrastructure support its role as an export economy (see fig. 5.2). On the one hand, being "surrounded by friends" since the 1990s allowed German companies to access new tariff-free markets in Europe. On the other hand, this new situation relaxed—or even obscured—the Germans' threat perception, which caused several rounds of defense spending cuts (Hellmann 2018). Particularly Eastern European countries disagreed with the German narrative of constantly easing relations with Russia (Hoffmann et al. 2016). Even the Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea did little to shift Germany's posture. Perceptions in Germany changed dramatically with the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022, with Chancellor Scholz identifying a *Zeitenwende* in German history (Deutscher Bundestag 2022).

Historically, the German economic model has depended on fragile energy politics that have strongly impacted German and European security politics. This model requires an uninterrupted import of demanded raw materials and fossil fuels (much of them from Russia, see fig. 5.2) to

keep industrial production running for constant competition on the world market (Glatz 2010, 70). In 2020, the overall import rate for crude oil was 98 percent and for natural gas was around 94 percent, which comprised 60 percent of the consumed energy in Germany as part of its so-called energy mix (Westphal 2021, 3). Due to the strategic significance of energy supplies, there would be direct political oversight from the German Federal Government, even the chancellor. However, rooted in the interwar years and the Cold War of the twentieth century, German "economic diplomacy" had more or less ignored the (geo)political implications for European and transatlantic security by leaving economic relations mainly to investors, interest groups, and companies (Rudolph 2004, 347). Germany has applied a laissez-faire approach focusing on the domestic effects of commerce. This approach economized German security politics without backing up those politics with a twofold Euro-Atlantic position toward malign actors.

Germany does not claim a unique role in Europe or the world. Still, how German government officials at the federal and state levels dealt with Nord Stream 2 and other pipeline projects in Eurasia may lead to the exact opposite impression. Likely, the German government did not have cruel intentions before the war in Ukraine. On the one hand, all bypassed partners and allies were alienated when German governments allowed increasing the German gas supply from Russia through an additional pipeline project (Schmidt-Felzmann 2018, 100–101). On the other hand, the unique German-Russian relations should not be surprising as Nord Stream 2 blends in the traditional economic ties with the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation. Since the 1970s, (West) Germany has been able to import gas at reasonable prices from the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation.

In contrast, the latter received access to Western machinery goods (Sullivan 2022). As part of *Ostpolitik* and against Western reservations, German-Russian trade relations had a positive side effect, that is, stable political inter-German and inter-bloc relations. Conducting foreign trade was a relatively low risk, as Russia, in exchange, has been highly dependent on revenues made from gas and oil exports. Although *Ostpolitik* was a West German strategy to ease the bloc confrontation in Europe, this strategy relied on military strength and an adjusted NATO strategic approach following the Harmel consultations in 1969. In contrast to its predecessors, the current German government adjusted German-Russian relations by disrupting Germany's dependence on gas imports from Russia and refocusing on credible deterrence through adequate military power (Federal Government 2023a, 31). Therefore, future German foreign strategies can be more effective in generating influence on great powers in strategic com-

petition through all instruments of the DIME toolbox and fit all efforts into an allied comprehensive security framework.

Before Germany's commitment to peaceful European integration, Bismarck's complex system of alliances might have maintained the balance of power in Europe. However, Bismarck's system served primarily German national interests and did not dare to align the German Empire with the West or the East. After World War II, that former idea of bloc nonalignment changed completely when Chancellor Konrad Adenauer pushed for West integration by standing up armed forces in West Germany and becoming a member of NATO in 1955. Although Adenauer's course avoided further Soviet influence on Germany and regained almost full sovereignty and leeway for economic prosperity, one side effect was that Western integration fortified the political separation of West Germany and East Germany for decades to come (Gaddis 2005, 105). Despite the domestic risk caused by anti-military resentments among West Germans, Adenauer's rearmament efforts also increased the German Federal Government's influence on allied strategies and European security. The commitment to the West helped rehabilitate Germany morally and recover economically after World War II. Both results were made possible by US initiatives to stabilize European security relations (see fig. 5.2). Also, the Biden administration has understood that strategic competition requires reliable alliances in Europe and Asia to cope with Russia and China (Aum, Galic, and Vandenbrink 2022).

Aside from all these multilateral security-related efforts within NATO and EU, German governments after 1990 did not continue to incorporate a détente understanding into their Russia strategy. Ironically, the German reunification solved the question peacefully and merged two populations and political elites with contradicting images of the Soviet Union and Russia (Lough 2021, 84). Due to several domestic and economic considerations, German governments gave away their Cold War leverage to influence Russia through trade relations. Using economic ties as leverage potentially offered to build more trust among partners than the poorly communicated and managed Nord Stream 2 project.

Furthermore, Chancellor Angela Merkel ceased nuclear energy in 2009 without presenting sufficient substitutes or decarbonization efforts. None of the Merkel administrations pursued plans for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal to message the Russian government that Germany would not tolerate political leverage through energy means. Instead, the untransparent and naive German approach has eroded German influence on Russia and the trust in a German European leadership role. Even if it leads

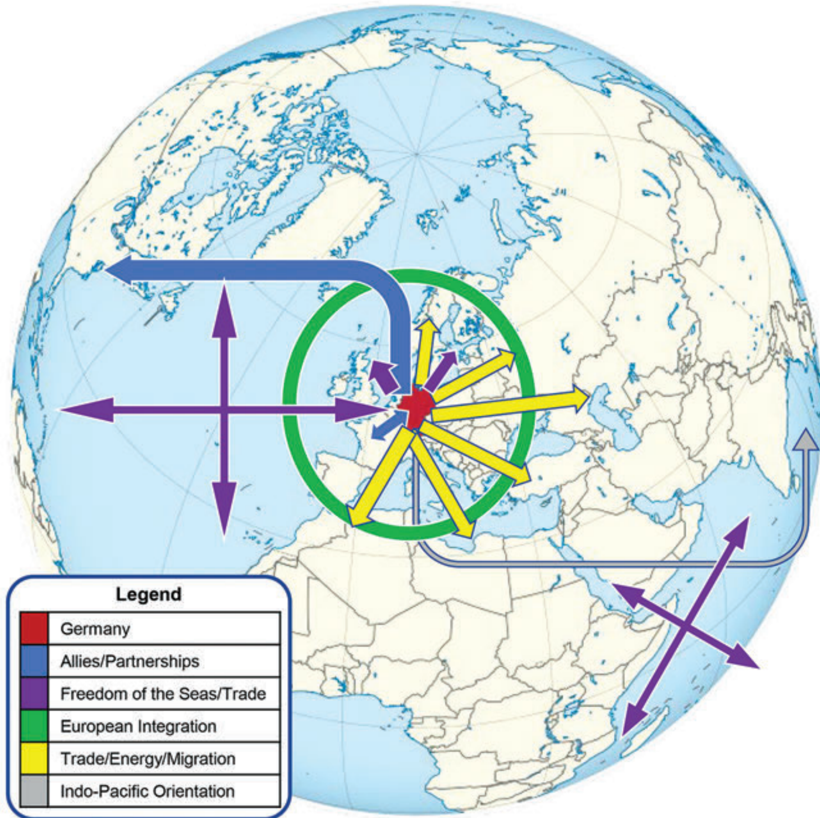

Fig. 5.2. Germany's geostrategic directions of interest. (Map based on Wikipedia [2014] "Germany on the Globe," courtesy Addicted04.)

to more decoupling efforts from strategic competitors and higher investments in the defense sector, it might increase the overall living costs for the general populace. The German population, I submit, would cope with such a combined realist and value-based approach. As long as this approach is part of consistent multilateral foreign politics, such as how the German government handled arms supplies for Ukraine, a solid majority of public support in Germany might endure (Ehni 2023). Therefore, balancing legitimate national economic interests with foreign implications on allies and partners is vital for Germany's international and domestic credibility and a prerequisite for successful foreign security initiatives.

Germany's Role in Strategic Competition

In this section, I intend to help readers understand why Germany struggles with defining its interests within the contemporary strategic competition realm and to find out how Germany can utilize its influence—as an honest broker—to support US and allied efforts and affect other great powers' aspirations.

One way of looking at the potential of powers within strategic competition is the framework of "networks of influence" that reflect a country's spheres and relative reach within the system of international relations (Moyer et al. 2018, 23–25). From a German perspective, one way of pressing the business forward might entail a new "German business model" with political and economic implications, as the Federal minister of finance, Christian Lindner, suggested (Wirtschaftskurier 2022). According to Lindner, Germany positioned itself in a self-inflicted circle of dependencies between the United States (security), Russia (energy), and China (commerce). Germany's role in its economic prosperity and its effect on economic growth in the EU became that significant because of a secure and stable environment caused by Germany's contribution to networks such as European integration and transatlantic relations (Nasr and Thomas 2022). As the economy is a stabilizing factor for German democracy and a resource of political power, a strong network of influence also means less malign interference. In a competitive environment, disintegrating with malign actors, particularly regarding energy dependency, combined with a more sustainable (export) economy will provide Germany with leverage to help strengthen organizations—such as the EU—without weakening the German partners' economic position. Consequently, rooting any German foreign strategy in a geo-economical understanding is influential in several ways. For example, balanced national economic power enables Germany to support its multilateral efforts and vice versa, which will contribute to regional security through strengthened partnerships.

How can this influence approach be put into practice? Proposing an active German role in strategic competition or conflict also means assessing the existing relations and connections (see fig. 5.3). Alliances provide their members with mutual access and assurances at low costs but do not limit member states when they develop strategies that contribute to regional security efforts (Rapp-Hooper 2020, 134). As simple as it sounds, Germany owns the resources to actively develop and publicly sell such a comprehen-

sive strategy based upon common transatlantic values and interests in a multilateral setup. Therefore, despite their almost traditional passiveness, German governments are suited in a favorable situation to execute more political or economic power internationally with or through international partners to shape the international order.

Germany's process of becoming more active in executing power can only succeed if accompanied by proactive consultations among allies and other entities to mitigate misperceptions. German strategic communications efforts must solve the dilemma of advertising a more leading German role in foreign politics to domestic and international audiences. The recent publication of the first German NSS might help back those communications efforts. Unfortunately, German voters—like most voters in other democracies—did not consider foreign politics a compulsory subject that influenced their decision on the ballots (Tagesschau 2021). Nonetheless, among German politicians and voters, agreeing on the fundamental understanding is vital because Germany will only successfully mitigate climate change and maintain a prosperous economy if they form international alliances supporting regional stability approaches (*The Economist* 2021). As a result, the German government is responsible for communicating its strategic goals of forming coalitions to achieve a carbon-neutral economy without deceiving voters about financial costs or harming foreign partners politically. Overall, European security and economic solidarity are not only two sides of the same coin; they come with a price: focusing on transatlantic cohesion to form a bloc against authoritarian malign influence—including economic reorientation—will increase living costs that require sufficient mitigation efforts to maintain public support (Stewart 2023).

The German NSS is the first important step to publicly consolidate and communicate German interests. As part of checks and balances, a German national security process is helpful to assess the German government's actual application and ensure a certain degree of transparency. Possible examples of codifying such a national security process are the US Goldwater-Nichols legislation and the German law regulating the Bundestag's parliamentarian rights in mandating military missions. This process would force the German Federal Government to develop and adapt its foreign strategy, nested under the German NSS, in regular cycles based on the international situation and Germany's strategic values, such as solid multilateral systems and the ties between liberal democracies. Furthermore, the process can be disclosed partially to the public and parliamentarian committees, allowing for budget issues to be tied to the NSS or a foreign strategy. Therefore, to avoid a shift in policy every four years, streamlining the German foreign policy

development by codifying a national security process enables Germany to increase trust in consistent German foreign politics.

From a German foreign politics perspective, shaping international relations entails pressing the business forward by brokering initiatives to serve Euro-Atlantic security interests. The Minsk consultations in the so-called Normandy format (Germany, France, Ukraine, and Russia) were an instructive example of such an initiative. Although Minsk I and II eventually failed to solve the Ukraine conflict or prevent a Russian invasion, the German chancellor and the French president were able to conduct high-echelon negotiations and broker an agreement between the conflict parties. Furthermore, the Minsk negotiations allowed two additional conclusions. First, the role of individual leaders and policymakers can make a difference. These individuals have been and will be entitled in the future to break conventions or stalemates by personal engagement, which happened in all phases and theaters of the last Cold War between the involved powers (Gaddis 2005, 197). Second, despite the weakness of the agreement that left Russia out as a conflict party, two European governments managed to broker a deal without central US involvement, which strengthened France and Germany and still served US interests in Europe.

On the other hand, such brokered deals should seek US support to avoid the perception of a middle-power solution at the expense of smaller countries. Accepting strategic competition as the dominating condition in current international relations with all existing differences still allows partners with shared values to find anchor points, especially between Europe and North America (see fig. 5.3). Therefore, utilizing German influence on state actors through regional security forums that support transatlantic and European security efforts is necessary to favor the balance of democratic states and values in strategic competition.

When conducting foreign politics, Germany seeks to rely strongly on multilateral organizations and forums (Federal Government 2023a, 15). This strategic approach is domestically accepted, as Germany experienced a positive economic and political outcome from investing in multilateralism. Multilateral approaches are generally supported by all political parties and create legitimacy in the eyes of domestic audiences due to these approaches' effects on themes relevant to Germans (Deitelhoff 2020). For instance, Germany tried to leverage its Group of Seven (G7) presidency to form a strong position against Russia with concrete measures. However, this needs to be more ambitious, as the G7 presidency was only a temporary, recurring responsibility. As both energy imports and terms of trade affect German economic and political credibility, pursuing a more enduring solu-

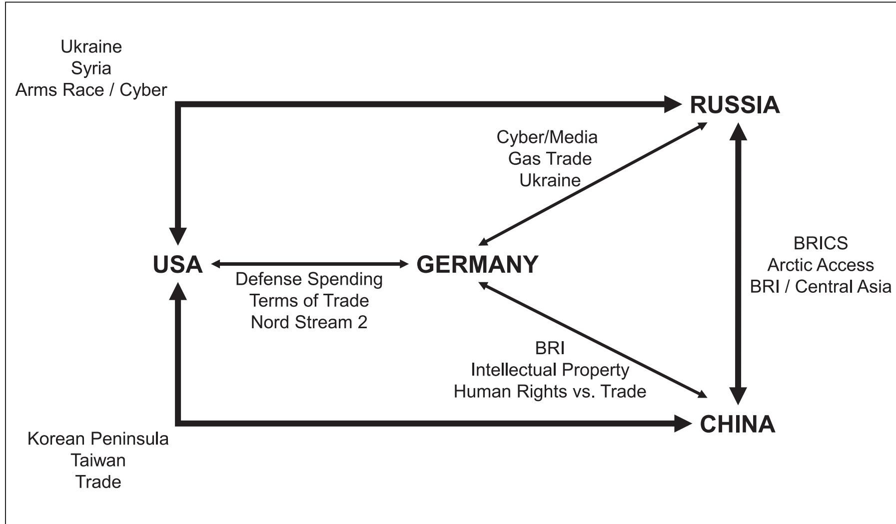

Fig. 5.3. Selected interstate conflict areas within the strategic competition realm

tion becomes imminent (see fig. 5.3). Recalibrating the German position within strategic competition also means reconsidering already disregarded projects that potentially strengthen economic ties between democratic countries, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. US president Joe Biden followed a similar path by reactivating the Association of Southeast Asian Nations forum in the Indo-Pacific to form common positions among Asian democracies against Chinese influence (Aum, Galic, and Vandenbrink 2022). Consequently, Germany must restart and utilize forums and organizations to form strong positions against malign actors that apply coercive strategies, for instance, in the energy sector. Ultimately, more countries with similar goals would profit from such an initiative.

Aside from decreasing the dependence on malign actors, reconfiguring the German-US relationship is crucial for any German foreign strategy. Historically, Germany's bilateral relationships with other great powers and regional stakeholders, such as the United Kingdom, France, the United States, China, and Russia, have always shaped its role in European and global security matters. The German attitude toward Russia was an alienating factor between Germany and the United States, favoring the Russian position in Europe. Russia put political pressure on Ukraine and other European countries by regulating or bypassing gas transits from Russia into

Central Europe (Charap et al. 2021, 62–63). In this context, the German government stayed passive. It did not use its potential leverage over Nord Stream 2 to influence Russian malign behavior, for example, by delaying the operating permit or building up LNG terminals as substitutes. Instead, a powerful argument between the United States and Germany broke out, including a US threat to sanction Nord Stream 2.

Although the United States and Germany settled the argument temporarily by granting Ukraine financial compensation, the naive German economic approach had become a significant security challenge (Westphal 2021, 5). The Russian regime watched closely how the German government would act regarding energy-related matters and presumably anticipated a more indifferent German reaction (Fix and Kapp 2023). If Russia were involved in destroying the underwater pipeline, that involvement would be a hostile measure to increase transatlantic tensions. Consequently, German energy politics and trade relations should be securitized and nested under further national or European policies following the German NSS. Furthermore, those reconfigured politics—harmonized with (transatlantic) partners—offer opportunities to utilize the German influence potential in favor of regional security frameworks in Europe and Asia (see fig. 5.3).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter, I tried to discover how Germany could utilize its unique role to affect transatlantic relations in the great power competition context. The reasons for more German foreign initiatives are manifold. I tried to show how Germany's geographical situation formed its particular position and importance for Europe. Germany's unique selling proposition is technological sustainability, regional integration, and existing economic ties with all great powers. On the other hand, Germany has cornered itself by remaining too passive in the current Ukraine war and undermining its existing influence in Europe.

Germany's historical, economic, and geographical factors determine its potential for foreign influence. However, the pacifist mentality and naive security perception among the German electorate—especially regarding the role of energy imports—block practical foreign politics regarding brokering deals that would help increase the transatlantic weight of European security. The German government has begun to mitigate that risk and increase its reputation by almost entirely reducing its dependence on Rus-

sian imports. However, the process requires multi-partisan commitment and a persistent will of the German population. That will only stay high if the German governments convince the population of their consistent plan, as outlined in the German NSS.

Referring to Bismarck's quote at the beginning of this chapter, Germany has the potential to fill the role of an *honest broker* to press the business forward in European security: Germany increased its military efforts after the proclaimed *Zeitenwende*, reconfigured its energy strategy cutting ties with Russia, and accepted that an adapting strategic culture is an essential requirement for the development of consistent foreign strategies (Federal Government 2023a, 73). By taking this angle, I also acknowledge the challenges of any German initiative and its potential ambiguity in the eyes of allies and partners. This ambiguity can pose a strategic risk to Germany's goals and reputation. Therefore, mitigating strategic communication pitfalls is as crucial as tangible actions that build credibility among partners and allies. However, further research is necessary to assess whether the new German NSS translates into a strategic narrative and concrete initiatives that underline the degree of influence of security politics *made in Germany* with a clear multilateral orientation.

German governments made their historical experiences that anti-expansionist and multilateral approaches help avoid major struggles with former adversaries in Europe, such as France and Russia. As a convinced multilateralist, Germany will solve its geostrategic challenges through and with institutionalized multilateral efforts, such as the United Nations Organization, the EU, and NATO (Federal Government 2021, 12). Despite the moderate execution of its power, Germany utilizes institutionalized partnerships and alliances, mainly in Europe and North America, to support its peaceful development and global trade, on which Germany depends significantly. Although German foreign politics have focused predominantly on soft economic power since World War II, Germany has maintained a specific influence and bridging function between the West and the East, for instance, with its *Ostpolitik*. This unique German role carries a permanent risk of being misinterpreted when too ambiguous or hesitant. Nonetheless, European security and, on a larger scale, transatlantic relations stand to gain if Germany brokers credible political deals focusing on inclusive regional cooperation.

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SIX

Coping with the Rise of Sino-American Rivalry

Why Macron Has Not (Yet) Succeeded in Strengthening Strategic Autonomy

Samuel B. H. Faure

On September 15, 2021, Australia announced that it was breaking off the "contract of the century"—the acquisition of twelve conventional submarines for €56 billion ($66 billion)—signed with France and Naval Group. Instead, US nuclear submarines were chosen, along with the creation of a new trilateral partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The representatives of these three states presented this trilateral alliance as an essential political instrument to counter the rise of China in the Indo-Pacific. In Paris, which considers itself a leader in the Indo-Pacific (Bondaz 2021, 2022), this decision felt like an "earthquake" (Tertrais 2021). For the French foreign minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, who had negotiated and signed the original contract in 2015 as minister of defense, it was a "blow to the back [that should not be done] among allies." This "submarine crisis," which was as unexpected as it was brutal, raises important questions about the effect of the growing rivalry between the United States and China on France's transatlantic policy and, more broadly, on its alliance strategy (Schmitt 2017; Faure 2020a; de Hoop Scheffer and Quencez 2021; Meijer and Brooks 2021). How has the Sino-American competition transformed France's strategic relationship with the

United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)? What are the changes in France's alliance strategy brought about by a dynamic of bipolarization of the world?

I argue that the Sino-American rivalry has reinforced the political position defended by President Emmanuel Macron and his political-military entourage in favor of institutional changes reflected in the notions of "strategic autonomy" (Brustlein 2018; Franke and Varma 2018; Maulny 2019a) and "European sovereignty" (Fiott 2021; de Kaniv and Bellouard 2021; Bora 2023; Bora and Schramm 2023; see also Deschaux-Dutard and Nivet, chap. 8, and Davidson, chap. 3, this volume). These notions reflect the French ambition to build up strategic capabilities specific to European states in order to limit their military, industrial, and technological dependence on the United States and China. Using a public policy analysis approach, I highlight the "political work" undertaken by French government representatives to reconfigure the alliance strategy of European states. The concept of political work is part of a constructivist and sociological neo-institutionalist theoretical framework that focuses on the role of actors (Faure 2020b; Mérand 2021; Smith 2021). This concept refers to a threefold political process: the framing of a *public problem* by actors, the *instruments* they use to respond to it, and the degree to which their actions are *legitimized* to bring about change (Giry and Smith 2019; Smith 2019; Hassenteufel and Genieys 2021). I apply this analytical grid to a case study, Macron's presidency during the 2017–22 period. To do so, I draw on open sources that are the main speeches delivered by the French head of state and the interviews he gave to the national and international press.

The main results of this research are presented in two parts. Macron and his political-military entourage have, first, worked to frame Sino-American rivalry not as a threat to France's security but as the reinforcement of a strategic problem: the inadequacy and inappropriateness of existing transatlantic partnerships to ensure Europe's stability in the twenty-first century (part 1). To respond to this dependence of France and its European allies on the United States and China, the representatives of the French government defended a complementarity between the continued use of existing transatlantic instruments—the bilateral relationship with the United States and NATO—and the creation of European instruments in order to create the conditions for European strategic autonomy. In this political work to activate institutional change, Macron and his political-military entourage encountered resistance from France's European allies, who feared strategic isolation from the United States. In addition, some European states feared that France's ambition was to strengthen its dominance over Europe. The

political difficulties encountered by France in implementing European strategic autonomy resulted less from a lack of leadership than from a lack of legitimacy on the part of France as perceived by its European allies (part 2).

The Shortcomings of Transatlantic Instruments as a Strategic Problem

During the 2017–22 period, France maintained the same policy agenda, with jihadist terrorism and Russia representing its top strategic priorities. The increased competition between the United States and China was not perceived by French actors as a threat to national security and European stability. For all that, Macron and his political-military entourage have worked to frame the bipolar reconfiguration of the international order as a strategic problem for France and its European allies. The work of political framing is always the result of political choices and priorities insofar as "the 'dysfunctions' or 'issues' perceived by individual or collective actors and which would require, from their own point of view, institutional change, never become the 'problems' that public authorities take up automatically, spontaneously, or haphazardly" (Smith 2019, 8). This strategic problem corresponded to the reinforcement of the inadequacy and insufficiency of bilateral cooperation with the United States and with NATO to ensure Europe's security in the twenty-first century.

Jihadist Terrorism and Russia: Europe under Threat

A few months after the election of Macron in May 2017, the Ministry of Armed Forces published the *Strategic Review of Defense and National Security* (Ministère des Armées 2017) defining French military doctrine. Jihadist terrorism and Russia were identified as the main threats facing France. These strategic priorities resulted from the political context of the 2010s. An unprecedented series of jihadist terrorist attacks occurred in France between 2012 and 2016. The November 13, 2015, attack was the deadliest perpetrated on national territory since the Second World War (130 dead and 413 injured). In addition, Russia annexed Crimea in Ukraine in 2014, revealing the European impotence to defend a sovereign territory located a few hundred kilometers from the borders of the European Union (EU). Beyond disregarding international law, Russia orchestrated campaigns of political destabilization through disinformation during elections held in Europe (Jeangène-Vilmer et al. 2018), with the aim of "weakening the transatlantic link and dividing the European Union (EU)" (Ministère des

Armées 2017, 42). Indeed, the growing competition between the United States and China was framed as a strategic issue rather than a threat to national homeland security. In the 111 pages that make up the *Strategic Review*, only one reference is made to Sino-American rivalry without specifying its effects on France and the stability of the European continent: "China is pursuing the ambition of being, in the short term, the dominant power in East Asia and, in the medium term, of equaling or surpassing American power" (42).

This hierarchy of threats and the resulting hierarchy of strategic priorities have remained relatively stable during Macron's term in office. On the eve of the April 2022 presidential elections, the main vectors of destabilization and insecurity for France were still jihadist terrorism and Russia. The international context was then marked by growing political instability in the Middle East with potential violent repercussions in Europe, following the return to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the summer of 2021 (Lebovich 2021). At the same time, a withdrawal of the armed forces deployed in the Sahel as part of the Barkhane military operation was announced by the French head of state,[1] reinforcing the "remote" confrontation between France and Russia.[2] As a result, the rivalry between the United States and China was no more presented by French officials as a threat to the security of the national territory at the end of Macron's term in 2022 than it was at the beginning in 2017. However, China's military rise is no longer seen as a distant phenomenon and therefore external to France, as the *Strategic Review* published in 2017 suggested. In the fall of 2021, a report of more than six hundred pages revealing Chinese influence operations in France was published by the Institute for Strategic Studies, the research office of the Ministry of Armed Forces (Charon and Jeangène-Vilmer 2021). This report has been widely spread in the media and in French power circles. However, French actors did not perceive China as a threat to the integrity of national territory or the security of the European continent in the same way as jihadist terrorist groups or Russia. This was not the case with US government officials.

China: A New Strategic Priority for the United States

Since the late 2000s, American foreign policy has been shaped by the "Asian pivot." Despite differences in policy style, Presidents Barak Obama (2009–17) and Donald Trump (2017–21) have worked continuously on a profound political transformation. They have limited themselves to a change not in the uses ("first order") or instruments ("second order") of American for-

eign policy but in its purpose ("third order") (Hall 1993). Indeed, the main political goal of the United States is no longer to ensure Europe's security in the face of the Russian threat but to stem the rise of China in Asia. While US state actors might question this assertion, this is how US foreign policy is perceived in France, including by President Macron (2019): "The [US] position has changed in the last ten years, and not only in the Trump administration. You have to understand what's going on at the bottom of American policymaking. This is the idea put forward by President Obama: '*I am a Pacific president*.'" In the fall of 2020, Biden's election opened a reflection among French government officials on a possible inflection of this American foreign policy directed toward China at the expense of Europe. In Paris, the appointment of the Francophone and Francophile Antony Blinken as secretary of state was interpreted as a promising sign of the United States' willingness to reinvest in the transatlantic partnership. Yet, by the summer of 2021, the withdrawal of US armed forces from Afghanistan without consultation with their European allies, followed within weeks by the submarine crisis, confirmed for Macron and his political-military entourage of the US-Chinese priority. French authorities have insisted to their European allies on a triple political problem posed by this strategic repositioning of the United States in Asia.

First, Macron and his political-military entourage emphasized the strategic risk of redefining the priorities of European states according to the agenda of the United States. In doing so, they sought to avoid European states being drawn into military competitions and political conflicts resulting from a bilateral worldview that they do not share. Second, French actors have emphasized the repositioning of US military resources in Asia (Meijer, Simon, and Lanoska 2021). This has resulted in a continued decline in the presence of US armed forces in Europe: 400,000 in the 1960s; 200,000 in the 1980s; and 68,000, including 35,000 in Germany, in the late 2010s (Le Gleut and Conway-Mouret 2019, 22). Macron and his political-military entourage have used this data to warn European states of a weakening of Europe's security if no strategic change is made. Third, the French government representatives recalled that the transatlantic relationship can only be asymmetrical between the United States and the European states, which mechanically reinforces the latter's strategic dependence. Indeed, even Europe's two largest military powers, France and Britain, are considered by the United States as "junior partners" that must follow American priorities and preferences (Mérand 2020). To mark this relationship of dependence on the United States, the pejorative term "*supplétif*" (supplementary role)

has been commonly used by French actors under Macron's presidency. This asymmetry of power between the United States and European states is considered a strategic problem insofar as Macron and his political-military entourage considered France to be a "lead-nation" that must maintain its rank to avoid strategic decline (Schmitt 2020).

NATO: What "Brain Death" Means

The strategic problem as framed by French officials was not limited to the progressive strategic distancing of the United States from Europe, suffered by European states. Macron has also worked to put NATO's inadequacy on the political agenda through highly politicized statements, choosing to pursue a "noisy politics" rather than a "quiet one" (Culpepper 2012). To use Hirschman's typology (1970; see also Deschaux-Dutard 2019), Macron's repertoire of action has been less about using a strategy of defection ("exit")—he has never threatened withdrawal from NATO's integrated command—or "loyalty" than about speaking out ("voice") to assert the character of NATO as both militarily essential and strategically insufficient. In 2009, under Sarkozy's presidency, France returned to NATO's integrated military command, more than forty years after Charles de Gaulle decided to leave it in 1966. With this reintegration, "France has fully recognized the role that NATO plays in the defense of Europe," notes the *Strategic Review* (Ministère des Armées 2017, 60). French representatives recalled, moreover, that France is the third largest contributor to NATO (11%), behind the United States (22%) and Germany (15%) and ahead of Britain (10%).[3] In addition, Macron considered that the military effectiveness of NATO was not in question thanks to the interoperability between the armies, which has proved its worth (Macron 2019).

However, a few weeks before the London summit celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the Atlantic Alliance in December 2019, Macron noted that NATO had a "strategic and political problem." In response to the announced American withdrawal from Syria (later reversed), Macron argued that "the American decision [to withdraw] and the Turkish offensive had the same result: sacrificing our partners who fought Daesh on the ground, the Syrian Democratic Forces. This is the crucial issue. From a strategic and political point of view, what happened is a huge problem for NATO" (Macron 2019). In the same interview with *The Economist* published in November 2019, Macron continued with these words that were later widely commented on:

> In my opinion, what we are experiencing now is the brain death of NATO. We have to be clear. . . . You have partners together in the same part of the world, and you have no coordination of strategic decision-making between the U.S. and its NATO allies. None. You have uncoordinated aggressive action by another NATO ally, Turkey, in a region [Syria] where our interests are at stake. There was no NATO planning, no coordination.

This interview followed repeated statements by US president Trump demanding that European states commit 2 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) in accordance with a 2006 agreement among defense ministers, if they wanted the United States to continue to ensure their collective security.[4] Without this rebalancing of burden sharing, the United States threatened to refuse assisting European allies in the event of an enemy attack, with Trump going as far as to imply that the triggering of NATO's Article 5 was no longer automatic.[5] These American demands led Macron to comment: "This simply means what has been implicit in NATO until now: I am no longer willing to pay for and guarantee a security system for them, and therefore 'Wake up!'" (2019). With his statements, the French head of state aimed less to criticize US demands: Macron steadily increased France's budget from 2017 to 2022 until it exceeded 2 percent of GDP in 2021 and again in 2022. Rather, the French president aimed to emphasize the passivity of European states and, indeed, to encourage them to assume their strategic responsibilities instead of continuing to rely on the United States.

Moreover, NATO is considered inadequate to fight against non-state actors who attack not only from Europe's eastern flank but also from its southern flank. This position, illustrated by two French senators in a parliamentary report, is shared by representatives of the French government: "The Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East will be major challenges for Europe's security in the coming decades. But NATO is not interested in them, because it was not designed for that" (Le Gleut and Conway-Mouret 2019, 34). A similar position was advocated by President Macron in the context of redefining NATO's strategic concept vis-à-vis China. Following the NATO summit in Brussels in June 2021, Macron argued that it was necessary "not to confuse the objectives. . . . NATO is an organization . . . that concerns the North Atlantic, China has little to do with the North Atlantic."[6] NATO's functional limitations and the strong influence of the United States convinced Macron and his political-military entou-

rage to discard the strategy of Europeanizing the Atlantic Alliance, aiming instead to complement the strategy of transatlantic alliances with European partnerships.

Europe's Strategic Autonomy as a Strategy of Alliances

In order to overcome the structural limitations of the transatlantic alliance strategy, Macron and his political-military entourage worked to convince their European allies of the interest—and necessity—of strengthening Europe's strategic autonomy vis-à-vis the great powers: becoming less dependent on the agendas and instruments of the great powers by obtaining military action capabilities of their own (see also Deschaux-Dutard and Nivet, chap. 8, this volume). French representatives have succeeded in putting strategic autonomy on the EU's political agenda, which was not a given in 2017. Each of these political initiatives is conceptualized as so many instruments of action (Halpern, Lascoumes, and Le Galès, 2019, 321). However, the legitimization of this political strategy has remained fragile and limited at the European level, due to persistent political ambiguities and a strong politicization of these issues by the French president.

Mapping of European Policy Initiatives, 2017–22

At a press conference given by Macron in December 2021 to present the objectives of the French presidency of the EU Council, which was to take place in the first half of 2022, the head of state said: "Since 2017, we have carried the ambition of a European defense with considerable progress: A European Defense Fund (EDF), a European Intervention Initiative (E2I), structured cooperation (PESCO), and several joint Franco-German programs, later opened to other Member States, in armaments (SCAF, RPAS, MGCS)" (Macron 2021).

In 2017, the European Commission established the European Defense Fund (EDF), an instrument to finance research and development (R&D) studies in support of the defense industry (Haroche 2019). In 2020, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers agreed on the EDF budget. While the sum of €13 billion was mentioned at the beginning of the negotiations on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021–27, budgetary decisions in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis led to a decrease in this amount to €8 billion. This budget is residual in relation

to the public funds available to France insofar as it corresponds to what the state spends each year to acquire conventional armaments. Nevertheless, it is the fourth highest military R&D budget in Europe after France, Britain, and Germany and ahead of Spain, Italy, and Poland. In addition, since 2019, the commissioner in charge of the internal market and industry (Directorate-General Defence Industry and Space, DG DEFIS), Frenchman Thierry Breton, has also been in charge of industrial defense issues and de facto manages the EDF.

A few months later, in December 2017, twenty-five EU member states decided to activate the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), an institutional mechanism that was incorporated into the Lisbon Treaty (2009) but that had not been used until then. The interest of this institutional instrument, which is part of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), is to implement specific military or industrial projects without having to wait for the approval of all EU member states. While Macron and his political-military entourage hoped that PESCO would take the form of a "minilateral" partnership (Faure 2019b) with a limited number of participating states—leaving more room for a large state like France to shape decision-making—the more inclusive German position prevailed. Even Poland, which had been reluctant to join PESCO, was included. Only three states did not take part in PESCO: Denmark, which has had an opt-out on CSDP since 2001; Britain, which decided in 2016 to leave the EU; and Malta, which had no interest in participating.

Concomitantly, Macron proposed to France's European allies at the beginning of his mandate, during a speech delivered at La Sorbonne in September 2017, to create a European Intervention Initiative (E2I) (Maulny 2019b) to help build a "common strategic culture" (Faure 2016). In June 2018, a letter of intent was signed by the defense ministers of nine European states. In 2022, the E2I had thirteen states, two of which are not members of the EU: Norway and Britain. With regard to armaments programs, after several years of negotiations, the future battle tank (Main Ground Combat System, or MGCS) is bilateral, with France and Germany taking part. The future combat aircraft (Système de combat aérien du future, or SCAF) and the European military drone (Remotely Piloted Aircraft System, or RPAS) are minilateral, with France, Germany, and Spain, and also Italy for the RPAS. These decisions are linked to the signing of the Aix-la-Chapelle Treaty between France and Germany in 2019, as well as the Quirinale Treaty with Italy in 2021. Finally, the work on the Strategic Compass—a kind of EU white paper on defense and security—was presented in March 2022, as part of the French presidency of the EU Council.

Change through Instruments, Differentiated Integration, and "French Europe"

As can be seen, there was no shortage of political initiatives aimed at strengthening Europe's strategic autonomy between 2017 and 2022. Beyond their description, three analytical remarks are made to identify the main political and institutional features of the changes at work. First, these initiatives correspond to "second-order" changes (Hall 1993): Macron and his political-military entourage chose to establish this strategic autonomy through the creation of instruments (table 6.1). This is the case for the E2I, SCAF, RPAS, and MGCS programs, as well as the Franco-German and Franco-Italian treaties and the Strategic Compass. Two exceptions to this rule can be noted. On the one hand, PESCO is a "first-order" change insofar as it was an existing instrument since 2009 but had not been activated. It is therefore a transformation of political practices and not the creation of a new institutional instrument. On the other hand, if the EDF is, strictly speaking, a financial instrument, it could help to embody a structural change insofar as the ambition is to constitute an internal market for armaments and a European technological and defense industrial base, in the wake of the "defense package" (Faure, 2019a, 2020c, 2022a).

Second, no matter what terms Macron uses—"strategic autonomy," "European sovereignty," "European strategic sovereignty," and so forth—they have one thing in common: they are used in the singular. However, an analysis of these instruments reveals their multiple formats (table 6.2). Some of these instruments, such as the EDF, PESCO, and the Strategic Compass, are constitutive of the EU. Conversely, the E2I, the armaments programs, and the Aix-la-Chapelle and Quirinale Treaties are instruments outside the EU. This observation can be clarified by listing the member states that participate in them. Indeed, some of these instruments are multilateral (EDF, E2I, PESCO, Strategic Compass), others are minilateral (SCAF, RPAS), and the last ones are bilateral (MGCS, Franco-German

TABLE 6.1. Instruments of Strategic Autonomy

	1st Order (uses)	2nd Order (instruments)	3rd Order (objectives)
EDF		X	X
E2I		X	
PESCO	X		
SCAF, RPAS, MGCS		X	
Bilateral treaties		X	
Strategic compass		X	

TABLE 6.2. Differentiated Integration of Strategic Autonomy

	Format	Member States
EDF	EU	27
E2I	Outside the EU	13
PESCO	EU	25
SCAF, RPAS, MGCS	Outside the EU	3, 4, 2
Bilateral treaties	Outside the EU	2
Strategic compass	EU	27

and Franco-Italian treaties). In fact, France and Germany are the only two states that have used all of these instruments to implement and strengthen strategic autonomy. Thus, strategic autonomy has been consolidated in an institutional framework of "variable geometry" or "differentiated European integration" (Faure and Smith 2019; Faure and Lebrou 2020; Leruth, Gänzle, and Trondal 2022).

Third, a clear pattern emerged with respect to the political order that structures these instruments and the financing that makes them work (table 6.3). Indeed, the governance of these instruments is intergovernmental, led by the states and not by supranational institutional bodies such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, or the EU Court of Justice. Decision-making is shaped by the principle of unanimity and the political practice of consensus among the representatives of member states. In fact, member states have retained control over the public funds they wish to allocate to these instruments (Faure 2022c). This intergovernmental order represents not a break with the past but rather a continuation of the instruments that were created in the 1990s and 2000s—within the EU, for example, the CSDP or the European Defence Agency (EDA); outside the EU, for example, the Weimar Triangle or the Organization for Joint Armament Cooperation. The only exception to this intergovernmental order is the EDF, since the governance of this financial instrument is carried out by the European Commission.

Consequently, during this period, there was a clear political preference for an intergovernmental European order to constitute strategic autonomy. Indeed, the political work carried out by Macron and his political-military entourage between 2017 and 2022 was somewhat of a reproduction of what had been done previously. It is therefore understandable that strategic divergences and even a "strategic cacophony" (Meijer and Wyss 2019) have persisted between European states insofar as the instruments created have reinforced the established intergovernmental order. Macron's European defense policy has unexpectedly and counterintuitively resulted

TABLE 6.3. The Intergovernmental Order of Strategic Autonomy

	Governance	Budget
EDF	Supranational	Commission
E2I	Intergovernmental	Member states
PESCO	Intergovernmental	Member states
SCAF, RPAS, MGCS	Intergovernmental	Member states
Bilateral treaties	Intergovernmental	Member states
Strategic compass	Intergovernmental	Member states

more from a “sovereignist” than a “liberal” policy agenda (Faure 2020a). This result also converges with the idea that Macron’s rise to power in 2017 corresponds in reinforcement of “French Europe,” that is, the political conception of the EU as a power multiplier for French interests rather than the promotion of a supranational Europe (Rozenberg 2020; Chopin and Faure 2021; see also Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter 2015).

Limited Transnational Circulation of a Political Idea through Weak Legitimization

Finally, the political work of Macron and his political-military entourage to support Europe’s strategic autonomy is revealed by its degree of legitimization. Legitimation is defined as “a set of processes that make the existence of a specialized coercive power tolerable if not desirable, that is, that make it conceivable as a social necessity, even as a benefit” (Lagroye 1985, 402). French representatives have succeeded in exporting this political idea of strategic autonomy to EU institutions (Anghel et al. 2020). There have been countless speeches and statements by the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen; the president of the European Council, Charles Michel; and the EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Josep Borrell. On the other hand, the representatives of the member states have remained generally reticent about this political-strategic project, with the notable exception of Germany under Angela Merkel; it is too early to assess the preferences and practices of Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Indeed, many representatives of European states agree with the French argument concerning the strategic problem of Europe’s overdependence on China and the United States, particularly in the event of Donald J. Trump’s reelection to the White House in 2024 (Brzozowski 2021). However, no fewer representatives of European states fear that strategic autonomy would result in political and military isolation from

the United States. This is the case of Poland, which is governed at this time by a conservative government. Other European states are also cautious about French initiatives. This is the case, for example, of Spain, the Netherlands, and Denmark, which intend to maintain good relations with the United States (Arteaga et al. 2021). Italy has been a strong supporter of French initiatives during the government of Mario Draghi (2021–22), without being able to influence their transnational circulation, due to strong governmental instability.

This low level of legitimacy of French initiatives can be explained, first, by a political practice that has been vocal, politicized, and directive. This has sometimes resulted in a lack of coordination and communication with France's European allies, which some have analyzed as a form of French-style unilateralism (Duclos 2021; Taylor 2022). Such was the case when Vladimir Putin was invited to Versailles in May 2017 just after Macron had been elected president of the republic or in the summer of 2021 when Macron announced to the press that France would withdraw its military troops from the Sahel. Macron's approach was not seen as innovative or "disruptive" by his European allies, but rather it confirmed France's own centralized and hierarchical "political style" (Faure 2022b). This French political style was found to be out of step (*misfit*) with the more horizontal and collaborative habits of representatives of other European states.

Moreover, Macron has maintained—like his predecessors—an ambiguity about France's political-military goals that are, on the one hand, part of a European framework and those that are, on the other hand, specific to maintaining its rank as a "nation-lead," thus confirming the idea of a "thwarted power" (Badie and Vidal 2021; Charillon 2021). This political ambiguity was a constant between 2017 and 2022 when President Macron as well as his political-military entourage spoke in favor of "French *and* European strategic autonomy," as if they were the same objective. This was, for example, the discursive framing used by the French head of state when selling Rafale fighter jets to Croatia (twelve), Greece (twenty-four), and the United Arab Emirates (eighty) in 2021. Yet the Rafale is a "made in France" aircraft that has competed with its European adversary, the Typhoon, involving Germany, Britain, Italy, and Spain, since the late 1990s (Faure 2020d).

Furthermore, the war in Ukraine, which began in February 2022, has highlighted the contradictions in French political discourse. Indeed, while the French head of state had described NATO as "brain dead" in November 2019, he insisted on its essential strategic role in ensuring Europe's collective security since the beginning of the war. From 2022 onward, Macron

has no longer mobilized the discursive and political register of "voice," as in 2019 in the columns of *The Economist*, but that of "loyalty." Moreover, to demonstrate France's goodwill, Macron announced in February 2022 that French armed forces would be sent to reinforce NATO's forward military presence in Romania.

In this new geopolitical context, Macron even goes so far as to reverse his argument by considering that the political priority is no longer the development of Europe's strategic autonomy; he affirms, on the contrary, that the tools of the European defense policy are at the service of strengthening NATO. As for France's role in the war in Ukraine, on the one hand, Macron was constantly ambiguous before and after his reelection in April 2022, calling for support for the Ukrainian armed forces without rapidly transferring tanks and fighter planes to Kyiv. On the other hand, his repeated speeches about not "humiliating Russia" were incomprehensible in European capitals in the first weeks of the war. They are even more so after months of the war.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed France's transatlantic policy in the context of the return of the great powers. Using a public policy analysis approach, I revealed the political work conducted by Macron and his political-military entourage between 2017 and 2022. During his mandate, the French head of state framed the Sino-American competition not as a threat to the integrity of national territory or the stability of the European continent but rather as the gas pedal of a strategic *problem*. Macron has consistently argued that existing transatlantic military instruments (the bilateral relationship with the United States and NATO) were both indispensable and at the same time insufficient to address the main threats facing France and Europe: jihadist terrorism and Russia. France's political response has been to support the activation and creation of European *instruments* aimed at producing strategic autonomy or even European sovereignty, to use the terms commonly used by Macron. This study confirmed the institutional revival of European defense that took place in the mid-2010s under the effect, among others, of French leadership. It resulted in the export within the EU institutions of the political idea of strategic autonomy, which was quite unlikely in 2017.

However, these institutional changes have not translated into political and strategic change, as France has failed to engage its European

allies—with the notable exception of Germany. Macron has invested in the creation of intergovernmental instruments that have tended to reinforce rather than change the established European defense order (table 6.3). Moreover, the way in which the head of state has acted has been perceived by his European and transatlantic allies as characteristic of the French style: highly politicized declarations, lack of coordination during European negotiations, and a tendency to impose his national preferences. Finally, France's ongoing ambiguity between its strictly national objectives and those collectively shared at the European level has tended to reinforce the low level of legitimacy of the initiatives undertaken by Macron between 2017 and 2022.

Beyond national interests, strategic ideas, and political will, the way actors such as Macron and his political-military entourage act, negotiate, and work on a daily basis has an effect on the structuring of international relations and, in this case, reproduced the established intergovernmental order (Adler and Pouliot 2011; Pouliot 2016). To transform Europe and participate in its strategic empowerment, President Macron will have to transform the way he builds interstate alliances during his second mandate (Chopin 2021). Otherwise, it is likely that France's European allies will remain more convinced that the United States and NATO are the best guarantees of the continent's security in a context of Sino-American competition and that genuine strategic autonomy will remain an illusion (Meijer and Brooks 2021).

NOTES

1. https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/barkhane-pour-macron-les-propos-du-premier-ministre-malien-sont-une-honte-30-09-2021-2445637_24.php (accessed October 15, 2021).

2. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58751423 (accessed October 15, 2021).

3. https://www.nato.int/cps/fr/natohq/topics_67655.htm (accessed October 15, 2021).

4. Total US spending on Europe's defense is estimated at $35.8 billion in 2018 (accessed October 15, 2021), https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2019/02/european-nato-defence-spending-up

5. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/18/world/europe/trump-nato-self-defense-montenegro.html (accessed October 15, 2021).

6. https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2021/06/14/sommet-de-lotan-a-bruxelles (accessed October 15, 2021).

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SEVEN

Britain's Strategic Dilemma

Thibaud Harrois

The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (EU) had major—and largely unexpected—strategic consequences. Neither the prime minister at the time, David Cameron, nor Brexiters anticipated what leaving the EU actually entailed, and the latter offered very few concrete explanations about the role they expected Britain to be able to play on the international stage once freed from the EU's "shackles." Brexit supporters claimed that leaving the EU would allow Britain to become a truly "Global Britain," a slogan that was later used by Theresa May, Cameron's successor at Number 10. But just like May's infamous other slogan, "Brexit means Brexit," the definition of "Global Britain" remained vague so as to encapsulate as many foreign policy objectives and priorities as possible. The point the government was eager to make was that Brexit would not lead to any kind of "strategic shrinkage" or "Little England" sentiment where Britain would renounce internationalism and embrace isolationism. Quite the contrary, Brexit would allow the UK to think anew its relations with continental Europe as well as traditional and potential new overseas partners. The vision was clearly stated, but the government failed to translate it into concrete policy decisions. In the 2019 Queen's Speech, the government announced a new "Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review" (hereafter Integrated Review) aimed at reexamining Britain's "place in the world, covering all aspects of international policy from defence to diplomacy and development" (HM Government 2019). The

new strategic document was presented by Prime Minister Boris Johnson as an opportunity to revise and update previous strategic reviews, normally published every five years. The new document was expected to take stock of Brexit, which had not yet been included in any strategic update following the 23 June 2016 referendum.

With Britain leaving the EU, uncertainty and doubts have been raised about the country's role in the world and specifically about the way its foreign and defense policy choices would fit with (or differ from) that of its European partners (Evans and Menon 2017; Hill 2019; Martill and Staiger 2018; Ricketts 2021; Schnapper and Avril 2019). Beyond Europe, it is the status of the "special relationship" with the United States that is being challenged. Key strategic issues like multilateral cooperation, climate change, free trade, or the relations with countries like Iran, Russia, or China exposed divergences between President Donald Trump and the British prime ministers. The delayed review process may have been used as an opportunity to take advantage of the momentum created by Joe Biden's election to emphasize how close the UK's strategic choices are to the United States' under the new presidency.

The withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan in August 2021, however, exposed the damage caused by Britain's overreliance on decisions made in Washington. The September 2021 AUKUS defense pact involving Australia, the UK, and the United States and the signing of a deal to help Australia deploy nuclear-powered submarines aimed at giving concrete proof of Britain's continued closeness to the United States. It was also intended to evidence Britain's renewed role in the Indo-Pacific. But the deal may have in fact further strained the UK's relationship with France without providing the expected benefits. Last, as both Theresa May and Boris Johnson insisted that post-Brexit Britain would pursue a global ambition, the Integrated Review was expected to give details about what this would entail in relation to regions where its presence had been somewhat limited, especially "East of Suez," from where British troops had withdrawn at the end of the 1960s.

Britain's role orientation as a great power has long been associated with such role conceptions as being a reliable ally in organizations like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the EU but also as being a military power that is ready to deploy troops overseas (Gaskarth 2014). Much was written before Brexit about Britain's waning influence and its ability to pursue policies commonly attached to the role of great power. The country was already more commonly characterized as a middle power than as a great power (Edmunds 2010; Daddow and Schnapper 2013;

Gaskarth 2014; McCourt 2014). Brexit poses an additional challenge, and the Integrated Review multiplies priorities to such an extent that it fails to acknowledge Britain's limited capabilities and risks disappointing the expectations it creates about the country's ability to uphold its role as a middle power. Although many of the decisions made in the review are quite fitting with Britain's traditional role conceptions and their performance, other contradictory policies risk creating role conflicts with long-lasting consequences for the country's reputation. For instance, Britain's refusal to negotiate its future foreign, defense, and security relations with the EU contradicts the importance given to the Euro-Atlantic area, which remains at the heart of the Integrated Review.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to study the way Britain's national role has been reinterpreted and to unpack Britain's post-Brexit strategic choices and how the country expects to face power competition. The concept of national role is part of a theoretical framework that takes into account structuralist as well as ideational elements (Wish 1987; Aggestam 2006; Cantir and Kaarbo 2012; Harnisch 2012; Gaskarth 2014). Looking at the strategic choices made in the Integrated Review, it can be argued that they take stock of rising Sino-American competition, although one can doubt whether Britain is able to offer an actual redefinition of its international role after Brexit, mainly for structural reasons.

First, much attention has been given to the UK's so-called tilt to the Indo-Pacific. Almost a decade after President Barack Obama decided to rebalance American foreign policy from the Middle East and Europe toward East Asia, Britain's "tilt" was presented not as an effort to follow America's lead but as an opportunity to reinforce existing bonds while building new partnerships in the region. The government's discourse and policy decisions regarding the area will thus be examined to understand what it actually means for Britain's global presence and ability to project power. Second, Britain's shared values and objectives with European states will be studied in order to highlight the growing evidence in favor of increasingly structured and institutionalized cooperation between the UK, its European allies, and the EU itself. The final part will analyze whether Boris Johnson's commitment to match strategic aims with capabilities can be met. The Integrated Review and the 2021 document *Defence in a Competitive Age* (hereafter Defence Command Paper) are the result of a difficult effort to balance traditional military capabilities and those needed to fulfill the government's ambition to turn the UK into a "responsible, democratic cyber-power" that is able to compete with Russia and China and resist their expansionist strategy.

Britain's Tilt to the Indo-Pacific and Competition in Asia

The history of Britain's relationship with the area that goes from the Gulf to the Pacific is long-standing and mainly associated with its role as a colonial power, until the withdrawal of British forces from the "East of Suez" in the late 1960s. Since the 2016 referendum, one of the Brexiters' leitmotivs has been to insist on the need for Britain to reorient its strategy toward the Indo-Pacific area. According to Boris Johnson, the British withdrawal from the region was a mistake, caused by Britain's economic difficulties in the 1960s and the reorientation of its strategy after it joined the European Economic Community (Johnson 2016). Although this historical interpretation is highly disputed (James 2021), it was used as justification for Britain's renewed interest in the region, now that it has left the EU. It was instrumental in Johnson's effort to give substance to the "Global Britain" narrative and allegedly to allow the country to play a great power role. The UK already is a leading member of the Five Power Defense Arrangements agreement (with Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand) and a member of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (with Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada). In military terms, the one-thousand-strong Brunei Garrison constitutes the last permanent British military base in the region, with the exception of Diego Garcia. But the maiden voyage of HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, the new British aircraft carrier, took her to Asia and was presented as the prelude to a return to a larger permanent British presence in the area (Patalano 2021). Britain's security and defense policy is thus already closely aligned with challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

Specifically on China, the Integrated Review notes the challenge of dealing with "an authoritarian state, with different values," that is both a threat to British economic security and a major trading partner (HM Government 2021a, 62). Contrary to the United States' more assertive policy toward China (Biden 2021), Britain's strategy is thus characterized by an attempt at reconciling its willingness to work with one of the region's (and the world's) major economic powers with the need to contain the threat Beijing poses for international security. It is therefore mostly coherent with the attitude adopted by the EU that seeks to strengthen its relations with China while promoting "global public goods, sustainable development and international security" as well as "respect for the rule of law and human rights" (European Commission 2016, 2–3). But the Integrated Review has failed to end the debates about China's industrial policy and Beijing's influence on the development and regulation of new technologies. Johnson's government was pressured into proposing a new telecoms security law by

a group of Conservative MPs, supported by then US president Trump, who feared that Huawei's and other Chinese telecom companies' 5G kits raised security concerns over surveillance.[1] Conservative MPs have been divided on the issue, as exemplified by the creation of the China Research Group by Tom Tugendhat, the chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, which seeks to harden British policy toward China. Opposition from inside the Conservative Party, together with pressure from the United States, suggests it is delusional to believe, as Britain seems to do, that it is possible to strengthen trade ties with China while maintaining divergent security interests.

More broadly, the review presents a nine-point strategy to underpin its "tilt" to the Indo-Pacific (HM Government 2021a, 66–67). With regard to the UK's economic interests, a free trade deal with New Zealand was agreed on in 2021 and formally signed in February 2022, following the one already signed with Australia in June 2021 and those signed with Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam in 2020. But Britain's economic strategy also rests on its desire to move closer to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), becoming one of its "dialogue partners" in August 2021 (a status it already enjoyed through its membership in the EU). This is expected to allow London to reinforce economic bonds with the region as well as cooperation in such fields as climate change and security. It is a signal that most ASEAN member states support Britain's strategy in Asia, even if it leads them to take a clearer position in the rivalry between China and Western powers. Another objective, also listed in the Integrated Review, is to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which brings together eleven Pacific Rim countries. Despite geographic distance, the fact that the UK already has security interests in the region and has already signed free trade agreements with seven of the eleven CPTPP members makes it a natural partner (Darkin 2021).

Finally, Britain presents itself as a "soft power superpower" and insists on development aid and scientific cooperation to perform this role (HM Government 2021a, 9). The UK has invested over £3.5 billion in development aid to ASEAN countries over the past decade. The Newton Fund has also enabled Britain to invest £106 million in support of scientific cooperation and innovation in Southeast Asia (HM Government 2021b). These soft power instruments are meant to allow London to strengthen ties with ASEAN countries after the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fragility of Southeast Asian economies and the weakness of their support for public policy in favor of scientific research. Although this represents a substantial effort on the part of the UK, such investments, especially in development

aid, are likely to be dwarfed by pledges made by other countries, especially the United States and China.

In conclusion, British strategic documents list the opportunities presented by the Indo-Pacific region at a time when the UK is seeking to give substance to the "Global Britain" discourse. But the success of Britain's return "East of Suez" depends not only on the country's initiatives but also on how the states of the region welcome the new British strategy. Finally, the "tilt" to the Indo-Pacific has rightly been described as an alignment with the United States' "pivot" (Landler 2021). Yet it is worth noting that, in addition to bilateral and multilateral alliances in the area, Britain's priority is given not only to the United States but also to France and Germany, which the Integrated Review mentions as privileged partners in the Indo-Pacific (HM Government 2021a, 66). As noted above, Britain's new strategy, especially toward China, is much closer to that of the EU and EU member states than to Washington's more confrontational attitude. Therefore, the redefinition of its role above all requires Britain to reconsider the bonds between its strategic choices and those of its closest European partners.

The Euro-Atlantic Area: At the Heart of Britain's Strategy

When successive governments insisted Brexit did not mean Britain would adopt an isolationist foreign policy but would instead seek to increase its worldwide presence and influence, the message was mainly aimed at the United States. In Washington, many politicians believed Brexit would prevent the UK from facing international challenges (Wright 2020). There were also concerns that Brexit would reduce American influence within EU policy debates. Besides, the vote took place in a period when political relations between the UK and the United States had significantly cooled down. The American "pivot" to Asia already meant Europe was given less attention. But the "special relationship" was further bruised when Obama confessed that German chancellor Angela Merkel was a closer partner than then prime minister Cameron. Besides, Obama never hid his opposition to Brexit, warning the UK would be at the "back of the queue" for a potential trade deal with the United States (Asthana and Mason 2016). Donald Trump's presidency caused even more damage to the relationship when, in spite calling relations with London "the highest level of special" (Trump 2018), the American president criticized Theresa May's Brexit policies and her conduct of negotiations with the EU (Newton Dunn 2018). Trump, who supported Brexit, believed Johnson would be a much better prime

minister and saluted him as "Britain Trump" (Trump 2019) because of their alleged shared populist approach to domestic policy. But a close personal relationship between the two leaders was not enough to bridge the gap that existed in such strategic issues as multilateralism and support for international organizations, the fight against climate change, relations with Russia and China, the nuclear deal with Iran, or even the promotion of free trade and the signing of new free trade agreements. Yet, even in this context, political divergences did not affect the core of the relationship, and cooperation in the fields of defense, security, and intelligence remained strong (Darroch 2021). Joe Biden's election was expected to open a new era for Washington's relations with its allies and international institutions (Allen and Broschak 2021). The "special relationship" was described as "stronger than ever" by President Biden after he first met Prime Minister Johnson days before the June 2021 G7 summit in Cornwall. This reassurance from Biden was welcomed by the British government.

Most of the priorities set in the Integrated Review actually correspond to those listed in the White House's March 2021 *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (Biden 2021), as well as President Biden's commitment to hold a "Summit for Democracy" to gather support in favor of human rights and against corruption and authoritarianism (Blinken 2021). Johnson and Biden built on their strategic proximity when they announced a New Atlantic Charter in June 2021 (White House 2021). Although the 2021 charter is unlikely to have the same impact as the original Atlantic Charter, it signaled the allies' intention to work together on some of the main contemporary international challenges. Yet, uncertainty around the UK's relationship with the EU remains a source of tensions in the Anglo-American relation. Joe Biden openly opposed Brexit, arguing that "US interests are diminished with Great Britain not an integral part of Europe" (2018). Repeated tensions and disputes over the Northern Ireland protocol in particular have led Biden to warn the UK that no trade deal would be signed if the Good Friday Agreement and peace in the province were threatened as a consequence of Britain breaching the protocol (2020).

But the deepest tensions in the Anglo-American relations after Biden's election were caused by an issue that was barely mentioned in the Integrated Review: Afghanistan. The Taliban's quick takeover of Afghanistan and the fall of Kabul in August 2021 triggered debates on the reasons that led Biden to order American troops to leave the country at such a pace and without consulting allies, even resisting their calls for America to keep troops on the ground after 31 August 2021 for evacuation efforts (Smith 2021). Boris Johnson and his government were heavily criticized, includ-

ing by Conservative MPs in Westminster, when the prime minister argued that the humanitarian crisis and political chaos in Afghanistan could not be avoided once Americans had decided to leave ("Debate on Afghanistan," House of Commons 2021). These events underlined the lack of influence the UK has on decisions made in Washington. But the Afghan debacle also pointed out the fact that the UK did not have the ability to conduct a large-scale military intervention in the Middle East without a strong American presence. This is mainly due to the fact that it would be politically difficult to get support either from voters or from MPs for a military deployment in Afghanistan. But sending a large number of troops to the Middle East would also have exposed the UK to security risks because of its army's limited capabilities. Finally, the 2021 Afghanistan crisis underlined once more the dire consequences of Britain's isolation from the rest of Europe, as American disengagement should have encouraged London to get closer to European partners, including the EU, rather than moving away from them.

The Integrated Review is very clear about NATO remaining the main international security organization for the defense of the Euro-Atlantic area. It insists that the UK sees itself as "the leading European Ally" in the organization (HM Government 2021a, 21). But the reality of the country's claim to be the leading power in Europe without a clear foreign and security policy relationship with the EU is questionable. The review argues that leaving the EU has allowed Britain to gain speed and flexibility and a "strong, independent voice" by working with new partners (HM Government 2021a, 17). The prevailing view, then, is that Brexit has "unleashed Britain's potential," to use one the Conservatives' slogans in the 2019 election. Yet, the number of new partnerships has remained limited so far, even if the UK is involved in a number of more or less formal alliances. The most important of these is certainly the one with France, which is based on the Lancaster House Treaties of 2010 and which, among other things, led to the establishment of a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force. The review also highlights the growing importance of the foreign policy partnership with Germany, both bilaterally and trilaterally in the E3 format involving Paris, London, and Berlin. In the absence of satisfactory and quick progress in defense and security cooperation at the EU level, the E3 format could be expected to be gradually institutionalized (Billon-Galland and Whitman 2021). In addition to cooperation with France and Germany, the review emphasizes the need for cooperation with Ireland and, to a lesser extent, with Italy and Poland but also the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey. Italy and Spain remain part of the UK's main European partners within NATO, in terms of both strategic

choices and equipment cooperation. Collaboration with Rome in particular was given new momentum with the December 2022 Global Combat Air Programme tripartite agreement between the UK, Italy, and Japan. In October 2022, the UK and Poland also signed the Air Defence Complex Weapons Agreement, enabling the two countries to work together on the development and manufacturing of complex weapons (Ministry of Defence 2022). For Britain, these countries share a common attachment to "values, free trade and a commitment to transatlanticism" (HM Government 2021a, 61). In this respect, the review mentions the bilateral links that exist with these countries but also, for some of them, their commitment within NATO or the Joint Expeditionary Force that associates the five Nordic countries and the three Baltic countries, as well as the Netherlands, under British command. This force, mainly oriented toward the Far North, is mainly intended to ensure the security of the region against threats from Russia (61).

Existing partnerships and current policy choices thus allow the UK to remain one of the main actors in European foreign and security policy. They reflect Britain's traditional national role conception as a "reliable ally" and are here more fitting with the country's role orientation as a regional partner rather than a great power. Besides, it is also worth noting that these partnerships already existed before Britain's exit from the EU and that none of them were made possible precisely because of Brexit. On the contrary, recent developments could weaken them in the event of political tensions, particularly with EU member states. The August 2021 events in Afghanistan also underlined the lack of coordinated strategy between the UK and its main European allies, especially France and Germany, raising doubts about Britain's post-Brexit strategy and what it entails for the country's relationship with like-minded liberal democracies in Europe.

Matching Ambitions and Capabilities

Although a state's behavior and role on the international stage do not merely depend on material properties, the latter does have an influence on a state's available role conceptions and the implementation of policies they entail. Ambitions listed in the Integrated Review can only be met if each government department is granted the resources and capabilities it needs. One of Boris Johnson's commitments when the process of drafting the review was launched was that departments would be "equipped with the resources they need to enact the review's conclusions" (2020a). In the months that preceded the publication of the Integrated Review,

the government committed to a rise in defense spending of £16.5 billion. This decision put an end to almost a decade of cuts in the Ministry of Defence's budget. It was thus meant to be a signal that priority would be given to the armed forces as instruments of British power and influence. Johnson's government also intended to reassure allies—especially NATO member states–about Britain's ability to play a forefront role in future conflicts involving armed forces by becoming one of the NATO states with the highest defense budget in proportion to its gross domestic product. The new budget focused on new technologies, with most of the new resources devoted to research and development. Yet, the number of priorities listed in the review raises doubts about the coherence of Britain's strategy and the possibility of making capacities match objectives.

The Nuclear Program

One may wonder in particular about the evolution of the British nuclear posture, in contradiction to post–Cold War policies and other priorities listed in the review. Indeed, since the 1990s, Britain has consistently and regularly confirmed its goal to reduce its nuclear arsenal. The Conservative government even committed not to increase the number of nuclear warheads as part of the Trident replacement program (Ministry of Defence 2021b). Moreover, the 2021 review stresses the importance of British support for multilateral diplomacy, particularly with a view to nuclear disarmament (HM Government 2021a, 78). This is hard to reconcile with the government's decision to abandon the objective of cutting the number of warheads from 225 to 118 and introduce a new warhead stockpile ceiling of 260 instead. In addition, the UK will no longer publish figures on its operational stockpile, nor will it reveal the number of warheads and missiles deployed on board its submarines (HM Government 2021a, 77).

These changes are presented as a response to the changing international environment, in particular the rising threats posed by Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran, which have been building up their stockpiles and have threatened to use them. In response, the UK no longer wishes to rule out increasing its own stockpile, even if it runs counter to commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and may undermine negotiations with China or Iran. But it is also the cost of the British nuclear program that raises questions. The Trident replacement program that was announced in February 2020 in cooperation with the United States is expected to cost more than £31 billion. This represents a significant share

of the defense budget, and this share is likely to increase in the coming years, while the rise in the defense budget announced in November 2020 will not fully cover these extra costs.

A "Responsible and Democratic Cyber Power"

The British government announced plans to "cement the UK's position as a responsible and democratic cyber power" (HM Government 2021a, 35), and cyber power is mentioned twenty times in the Integrated Review. In the face of China and Russia, both of which invested in cyber power as part of their expansionist strategy, the UK aims to give a different definition of what cyber power means. The creation in November 2020 of a National Cyber Force that combines military and intelligence personnel (GCHQ 2020) was followed by an investment plan that targeted twelve hundred companies and forty-three thousand jobs specifically devoted to the cyber sector. These decisions reflect the government's aim to equip the country with the means to resist costly and potentially dangerous attacks on national security. This effort is to be led jointly with other states and foreign companies, in order to strengthen digital infrastructures and cyber capabilities. This new cyber diplomacy is thus intended to be the foundation for new relationships that could allow Britain to extend its overseas influence. It also represents a potential opportunity for the British cyber industry to develop its exports. And beyond identifying the expected benefits to national industry, the review emphasizes how essential the investments in the sector are to the government's strategy, as well as the role universities, schools, and society as a whole can play (HM Government 2021a, 41).

The academic research community and society more broadly have a central role in the development of what the review calls a "responsible and democratic" cyber strategy. They are expected to support the role of the armed forces, which remain the main actors in the field. As a complement to the Integrated Review, the March 2021 Defence Command Paper underlines the importance of cyberspace as a new "operational and warfighting domain" alongside the other four domains: maritime, land, air, and space (Ministry of Defence 2021a, 27). As a consequence, the Ministry of Defence has announced an increase in spending on cyberspace capabilities, to the detriment of resources allocated to the more traditional forces (Navy, Army, and Air Force).

Doing More with Less: The Military Budget

While previous defense reviews, notably the 2015 *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review*, were accused of being too ambitious given the lack of available resources ("Armed Forces Capability: Future Security Threats," House of Commons 2020), the Johnson government promised that the Integrated Review would avoid falling into the same trap. However, despite the early announcement of an increase in the military budget, matching ambition and resources seemed just as difficult in 2021. The Defence Command Paper insisted on plans to "modernize" British forces in order to achieve the military objectives set out in the Integrated Review (Ministry of Defence 2021a, 39). But this "modernization" could also be interpreted as an attempt to disguise the consequences of a reduction in the number of existing personnel and amount of equipment, especially in the Army and the Royal Air Force, in order to fund new equipment in the space and cyberspace domains.

The Royal Navy has been the most protected of the three traditional forces. The tilt to the Indo-Pacific and the perception of Russia and China as the main threats to British security have meant that the Navy is expected to play a major role in achieving the objectives set out in the review and has to be ready to be deployed at any time. Britain's new aircraft carrier HMS *Queen Elizabeth* was presented as "a symbol of Global Britain in action," and while the Carrier Strike Group is essential to British strategy, it is to remain "permanently available to NATO, an embodiment of [Britain's] unwavering commitment to the defence and deterrence of the Euro-Atlantic area" (Ministry of Defence 2021a, 14). The Defence Command Paper also confirmed that the HMS *Prince of Wales*, another Queen Elizabeth–class aircraft carrier, was to be commissioned, although one wonders about the relevance of such a choice as long as the Navy can only deploy one Carrier Strike Group at a time. Moreover, the review remained quite vague about the number of aircrafts available to the Navy in coming years. In addition, two new Littoral Response Groups were deployed in the Euro-Atlantic area in 2021 and in the Indo-Pacific in 2023 in order to ensure a permanent British presence in both areas. Yet their equipment relies on ambitious projects for the construction of new-generation frigates, destroyers (Type 83), and nuclear submarines that will only be operational by 2030 (Ministry of Defence 2021a, 49).

Budget cuts will mainly affect the Army, which will be "restructured" and "modernized" (Ministry of Defence 2021a, 53–54), leading to cuts in the number of personnel and capabilities. The number of personnel is

expected to be cut from 82,000 to 72,500 by 2025, even if the actual figure may be less impressive, as the Army has failed to meet its planned number of personnel for several years. Besides, contrary to what was reported in the press in August 2020 (Fisher 2020), the review does not plan to dispense with its Challenger II battle tanks, two-thirds of which will be modernized (148 tanks). Other older vehicles will be withdrawn from service without being modernized. The reduction in resources and capabilities available to the Third Infantry Division (the only operational division based in the UK) will reduce its ground maneuver capability to two combat units (Brigade Combat Teams), that is to say, fewer than most heavy divisions in other NATO armies.

The Royal Air Force will also have to dispose of some of its older aircrafts and helicopters, leading to a short-term reduction of its capabilities. This is expected to be partly offset by a £2 billion investment in the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) program. After the Franco-British drone project failed, the British chose to focus on the Tempest project, which is expected to replace the Eurofighter Typhoon in the mid-2030s. The British FCAS program is therefore different from the FCAS program led by France, Germany, and Spain, which will eventually replace their own fighter aircrafts. It is also worth noting that the British Defence Command Paper planned a reduction in the number of military transport aircrafts and helicopters, with the Hercules being replaced, so to speak, by the A400M Atlas and with the Puma and Chinook also being retired. However, it is somewhat paradoxical to plan the withdrawal of these transport aircrafts from service just as the Integrated Review emphasizes Britain's desire to increase its global presence.

In conclusion, the modernization of the British armed forces and the capability choices made by the government are not always consistent with strategic choices. The 2021 review process did not entirely escape the pitfalls of the 2010 or 2015 reviews, and, once more, the government's vision for Britain's role in the world has been disconnected from a clear assessment of structural constraints, preventing ambition from being translated into action.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 2021 Integrated Review reflects the government's attempt at redefining Britain's role conceptions in order to meet Britain's role orientation as a "global" power. With promises to increase the num-

ber of nuclear warheads, modernize the armed forces, focus on cyberspace, fight global warming, take part in the defense of the Euro-Atlantic area, and increase the country's presence in the Indo-Pacific, the UK's post-Brexit strategy lacks neither ambition nor direction. But while none of these objectives are questionable in themselves, their multiplication at a time when resources remained constrained suggested it would be much more difficult to implement these aims than to set them. Many aspects of Britain's strategy will thus need to be reexamined in upcoming years so as to clear up any ambiguities and make its logic more explicit in order to reach a more realistic definition of the UK's role in the world.

Boris Johnson's government wholeheartedly embraced the Brexiters' enthusiastic "Global Britain" discourse. They argued that leaving the EU was an opportunity to redefine Britain's role in the world and prove the country could actually be more than a European middle power. As a result, the government's strategy set out in the Integrated Review paradoxically lacks details on the relationship with the EU. On these issues, as well as on the role it takes in the security of the European continent, the UK has an interest in reinforcing cooperation with European allies, especially after the August 2021 events in Afghanistan confirmed how weak and unsecure the "special relationship" with the United States has become. Therefore, the Afghan crisis, as well as ongoing tensions with such countries as China or Russia, has only confirmed the need for the UK to reconsider its bonds with the EU as Europeans consider reinforcing the EU's "strategic autonomy." Besides, with the United States wishing Europeans to do more for their own defense and security, the UK has to reconsider its links with European allies if it wants to avoid being left to its own devices in the ever-growing competition between great powers.

NOTE

1. See also David G. Haglund and Dylan F. S. Spence, chapter 11, this volume.

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EIGHT

A Lamb in the Jungle?

The EU and the Return of Power Politics

Delphine Deschaux-Dutard and Bastien Nivet

> Europeans must deal with the world as it is, not as they wish it to be. And that means relearning the language of power and combining the European Union's resources in a way that maximizes their geopolitical impact.
>
> —Josep Borrell (February 8, 2020)

Academics and practitioners alike have long considered the European Union (EU) to be an international actor somehow "outside" of the game of power politics. Some have not even considered the European Economic Community (EEC) or the EU as a real international actor because of its dependence on member states (Bull 1983), its alleged lack of coherence and unity, or its lack of legal personality, until recently. Others, more inclined to recognize that the EEC/EU was exercising some sort of international influence, were eager to argue that it did not fit into the classical definition and models of international power (Duchêne 1973).

During the Cold War, this European uniqueness could be perceived as an "alternative" to the bipolar world order: if most member states were individually engaged in the Cold War power politics through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the organization they were building through the European integration process was not. In the post–Cold War years, the EU could be perceived as showing the path toward a more

multilateral, normative, post–power politics world order. Recent trends and evolutions, with the return of power politics by actors such as Russia and the potential emergence of a new bipolarity between the United States and China, question the viability of the EU's approach to power.

Today's context of a return to great power competition challenges a long-lasting European stance of nonpower international presence, visible in both EU policies and discourse. This is especially apparent when looking at the evolution of the transatlantic relations over the last decade. For instance, in the winter of 2021–22, the EU was clearly missing from the discussions between Washington and Moscow over the rising tensions at the Ukrainian border before the outbreak of the war. The same applies when looking at the recent example of the AUKUS alliance set up between Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom in September 2021 to face Chinese strategic influence in the Indo-Pacific area, which led to the cancellation of a giant contract for submarines with France, with almost no EU reaction. Therefore, it seems crucial to raise the following questions in this chapter: How is the EU reacting to the return of great power politics? Has it reconceptualized its strategic stance and discourse accordingly?

This contribution answers these questions first by recalling how the European integration process has been analyzed and perceived in relation to the concept(s) of power and how it portrayed itself as an international actor until the last few years. The second part then studies the specific challenges with which the emerging "power context" is confronting the EU, before analyzing how the EU has reacted against it, in terms of both policy adjustment and discourse production and self-representation. We aim to show how much the long-lasting avoidance of the notion of power by the EU impacts its behavior in today's power politics. Despite a common assessment that the European integration process is a nonpower project, the rich academic literature on "European power," as well as the long tradition of European self-depiction as a "geopolitical project," indicates that the EU has never been "out of the world."

The EU and Power: A Rich Academic Object

The rich academic literature on "power Europe" contrasts with a common perception that the EU neither was nor ought to be an international power. The emergence of a European superpower was indeed announced very early (Galtung 1973; Whitman 1998). By asserting that the European Community was a superpower in the making, John Galtung intended to

describe in 1973 the possible emergence of a kind of *Pax Bruxellana* characterized by the emergence of integrated Europe as a neo-imperial entity, in particular because of its ability to structure a Eurocentric world and a Europe itself centered on its integrated western part. He made a distinction between resource power and structural power as the two main foundations of this European power. The first criteria (resource power) in fact referred to relatively conventional criteria of power: economy, demography, and so forth, which made it possible to compare or evaluate the European Community with other powers. Structural power was more specific since it described a form of capacity of attraction and partnership of the EEC. The idea that the power of the EEC rested on a specific form of power distinctive to that of other international actors has been a key feature of many analyses portraying Europe as "some kind of power."

The concept of civilian power, for instance, as popularized in particular by François Duchêne in the early 1970s against the Gaullist conception of Europe (1973), attempted to account for such a specific or even alternative mode of positioning of the whole "Europe" on the international scene. Considering that the balance of nuclear forces in Europe would devaluate the role of military power in interstate relations on the continent, the author envisaged the appearance of new, civilian forms of influence and modes of international action. On the grounds that military force would no longer be able to guarantee the defense of the interests of European countries (individually or collectively), these countries would therefore, according to Duchêne, be forced to define strategies and adopt alternative registers of action. The concept of civilian power Europe has been the most resistant conceptualization of Europe as a power. Until the development of common EU policies in the field of security and defense in the late 1990s, it could account for an international role of the EU that, while real, excluded any military dimension. Also, in a post–Cold War context marked by a new conceptualization of security issues (Buzan, Weaver, and de Wilde 1998) and a civilianization of security, it could be asserted that civilian power intended not to eradicate the use of force but to control it and that civilian power was rendered obsolete neither by the post–Cold War strategic context nor by the start of a possible militarization of the EU (Lodge 1993). Certain analysis of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) also underlines its mostly civil programmatic ambitions. Finally, in view of the development of defense tools and expenditure by member states as well as the practices of the CSDP, the development of the latter is far from having made the EU an actor with considerable hard power (Deschaux-Dutard and Nivet 2014).

The concept of Europe as a "normative power" has also appeared as an attempt to capture the specific power of the EU escaping from classical categories and analytical tools (Manners 2002; Laïdi 2004). This concept, coined and popularized by Ian Manners, attempted to capture the role of the EU as a changer or promoter of norms and standards in international relations. As the author himself put it, "The EU, as a normative power, has an ontological dimension—in that the EU can be conceptualized as a standard modifier in the international system; a positivist dimension—in that the EU acts to change standards in the international system; and a normative dimension—that the EU should act to expand its standards in the international system" (Manners 2002, 252). Partly intended to rethink the international role of the EU in a post–Cold War context, this concept of normative power Europe effectively accounts for the growing role of an integrated Europe in the definition, establishment, and management of international norms/standards.

These conceptualizations of "Europe" as a power have all faced rejections/objections. For instance, in his famous questioning of the concept of civilian power Europe, Hedley Bull (1983) not only confined himself to challenging the EEC as an international player but also highlighted its shortcomings in the fields of foreign policy, security, and defense to reject as a whole that the qualifier of power could be granted to the EEC. In particular, the author stressed that what was presented as a civilian power could only have developed thanks to the existence of a NATO umbrella and therefore of American power: while the EEC itself may have been a nonpower player, its member states were not. This argument of the impossibility of qualifying an integrated Europe as a power by its inability to assume its own ultimate security (at least on the military level) has been one of the main ones used ever since by analysts with very varied views on the nature of the EU as an international actor. These critics find renewed echo within the context of the recent debates on European strategic autonomy (see Sinkkonen and Helwig 2022) and the return of power politics: Can the EU be a credible actor vis-à-vis China or Russia if it is not (or is not perceived as) autonomous in its defense and in the full spectrum of its international actions?

In any case, most conceptualizations of "Europe" as a power had in common the desire or need to rephrase or reconceptualize the notion of power itself, so as to make it fit with the processes and results of European integration. Yet, the broad and now almost exhaustive range of EU fields of intervention on the international scene has led to the emergence of the concepts of the EU as a global power or, more realistically, a global player

(Piening 1997). These academic debates and conceptualizations naturally echoed the evolutions and hesitations of the way the EEC and the EU portrayed and positioned themselves over time.

Claiming Influence While Rejecting Power? The Historical European Narrative

European integration has offered a long narrative on power, without, at least until a recent period, using the word "narrative" itself. It has offered a "narrative by doing," through its policies, and a "narrative by saying," through its discourse production. The latter, discussed here, demonstrates a remarkable continuity among three main pillars: a depiction of Europe as a strategic peace project, a nonpower yet influential pole on the world stage, and a collaborative/multilateral project. Without labeling it as power, key official documents along the history of European integration have long tried to assert that this very process was a strategic peace project.

The Schuman Declaration, frequently considered the founding act of European integration, is first and foremost remembered as an act of reconciliation and technical integration. Yet, it also coined the idea that there was more to European integration than internal preoccupation and that the peace process it launched among Europeans was also a peace process for the outside world: "The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. In taking upon herself for more than 20 years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had as her essential aim the service of peace. A united Europe was not achieved, and we had war" (Schuman 1950).

Three decades later, after the EEC had undertaken successful first steps of economic integration but also faced international external and internal pressure for a clarification of its international "nature," the Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity of 1973 stated that member states aimed "to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs." This declaration depicted a strategic role for the EU that could still, in many respects, echo today's situation of the EU. It insisted, for instance, on a form of "European rescue of the nation-state," whereas Europe as a strategic peace project aimed first and foremost at overcoming the member states' weaknesses. As argued, "International developments and the growing concentration of power and responsibility in the hands of a very small

number of great powers mean that Europe must unite and speak increasingly with one voice if it wants to make itself heard and play its proper role in the world." The declaration also emphasized the peaceful nature of the project: "On the contrary, the Nine [EEC members] are convinced that their union will benefit the whole international community since it will constitute an element of equilibrium and a basis for co-operation with all countries, whatever their size, culture or social system" (Copenhagen 1973). This nonconfrontational stance has long been a clear marker of Europe's identity in the world since, even in periods of tensions.

The Maastricht Treaty, in institutionalizing a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and suggesting the potential development of future cooperation in the field of defense, also paid attention to portraying the emerging EU and its newly fledged external policies as a peace project. This was done by insisting on the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act as key driving principles of the CFSP. These historical documents are only but key examples of how the Europeans have long developed a narrative on European integration as a peace project, this narrative being also visible in CFSP declarations since 1993, for instance.

In this context, the EU has also developed a narrative portraying itself as a "non power yet strategic influence project." This could seem to be a contradiction in terms, as pointed out by Hedley Bull (1983): how could a collective deprived of, or refusing, the classic tools of power exercise international responsibilities? The Schuman Declaration provides a first answer by insisting on the importance of structure, organization, and relations as key tools of influence. The Copenhagen Declaration of 1973, while a declaration of intention/pretention of the then nine EEC members that they should or could exercise more responsibilities, also made it clear that "European unification is not directed against anyone, nor is it inspired by a desire for power." This has sometimes been perceived as a European ambivalence or paradox, but it constituted a rather coherent line of EU foreign policy speeches and actions. Before the CFSP was even created, the Venice Declaration on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for instance, reflected an original and, at that time, rather forward-looking European stance against the background of their collective refusal of any power-oriented intervention in the region at this stage.

In insisting on its ambitions to "safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Union; to strengthen the security of the Union and its Member States in all ways; to preserve peace and strengthen international security, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter as well as the principles of the Helsinki

Final Act and the objectives of the Paris Charter; to promote international cooperation, etc.," the Maastricht Treaty also portrayed an EU that was eager to exercise a greater international influence without building up conventional power.

In the same way, the European Security Strategy of 2003, in the aftermath of the US-led war on Iraq, confirmed this European "influence without power" narrative by coining concepts such as "efficient multilateralism" and insisting on multilateral networks, negotiations, and fora for the fulfillment of the EU's foreign and security policy objectives.

Last but not least, the EU has also over decades deployed a narrative portraying itself as a collaborative/multilateral strategic project (insisting on the central role of the United Nations, the attachment to international cooperation, etc.). All the above-mentioned documents systematically refer to the collective action of the Europeans as an action that would also exercise collectively with other international actors: globally, regionally, or bilaterally. Reference to the United Nations or other existing frameworks (e.g., the Committee on Security and Cooperation in Europe) ensured a reassuring function: the EEC/EU aims not to reverse the existing multilateral frameworks but to reinforce and support them. Reference to regional organizations and the development of bilateral or neighborhood cooperation relations answer a more proactive function: the EU is eager to deepen the quality, depth, and efficiency of a multilateral world order.

The EU Security Strategy of 2016 and Beyond: Continuity or Turn?

The very word "power," absent from the European security strategy of 2003, made a prudent entry into the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) of 2016. The foreword by Federica Mogherini is more direct than the rest of the document, asserting that "soft power and hard power go hand in hand." Only the concept of soft power appears in the body of the document, however, with the reference to *hard power* disappearing. Omitting that hard power can also refer to diplomatic and economic instruments, such as sanctions; it was above all a reminder and a renewal of the initial ambitions of the CSDP in which the EUGS is engaged. The use of the concept of autonomy illustrates this. Already included in the Franco-British declaration of Saint-Malo of December 1998 and in the founding documents of the CSDP at the turn of the period 1990–2000—on the subject of the Petersburg missions—the notion of autonomy is enhanced in "strategic autonomy" with regard both to European commitments in

terms of solidarity and mutual assistance and to engagement in external crises and conflicts.

In a context of relative sleepiness of the CSDP and doubts about the capacity of the then twenty-eight member states to assume more strategic responsibilities and to engage in crises and conflicts, this ambition served as a wake-up call as much as a self-stimulation exercise. However, whether labeled as power or strategic autonomy, the latest EU strategic document, the EUGS, marked at least an evolution in the EU's narrative on its international environment and the self-perception of its role in this context. It is against this evolving European narrative that the return to great power politics and the subsequent reaction of the EU can be analyzed.

Great Power Politics and Its Implications for the EU: Observer or Actor? The EU and Power Politics and the EU in Power Politics

The EU was challenged by the shifting definition of power in the new multipolar context at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Indeed, Andrew Moravcsik has long argued that the EU should have been considered as the world's second superpower after the United States in the first decade of the 2000s (Moravcsik 2010). He also qualified the EU as a "quiet superpower" (Moravcsik 2009) that can rely on important normative resources that may overcome its geopolitical and military potential. But what does it mean today in a world characterized by the crisis of multilateralism and a return to military tensions in the world and open war at the doorstep of the EU? Can the EU continue behaving as if all the other great powers still coped with multilateral rules? How can Brussels find its own way between the great powers, as Sven Biscop (2017) asks? If we get back to basics and consider power following Dahl's conception, that is, as the ability to get others to do what they would otherwise not do, is the EU well endowed? We will first look at the EU's latest strategic document, the EUGS published in 2016, and then assess EU's military capability to give elements of the answer to these questions.

On the one hand, the EU can rely on important resources as a vast and prosperous internal market and a powerful trading partner, which has also helped to set up regulatory norms, with the biggest world powers such as China and the United States.[1] Rather than eliminating competition, the EU's economic strength can be a source of it. For example, trade tensions emerged with Washington following the Inflation Reduction Act (adopted in December 2022), prompting the EU to consider economic countermea-

sures. On the other hand, it is important to look further and assess how far the EU has come concerning hard power and the capacity to impose its views not only by the means of soft power and persuasion but also by military means in case of conflict. If the EU wants to build from its acknowledged soft power to develop (and deploy) hard power and combine the two into "smart power," three core assets should be developed further.

The first one is conceptual and embodied in the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) published in June 2016. The EUGS is the new European strategic narrative aimed at bringing the Europeans together to better face the multiple threats surrounding the EU (e.g., migration, terrorism, Russia's and Turkey's assertiveness, and the Eurozone crisis) and moving from vision to action (Tocci 2017). It's becoming increasingly important for the EU to be able to safeguard its interests by developing a real European foreign policy. This does not mean harming the interest of others but rather being able to stand for European interests and values in today's challenging international relations. The EUGS is a valuable stepping stone as it expresses the collective view of the EU on power and has been endorsed by all the member states.[2] However, as we show later, its key concept—strategic autonomy—remains a bone of contention within the EU.

Another important asset for the EU to move from vision to action is military capabilities. On paper, the EU developed this aspect in the last two decades through the successive headline goals published throughout the 2000s and the creation of EU Battlegroups in 2007. In spite of these developments, the "capability-expectation gap" identified by Christopher Hill in the 1990s still exists (Hill 1993). The importance of national caveats and the unanimity rule made it impossible to deploy the EU Battlegroups even though some crisis theaters like Mali matched their purpose (Reykers 2017). The EU has started to deploy more and more military operations (over thirty since the beginning of the twenty-first century), even though these operations are not high-intensity military operations aimed at projecting hard power. Nevertheless, these operations show a capacity for helping others to face threats while slowly normalizing military deployments for the member states. A good example of this is the participation of Estonia and Sweden in the European Takuba Task Force in Sahel since 2020. This shows an evolution toward a more robust conception of power within the EU (at least on some topics), in line with the EUGS.

The third asset the EU has started developing for the last decade is its cyber power. Within our fundamentally interconnected world, cyberspace has become the fifth battlefield. The EU not only issued a cybersecurity strategy in 2011 (updated in 2020) but also created an institutional

cybersecurity architecture. However, the EU's cybersecurity capabilities are still fragmented between the European institutions and agencies and the member states (Deschaux-Dutard 2020a). As long as the EU does not rely on a coherent common foreign policy, it seems difficult to go beyond a facilitating role in cyberspace. There are also questions as to whether it is appropriate for the EU, which defines itself as an actor promoting peace on the international scene, to create cyber offensive weapons (Deschaux-Dutard 2020b).

Policies of the EU toward the Main International Powers

Some have therefore recalled that if the member states of the EU could legitimately be proud of the renewal of interstate relations that they have operated through European construction, this is not a model applicable to all of their external relations. British diplomat Robert Cooper explained the dilemma the EU faces: "The challenge for the post-modern world is to get used to double standards. Between us, we operate on the basis of rules and security based on transparency and cooperation. But in our approach to states with more traditional behaviors, outside the post-modern European continent, we must resort to harsher methods, which belong to an older era. Between us, observe the rules, but when we operate in the jungle, we must also have recourse to the laws of the jungle" (2002).

While retaining its will to make the world evolve in its image, can the EU develop in parallel a power strategy corresponding to a more classic, even Hobbesian model? In this matter, examining the EU's relationship toward the great powers such as the United States, China, and Russia and even a regional power such as Turkey can tell us more about how the EU conceives power. After the turmoil created by the Trump mandate in the EU-US relationship, the arrival of Joe Biden marks at least one major turning point: he considers the transatlantic link as a fundamental element of his foreign policy, embodied in NATO. More generally, the speeches made by candidate Biden during his campaign show a leader inclined to reintegrate the United States into multilateral negotiations on many subjects, from the fight against climate change to international security issues. But does this mean a profound and unprejudiced change of direction for the EU and its claim for strategic autonomy? It is likely, as many international experts analyze that there will be no revolution in US foreign policy.[3] The EU's quest for strategic autonomy and the strengthening of European defense could therefore benefit from a form of circumspect benevolence,

as has been the case under other Democratic presidencies since the end of the Cold War as long as it does not jeopardize the Atlantic Alliance. Yet the United States and the EU tend to be competitive cooperative partners: if the partnership may be softened by the arrival of the Biden administration, the trade competition may endure.[4] Joe Biden made it clear to America's European partners in a foreign policy speech in February 2021: America is back in multilateralism, but this also means that the United States will change the method (more multilateral dialogue) but not its core doctrine (defending US interests first).[5] This means that there is no automatic unity between the EU and the United States (Riddervol and Rosen 2018). On the EU's side, the main challenge concerning its relationship toward Washington remains the lack of collective position and sufficient resources (Biscop 2015), putting the relationship at risk of becoming a "coalition of the unwilling and the unable," as John Deni argues (2021).

Concerning the relationship between the EU and China, the EU has for the last two decades considered China as a strategic partner and institutionalized an EU-China dialogue based on regular summits. In 2003, the EU launched a "comprehensive strategic partnership" with China aimed at bringing EU-China relations beyond prosaic trade and investment issues to address some of the world's important political and security challenges (Geeraertz 2011). However, this partnership is also based on competition and is qualified by many as "elusive" (Hoslag 2011; Maher 2016). On the one hand, the EU is China's largest trading partner, and both signed a comprehensive agreement on investment in December 2020. In the security area, Brussels and Beijing cooperate in the fight against piracy off the Somali coast. On the other hand, the European embargo on Chinese weapons has been imposed on Beijing since the violent suppression of Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. On 17 March 2021, the EU also agreed on its first sanctions against the Chinese government over human rights abuse committed against the Uighur minority. Yet this unanimous denunciation of Beijing's behavior is an exception rather than a principle. For instance, in summer 2016 the French defense minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, proposed that the EU send military vessels to the South China Sea in the collective name of the EU, the goal being to ensure freedom of navigation on the maritime routes under pressure from Chinese claims. But he faced the reluctance of the other member states, many holding the view that East Asian affairs were far removed from Brussels and European interests. And the help given by China to some member states (like Italy in spring 2020) during the COVID-19 pandemic may increase this lack of unanimity toward China. Conversely, the EU does not occupy a central role in

China's strategic narrative (Zeng 2017), which shows how balanced EU's power is perceived from the outside.

In the case of EU-Russia relationship, the main characteristic is ambiguity (Haukkala 2015). On the one hand, during the 2000s, Russia has been a very important partner in the international fight against terrorism. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and second invasion of Ukraine in 2022 have demonstrated Moscow's willingness to use military force and threat—a classic (or "old-fashioned," as Biscop states [2017]) view of power antithetical to EU values and security. Since 2014, the EU has mixed mediation attempts (among which are mediation negotiations under the "Normandy Model"[6]) and sanctions against Russia. It is highly questionable that any of these attempts proved effective when looking at the relationship between Moscow and the EU in 2021. The failed visit of EU high representative Josep Borrell to Moscow to discuss the case of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny with Russian minister of foreign affairs Sergei Lavrov on 5 February 2021, reveals a lot concerning how the EU's relationship with Russia has evolved.[7] This episode surprised the EU, as it clearly shows that the power discourse that started to develop under the mandate of the former high representative Federica Mogherini in a context where the EU had more time to discuss topics like the Iranian nuclear program is now highly constrained. The EU faces not only the rapid succession of power confrontations in international relations but also a world moving away from classical multilateralism, as many observers stated during the Munich Security Conference of February 2020. Moreover, the ambiguity of the relationship between the EU and Russia relies on two main aspects. On the one hand, Russia does not take the EU seriously when it comes to projecting power and even tends to question the EU's normative power (Casier 2013). For instance, Moscow showed irritation when special forces on a Greek vessel participating in the IRINI naval operation boarded one of its merchant vessels in the Mediterranean Sea. The Russian minister of foreign affairs labeled this event as an incident while the Greek side spoke of it as a friendly stop.[8]

On the other hand, the European cacophony still prevails on the analysis of Russian threat: if some nations like Sweden or the Baltic countries tend to view Moscow with much mistrust as they are faced with Russia's provocations,[9] the picture remains less clear in many other EU countries like Germany or Hungary, for example. The case of Germany is particularly striking because of the country's historical dependence on Russian energy supplies. This ambiguous European attitude toward Moscow provides a good example of the lack of clarity of the EU's power for the EU itself.

The case of the security tensions between Greece and Turkey in summer 2020 further illustrates this blurring perception of power within the EU. Some member states like France wanted to display hard power capacities to deter Turkey from continuing to explore the Greek maritime area to look for underwater gas fields, whereas many others, following Germany, pled for mediation. The same can be said concerning many populist parties' perceptions of Russia, which can differ from liberal democratic parties' perception. For instance, if the conservative Law and Justice Party (PiS) ruling the government in Poland tends to consider Russia with suspicion, the party Fidesz in power in Hungary sees Russia as an important economic partner (Henke and Maher 2021). Last but not least, the return of power politics may also receive differentiated attention or priority when occurring outside of the Euro-Atlantic area. The influence exercised by Russia in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa or the tensions on the Indo-Pacific regions are of more immediate concern for member states such as France than for most other member states.

Can the EU Be Serious about the "P-Word" in the New International Context? The Concepts of Power in EU Discourse since 2016

The use of the concept of power in EU official speeches and documents is more recent, and scarce, than in the academic and French political debate. Of course, there had been occasional appearances of the concept of power in some European speeches. In the context of a great debate on the future of the EU, the then prime minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair had mentioned, for instance, in a very British oxymoron, "a superpower without a superstate." In 2001, the then president of the European Commission Romano Prodi had mentioned the EU as a "civilian power." But these were individual perspectives portraying the EU, not official political statements.

A first change appeared in 2016, when the then high representative for foreign policy of the EU Federica Mogherini wrote in her foreword to the EU Security Strategy of 2016 that for the EU "soft and hard power go hand in hand." The EU was referred to not only as a power in an official EU document but also as a "complete power," not confined to its now well-admitted civilian power status and methods. However, only the concept of civilian power was mentioned in the rest of the document, as if this first official self-portrayal of the EU as a hard power could not be asserted or embodied completely—and also as if the normalization of the

EU's power, from a civilian or normative power to a "normal power," was not self-evident (Wood 2009).

Despite these limits, the concept of power is now, however, more frequently and voluntarily mentioned in official EU discourse. Yet, it is most frequently used in a general, undefined way, such as when the president of the European Council asserts that "Europe is united, confident, anchored in its values. This is how it projects its power," or when the newly appointed president of the European Commission asserts that "Europe must also learn the language of power."[10]

In her first State of the Union address as acting president of the European Commission on 16 December 2020, Ursula Von der Layen did make a passing reference to the foreign, security, and defense challenges ahead for the EU. Interestingly, the only occurrence of the notion of power in connection with the international role of the EU referred to the multilateral role of the EU in the COVID-19 crisis and the alleged "EU's unmatched convening power in action" in this crisis. A tension still exists in the EU's self-depiction or self-motivation speech acts, between its traditional non-power status and its would-be power ambitions, for instance, when the president of the European Commission insists that "on the one hand, this means building our own muscles [in areas] where we've long been relying on others—for example in security policies. . . . That also means applying our existing power in a more targeted way in areas where European interests are concerned."[11]

These hesitations and tensions in shifting from a rather civilian or normative narrative on power to a more robust or "masculine" (Hoijtink and Muehlenhoff 2020) definition of power are especially visible when it comes to the military dimension of power, which had long been one of the weaknesses of the EU's otherwise active international role. It is also this dimension of power that creates breaches in the cohesiveness of the EU as an international actor in its approach to power.

Challenges and Tensions around the EU and the Concept of Power

One of the challenges to the EU's relationship with power is well demonstrated by the European cacophony on strategic autonomy (Meijer and Brooks 2021). If the notion of European strategic autonomy is once again the subject of discussion at the European level—notably at the European Council of October 2020 or in the words of the president of the Euro-

pean Council, Charles Michel, who believes that "strategic autonomy is the objective of our generation"[12]—it is not the change of occupant in the White House that can make it progress but rather more unity among Europeans. Since the 2020 American election, European leaders have shown a propensity for division rather than normative convergence. In an interview with *Politico* on 2 November 2020, the German defense minister said that European strategic autonomy would be a dangerous illusion, leading Europeans to believe that they could do without Washington to ensure their security.[13] The French president replied a few days later in an interview that European strategic autonomy was, on the contrary, the direction of history.[14] It is thus clear that while the American political changeover is good news internationally, it may not make a European pursuit of power more substantial. The key to this project has long been the ability of Europeans to truly agree on what "autonomy" means and how to find the way alongside NATO in this quest (see Lippert, Ondarza, and Perthes 2019: Sinkkonen and Helwig 2022). This is even truer with the second Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Although the EU continues to play an important role in financing the delivery of sophisticated and lethal weapons to Kyiv through the European Peace Facility (€3.6 billion as of February 2023), NATO remains the leading arena to coordinate the transatlantic community's military response to the conflict. Therefore, the war in Ukraine might have ambiguous consequences for the EU and its strategic thinking. In the area of the EU's defense capacity, for instance, if the new strategic compass (adopted in March 2022) demonstrates a European will to seize the moment, it does not really stand out for its ambition either in terms of the military capabilities or in terms of the functioning of European defense, nor does it solve the dilemma of defining European strategic autonomy, which remains unclear, underdefined, and differently interpreted among the actors promoting it (Lippert, Ondarza, and Perthes 2019; Sinkkonen and Helwig 2022). It seems that the EU's center of gravity is moving from the French-German partnership toward Eastern European countries manifesting mistrust toward any project of EU strategic autonomy that would undermine NATO. Therefore, even Paris seems to use the notion of "European strategic autonomy" less since the end of 2022. Countries like Poland, Lithuania, or Estonia have important and legitimate arguments to question such a project when looking at Germany's dilemma over the delivery of heavy tanks to help Ukraine in January 2023 or the division of Italian public opinion on the subject.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is also a testimony to this blurring of the meaning of strategic autonomy. The abundance of projects

(over forty-six) to be developed in this framework led the European Council to review PESCO in December 2020 and advocate for more rationalization so as to make sure that at least some of these military projects could really be fully developed. Indeed, more than two-thirds of these projects are still in the conceptualization phase. In other words, the very high number of projects certainly demonstrates the interest of European states in this tool but also symbolizes the scattering of energies in very diverse fields, from medical support, to training, to cyber. Finally, recurring divergences between the member states undermine the strategic relevance of PESCO. For example, although France and Germany relaunched PESCO in 2016, Paris and Berlin did not have the same understanding of it. For France, PESCO had to be limited to a few states with the aim of enabling European military operations to be conducted in the medium term; for Germany, PESCO had to be inclusive and based more on industrial and logistic aspects. Launched in December 2017, PESCO effectively enshrines the German vision (Deschaux-Dutard 2019). Similarly, Poland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the Baltic States advocate for an inclusive PESCO open to third countries such as the United Kingdom and intend to use this cooperation tool as a means of strengthening their ties with NATO.

Another aspect that may have a constraining impact on the EU's potential as a global power is the rise of illiberal regimes and populist parties within the EU. On the one hand, the rise of governments ruled by populist or authoritarian-prone leaders like in Hungary and Poland could jeopardize the EU's role as a normative power. Indeed, as Meunier and Vachudova (2018) state, if the EU could be seen as the champion of democracy across Europe in the 2000s in the wake of the end of the Cold War and the enlargement to Eastern European countries, it is because the member states tended to share a common perception of democracy. But as regimes contesting liberal democratic rules have tended to rise within the EU in the last half decade, this may affect the EU's potential as a norm exporter. This argument is even stronger if we follow the conception of power proposed by Joseph Nye (1990), identifying several immaterial assets of power, among which cohesion and governance constitute important elements. If the governments of the member states start to develop different views of democracy and its functioning, this may affect the EU's foreign policy, which is currently based primarily on the assumption that world stability is more likely to occur with the development of democratic states. The short-term future of liberal democracy is further complicated by the increasingly authoritarian governance of closed systems like China and Russia and even semi-closed systems like Turkey.

There is little clarity regarding the impact that rising authoritarianism abroad and rising populism at home will have on the EU's power potential. Populist parties across Europe might transform nationalist rhetoric into increases in national military budgets, but it is not clear if they would value military cooperation at the EU level (Henke and Maher 2021) or in a transatlantic context. Many populist parties such as Fidesz in Hungary or PiS in Poland instead tend to value bilateral or infra-European cooperation in the military area.

All in all, these divergences among member states concerning the EU's power and its projection may affect the EU's own contribution to international relations. If we look at the EU's power representation not only as the European contribution to the world but also as the way the EU sees itself, it is interesting to underline that what is still crucially missing is a common perception of European interests among the member states.

Conclusion

The past few years have radically altered the EU's conception of power. First, the COVID-19 pandemic played an insightful role in the EU's relationship with the notion of power and tended to stress even more the lack of unanimity between the member states on the kind of power the EU should aim for.

The type of power the EU must aim for moving forward remains a crucial question, not least because of the evolution of transatlantic relations and the rise of US-China strategic competition. The race for a COVID-19 vaccine and disunity toward the Russian vaccine combined with the Chinese government's retaliation after the EU imposed sanctions on China in March 2021 underline accurately how much the EU needs to define the kind of power it wants to project in a world in which power politics has become regular again and in which diplomatic exchanges are made harder by the virtualization of many talks due to the pandemic since 2020.[15] The question is crucial, and, as Sven Biscop states (2020), if they don't want to become weaker apart, the Europeans have to engage for change in international relations and shape the world more in a way that would cope with EU's claims of active multilateralism.

In the more recent crisis of the war in Ukraine, we see the EU once more as a secondary rather than primary player. Weapons shipments to Ukraine follow American initiatives; Europeans do not anticipate them, nor do they respond directly to Ukrainian requests for assistance. In

December 2022, in his first trip abroad since the Russian invasion, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky went to Washington before visiting London, Paris, and finally Brussels in February 2023. This prioritization demonstrates that the EU collectively has not completely managed to appear as a credible actor within power politics. At the same time, Russia's assault on Ukraine has highlighted the enduring value of the military aspects of hard power and unity within the transatlantic alliance. The war has, in many ways, pushed the EU—willingly or unwillingly—back into the "jungle." What the EU does with this new reality is open to question; all the intra-European divisions discussed in this chapter—and elsewhere in this volume—remain. For the EU to be considered a unified global player, changes need to take place.

NOTES

1. Meunier and Vachudova (2018) state that the EU's global power has been the most effective in the areas of trade and enlargement concerning European's ability to impact other countries' behavior.

2. Some even see it as a move toward a more masculine conception of power within the EU (Hoijtink and Muehlenhoff 2020).

3. See, in particular, Frédéric Charillon and Patrick Chevallereau, "À quoi pourrait ressembler la politique étrangère de Joe Biden?" The Conversation, 5 November 2020. Accessed 26 February 2021. https://theconversation.com/a-quoi-pourrait-ressembler-la-politique-etrangere-de-joe-biden-149381

4. This "competitive cooperation" is not new (see Smith 1998).

5. Andrew Rettman, "America tells Western Allies: America's Back", *EU Observer*, https://euobserver.com/foreign/150837?utm_source=euobs&utm_medium=email (accessed 17 March 2021).

6. The "Normandy Model" designates diplomatic negotiation configuration between Russia, Ukraine, France, and Germany during the Ukrainian conflict in 2014–15.

7. Russia evicted three EU diplomats on the very day of Josep Borrel's visit to Moscow.

8. Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, "La Russie agacée par l'opération IRINI et le fait savoit," *Bruxelles 2*, https://www.bruxelles2.eu/2021/01/la-russie-agacee-par-loperation-irini-et-le-fait-savoir/ (accessed 16 March 2021).

9. For instance, in September 2020, two Russian military vessels violated the Swedish maritime area without authorization. Russian military aircraft also regularly have tended to fly over the Baltic sky since 2014. https://www.lepoint.fr/europe/inquiete-face-aux-ambitions-russes-la-suede-s-arme-massivement-21-10-2020-2397495_2626.php (accessed 16 March 2021).

10. "'The EU Must Learn the Language of Power,' Incoming Chief Says," https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN1XI2BL/

11. State of the Union 2020, https://state-of-the-union.ec.europa.eu/state-union-2020_en

12. Speech of President Charles Michel to the Bruegel group, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/press/press-releases/2020/09/28/l-autonomie-strategique-europeenne-est-l-objectif-de-notre-generation-discours-du-president-charles-michel-au-groupe-de-reflexion-bruegel/ (accessed 26 November 2020).

13. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, "Europe Still Needs America," *Politico*, 2 November 2020, https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-still-needs-america/ (accessed 26 November 2020).

14. "10 points sur la doctrine Macron," *Le Grand Continent*, 16 November 2020, https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2020/11/16/10-points-macron/ (accessed 26 November 2020).

15. The European Council decided to postpone discussions on Russia and alleviate talks on Turkey for the European summit on 26 March 2021, under the argument that such talk needs complete discretion, made difficult by video conference, during which heads of state and representatives can use internet and their cell phones. https://club.bruxelles2.eu/ (accessed 23 March 2021).

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PART 4

Key Sectors

NINE

The Geoeconomic Dimensions of Chinese FDI in Europe

Peter G. Thompson

Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) flows into Europe generate security externalities and uncertainty among European states and the United States.[1] The transatlantic partners fear the division of European states and institutions, the erosion of European norms and institutions, the foreign control of infrastructure and advanced technology, and supply chain vulnerabilities. While Chinese FDI flows will generate greater economic interdependence, which creates economic and political benefits, it comes at the price of unaddressed security concerns.

Europe has been the top regional host of Chinese FDI since 2005, with France, Germany, and the UK the largest targets (accepting over 52 percent in 2020 alone) (Scissors 2021; Kratz, Zenglein, and Sebastian 2021). However, overall, Chinese FDI stock in every European country remains small relative to the percentage of FDI stock controlled by the United States (OECD 2021). The United States accounted for 28 percent of FDI stock held in the European Union (EU) at the end of 2019, while China accounted for 4 percent of FDI stock held in the EU (Eurostat 2021). Likewise, the EU held 24 percent of the FDI stock in the United States at the end of 2019 and 4 percent of the FDI stock in China (Eurostat 2021). The UK has been China's largest FDI target since 2000, receiving €51.9 billion in completed Chinese projects (Kratz, Zenglein, and Sebastian 2021, 11). Germany and France, the second and third largest targets of Chinese

FDI, accumulated €24.8 and €15.0 billion, respectively (11). However, China accounts for only 0.22 percent of overall FDI stock in the UK, while the United States accounts for 30.6 percent of FDI stock. Chinese FDI stock accounts for 1.35 percent and 1.41 percent of German and French FDI stock, respectively, while the United States accounts for 22.4 percent and 19.2 percent of German and French FDI stock, respectively (OECD 2021). It is the recent growth in Chinese FDI to Europe and its location in the high-tech and strategic sectors that has garnered attention, not the overall amount.

FDI flows today are key drivers of economic integration. FDI generates trade, leads to higher wages and greater productivity, and facilitates technology and skill transfers. It also challenges state sovereignty and is increasingly seen as provoking a security threat, as states understand "national security" in a new light. Amid a backdrop of China's rising military power, economic growth, and aggressive diplomatic stance, Chinese geoeconomic strategy has come under increased scrutiny. States are concerned that instead of generating pacific relations, greater economic interdependence with China through FDI flows will lead to greater vulnerability to Chinese influence.[2]

China's geoeconomic strategy exemplifies the complex and interactive nature of great power competition. While power can be fungible and generate influence across multiple domains, it also spawns unintended costs and consequences. Chinese economic statecraft may propel the EU to focus more on unifying policies and cohesive strategies, such as the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI), state-level investment screening mechanisms, and broader EU strategies focused on China, while inviting further US-EU engagement in an arena China seeks to influence.

This chapter examines the security externalities from Chinese FDI in Europe, as well as the constraints China confronts. Chinese economic statecraft is often conceived as a one-way street: economic relations are translated directly into Chinese political and strategic influence. But these analyses do not consider the constraints China faces, such as the backlash China generates through its own actions.[3] One poll noted 66 percent of those surveyed across Europe harbored an unfavorable view of China. These historically high unfavorable ratings are driven by the view that China does not respect personal freedoms at home and abroad (Pew Research Center 2021, 9–10, 12, 14). These factors "poison the well" and create a discordant climate in many countries predisposed to reject Chinese political overtures.

Renewed Great Power Competition, Economic Power, and "Security"

Russia's March 2014 seizure of Crimea marked a turning point away from the post–Cold War era to the current period of "renewed great power competition" with a focus on geopolitics as it concerns China and Russia (O'Rourke 2021, 25). China's rapid rise has added to the geopolitically unstable environment. Both China and Russia "are determined to make economies less free and less fair," while using trade and investment strategies to further their geopolitical ambitions (White House 2017, 2, 46). In regard to Europe, "China is gaining a strategic foothold . . . by expanding its unfair trade practices and investing in key industries, sensitive technologies, and infrastructure" (47). The EU in 2019 declared China a "cooperation partner," "negotiating partner," "economic competitor," and, for the first time, a "systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance" (European Commission and HR/VP 2019, 1).

The renewal of great power competition has been accompanied by a focus on economic power and the growing prominence of economic over military competition (Rosecrance 1986; Gelb 2010). This has led to an increased application of geoeconomic strategies: "the use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests, and to produce beneficial geopolitical results; and the effects of other nations' economic actions on a country's geopolitical goals" (Blackwill and Harris 2016, 20). Military force is likely an inefficient and weak option for China in Europe—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), EU member states, and the United States all possess deterrent military capabilities, and China lacks power projection capability. While Russia has invaded and occupies parts of Ukraine, they have lacked regional escalation dominance and have, until the February 2022 invasion, acted through proxies, private military companies, and their own irregular forces (Sukhankin 2019; Lanoszka 2016). China, lacking proxy military forces in the region, is left to use FDI and multinational corporations as "proxies" to enter markets and influence local, national, or regional policies. China seeks influence with EU members such as Greece in order to gain leverage within the EU itself (Tonchev 2022).

FDI's Benefits and Political Influence

FDI has several qualities that exacerbate security externalities in a way that trade, portfolio investment, or other economic relations may not. FDI

establishes long-term control over economic assets in another country (Hanemann et al. 2021, 36). FDI produces economic benefits including transfer of skills and technology, increased wages, economic growth, and increased labor productivity (Lipsey 2004).[4] Furthermore, multiple actors within the country—individuals, firms, and politicians—realize these benefits. Individual laborers may earn more with an increased skillset; politicians may see an increase in tax revenue and overall economic growth; and firms see increased productivity, profits, and market share.

Politically, FDI generates influence with labor and elites; advocates for a favorable regulatory, legal, and political climate; expands political reach without generating traditional balance of power arms building; and can "capture" markets, resources, and capital without the application of military force (Rosecrance 1986). The individual, whether at the national level or within a firm, is susceptible to influence as regards the possibility of knowledge transfers such as management techniques, the acquisition of additional skills or education, or simply an increase in wages earned. At the systemic level, states are drawn closer together through economic interdependence (Gartzke, Li, and Boehmer 2001; Rosecrance and Thompson 2003).[5]

China's projection of economic power—similar to Russia's use of private security forces in Ukraine, Syria, or Libya—brings some measure of "plausible deniability" and thus uncertainty to China's geostrategic designs in Europe. China can always claim to be engaged in economic projects seeking only economic gains.

Chinese FDI Outreach

China's strategic objectives include a desire to return to regional dominance and increased international status; an ambition to "adjust" the international order to reap economic and technological benefits while maintaining a free hand domestically; and an intention to preserve the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) position (Maull 2018; Ho 2020, 97; Mardell 2021a; Xiaotang and Keith 2017, 186, 196). China recognizes the need for continued economic growth in order to achieve these objectives (Friedberg 2018). To that end, China is attempting to sustain and project economic power and resist Western domination of international economic institutions (Xiaotang and Keith 2017, 186). Europe is a tempting target for Chinese economic power projection because of its favorable economic and political climate. China looks to capitalize on western Europe's wealthy

consumer markets and technological expertise, take advantage of southern Europe's energy and port infrastructure, and use eastern Europe as a bridge to western Europe (Stratfor 2021; Anthony et al. 2021, 35). Additionally, garnering influence in EU member states provides access to international institutions and the ability to shape the broader narrative. At the same time, economic stagnation in much of Western Europe has made those countries open to the idea of Chinese investment as a means to jump-start their moribund economies.

Overview of Chinese FDI in Europe

Chinese global outbound mergers and acquisitions (M&As) were at a thirteen-year low in 2020, and Chinese FDI flows to the EU and UK in 2020 were at their lowest levels since 2010 (Kratz, Zenglein, and Sebastian 2021, 9). Prior to the global slowdown, Chinese FDI in the EU grew and peaked in 2016 at €44.2 billion.[6] Chinese investment dropped after 2016 but rose slightly in 2020 to $7.2 billion (€6.3 billion) (Hanemann et al. 2021, 19).

Most Chinese FDI in Europe since 2020 has been M&As with greenfield averaging only 6.5 percent of FDI over the last decade. In 2020, 30 percent of Chinese FDI in the EU and UK went to Germany, 12 percent to the UK, and 10 percent to France. Between 2000 and 2020, the largest targets of Chinese FDI were the UK, Germany, Italy, and France, with the UK holding nearly double the Chinese FDI stock as Germany with €51.9 billion (Kratz, Zenglein, and Sebastian 2021, 10–11).

In recent years, China has faced several barriers to investing in Europe: the COVID-19 pandemic, increased screening and review of proposed deals, domestic Chinese capital controls, and a deteriorating geopolitical situation (Kratz, Zenglein, and Sebastian 2021, 10, 16–17). The recent tit-for-tat sanctions over human rights concerns in Xinjiang highlight this tension. After the EU sanctioned Chinese officials, Beijing responded with sanctions on individuals, including members of the European Parliament, and organizations. The European Parliament then stopped the EU-China CAI ratification process on May 20, 2021, until China removes its sanctions (Emmott 2021). It is unclear how the impasse may be overcome, but the end result may be the scrapping of the CAI and an erosion of confidence and a diminished view of the possibility of overcoming geopolitical tensions in order to stabilize economic relations.

The transatlantic relationship is undergirded by mutual investment

flows. These investment flows generate intrafirm trade, foreign affiliate sales, employment, and capital transfers (Hamilton and Quinlan 2021, v). US foreign affiliate sales in the transatlantic region were $6.2 trillion in 2019, compared to $3.3 trillion in the Asia/Pacific region (Hamilton and Quinlan 2021, 18). EU FDI stock in the United States was $2.9 trillion in 2019, compared to Chinese FDI stock in the United States at $37 billion. Chinese flows to Europe were $7.5 billion and to the United States, $6.4 billion. US stock in the EU was $3.6 trillion in 2019, which is four times that of the US FDI position in the Asia/Pacific region (Hamilton and Quinlan 2021, 35). Overall, there is a substantial gap between US FDI flows to Europe and China, with Europe receiving the lion's share each year (Hamilton and Quinlan 2021, 79).

Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), while not coterminous with all of China's FDI in Europe, is nonetheless emblematic of China's geoeconomic strategy. The BRI began in 2013 with President Xi Jinping's vision of a "Silk Road Economic Belt" and a "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" (Sacks 2021). Its stated purpose was for Chinese companies to fund and build a transregional transportation, energy, and communication infrastructure that would link China to Europe. Starting with 10 countries, there are now 139 members, including China, composing 40 percent of the world's GDP and 63 percent of the world's population (Sacks 2021). The BRI entails investments of over $300 billion (Scissors 2021, 2). Of the European signatories, 19 are NATO members, 17 are in the EU, and 14 are in both (Sacks 2021). As part of BRI, China has accessed Europe through investments in southern and eastern Europe and the "16+1" grouping of eleven EU and five EU candidate countries (plus China). This has been accompanied by Chinese investments in Greek and Italian ports to secure a foothold in Europe (Zeneli 2019). The BRI's growth and size generate fears that China harbors grand strategic designs to create and exploit economic dependencies and vulnerabilities for political and strategic advantage.[7]

To try to allay these concerns, China employs several strategies to shape the broader environment within which this infrastructure investment is occurring. China has pursued soft power approaches promoting Chinese language, culture, and education throughout Europe via Confucius Institutes, university research centers, university scholarships, and sister city programs (Tonchev 2022; Scobell et al. 2020, 42).[8] Additionally,

China has sought to promote a pro-China, anti-Western narrative using local media as "proxies" in a policy termed "borrowing boats to go to sea" (Tonchev 2022).

Continued suspicion and concern over China's actions in the BRI set the stage for uncertainty surrounding investment in Europe. Italy provides a brief example of the promises and pitfalls China faces in Europe. Italy signed a non–legally binding memorandum of understanding joining the BRI in 2019 (Meacci 2021). The potential economic rewards were obvious, but after pedestrian economic performance, and US and French pressure, a new government sought a new approach (Ghiretti 2021; Zeneli 2019). The new Draghi government in February 2021 emphasized that it was "strongly pro-European and Atlanticist, in line with Italy's historical anchors." Italy has since expressed concern over repression and human rights issues in Hong Kong and Xinjiang (Meacci 2021). At the same time, the Five Star Movement party continues to espouse pro-Chinese propaganda. Italian attitudes and policy toward China have been shaped not only by external pressure but also by domestic politicking. As the economic gains stem from economic deals predating Italy joining the BRI, it is unclear what economic advantage Italy actually reaps. Instead, it has garnered pressure from the United States and France, fear over China's unwillingness to play by multilateral rules, China's undemocratic vision of global governance, and the broader notions that Italy may be unable to shift Chinese actions without the support of the EU (Ghiretti 2021; Meacci 2021).

Issues of Concern

Divide and Rule or Divide and Weaken?

A fundamental concern is that China seeks to divide the EU by applying bilateral pressure to individual states, driving wedges within the EU (Hellström 2016, 26–28). This occurs in numerous areas. First, there is a potential threat to the "European identity" characterized by adherence to democratic governance and liberalism, free markets, and the rule of law (Rogelja and Tsimonis 2020, 119, 129). Second, Europe may be divided economically between states that have established investment relationships with China and those that have not. China's "16+1" grouping of central and eastern European states illustrates this approach (Kratz et al. 2016).[9] This may also create conflict or division within states between different economic sectors. Third, economic division may lead to political divisions

between and within EU states, between EU states and the EU as a political institution, and between EU states and the United States. For example, as Greece and Hungary established investment relations with China, they resisted attempts to publicly criticize China or to implement EU policy directed toward China (Standish and Keller-Alant 2021; Emmott and Koutantou 2017). In June 2017, for example, Greece blocked an EU statement on Chinese human rights issues (Le Corre 2018c). China may be taking advantage of EU members' desire for an outside partner to play off against the EU as a source of financing and investment. China was also hoping to pit the EU against the United States, given the Trump administration's trade sanctions and disdain for NATO (Kuchins 2021, 200, 207). Recent policy changes and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, however, may mitigate some EU-US tension. Ultimately, shifts in economic "winners and losers" domestically can alter a state's foreign policy (Rogowski 1989; Solingen 1998).

One complicating factor is that some European states such as Poland may be looking for outside funding and support in order to garner greater attention from the EU and the United States. While Poland has sought increased Chinese investment, especially in the energy sector, they are aware of the security position of the United States and some western European states. Renewable energy projects, however, may help allay Poland's fears of dependence on Russian energy and bring it in line with EU environmental goals (Bachulska 2021; Adamczyk 2022). An opportunistic Poland may be contributing to the EU's lack of cohesion while charting a middle ground in the current era of strategic competition. China's support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, increased US attention to the region and NATO, and EU attempts to unify investment policies may shift Poland's outlook on Chinese investments.

Eroding Norms and Standards

A similar situation occurs as Chinese actions erode standards in one country, which may then translate into a broader breakdown in norms and standards through a "contagion effect." A key challenge for China in Europe is the oversight and transparency of the EU's regulatory and legal structures, especially with regard to investment and economic relations. The EU fears an erosion of their oversight and legal standards.[10]

Chinese investment deals do not always conform to EU standards and can erode EU standards as countries push to accept lower standards. Concerns over eroding standards can be seen in the fear of low wages, threat to

environmental standards, fraud, Chinese government support to Chinese firms, influence from the CCP, erosion of trade liberalization, and the lack of transparency in investments.[11] There is also the concern over possible erosion of liberal-democratic norms as China reinforces local strongmen (Meacci 2021; Higgins 2021).[12] Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán has been accused of backsliding on democratic norms while looking to the CCP as an ideal model for governance (Matura 2022). Driving some of this is that between 2010 and 2015, more than 70 percent of Chinese FDI was from state-owned enterprises (SOEs). While the private sector began to increase their share of Chinese FDI to Europe, much of the accumulated FDI stock was controlled by Chinese SOEs (Kratz, Zenglein, and Sebastian 2021, 12).

Environmentally, critics point to Serbia's building of new coal plants, which is funded by the Chinese. Many existing plants already exceed Serbia's national pollution limits, the new construction delays Serbia's planned coal phaseout, and these new projects are in violation of EU environmental law, according to civil society groups (Prtoric 2021). In addition to chipping away at Serbian and EU environmental standards, Chinese financing takes the form of "tied loans," whereby Chinese loans are tied to hiring Chinese firms to undertake construction, further eroding the EU's open-tender practices (Prtoric 2021; Bradsher 2020).

Labor Issues

A broad concern is that China will erode labor standards in Europe, with the G7 issuing a rebuke on "all forms of forced labour in global supply chains" at their June 2021 meeting, with a clear nod toward Chinese actions in Hong Kong and Xinjiang (G7 2021, 10). Additionally, German chancellor Angela Merkel, a proponent of greater EU-German investment, publicly pushed China to improve their labor rights (Lau 2021).

On a more local level, as the Chinese firm COSCO moved into the Greek port of Piraeus in 2008, there were concerns over reduced wages and workers' rights (Lim 2011). COSCO originally abided by the agreement between the Union of Port Workers and the Greek Port Authority and employed 500 Greeks. China then brought in Chinese labor and senior managers, which led to protests. China withdrew the Chinese workers but hired temporary workers from Eastern Europe to replace them. By 2016, only 261 of 1,200 workers were locals (Zheng 2017). Greek politicians were not pleased: "Greece is no longer a sovereign state in economic terms," warned Theodore Dritsas of the left-wing Syriza Party, while the

then Greek minister of state Haris Pamboukis stated that "Piraeus is not a colony" (Lim 2011).

Infrastructure Control

Investment in strategic infrastructure such as ports brings numerous security concerns as well as ambiguity as to whether Chinese large-scale investment signifies an attempt to deny the use of a port for European military purposes, facilitate Chinese military movements, conduct espionage, disrupt economic flows, or tax non-Chinese economic flows differently (Scimia 2019; Bradford 2021). Chinese investment in power utilities raises additional security concerns (Otero-Iglesias and Weissenegger 2020; Le Corre 2018a). Chinese firm COSCO's ownership of the Port of Piraeus in Greece is just one of many ports throughout Europe in which COSCO has invested. When COSCO made moves toward purchasing a stake in the Port of Hamburg in Germany, rifts appeared within the Scholz government. Concerns emerged that this investment was a "threat to public order and safety," and questions arose about what balance the government should strike between China as an economic partner and German dependency on Chinese goods and supply chains ("Germany Agrees on Compromise over China Port Bid" 2022).

Strategic Resources and Supply Chains

China is seeking access to strategic resources, generating fears that it will capture and exploit markets, will not allow host government access or will cheat local governments out of profits, or will corner markets of dual-use technology and create dependencies (Hellström 2016, 28–30; Xi Jinping 2020). A Chinese-backed firm that tried to buy Newport Wafer Fab (NWF), the UK's largest chip manufacturer, highlights the fear over threats to strategic resources. In the midst of a chip shortage, and despite the fact that NWF's chips are mostly used in automobiles, the concern is that China will control an ever greater share of this critical component as it strives to produce 70 percent of chips it uses in China by 2025 and reduce their dependence on South Korea and Taiwan, among other countries (Shead 2021).

Technology and Innovation

China accounted for one-third of global research and development spending between 2000 and 2015 and seeks to increase its spending (Zeneli 2019).

A key concern is that China will use links with Europe-based research and development centers to steal advanced technology and intellectual property (Hellström 2016, 28–30). Countries such as Germany, which accounted for 14 percent of Chinese FDI in the EU from 2000 to 2019, also worry about the dampening effect FDI may have on their domestic economy, such as increased competition for investment, decline in innovation, weakened influence on internet standards, and attacks on data privacy (Borrett 2021).

Mitigating and Constraining Factors

Wolf Warrior Diplomacy

China's "wolf warrior diplomacy" has been contentious, and Chinese overall messaging has become more "proactive" and "aggressive" (Dettmer 2020; Zhu 2020; Taylor 2021). A key question is, "Has China become less interested in growing its appeal than in exercising its influence?" (Dams, Martin, and Kranenburg 2021, 3). China has not succeeded in constructing a successful narrative in regard to their actions in Europe. Many Europeans want Chinese investment and greater economic relations, but China continues to antagonize many Europeans (Mitter 2021).

China's Support for Russia

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has worried Central and Eastern European NATO countries who are not only concerned about future Russian military moves but are also actively working with NATO to supply Ukraine with military equipment. China's support of the invasion has not proven popular among most European states, although Hungary and Serbia—erstwhile friends of China—have seen little impact on their overall China policies (Stec 2022; Lamond and Lucas 2022, 4).[13]

Overpromise and Underdeliver

Numerous countries have complained that the expected economic benefits from Chinese investments have not materialized. As noted earlier, Italy's benefits are from deals that predate the BRI. Poland has noted a "lack of tangible results of economic cooperation," while many European countries bemoan China's lack of reciprocity by demanding access to European markets while limiting access to China's domestic markets (Bachulska 2022; Bergsen 2021). These factors, combined with increased pressure from the

EU and the United States and newly available options, as well as China's support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, constrain China's ability to achieve political influence or secure economic benefits.

A 2020 survey of thirteen European states showed that many states have a negative view of Chinese investment in Europe, as well as a negative view of BRI (Turcsányi et al. 2020, 12–13). This highlights the importance of the principal-agent problem, as China cannot necessarily dictate or control its economic agents abroad (Garlick 2019; Norris 2016). A further consideration is the conflict between Chinese provincial and central government actors illustrating the significance and complicating factor of domestic economic and political considerations (Ho 2020; Wong 2021; Albert, Maizland, and Xu 2021).

Ultimately, China is constrained by a lack of trust and soft power; unease over specific Chinese policies including human rights, democracy, and environmental regulations; and a sense that President Xi—now firmly established as the president of China—will not do the right thing in world affairs (Turcsányi et al. 2020, 14–15, 16, 18, 20; Dams, Martin, and Kranenburg 2021).[14]

US and EU Counterstrategies

The United States and Europe have both begun "counter-investment" programs as part of an "economic balance of power" (Lenihan 2018; Mardell 2021b). The United States and the EU have founded the US-EU Trade and Technology Council with an eye on cooperating across critical technologies to establish standards, provide oversight of supply chains, promote democratic values, and enable greater innovation (Scott and Barigazzi 2021). The US State Department has created "The Clean Network" program in opposition to China's moves to expand global 5G networks through Huawei and the "Blue Dot Network" to fund infrastructure programs (US Department of State 2020, 2021). The US Department of Defense seeks to connect defense-related industries with trusted sources for capital investment through the "Trusted Capital" program (US Department of Defense 2020). Similarly, one of President Biden's earliest executive orders mandated a review of US supply chains with an eye on reducing exposure to, and dependence on, Chinese inputs and potential "vulnerabilities" (Sevastopulo and Williams 2021).

A key focus for the EU, as espoused in the EU-China Strategic Outlook, has been to secure greater reciprocity and fairness in its dealings with

China (European Commission and HR/VP 2019).[15] The EU has had only modest success in this regard and, with the suspension of the CAI over human rights concerns and other issues, may not open new markets any time soon. Additionally, the EU has signed deals with Japan and India, has spoken with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United States, and looks to operate in the context of the G7 and G20 in creating a large-scale infrastructure program (Council of the EU 2021; Emmott and Siebold 2021).

Conclusion

Several themes emerge from this brief survey. First, China is using FDI as part of its geoeconomic strategy because FDI seeks control over another economic actor, it is long term in outlook, and it brings benefits to both home and host country, including increased wages, productivity, capital transfers, and increased employment. As such, all levels of the home and host countries recognize benefits from FDI. Additionally, many European states are welcoming Chinese FDI, which provides China with a ready-made influence tool.

The amount of FDI is not always the main concern. As noted in the beginning of the chapter, US FDI stock in almost all European countries far outweighs Chinese FDI stock. Instead, concerns arise over the rapid growth of FDI in politically sensitive sectors including power grids; advanced technology sectors such as robotics, drones, or chips; foundational infrastructure projects such as ports and airports; and the digital domain, characterized by fights over Huawei and 5G networks (Cristiani et al. 2021). One author argues that China does not have an overarching goal in BRI in so much as it is opportunistically looking to "fill the gaps" that appear as the United States, the EU, and others have neglected selected regions and sectors (E. Lucas 2022). These "gaps" may be due to societal divisions or the lack of interest in political or economic needs that the market either could not or would not fill. The more illiberal European states are looking not only for outside economic alternatives to the EU but also for political support.

Second, while China has garnered political influence through its geoeconomic strategy, China's influence centers on the "low politics" concerns of labor issues, democratic norms and governance, and environmental regulations. While these issues have generated tensions within the EU, increased concerns over the dissolution of European norms and standards,

and increased rancor between the United States and the EU, they do not explicitly challenge military security concerns, degrade alliances, or shift the regional balance of power according to realist international relations theory. Chinese economic and political gains have been limited and come at a cost—China has pursued aggressive political and economic policies, which further alienate those already concerned with China's actions while confirming the fears of those unsure of China's objective.

Relatedly, many of the security externalities from Chinese FDI do not fall into the category of "traditional" security issues. Instead, they involve concerns over domestic tensions between political or economic interests, the erosion of norms and standards, and division between European states or between the United States and the EU. This focus on nontraditional security issues—such as energy, identity, market share, or governance—makes it difficult for European states to gauge the threat Chinese FDI poses. Europe does not think of Chinese FDI as a traditional geopolitical threat, which hampers Europe's ability to respond. One survey reveals that none of the European countries surveyed had a majority who agreed with the idea that "preventing Chinese geopolitical expansion" should be a top foreign policy priority for their country (Turcsányi et al. 2020, 19). And yet, that is what is occurring when European states tighten investment screening mechanisms or prevent investment in strategic sectors. Furthermore, China's use of economic instruments generates uncertainty surrounding their objectives—economic profit, political influence, economic base for future military buildup, or all of the above (Brînza 2018; Wuthnow 2017).

Last, China faces constraints on its influence attempts in Europe. Chinese policies and actions do not occur in a vacuum—China cannot always control its own message, nor can they control how others perceive and react to its actions. Chinese FDI does not always provide the expected benefits, China has trouble controlling its own economic agents, and aggressive diplomacy sows division and generates pushback.

Europe plays a key role as the endpoint of China's BRI network. As such, China seeks a well-developed infrastructure and policies friendly to Chinese economic relations. At the same time, China is looking to use these inroads to influence and shape, where possible, international institutions. All of this occurs in markets rich in advanced technology and an educated workforce that nevertheless has numerous internal divisions and fault lines. China, through cultural and educational outreach, bilateral economic relations, and digital networks, seeks to reshape the geopolitical landscape as the opportunity allows.

This speaks to China's broader use of geoeconomic strategies in pursuit

of creating a more China-friendly network globally. In the standard conception of balance of power politics, the use and threat of force may generate a counterbalancing coalition. Attempting to expand its power employing a geoeconomic toolkit not only secures China's access to resources, territory, and both elite and mass narratives but also complicates potential counterstrategies by the United States, the EU, and other competitors. In much the same way that the transatlantic partners find it difficult to discern a security threat from an attempt at economic profit, so too do other countries without the added benefit of institutional oversight mechanisms protecting critical infrastructure and key natural resources.

There are two key implications for transatlantic relations, given the factors noted above. The US and Europe may have an easier time coordinating policies in the face of Chinese investment in strategic sectors across western Europe. These investments, coupled with aggressive diplomatic actions, signal Chinese intentions and may push the EU and the United States to present China with a united front. These transatlantic efforts, however, are likely to be complicated by intra-EU negotiations. Unless eastern Europe's economic needs are more fully addressed, these states may thwart transatlantic policy coordination as they seek investment from China. Only by tackling intra-European regional affairs can the transatlantic relationship meet China's geoeconomic challenge in an era of renewed great power competition.

NOTES

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1. The debate over whether corporations—and, by extension, FDI—are "stateless" has intensified with the rise in globalization (Reich 1990; Ohmae 1991; Jones 2006). Today, several factors converge to bring corporate nationality to the fore, especially in the case of China: investment screening mechanisms; state-led economic diplomacy and investment promotion; ongoing concerns over unfair Chinse economic competition, poor-quality Chinese goods, and the influx of inexpensive Chinese labor; and an increased general awareness of Chinese firms and Chinese geoeconomic activity given the "rising China" and "great power competition" narratives (Jones 2006). Considering the recent pushback regarding Chinese FDI in the technology sectors, and in response to the EU's new investment screening mechanisms, China is attempting to evade attention and scrutiny through the use of greenfield investment, smaller deals, and offshore structures (L. Lucas and Feng 2017; Pop 2021).

2. On economic interdependence and vulnerability, see Keohane and Nye (1989); Drezner, Farrell, and Newman (2021).

3. Chinese spending on BRI dropped in 2019 after complaints in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Indonesia forced President Xi to publicly "strike a conciliatory tone" (Perlez 2019; Bradsher 2020).

4. For example, Chinese firm COSCO's investment in the Greek port of Piraeus may bring "technological upgrading of the port's facilities, job growth, and spill-over effects in other economic sectors" (Rogelja and Tsimonis 2020, 118).

5. On the costs of breaking supply chains, see the discussion of a possible US-China "decoupling" (U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Rhodium Group 2021).

6. By comparison, US FDI stock in the EU "dwarfs China's by a ratio of 35:1" (Rogelja and Tsimonis 2020, 112).

7. The United States has instigated much of the concern with their focus on "great power competition" and China as a "rising power," with some in the EU converging on this point. Other EU and prospective EU members are comfortable with Chinese investment. Even those in the EU "waking up to the threat" are finding they may want a different, less aggressive approach. On those comfortable with it, see Le Corre (2018b). On those EU members waking up to the China threat but potentially seeking a different approach from the United States, see Anthony et al. (2021). This fear is not without merit, given Chinese statements. See Xi Jinping (2020).

8. Soft power mechanisms are not a simple guarantee of success, however: for example, 83 percent of Serbs, in a country where the government has extolled Chinese infrastructure projects, see China as a "friendly country," while 50 percent of the Hungarian population, with a pro-Chinese leader in Prime Minister Orbán, have a negative view of China (Matura 2022; Vladisavljev 2022).

9. While this forum increased to "17+1" with the addition of Greece, it dropped to "14+1" when Lithuania, followed by Estonia and Latvia, pulled out in 2021–22 (Lamond and Lucas 2022, 3).

10. This is highlighted in the competition over cybersecurity and 5G networks. See Anthony et al. (2021, 35).

11. See Hellström (2016, 30–32) and Zeneli (2019) on trade liberalization.

12. Many Europeans not only are concerned that China disregards personal freedoms but also view their own record on human rights favorably. See Pew Research Center (2021, 12); Turcsányi et al. (2020, 18).

13. Estonian minister of foreign affairs Urmas Reinsalu said part of why Estonia pulled out of the 16+1 was that "China has not condemned the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine in clear terms" (Vahtla 2022).

14. Pew notes that France, Sweden, and Germany "have no confidence *at all* in China's president" (Pew Research Center 2021, 21; emphasis in the original).

15. Similarly, a US Chamber of Commerce survey reported that "more than 66% of US companies surveyed continue to feel treated unfairly in terms of market access" (Hanemann et al. 2021, 18).

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TEN

The European Defense Industry in an Era of Great Power Competition

Why China's Rise Is Not (Yet) a Game Changer

Lucie Béraud-Sudreau and Samuel B. H. Faure

The defense industry in Europe provides a privileged vantage point from which to analyze the return of great power competition in the 21st century, embodied by the growing rivalry between China and the United States (Boniface 2020; Kroenig 2020). Indeed, technological sovereignty, both for conventional armaments and new technologies, is at the heart of this international rivalry (Inkster 2021). This chapter explores the economic reliance of the largest European defense companies (Hartley 2019a) on China and the United States according to their revenue, location, and governance.

We define here the 'internationalization' of European defense companies as the degree of their economic relations outside their national (sometimes transnational) headquarter locations and we argue that large European defense companies are characterized by *differentiated internationalization*. We complement most of the work on the defense industry and more broadly on European security that focuses on Europe's *internal* political dynamics (Béraud-Sudreau 2020; Faure 2021; Kruck and Weiss 2023), with a study that considers its *external* interdependencies vis-à-vis the two great global powers, the United States and China (Hartley and Belin 2019). Our institutionalist and sociological approach to the international political economy of defense industry qualify the realist argument that European "strategic autonomy" is an "illusion" (Brooks and Meijer 2021; Meijer 2022).

According to some observers, European defense companies are characterized by a low degree of internationalization, the industry being closely tied to state sovereignty (Bellais et al. 2014, 21–24; Faure 2020b). Neither China nor the United States should have a predominant role in structuring the military industrial landscape in Europe. In fact, there is no shortage of examples of the resilience of national champions: Leonardo in Italy, Dassault Aviation in France, BAe Systems in the United Kingdom, Rheinmetall in Germany, Saab in Sweden, PGZ in Poland. Around 80 percent of armaments programs in Europe are still implemented on national territory. Bilateral collaborations remain the exception (De La Brosse 2017).

Nonetheless, the establishment of transnational companies such as Airbus and MBDA both defined by European Union (EU) law as "European" cannot be ignored (Païtard and Bellais 2019; Bellais 2021). BAe Systems' close commercial ties with the Pentagon is also a significant development (Hoeffler and Mérand 2015). For some (Csernatoni 2022; Lundmark 2022), these industrial transformations are a symptom of the development of "technological sovereignty" or "strategic industrial autonomy" on a continental scale and therefore beyond the national political framework.

Prior research shed light on the determinants of the internationalization of large European defense companies, and therefore the parallel existence of national and European industrial champions (Fligstein 2008). It also looked at the limited international circulation of the managers of these companies (Faure et al. 2019a). However, the type, form, and degree of internationalization of large European defense companies remain largely unknown due to three blind spots. First, internationalization is less the object of study than the starting point of the existing literature, according to which, for example, Safran is weakly internationalized while Airbus is strongly internationalized. These intuitive claims are taken for granted, with only limited empirical data to back them up. Second, only the largest European companies, mainly involved in the aeronautics sector, have been analyzed. But this leaves out a whole part of the European industrial landscape comprising the naval, land, and missile sectors. Third, existing work does not address the dependency of European defense firms on China and the United States (Meijer et al. 2018; Faure and Smith 2019). This latter gap has become more urgent to fill, given the new era of great power competition, as any economic dependency on one or the other of the two rivals may influence European governments' strategic decision-making.

To contribute to, and go beyond the literature, this chapter empirically characterizes internationalization. In which territories do the major European defense companies internationalize: China, the United States,

or Europe? Are their activities and governance more shaped by the rise of China, the dynamic of "transatlanticization" in favor of the United States, or the Europeanization trend (Béraud-Sudreau et al. 2020; Tian and Su 2020; Béraud-Sudreau and Nouwens 2019)? This chapter provides an empirical characterization, which can become a baseline for future studies regarding the new geopolitical context's impact on European arms companies.

The chapter argues that large European defense companies are characterized by *differentiated internationalization*. China remains a territory of limited commercial attraction for the European defense industry, which invests significantly more in the United States. In addition, the European defense industry is divided between companies that prefer to develop on American soil and those that choose the European continent. This split to a large extent follows a divide between European companies headquartered outside the EU and those based in EU member states. The growing rivalry between the United States and China may exacerbate this existing divide among European companies and their host states, and in turn influence their position vis-à-vis the United States and China.

Where Are the Major European Defense Companies Internationalizing?

Three indicators help to uncover the internationalization of large European companies, which shapes their industrial relations with China and the United States but also within Europe: revenue distribution, subsidiaries location, and presence of foreign nationals on their boards of directors.

Indicators: Export Revenue, International Presence, Foreign Managers

The first indicator is the share of defense companies' export revenue, defined as the proportion of the total turnover of companies aggregating their production of military and civilian goods. The decision to consider export revenue without distinguishing military from civilian production is due to the lack of disaggregated data. This indicator thus compares the share of revenue generated in China, the United States, and in European countries other than the one or those where the company is headquartered (Italy for Fincantieri, for example).

The second indicator looks at the international presence of companies, through the location of their subsidiaries in the three territories analyzed.

The data available is insufficient to specify the nature of their international establishments (offices or factories), their size (number of employees working there), and the type of industrial activities carried out (military or civilian). However, this indicator enables us to understand the preferences of European defense companies regarding their international development strategy through their perceptions of production capacities and expected commercial perspectives in each territory.

The third indicator looks at the nationality of company managers. Building on recent research on European defense industry elites (Faure et al. 2019), this indicator captures the degree to which companies are open to foreign leaders.[1] Managers referred to as "European" represent nationals from a European country other than that or those in which the company has its headquarters. This is the case, for example, of the British Lord Paul Drayson, who sat on the board of directors of Airbus, a company whose governance is ensured by Germany, France, and Spain. In the event of dual nationality, the two national affiliations of the leaders are included if one of them corresponds to the countries (China and United States) and region (Europe) studied.

Case Studies: Widening the Comparison to the 28 Largest European Companies

These three indicators are used to analyze the 28 largest European defense companies with head offices in 10 countries: Germany (Bzoska 2019), Spain (Fonfria and Marti Sempere 2019), Finland, France (Belin, Malizard, and Masson 2019), Italy (Caruso 2019), Norway (Haltebakk Hove and Pedersen 2019), Poland (Markowski and Pienkos 2019), the United Kingdom (Hartley 2019), Sweden (Lundmark 2019), and Switzerland (see table 10.1). Only three of these countries are not members of the EU (Norway, the UK, and Switzerland) and three are not members of NATO (Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland). These 28 case studies refer to all European defense companies in the global top 100 established by SIPRI in 2018 (Fleurant et al. 2019). The data was then updated by the authors, in combination with SIPRI's top 25 for 2019 (Beraud-Sudreau et al. 2020). To European firms present in the top 100 were added the main defense firms from Finland (Patria) and Norway (Kongsberg), as well as the second largest Spanish company (Indra), to broaden the geographic scope of the study.[2]

The objective of this broad comparison is to go beyond the study of the usual suspects (BAe Systems, Airbus, Leonardo, Thales, Safran and Rolls-Royce) gathered in only five countries (Germany, Spain, France,

Italy, United Kingdom), corresponding to a limited number of cases, and restricting de facto the generalization of the results obtained (Faure et al. 2019b). Exploring a larger number of cases also gives a view of all the branches making up the defense industry: aeronautics, naval, land, electronics and missiles.

Primary Sources: Business Activity Reports and SIPRI Database

The main source of information for the analysis is the 28 firms' annual reports or financial statements (see the appendix). The data was collected for the year 2019, the latest full set of available information at the time of writing. While annual activity reports or corporate financial statements provided sufficient data to shed light on revenues earned in Europe, the empirical task was more complicated for China and the United States.[3]

The companies seldom specify the share of turnover in China. The information is most often aggregated at a regional scale, for example, Asia of Asia-Pacific, even Asia and Middle East. However, this difficulty was bypassed for companies whose income is mainly generated by military production (90% or more), thanks to the SIPRI arms transfers database.[4] This database contains the complete list of international state to state arms transfers since 1950. When it was found that a European company has not carried out any arms sales to China since 2010, its turnover from China was interpreted as zero for 2019. However, this database cannot compensate for the lack of information on companies whose production is more balanced between armaments and goods for civilian use, or even whose production is mainly civilian (table 10.2).

For the United States, the methodological difficulty was similar. Many of the companies presented their revenue derived by region and not by country. The United States was often included in "North America" or "Americas." Given the predominance of the US market in these regions, however, the data was used as an estimate of the turnover generated by European companies in the US territory, recognizing that this may be a slight overestimate of the actual figure.

The international presence of the 28 companies' subsidiaries was also informed by activity reports and annual financial statements. As for the sociological analysis of the boards of directors, the nationality of the directors was obtained by crossing several open sources, namely the annual activity reports, company websites, and professional social networks (LinkedIn).

The Limited Internationalization of European Companies in China

This section presents the internationalization of the 28 largest European defense companies on Chinese territory, through the three indicators described above.

Limited Dependence on the Chinese Market

Despite the limited data available for the first indicator (table 10.2), some findings nonetheless emerge. First, European companies whose production is almost exclusively military (greater than or equal to 85% of total turnover)—corresponding to a third of the cases studied (BAe Systems, Naval Group, MBDA, Saab, KNDS, Navantia, PGZ, Hensoldt, and Patria) do not generate revenue from the Chinese market.

Indeed, the European Union implements an arms embargo on China since 1989 (European Council 1989). This embargo prevents military exports from EU member states to China from occurring, although some dual-use licenses may be granted (European Council 2019). This interpretation is confirmed by the 8 companies for which data is available. The share of turnover achieved by these companies on the Chinese market is zero (0%) as in the case of Naval Group, MBDA, KNDS, PGZ, and Navantia. The SIPRI arms transfer database does not identify any arms exports from these companies. For example, neither Naval Group nor Navantia exported warships to China in 2010.[5] For three companies, the share of revenue derived from China is limited: Rolls-Royce (10.2%), Rheinmetall (8%), and Kongsberg (2.1%). In these cases, it is likely that these exports only reflect sales of goods for civilian and non-military use, due to the imposition of the European arms embargo.

For other companies that are more dependent on sales of civilian or dual-use goods, the lack of available data likely masks a dependence of some of them on the Chinese market. For example, Airbus maintains close ties with Chinese companies, including subsidiaries of AVIC, China's leading aerospace company, in the development and production of civilian helicopters.[6] However, no sufficiently reliable data could be obtained to assess the income the company derives from this cooperation.

TABLE 10.1. The Twenty-Eight Largest European Defense Companies in 2019

Rank	Company	Country	Industrial Branch	Total Revenue (US$ million)	Military Revenue (US$ million)	Share of Military Revenue (%)	Share of Export Revenue (%)	Personnel	State Ownership
1	BAe *Systems*	United Kingdom (UK)	Multiple	23,378	22,240	95.1	81.0	87,800	Golden share[a]
2	*Leonardo*	Italy	Multiple	15,433	11,111	72.0	84.0	49,530	30.2%
3	Airbus	Germany, Spain, France	Aerospace	78,907	11,047	14.0	67.9	134,930	26.0%
4	Thales	France	Electronics	20,602	9,472	46.0	76.0	82,600	25.7%
5	Dassault Aviation	France	Aerospace	8,219	5,764	70.1	87.9	12,100	Single share[b]
6	*Rolls-Royce*	UK	Engines	19,732	4,714	23.9	89.0	51,700	Golden share[a]
7	Naval Group	France	Naval	4,156	4,115	99.0	29.3	15,170	62.3%
8	MBDA	France, UK	Missiles	4,146	4,104	99.0	40.0	11,500	Indirect[c]
9	*Rheinmetall*	Germany	Land	7,003	3,943	56.3	68.9	24,490	0%
10	Safran	France	Engines	27,587	3,546	12.9	80.2	81,000	10.8%
11	*Babcock International*	UK	Multiple	6,222	3,289	52.9	31.0	35,000	Golden share[a]
12	*Saab*	Sweden	Multiple	3,746	3,184	85.0	62.8	17,420	0.0%
13	KNDS	Germany, France	Land	2,843	2,701	95.0	86.0	8,300	50.0%
14	CEA	France	Nuclear	5,562	2,231	40.1	—	15,711	100%
15	*ThyssenKrupp*	Germany	Naval	33,364	1,959	5.9	68.0	104,000	0%
16	*Fincanteri*	Italy	Naval	6,549	1,954	29.8	81.9	19,823	59.0%
17	*Cobham*	UK	Electronics	2,628	1,804	68.6	92.6	10,000	0%
18	*Serco Group*	UK	Services	4,653	1,489	32.0	61.0	50,000	0%
19	PGZ	Poland	Multiple	1,523	1,371	90.0	14.5	—	100%
20	*Navantia*	Spain	Naval	1,385	1,316	95.0	—	4,112	100%
21	*Hensoldt*	Germany	Electronics	1,247	1,185	95.0	56.6	5,461	25.1%
22	*Qinetiq*	UK	Services	1,370	1,055	77.0	31.0	6,000	0%
23	*Meggitt*	UK	Subsystems	2,907	1,053	36.2	92.2	12,000	0%

24	GKN *Aerospace* (*Melrose*)	UK	Subsystems	4,981	1,046	21.0	90.8	17,000	0%
25	RUAG	Sweden	Aerospace	2,016	887	44.0	63.0	9,091	100%
26	*Kongsberg*	Norway	Multiple	2,736	821	30.0	82.0	10,793	50.0%
27	*Indra*	Spain	Engines	3,386	634	18.7	53.3	47,409	18.7%
28	*Patria*	Finland	Land	568	523	92.0	26.0	2,988	50.1%

Note: Revenue data for Rolls-Royce are based on "underlying revenues"; revenue data for PGZ are 2018 figures; data for Qinetiq are based on the company's fiscal year 2019–20; MBDA's export revenue is based on a secondary source (Pierre Tran, "MBDA Moves Away from Saturated U.S. Missile Market," *Defense News*, 15 March 2017, https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2017/03/15/mbda-moves-away-from-saturated-u-s-missile-market/).

[a] Bellais, Foucault, and Oudot (2014, 31) remind us that a "specific share or golden share provides regulatory leverage complementary to ownership of the company's capital. This share has no commercial value but enables the state to dispose of specific rights for the company's strategic decision-making (control of investments and disposal of assets notably) and provides de jure a veto power for decisions that would appear contrary to national interest."

[b] The French state owns a single share in the Dassault Aviation group, according to a convention that provides the state with "a preemption right on all disposal of assets in Dasault Aviation by the Groupe Industriel Marcel Dassault that would lead it under the threshold of 40 per cent of ownership, as well as on all disposal of assets below this threshold." Dassault Aviation, "Dassault Aviation rachète 8 % de ses propres actions auprès d'Airbus," November 2014, https://www.dassault-aviation.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2014/11/FR_Dassault_Aviation.pdf. See also Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, "L'Etat annonce la signature d'une convention avec le Groupe Industriel Marcel Dassault, actionnaire majoritaire de Dassault Aviation," 28 November 2014, https://www.economie.gouv.fr/files/files/directions_services/agence-participations-etat/L'Etat_annonce_la_signature_d'une_convention_avec_le_Groupe_Industriel_Marcel_Dassault%2C_actionnaire_majoritaire_de_Dassault_Aviation.pdf

[c] MBDA is owned at 37.5% by Airbus, 37.5% by BAE *Systems*, and 25% by *Leonardo*, companies that in turn are partly state owned.

TABLE 10.2. Internationalization of European Companies on Chinese Territory

			Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3
Rank	Company	Share of Military Revenue (%)	Share of Revenue Made in China (%)	Presence of Subsidiaries in China	Presence of Chinese Managers on the Board
1	BAe *Systems*	95.1	—	Yes	0
2	*Leonardo*	72.0	—	Yes	0
3	Airbus	14.0	—	Yes	1
4	Thales	46.0	—	No	0
5	Dassault Aviation	70.1	—	No	0
6	*Rolls-Royce*	23.9	10.2	Yes	0
7	Naval Group	99.0	0.0	No	0
8	MBDA	99.0	0.0	No	0
9	*Rheinmetall*	56.3	8.0	Yes	0
10	Safran	12.9	—	Yes	0
11	*Babcock International*	52.9	—	Yes	0
12	*Saab*	85.0	—	No	0
13	KNDS	95.0	0.0	No	0
14	CEA	40.1	—	No	0
15	*ThyssenKrupp*	5.9	6.8	Yes	0
16	*Fincanteri*	29.8	—	Yes	0
17	*Cobham*	68.6	—	No	0
18	*Serco Group*	32.0	—	No	0
19	PGZ	90.0	0.0	No	0
20	*Navantia*	95.0	0.0	No	0
21	*Hensoldt*	95.0	—	No	0
22	*Qinetiq*	77.0	—	No	0
23	*Meggitt*	36.2	—	Yes	0
24	GKN *Aerospace* (*Melrose*)	21.0	—	Yes	0
25	RUAG	44.0	—	No	0
26	*Kongsberg*	30.0	2.1	Yes	0
27	*Indra*	18.7	—	Yes	0
28	*Patria*	92.0	0.0	No	0

The Establishment of European Companies in China: The Exception Rather Than the Rule

More than half of European companies (15, or 54% of the population studied) are not established in China (table 10.2). This result can be considered as a limited presence, not only absolutely, but also relative, in comparison with their establishment on American soil and on the European continent (see tables 10.3 and 10.4 below).

Only 13 companies (46%) are present in China. Nine of these mainly produce civilian goods: ThyssenKrupp (5.9%), Safran (12.9%), Airbus (14%), Indra (18.7%), GKN Aerospace (21%), Meggitt (21%), Rolls-Royce (23.9%), Fincantieri (29.8%), and Kongsberg (30%). These results confirm the correlation that the more civilian a company's activities are, the stronger its interest in accessing the Chinese market. The reverse is largely true. The companies whose income depends more on the sale of weapons are not established in China: Cobham (68.6%), Dassault Aviation (70.1%), Qinetiq (77%), Saab (85%), PGZ (90%), Hensoldt (95%), KNDS (95%), Navantia (95%), MBDA (99%), and Naval Group (99%).

A handful of cases falsify this correlation, in particular Leonardo (72%) and BAe Systems (95.1%), which are established on Chinese territory despite mainly military industrial activities. The British company's subsidiary is known as *BAe Systems China (Exports) Limited*, and the Italian company's *Jiangxi Changhe Agusta Helicopter Co. Ltd*. and *Leonardo China Co. Ltd*. The name of the BAe Systems subsidiary suggests a company focused on marketing or sales, but it appears to have been set up before the arms embargo was imposed and declared dormant since.[7] *Jianxi Changhe Agusta Helicopter Co. Ltd* is a joint venture created in 2004 between Agusta—now part of the Leonardo group—and a subsidiary of the Chinese group AVIC, created for the production of A109 helicopters which have a dual-use function.[8]

An Absence of Chinese Leaders in the Management of European Defense Companies

The results relating to our third indicator confirm European companies' limited internationalization vis-à-vis China. Besides Airbus, none of the boards of the 28 firms has a Chinese leader (table 10.2). There is only one exception to this rule, namely, Victor Chu, who is a member of the board of directors of Airbus. Beyond what has already been indicated (Airbus is a company with mainly civilian activities), it should be noted that this leader has dual nationality, Chinese and British. His training in the United Kingdom (graduated from University College London) and his professional trajectory (started in a legal firm in the City of London before establishing his own investment firm in Hong Kong) suggest that it was shaped more by British socialization, and more broadly international, than specifically Chinese.[9]

The United States as a Privileged Internationalization Territory

This section compares the results for China with those for the internationalization of European companies in the United States. Overall, the degree of internationalization of European defense companies is higher on American territory than on Chinese soil.

Greater Dependence on the American Market Than on the Chinese Market

While none of the 28 European companies generate more than 10% of their turnover in China, nearly two-thirds are in this situation in the United States (table 10.3). A quarter of them achieve more than 20% of their turnover in the United States—Indra (22%), Kongsberg (25%), Serco Group (28%), Rolls-Royce (28, 5%), Leonardo (29%), Safran (35%) and Bae Systems (43%)—and three, more than half of their revenues (GKN Aerospace, 53.3%, Cobham, 57%, Meggitt, 59%).

However, with three exceptions (Bae Systems, Leonardo, Cobham), all the European companies mentioned have, as in the Chinese case, minority military activities compared to their total turnover: ThyssenKrupp (5.9%), Safran (12.9%), Indra (18.7%), GKN Aerospace (21%), Rolls-Royce (23.9%), Kongsberg (30%), Serco Group (32%), and Meggitt (36.2%). In other words, the European companies which export the most to the United States have a commercial profile like those which do the same vis-à-vis China. Their industrial activity is mainly devoted to the production of civilian and non-military goods. On the other hand, for these companies, the dependence on the American market is much stronger than on Chinese customers.

A Strong Presence of European Companies in the United States: The Rule Rather Than the Exception

Our second indicator confirms the higher level of internationalization of European companies vis-à-vis the United States than with China is confirmed (table 10.3). More than 80% of European companies analyzed have subsidiaries in the United States, compared to less than one in two (46%) in China. Only Naval Group, CEA, PGZ, RUAG and Patria do not have a presence in the United States.

The difference in the location of European companies in the United States and China is not only a question of degree, but also one of nature. Of

TABLE 10.3. Comparison of the Internationalization of European Defense Companies in China and the United States

		Indicator 1		Indicator 2		Indicator 3	
Rank	Company	Share of Revenue Made in China (%)	Share of Revenue Made in US (%)	Presence of Subsidiaries in China	Presence of Subsidiaries in US	Presence of Chinese Managers on the Board	Presence of US Managers on the Board
1	BAe *Systems*	—	43.0	Yes	Yes	0	4
2	*Leonardo*	—	29.0	Yes	Yes	0	0
3	Airbus	—	17.0	Yes	Yes	1	1
4	Thales	—	11.4	No	Yes	0	0
5	Dassault Aviation	—	—	No	Yes	0	0
6	*Rolls-Royce*	10.2	28.5	Yes	Yes	0	1
7	Naval Group	0.0	0.0	No	No	0	0
8	MBDA	0.0	—	No	Yes	0	0
9	*Rheinmetall*	8.0	8.5	Yes	Yes	0	0
10	Safran	—	35.0	Yes	Yes	0	2
11	*Babcock International*	—	13.0	Yes	Yes	0	0
12	*Saab*	—	12.9	No	Yes	0	0
13	KNDS	0.0	2.3	No	Yes	0	0
14	CEA	—	—	No	No	0	0
15	*ThyssenKrupp*	6.8	15.2	Yes	Yes	0	0
16	*Fincanteri*	—	—	Yes	Yes	0	0
17	*Cobham*	—	57.0	No	Yes	0	2
18	*Serco Group*	—	28.0	No	Yes	0	0
19	PGZ	0.0	—	No	No	0	0
20	*Navantia*	0.0	8.0	No	Yes	0	0
21	*Hensoldt*	—	3.7	No	Yes	0	0
22	*Qinetiq*	—	12.0	No	Yes	0	1
23	*Meggitt*	—	59.0	Yes	Yes	0	1
24	GKN *Aerospace (Melrose)*	—	53.3	Yes	Yes	0	1
25	RUAG	—	11.0	No	No	0	0
26	*Kongsberg*	2.1	25.0	Yes	Yes	0	0
27	*Indra*	—	22.0	Yes	Yes	0	0
28	*Patria*	0.0	0.0	No	No	0	0

Note: The geographical distribution of Navantia's revenue is based on that of all revenue from Sociedad Estatal de Participaciones Industriales (SEPI); the geographical distribution of GKN Aerospace's revenue is based on that of all revenue from *Melrose* Plc (parent company).

course, there are industrial groups whose activity is driven by the production of civilian equipment, as we have seen in China. This is true of all the cases studied, except for CEA (40.1%) and RUAG (44%): ThyssenKrupp (5.9%), Safran (12.9%), Airbus (14%), Indra (18.7%), GKN Aerospace (21%), Rolls-Royce (23.9%), Fincanteri (29.8%), Kongsberg (30%), Serco Group (32%), Meggitt (36.2%), and Thales (46%). In addition, European companies with a military focus are much more likely to have established themselves in the United States since there are 12 (43%) against only 3 (12%) in China: Babcock International (52.9%), Rheinmetall (56.3%), Cobham (68.6%), Dassault Aviation (70.1%), Leonardo (72%), Qinetiq (77%), Saab (85%), Hensoldt (95%), KNDS (95%), Navantia (95%), BAe Systems (95.1%), and MBDA (99%). Three counterexamples are identified: PGZ (90%), Patria (92%), and Naval Group (99%) are companies with almost exclusively military production that have not set up a subsidiary in the United States. These 3 firms are majority state-owned, which may explain why this is the case.

There are incentives for European companies to create subsidiaries in the United States: it is an indispensable step to gain access to the American market. The contracts signed by the Department of Defense of the United States are in fact almost exclusively with domestic companies (Béraud-Sudreau et al. 2020). In addition, the United States have the world's largest military budget, spending more than $730 billion in 2019 (Tian et al. 2020), which makes them an attractive market for defense firms.

American Executives at the Head of European Companies Based outside the EU

The analysis of the 28 boards of directors confirms the results revealed by the two preceding indicators: the United States represents a privileged territory of internationalization compared to China. While there was only one British-Chinese at the head of Airbus, there are 13 Americans in 8 different European industrial groups: BAe Systems (4), Safran (2), Cobham (2), Airbus (1), Rolls-Royce (1), Qinetiq (1), Meggitt (1), and GKN Aerospace (1).

These results lead to two remarks. First, most of these companies (5 out of 8) generate their turnover through the production of goods for civilian use: Safran (12.9%), Airbus (14%), GKN Aerospace (21%), Rolls-Royce (23.9%), and Meggitt (36.2%). However, there are also groups whose industrial activity is linked to the military sector: Cobham (68.6%), Qin-

etiq (77%), and BAe Systems (95.1%). Second, all the industrial players with an American presence on the board of directors are British with two exceptions, Airbus and Safran, which represent the two companies with the lowest military production. In other words, these results reveal a clear link between British companies and the United States as a privileged internationalization territory.

Choosing the European Continent or the American Territory: Two Models of Internationalization

The internationalization of defense companies on the European continent corresponds to their activities in countries other than the one or those where the company is headquartered. There is a difference in the nature rather in degree when comparing their internationalization in Europe or the United States. Groups headquartered within the EU prefer the European continent, while groups headquartered outside the EU opt for the American territory.

Preference for the European or American Market: Industry Cut in Half

The first indicator shows a similar reality on both sides of the Atlantic, in terms of the level of internationalization: European defense companies are as dependent on the European market as on the American market (table 10.4). When 15 European companies achieve more than 20% of their turnover in Europe, there are 10 in the United States. Ten of them generate more than 25% of their income in Europe and 9 in the United States; one obtains more than 50% of its economic activities in Europe against three in the United States. If the degree of economic dependence is similar, the nature diverges. Indeed, there are twice as many European companies characterized by a military turnover above 50% in Europe (Leonardo, Rheinmetall, Babcock International, Navantia, Hensoldt, Patria) than in the United States (BAe Systems, Leonardo, Cobham).

Above all, there is a clear territorial distinction. The European companies whose revenues are most dependent on the United States are mainly groups headquartered in a country outside the EU, while the companies with the highest turnover strong in Europe are based within the EU. Hence, the companies which realize a higher turnover in the United States than in Europe are British: BAe Systems, Rolls-Royce, Cobham, Serco

TABLE 10.4. Comparison of the Internationalization of European Defense Companies in the United States and Europe

		Indicator 1		Indicator 2		Indicator 3	
Rank	Company	Share of Revenue Made in US (%)	Share of Revenue Made in Europe (%)	Presence of Subsidiaries in US	Presence of Subsidiaries in Europe	Presence of US Managers on the Board	Presence of European Managers on the Board
1	BAe *Systems*	43.0	6.3	Yes	Yes	4	0
2	*Leonardo*	29.0	33.4	Yes	Yes	0	0
3	Airbus	17.0	32.1	Yes	Yes	1	3
4	Thales	11.4	29.0	Yes	Yes	0	2
5	Dassault Aviation	—	—	Yes	Yes	0	0
6	*Rolls-Royce*	28.5	20.7	Yes	Yes	1	1
7	Naval Group	0.0	0.0	No	Yes	0	0
8	MBDA	—	—	Yes	Yes	0	3
9	*Rheinmetall*	8.5	29.8	Yes	Yes	0	0
10	Safran	35.0	21.3	Yes	Yes	2	0
11	*Babcock International*	13.0	34.0	Yes	Yes	0	4
12	*Saab*	12.9	16.0	Yes	Yes	0	0
13	KNDS[a]	2.3	69.0	Yes	Yes	0	1
14	CEA	—	—	No	No	0	0
15	*ThyssenKrupp*	15.2	27.1	Yes	Yes	0	2
16	*Fincanteri*	—	—	Yes	Yes	0	0
17	*Cobham*	57.0	14.4	Yes	Yes	2	1
18	*Serco Group*	28.0	3.0	Yes	Yes	0	1
19	PGZ	—	—	No	No	0	0
20	*Navantia*	8.0	25.2	Yes	Yes	0	0
21	*Hensoldt*	3.7	23.3	Yes	Yes	0	1
22	*Qinetiq*	12.	—	Yes	Yes	1	0
23	*Meggitt*	59.0	18.2	Yes	Yes	1	1
24	GKN *Aerospace* (*Melrose*)	53.3	21.3	Yes	Yes	1	1
25	RUAG	11.0	47.0	No	No	0	0
26	*Kongsberg*	25.0	28.0	Yes	Yes	0	0
27	*Indra*	22.0	18.2	Yes	Yes	0	0
28	*Patria*	0.0	23.2	No	Yes	0	4

[a] European revenue by KNDS includes France and Germany.

Group, Qinetiq, Meggitt and GKN Aerospace. There are only two exceptions: Safran (France) and Indra (Spain), who generate a higher share of their turnover in the United States than in Europe.

In addition, the industrial groups that favor internationalization in Europe rather than in the United States are all based within the EU, namely Leonardo, Airbus, Thales, Rheinmetall, Saab, KNDS, ThyssenK-

rupp, Navantia, Hensoldt, and Patria.[10] Three cases defy this rule: Babcock International (UK), RUAG (Switzerland), and Kongsberg (Norway) generate a higher share of their income on the European continent.

A Stronger Presence in Europe Than in the United States

The establishment of subsidiaries in the United States and Europe lead to similar results (table 10.4). All the 28 companies studied have set up factories or offices in European countries other than the one in which they have their head office, except for CEA (France), PGZ (Poland), and RUAG (Switzerland). These 3 companies are also not established in the United States and therefore fall under a strictly national territorialization. It should be noted that these 3 companies are entirely state-owned (table 10.1). Two firms, Naval Group (France) and Patria (Finland), do not have entities in the United States but are present in European territory. In fact, the companies studied overall have a stronger presence in Europe than in the United States.

European Leaders at the Head of EU-Based Companies

Three findings emerge from the analysis of European leaders on the boards of directors. First, there is a significant quantitative difference between European and American leaders. There are 25 European leaders in 13 different companies: Babcock International (4), Patria (4), Airbus (3), MBDA (3), Thales (2), ThyssenKrupp (2), Rolls-Royce (1), KNDS (1), Cobham (1), Serco Group (1), Hensoldt (1), Meggitt (1), and GKN Aerospace (1). They are half as many with the US: 13 American captains of industry sit in 8 European groups.

Second, there are 14 European leaders at the head of companies which achieve the greatest part of their turnover by the production of armaments (MBDA, Babcock International, KNDS, Cobham, Hensoldt, and Patria), against 7 Americans only, from the boards of directors of BAe Systems, Cobham, and Qinetiq. We therefore find a ratio ranging from single to double between Americans and Europeans. Of these 6 companies with European leaders, 3 are based in an EU member state (Finland for Patria, Germany for Hensoldt, Germany and France for KNDS), 1 has a foot in it, 1 a foot out (France and UK for MBDA), and only 2 are headquartered outside the EU (Babcock International and Cobham in UK). This is a significant difference as the 3 companies with American executives (Cobham, Qinetiq, and BAe Systems), are all based in the UK.

This difference in territorial preference is confirmed when all the 28 companies studied are considered. Indeed, out of the 13 companies headed by European managers, 6 have their head office within the EU (Airbus, Thales, KNDS, ThyssenKrupp, Hensoldt, Patria), that is, 46% and even 54% including MBDA, which is partly based in the EU. The other 6 companies are in the United Kingdom, 4 of which have minority military activities (GKN Aerospace, 21%; Rolls-Royce, 23.9%; Serco Group, 32%; Meggitt, 36.2%). Babcock International (52.9%) and Cobham (68.6%) are the only companies that mainly produce arms, headquartered outside the EU, and have European leaders. On the other hand, only a minority of companies with American directors are in an EU member state (2 out of 8, or 25%), companies which, moreover, earn their income through the production of goods for civilian use (Airbus and Safran).

Conclusion

This chapter revealed three distinct types of relationships for major European international defense companies corresponding to three territories of their internationalization. China's political and military rise has not yet been shown to produce increased economic dependence for European defense firms (Ekman 2020; Faure 2019b). Their internationalization is limited in China, while it is equally significant in the United States and Europe. The difference in the internationalization on the American territory and on the European continent is less of degree than of nature. To put it another way—and which speaks to the theme of this volume—the rivalry between the United States and China may exacerbate the split among European companies and their host states with regards to their position vis-à-vis US dominance.

Figure 10.1 shows three groups of companies. Group 1 (*left of the diagram*) encompasses the companies that internationalize in the United States rather than in Europe. While these companies correspond just as much to military production companies as to civilian production, they all have their headquarters outside the EU. Group 2 (*right*) combines firms that internationalize primarily on the European continent. This cluster also includes many companies with military activity, as well as companies producing goods for civilian use. However, contrarily to Group 1, these companies are all based in an EU member state. Group 3 (*bottom*) brings together two companies whose internationalization is as strong on Ameri-

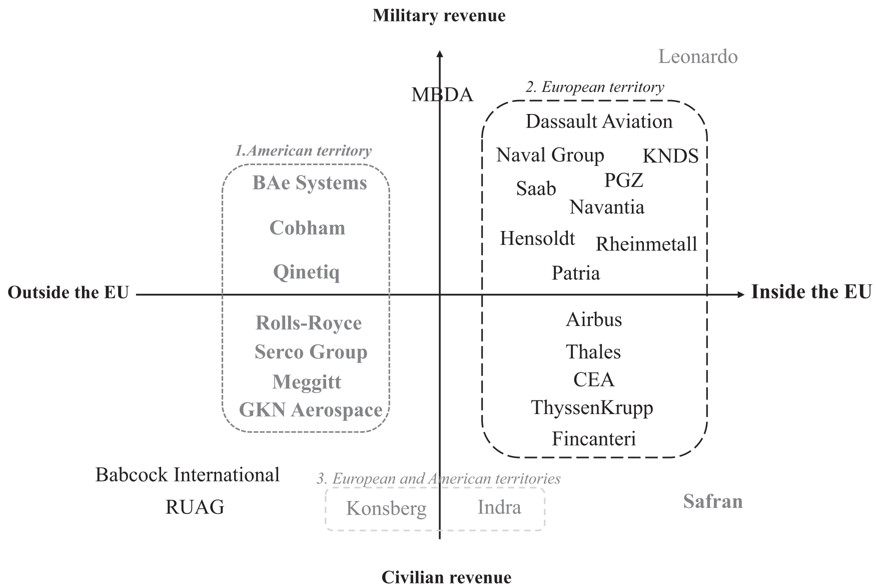

Fig. 10.1. The internationalization preferences of European defense companies on European or American territory

can soil as on the European continent: Kongsberg (Norway) and Indra (Spain). Both have mainly civilian activities.

Five cases—MBDA, Babcock International, RUAG, Safran and Leonardo—do not correspond to this classification of the internationalization of large European defense companies according to the type of their production (civil or military) and the location of their headquarters, social (outside or inside the EU). Indeed, MBDA, Babcock International, and RUAG are internationalizing first in Europe (Group 2). However, one would have thought that the profile of MBDA through activities and governance including the United Kingdom would lead it to turn more to the United States. This result invites us to clarify that Group 1 does not involve companies based outside the EU, but exclusively in the United Kingdom. Thus, one can understand the interstitial positioning of MBDA, which is not an exclusively British company. RUAG's case is also trompe-l'oeil. Indeed, RUAG is a company located outside the EU, while being based on the European continent (Switzerland). As for its production, it is balanced since 44% of its activities are military. It can also be noted that this is a

fully state-owned enterprise (table 10.1). Because of these characteristics, it is not so surprising that the Swiss company favors its internationalization on European soil rather than in the United States, like other companies with the same profile. Babcock International, Safran, and Leonardo's are more enigmatic. The continuation of this empirical research by further distinguishing the military activities and subsidiaries of these companies would offer additional keys to understanding.

These results nuance the argument that strategic autonomy is an illusion due to a "strategic cacophony" between European states and the lack of their budgetary and military resources (Brooks and Meijer 2021). Our analysis of the defense industry reveals rather a cluster of companies that first internationalize in Europe (Group 2), de facto holding significant autonomy in their operations vis-à-vis the United States and leading to the emergence of a European Technological and Defense Industrial Base (EDTIB) (Hartley, 2011; Mölling et al. 2013). This cluster differs from companies headquartered in the United Kingdom that choose to turn primarily to the United States to develop their business (Group 1). We therefore observe less a "strategic cacophony" between European states than an industrial fragmentation between two clusters, one constituting and favorable to an EDTIB, the other choosing American territory to internationalize: Europeanization against the transatlanticization of the defense industry, in short. However, in the era of great power competition we are entering in, this industrial fault line within Europe may fracture even further, as some companies—and their governments—may choose to side closer with the United States and chose Washington as their key partner, while those countries whose companies are more present in the EU-territory will focus on strategic autonomy and even maybe a 'third way' between the US and China.

From an analytical perspective, this research needs to be continued to identify other explanatory conditions for the preference of European companies for one territory of internationalization rather than another. Beyond the characteristics of these companies (civilian / military production and location outside or inside the EU), further research could look at their internationalization through their relationship (1) to the State and therefore to the structure of political economy (De Vore and Weiss 2014); (2) the dynamic of liberalization of defense policies (Joana and Mérand 2013; Larrieu 2017); and (3) to the strategic culture of political elites vis-à-vis the United States (Hoeffler and Merand 2015; Faure 2016). In addition, it would be interesting to assess whether Brexit—effective in 2020—has reinforced the tendency of British defense industry to rely more on the US

than on Europe, and to assess the effects on war in Ukraine on the internationalization of the European defense industry.

In doing so, it is possible to improve our understanding of the world in the 21st century, which is spanned by overlapping conflicting relationships and partnerships between great powers and their industrial champions.

APPENDIX

This list provides the primary source of information for the analysis, using the 28 firms' annual reports or financial statements. The data was collected for the year 2019, the latest full set of available information at the time of writing.

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NOTES

1. Based on available information and the type of governance for each company, the data sometimes refers not to board of directors but to executive committees (MBDA, CEA) or supervisory committees (Rheinmetall, KNDS, PGZ, Hensoldt, ThyssenKrupp).

2. SIPRI's top 100 distinguishes Nexter from Krauss Maffei Wegmann. In this article they are regrouped under the holding KNDS, due to the *rapprochement* underway since 2015 between the two firms. This trend was further strengthened in December 2020. KNDS will be led by a single Director General and Chief Executive Officer (https://www.defense.gouv.fr/salle-de-presse/communiques/communique_evolution-de-la-gouvernance-et-poursuite-de-l-integration-de-knds-champion-europeen-de-l-armement-terrestre).

3. Data was first collected in local currency then converted to US dollars for comparative purposes. The exchange rate is calculated indirectly based on the IMF World Economic Outlook Database, Oct. 2020 (https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2020/October).

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10. Dassault Aviation, Naval Group, PGZ, CEA et *Fincantieri* are not mentioned here due to lack of data for this indicator (tableau 4).

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ELEVEN

The Return of "Techno-Nationalism" and Its Implications for the Transatlantic Allies

The Case of Huawei 5G Networks and Canada

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Introduction: Goodbye Yellow Brick Road

Writing in a special theme issue of the journal *Security Studies* published at the end of the 1990s, authors Paul A. Papayoanou and Scott L. Kastner sounded a cautiously hopeful note about the long-term implications of the Clinton administration's policy of "engagement" with China. Liberal theorists at that time were prepared to regard the Sino-American cooperation glass as being more than half full, and Papayoanou and Kastner were no exception to the trend of analysts imagining that the West's increasing economic links with China would, in the end, redound to everyone's benefit: China would become both liberalized and, eventually, democratized; Americans and everyone else would become richer; and the prospects of global and regional peace and security would be greatly enhanced.

Liberal theory told them that this should be so, for reasons that could be boiled down to one assumption: mutually beneficial economic interdependence would foster the rise of interest groups in China who understood that their (and thus their country's) interests would benefit from a broadening and deepening of internationalization.[1] Thus, continued the theory, these interest groups would help to fashion a "national interest"

that reflected the goal of perpetuating and even deepening the economic exchanges. It was all to be one fortunate progression resting on a foundation of economic "rational acting." Now, while the theory might point to what *should* transpire, it could not guarantee that this is what *would* transpire; no theory in international relations (IR) can deliver such guarantees.

So Papayoanou and Kastner injected a note of caution into their analysis. They acknowledged that even a China palpably and unambiguously gaining from its integration into the global capitalist economy might still develop into a major security threat. And while they did not expect this to happen, they did concede that "if the gains China reaps from deeper integration into the world economy are only a source of power, and not a constraint on future behavior, then the engagement policy may come back to haunt U.S. policymakers." On the whole, however, their assessment remained a very upbeat one, punctuated by the assertion that engagement "will further raise China's global economic stakes and likely broaden support for reform and further integration. This, in turn, would make China more cooperative on security issues" (Papayoanou and Kastner 1999, 173, 184).

Alas, if only things had turned out this way! Seen from the remove of close to three decades, the Clinton engagement strategy lauded by the two scholars looks every bit as unsuccessful as the more recent Bush and Obama strategies on Afghanistan. Hindsight always being an acute form of vision, it has to be acknowledged that Papayoanou and Kastner were far from being the only scholars placing their bets on the Clinton-era engagement turning out to be a "win-win" for all concerned—the United States, its allies, China, and just about the entire international order. The 1990s, after all, were that fabled "post–Cold War decade" when it was possible to dream big dreams and have confidence they would come true. Andrew Bacevich has given to this wistful perspective a brilliant metaphorical label, the "Emerald City consensus," in reference to that happy place at the end of the yellow brick road in *The Wizard of Oz*, where sojourners' wishes would all be granted by the omnipotent wizard residing there.

In the classic film from 1939, of course, it was Dorothy and her three companions—the Cowardly Lion, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Man—who hoped to find their hopes fulfilled. For more recent travelers on this road, the Emerald City vision was to be realized through a pair of wonder-working devices rather than wizardry. The first of these devices was an "unfettered" capitalism seen to be inexorably advancing the interests of Americans and non-Americans alike in a world becoming increasingly "globalized." The second device was the American military, whose "unabashed" domination of the international system would supply the necessary superintendence of order.

For Bacevich, and so many others, it is not difficult to understand why the Emerald City consensus collapsed. Many Americans had simply ceased to believe that it was working to further their interests. The election of Donald Trump in November 2016 ratified more than it caused this loss of belief in the promise of a "post–Cold War" order that many have termed the "liberal international order," which had been nurtured by the conviction that America "could be simultaneously virtuous *and* powerful *and* deliriously affluent" (Bacevich 2020, 15–16, 88). However, during the first decade of the twenty-first century, the wheels began to fall off the vehicle intended to transport the modern-day voyagers to the Emerald City.

Even the election of Joe Biden in November 2020 has not generated expectations of any return to the Emerald City consensus, for on the question of "engaging" China, Biden hardly differs from his predecessor in the White House (Leary and Davis 2021). Instead, what we can expect to see returning—and indeed have already been witnessing—is the topic upon which we focus in this chapter: a "techno-nationalism" that many believed had expired with the demise of the Soviet Union and the ending of the long bipolar struggle that may well come to be remembered as the *first* Cold War (Brands and Gaddis 2021). In the initial flush of enthusiasm accompanying its termination, great power competition became, ostensibly, banished from a global system in which major war had been authoritatively deemed to be "obsolescent" (Mueller 1990). As explained in earlier chapters of this volume, such competition has returned, with a vengeance. With it, so too has returned techno-nationalism, which we interpret as being an aspect of economic statecraft (alternatively called "geoeconomics") emphasizing the urgency of state intervention in technological sectors of the economy deemed of great significance to national security (Blackwell and Harris 2016; Baldwin 2020; Scholvin and Wigell 2018).

There are two principal causes of the reemergence of techno-nationalism. One of these has to do with the fate of those economies unlucky enough to be on the wrong side of technological trends: they do not prosper as much as they might otherwise, with all the implications of backwardness coming to bear upon their sociopolitical health. The other cause is, if anything, even more worrisome, as it relates to the very real security consequences associated with technological backwardness. Such backwardness can prove deadly in case international frictions trigger fighting. We canvass both these causes in this chapter, which puts the spotlight upon how techno-nationalism affects the fortunes and interests of one particular ally, Canada. We conclude by suggesting that the Canadian experience can turn out to be surprisingly relevant to countries elsewhere in the broader transatlantic alliance.

Our chapter proceeds first by theorizing the security stakes of technological competition between the United States (and its allies) and China, within a conceptual and theoretical framework erected decades ago by Albert O. Hirschman. Following that comes a section in which we zero in on the recent controversies that swirled around Canadian decision-making regarding what was to be done about the country's "Huawei problem." A concluding section recapitulates the chapter's recounting of possible implications for other allies, suggested by the Canadian case. These include, but are not limited to, (1) jeopardizing national wealth through the pilfering of technology; (2) exposing one's citizenry to being spied upon; (3) calling into question alliance bonds with the United States; and (4) contributing to a growing public distrust regarding the overall competence of the government.

With Enough Rope: A Hirschmanesque Entrée into Techno-Nationalism

We open this section by invoking a pair of historical vignettes from the closing years of the Cold War, to make an important point about techno-nationalism. Unlike other forms of economic nationalism whose inspiration is mainly or entirely owing to the protection of economic interests for economic *ends*, techno-nationalism is concerned chiefly with the security implications of interdependence (though it can be, and has been, exploited for protectionist reasons). Techno-nationalism suggests policy responses that might be required so as to minimize the security risks of technological trade and investment in certain sectors of the economy. Our pair of vignettes stem from the spring and summer of 1987. One of these attracted much more publicity than the other; each was equally revelatory of how trade and investment in high tech can be said to influence security. The more well-publicized controversy involved the diversion of sophisticated military technology to the Soviet navy on the part of two of America's allies. The other, less publicized, incident involved a takeover of an American-based (but French-owned) electronics enterprise. Each, in its own way, tells us something useful about the current debate over techno-nationalism. Space constraints prevent all but a skeletal summary of the two incidents.[2]

The more celebrated of the two 1987 cases was the "Toshiba/Kongsberg affair," in which companies based in two allied countries, Norway and Japan, were discovered to be supplying the Soviet Union with the kind of

"rope" that Lenin had so famously prophesied capitalist countries would be giving their communist adversaries, the better to hang the capitalists with. It was with this Leninist specter in mind that America and its allies had established, back in 1949, the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM), in a bid to keep sensitive "dual-use" technologies from leaking into the possession of adversaries (Mastanduno 1992; Yuan 1995). Although Washington would not become aware of the diversion until the second half of the 1980s, the affair has its origins in early 1981. At that time, a deal had been struck between the Japanese company Toshiba Machine and the Soviet government, under the terms of which this subsidiary of Toshiba would deliver to Soviet shipyards four multi-axis propeller-milling machines, in contravention of COCOM regulations. For its part, the Norwegian company Kongsberg Vaapenfabrikk undertook to supply the Soviet shipyards with the software needed to guide the milling machines. Each company engaged in a series of deceptions to enable it to obtain export licenses from its respective government, with the first milling machine arriving in Leningrad in late 1982.

When it was discovered later in the decade, the deception generated a great deal of ill will in Washington, prompted by the worry that the assistance the two allied entities were supplying to the Soviet navy would render its nuclear submarines less easily detectable by acoustic means, thus degrading allied antisubmarine warfare capabilities. But the rancor would subside, and intra-allied tension would abate, in no small part because the ending of the Cold War made such security concerns suddenly seem quaint.

The other incident that raised tensions between Washington and Tokyo around the same time (this one with Oslo out of the picture) concerned not illicit trade in sensitive technology but rather quite licit investment in America's semiconductor sector. Fairchild Semiconductor, based in Cupertino, California, was a takeover target of Japan's Fujitsu, which proposed to purchase 80 percent of Fairchild's shares from its French-based parent corporation, Schlumberger Ltd. This touched off a battle within the Reagan administration between advocates of free trade and supporters of protectionism based on a security rationale (in this case, fear of Japan's acquiring a dominant position as a supplier of electronics to the Department of Defense). Once more, the ending of the Cold War rendered the dustup seemingly inconsequential, because in the future it was assumed that global free trade would best assure the acquisition of *all* countries' needed industrial inputs, produced according to the inexorable logic of comparative advantage. The era of complicated but economically "rational" supply chains had dawned, such that all were henceforth going to

derive benefit from an increasingly globalized marketplace. They would derive such benefit, of course, until it became obvious that dark geopolitical clouds were lowering once more, beginning toward the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Further diminishing the merits of reliance on globe-spanning supply chains was the coronavirus pandemic, starting in 2019 and becoming a worldwide concern in 2020. Then, of course, came Vladimir Putin's madcap scheme to annex Ukraine in late February 2022, which had the additional demerit of causing China watchers to ponder whether Putin's ostensible soulmate in Beijing, Xi Jinping, would duplicate the Russian dictator's approach to "diplomacy" by staging an Anschluss of his own, in an attempt to gobble up Taiwan.

So now we are back, not just to 1987 but to an even earlier period of great power rivalry and confrontation, with renewed focus upon the same kind of security effects of economic interdependence that had been brilliantly analyzed in Albert O. Hirschman's wartime classic of 1945, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*. In it, Hirschman took pains to disabuse those who believed that trade and, by extension, such other forms of economic interdependence as investment, in and of themselves, were almost entirely a matter of economic logic and hardly of national security concern. And to the extent that analysts did concede that security implications might be associated with trade and investment patterns, it was more often than not assumed that those implications were bound to be comforting ones. This was based on the assumption that the more economic interdependence there was in the international system, the more peaceful that system was likely to be (Angell 1911; Mandelbaum 2019, xii–xiii). Hirschman disagreed with this roseate perspective.

His analysis concentrated upon the economic statecraft of Hitler's Germany in its bid to extract security benefits through the manipulation of commercial ties with other countries. During the interwar years, just as in the post–Cold War decade, it had become an article of faith in certain Western countries that trade, left as untrammeled by political considerations as it could possibly be, was the best guarantor for enhancing both peace and prosperity. To this claim, Hirschman's rebuttal was that by its very nature, trade was, and *had* to be, an eminently political undertaking; it could not be otherwise. Memorably, he identified two salient political impacts of trade upon the international state system and the units composing it.

Because the cessation of a trading relationship between two states—or at least the mere threat of a cessation—can endow one country with lever-

age over another, trade, he said, possessed an "influence" effect, in raising the possibility of the stronger state's punishing its weaker economic partner. Conversely, because imports can contribute to a real increase in national power capability, trade also possessed a "supply" effect. Mutatis mutandis, we will show how both of these Hirschmanesque effects have factored into the current debate within the circle of America's allies about Huawei in particular and more generally China's announced strategy—its "Made in China 2025" plan—to achieve technological dominance in certain key sectors of the modern technological economy, including ones that have worrisome implications for the Pentagon (Larson 2021, 55; Davis and Wei 2020).

Simply put, the Huawei issue raised anew those two Hirschmanesque concerns about the supply and influence effects of trade and other forms of economic interdependence. The Canadian case is especially germane for understanding the contemporary stakes of the Chinese technological challenge, for not only has Canada contributed (along with the United States and other Western states) to enhancing China's technological capability (the supply effect), but more than most of its allies, it had been placed in the crosshairs of international rivalry for reasons directly connected with Huawei; thus it has felt the lash of Hirschman's influence effect in a singularly intense way.

As noted earlier, there is nothing particularly novel about the idea that trade and other kinds of economic interdependence can often have security implications (Grieco, Powell, and Snidal 1993; Mastanduno 1998). Considering that the two security-related trade and investment tensions we discussed above took place during the latter phase of the Cold War and involved *allies*, it is easy to grasp why the return of techno-nationalism can be an even graver concern today, given the obvious reality of the two protagonists, America and China, being anything *but* allies. They may not yet be accurately classified as enemies, but they drift ineluctably into a more competitive, possibly even adversarial, relationship with each passing day (Hass 2021). Their doing so will have inevitable implications for them, as well as for America's allies, whatever the latter might happen to think. Canada is an excellent case in point.

Techno-Nationalism Roars Back: The Huawei Challenge and the Canadian Canary

So long as it was possible for policymakers in the United States (and perhaps some other Western countries) to imagine that the Emerald City

vision could be an enduring one, there was little urgency in pondering the security implications of deeper engagement with China. Why should there have been? Chinese leaders were telling everyone who would listen that their country's rise would be a "peaceful" one. And American leaders were giving every evidence that they took the claim seriously. Besides, there was a lot of money to be made through American and other Western multinationals' business dealings in China—and for good measure those activities would have the advantage of providing American and other Western consumers with lower-cost goods of ever higher quality. What was not to like about this? Today, we can detect in Chinese foreign policy initiatives a great deal not only not to like but also to fear.

Although there had been intimations of a new, tougher American stance toward China being adopted as early as the second Obama administration (Mori 2019; Puglisi 2021; Kitchen 2020), attitudes only really hardened during the Trump administration—ironic given that China's political leadership had favored Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential campaign. When it came to assessing the danger to American interests posed by China's increasingly aggressive foreign policy—its self-damaging "wolf warriorism" as well as its openly declared drive for global technological dominance (Shirk 2022)—the Trump administration was hardly alarmist. Indeed, the president's wake-up call to Americans and their allies on China provides grounds for believing that while someone might be crazy, it does not have to follow that they are stupid.

This message regarding the threat from China's drive for technological dominance was delivered bluntly in a policy address delivered by Trump's attorney general, William Barr, in early February 2020. Barr cut to the chase by telling his auditors at a Department of Justice conference on China that Beijing's quest for domination is

> backed by industrial policy involving huge investments in key technologies, massive financing, and subsidies in the hundreds of billions of U.S. dollars. Unfortunately, it also involves industrial espionage and theft of technology and intellectual property, as well as forced technology transfers, predatory pricing, leveraging China's foreign direct investment, and strong-arm sales tactics in target markets, including the use of corruption. Make no mistake about it—China's current technological thrusts pose an unprecedented challenge to the United States. (United States Department of Justice 2020)

Barr's words indicate that while the coronavirus pandemic may have magnified the renewed interest in the security implications of high tech-

nology, it did not generate that interest in the first place (Val Sánchez and Akyesilmen 2021). There had been underway for some time what some have labeled the "fourth industrial revolution," widely expected to change the way people around the world live their lives (Schwab 2016). As such, it would also inevitably have an impact upon security, hence Barr's qualification of the challenge as being "unprecedented." What COVID-19 did was to heighten interest in the implications of a digital future in which 5G (or "fifth-generation") technology will transform the electronic "ecosystem" of the entire globe. It will do this by radically altering the international information society, making it ever more fully mobile and connected. This enhanced state of connectivity, called "always-on connectivity," is to be achieved through a central element of 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), based on a wide network of devices connected to the internet and to each other. The IoT's ambit will be vast, extending to virtually all walks of life, with obvious significance for the amassing and projection of military capability. As such, it will constitute "spin on" on steroids,[3] to such an extent that we might be permitted to paraphrase Sir Halford Mackinder's familiar dictum regarding the geographic "pivot" of history and remark that "who rules 5G rules the IoT, who rules the IoT rules the world."[4] Or, as the same thought was nicely put in a nongeographic context by two Canadian analysts, "the war with the U.S. over 5G technology is not just another trade dispute. China is on what it considers a sacred mission to play the leading role in the future of the internet, a campaign that not only companies like Huawei, but the entire Chinese government and military, are engaged in" (Hampson and Blanchfield 2021a).

The struggle over 5G illustrates, better than anything else, Hirschman's two effects stemming from economic interdependence. The supply effect is obvious, for (to allude once again to Lenin) digital technology well and truly represents the "commanding heights" of the economy, and there can be no question regarding the role played, *nolens volens*, by Western companies (including Canada's former world-class but now defunct Nortel Networks) in beefing up China's technological profile (*National Post* 2020). With economic prowess comes, almost inexorably, military prowess. This is the chief reason why so much anxiety has been triggered by China's rise, for it is the belief of many (and not just those smitten with the charms of "power transition theory") that in the anarchical international system a state's growth in economic capability is going to translate into a comparable growth in military capability (Gilpin 1981; Kennedy 1987; Allison 2017). This need not generate geopolitical competition of all against all, since it is possible for states to develop a sufficient degree of

trust in the intentions of fellow states to avoid a headlong descent down the geopolitical rabbit hole known as the "security dilemma" (Herz 1950; Jervis 1978). But the shifting patterns of global economic (especially technological) competence will assuredly continue to engender and exacerbate strains between states that do *not* trust each other very much. And compared with the halcyon era in which the Emerald City consensus took shape, today's international system features very little in the way of trust, especially between China and America.

It is this question of trust that gets us both to Hirschman's influence effect and to Canada (and by extension, as we argue in the conclusion, to the other allies as well). Canada provides a fascinating object lesson for other allies, Germany for one (*The Economist* 2021),[5] which might be inclined to think that "you can do business" with China without suffering any adverse political consequences—that, in fact, there can be "*Wandel durch Handel*." For Hirschman's reminders about the political stakes of economic ties with adversarial lands remain as relevant today as they were during the Second World War.

Diplomatic relations between Ottawa and Beijing are at a particularly troubled pass—nearly as troubled as they were during the Korean War, when Canadian and Chinese soldiers were shooting at each other. Huawei had been at the very center of this storm. It is, of course, a key player in the Chinese bid to attain global technological supremacy—a goal that Chinese leadership has openly vaunted, not just for what it will mean for the country's economic health but also because, as expressed by Xi Jinping, science and technology constitute a "national weapon essential for the growth in China's power" (XinhuaNet 2016). There is little that can be regarded as either surprising or illogical in Xi's declaration; other great powers in other eras have acted similarly when it came to positioning themselves in respect to their eras' most significant, or "strategic," economic assets. But neither can it come as any surprise that the Chinese bid for technological dominance in certain strategic sectors is stimulating a reaction on the part of countries who cannot bring themselves to count upon China to uphold the liberal, rules-based, international order or otherwise to conduct its foreign policy in a manner that is not prejudicial to their own security interests.

So, what does Canada have to do with this? Although Canada is generally considered to be a "middle power" in the international system, China has for some time regarded it as being more important than that modest adjective might imply. For China, Canadian universities have been, and to an extent remain, important partners for cooperative projects including, and especially, the cultivation of research in high tech—much more

important partners than the country's relative economic ranking would suggest they be. It is reliably estimated that only the United States and the UK have had a greater number of university partnerships with China than Canada (Barber 2023). In theory, that cooperation might have generated as many benefits for Canadian interests as for Chinese interests, but there has been growing concern in Canada's intelligence community that China has indisputably derived the lion's share of the gains from bilateral technology transfers, doing so by means both fair and foul. It has grown more capable, in short, by importing technology from Canada—and, of course, from other Western countries. Sometimes those "imports" have made a mockery of normal commercial etiquette and have included outright theft of technology, a practice that has belatedly been causing alarms bells to ring within the Canadian intelligence community, which has taken to issuing warnings about the security consequences of "partnership" (CTV News 2021; Fife and Chase 2023a).

Until 19 May 2022, Canada had been, alone among the "five eyes"—the elite intelligence-sharing club that also includes the United States, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand—the one country not to impose an outright ban on Huawei's participation in the development of domestic 5G networks (Curry and Posadzki 2022; Griffiths 2022). Even after Ottawa did announce such a ban, Canada's universities and independent 5G research facilities continued to remain active partners of Huawei and other Chinese high-tech enterprises, some of which had direct links to the Chinese military—links that became front-page news in Canada in early 2023, leading the federal government to promise an end to the leakage of Canadian technology to Beijing (Fife and Chase 2023b). Whether it can stanch the flow remains an open question, for not only is postsecondary education in Canada largely a provincial, not a federal, responsibility, but many professors (and their deans!) have become used to battening on Beijing's largesse, estimated at some $600 million steered in their direction between 2008 and 2018 (*Globe and Mail* 2021).

For Huawei, the fall has been vertiginous. Not too long ago, it enjoyed an exalted status in Canadian cultural life, through its sponsorship of weekly hockey telecasts during the last pre-pandemic season of *Hockey Night in Canada*—broadcasts dubbed by some wags as *Huawei Night in Canada*. But the saga of Huawei, so important in its own right, also serves to symbolize something else: the recent and dramatic deterioration in Canada-China relations, caused in some important measure by Beijing's adoption of "hostage diplomacy" (discussed below). Prior to the Canada-China relationship going off the rails, bilateral ties had regularly featured, at least in certain

circles, a barely disguised whiff of mythology (Evans 2014; Hampson and Blanchfield 2021b). Much of this myth spinning stemmed from romanticized recollections of the work of Canadian doctor Norman Bethune, the politically engaged thoracic surgeon whose medical services during the 1930s on behalf of revolutionary causes (first in Spain and later in China, where he died in 1939) made him something of a Chinese hero.

In addition to the cult of Bethunism, Canada-China relations had been buoyed by the relatively early establishment of full diplomatic relations between Ottawa and Beijing and by Ottawa's severing of relations with Taiwan, both of which occurred in 1970 during the prime ministership of Pierre Trudeau, father of the country's current prime minister, Justin Trudeau. Canadian endorsement of Beijing's "One China" policy opened the door for Beijing to view Canada as a promising collaborator. Pierre Trudeau believed, as he would later write, that China would become one of the most influential countries in the world and that it should "not be allowed to assume it was without friends . . . [and] that Canada's influence . . . should continue to be exerted with that future in mind" (Head and Trudeau 1995, 236–37).

As promising (and flattering) as things looked for some in Ottawa who were seeking to deepen ties with the People's Republic of China, in the latter country, there was a similar feeling that Canada might just be the "best candidate among Western countries" (Manthorpe 2019, 113) with which to foster closer economic relations, especially in the domain of science and technology, where Canada possessed a reasonably impressive amount of expertise. As noted above, Canada was definitely "punching above its weight" in the matter of transferring technology to China, trailing only the United States and the UK in this once-promising but now dubious line of activity. Beginning in 1970, Canada and China started on a path of "decades of collaboration in S&T that include government-to-government partnerships, joint research initiatives and strong academic linkages" (Canada-China Business Council 2019). On the surface, these collaborative projects "typically proceeded well, and deepened Canada and China's R&D relations" (McCuaig-Johnston 2017, 37).

Huawei, the erstwhile emblem of mutually beneficial collaboration, soon began to find itself caught in the crosswinds of a rapidly gathering storm. Since the 2017 adoption of China's National Security Law, the company's fortunes in Canada have sagged, and not necessarily because of anything that it was actually doing but to a great extent for reasons related to what some thought it might likely end up doing. It was becoming increasingly difficult for Canada's "five eyes" partners to believe that, were they to

allow Huawei to become part of their 5G future, they would not be placing their countries' security in a compromising position, with sensitive intelligence making its way to authorities in China. This worry existed, notwithstanding that Huawei's chief executive officer, Ren Zhengfei, insisted he would "definitely" refuse if Beijing ordered his company to surrender his customers' data (CNBC News 2019). But even in the event that China did not have a law requiring its companies to surrender data they controlled, there is a bigger reason for the headwinds currently buffeting Huawei. It is the challenge we saw expressed earlier, in our reference to Hirschman's supply effect. It has become, not without reason, a US objective to try to thwart China's march to digital dominance, and especially in that portion of the digital ecosystem where Huawei excels.

This has put Canada in a delicate position. Going along with Huawei and allowing the company to develop its 5G networks would have caused serious problems with the United States. That Canada took so long to exclude Huawei was puzzling to many observers, some of whom attributed it to a second Huawei-linked imbroglio: the arrest of Huawei's chief financial officer (and daughter of Ren Zhengfei), Meng Wanzhou, at the Vancouver International Airport in December 2018 by Canadian authorities. This was done at the request of American authorities who wanted her extradited to the United States to face prosecution for violating American sanctions against Iran. China, in retaliation, seized two Canadian hostages, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor (the "two Michaels"), and kept them locked up for more than a thousand days on spurious charges of espionage—charges that resulted in one of the luckless hostages (Spavor) being convicted and sentenced to eleven years in prison. Both men were finally released and returned to Canada in the autumn of 2021, when the US government agreed to drop the extradition request for Meng, who returned to China. Not surprisingly, China's image has tumbled drastically in the opinion of nearly all Canadians (Chase 2021), save for the most starry-eyed among the country's shrinking cluster of "China whisperers," people whose moral compasses are said to betray a strong inclination toward deviation from true north. Nor has it helped China's cause that it is increasingly being accused of having meddled in the Canadian 2021 federal election, with the goal of enhancing the chances of Justin Trudeau remaining in power (Fife and Chase 2023c). For some in Canada, as we write these words, Trudeau (who did prevail, with a minority government, in that September 2021 balloting) looks surprisingly like Donald Trump in 2016—save that in the case of the latter it was *Russian* interference that was held to sway gullible

voters, whereas Trudeau is suspected to have benefitted electorally from Chinese interference.

Conclusion: Only in Canada, You Say?

It might be tempting for analysts in Germany and elsewhere in the transatlantic alliance to think that Canada's Huawei-related predicament has little or nothing to do with them. After all, it was not so long ago that Europeans, somewhat blithely, seemed to imagine they had no need to become caught up in whatever tensions might roil American (or Canadian) relations with China. In the inimitable words of one British scholar writing almost two decades ago, "Europeans do not do China" (Danchev 2005, 433). If the Canadian case is anything to go by (and we think it is), it will likely turn out that if Europeans don't "do China," then China assuredly will end up *doing* them, for reasons identified by Hirschman so long ago.

In practice, what this could mean is that continued American interest in European security will be increasingly conditioned by an assessment, in Washington, of the extent to which the European allies show themselves interested in handling the alliance's very real, even if not always acknowledged, China problem. Washington will probably not count on the allies to give military assistance should fighting break out in East Asia, say over Taiwan. But it will insist that the allies cease providing the rope by which all of them might someday be found hanging. Nor will it be only Washington that will be keeping an eye on the Europeans. In the blunt words of Guy Saint-Jacques, a former Canadian ambassador to Beijing, Ottawa as well will need to work closely with the allies to "produce a new engagement strategy with China that opposes its thuggery and meets the expectations of Canadians" (2021).

NOTES

1. Not all IR theorists, of course, accept that interdependence really is such a peace-inducing device; for one sophisticated dissent from this optimistic perspective, see Rowe 2005.

2. For a full discussion of the incidents, see Haglund and Busch 1989.

3. The allusion here is to the Cold War–era debate regarding the "spin-off" effects of military technology for the civilian economy; increasingly, discussion began to turn to how technological progress in the latter will come to bear (through "spin on") upon the military sector.

4. Mackinder famously observed, "Who rules East Europe commands the

Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world" (Halford John Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* [New York: H. Holt, 1942], 150).

5. "Germany will find it hard to sustain its chummy economic relationship with China, which the rest of the West has come to see as a strategic competitor" (*The Economist* 2021, 12).

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TWELVE

The Impact of the New Security Agenda on Transatlantic Intelligence Relations

Benjamin Oudet

In the post 9/11 context, transatlantic intelligence relationships have been quasi-exclusively investigated through the prism of counterterrorism policies (Aldrich 2004). However, the strategic shift toward the return of competition between great powers looms (Tenenbaum 2021; Tenenbaum and Hecker 2021) and raises the question of how international intelligence relations are changing and adapting (Renault 2021). Intelligence plays a crucial role in every aspect of statecraft and decision-making, from diplomacy to trade, from coercion to cooperation. Defined as state bureaucracies and as a certain kind of knowledge upon which decision-makers choose the course of action, intelligence is at the heart of today's strategic relations, either as a kind of shadow diplomacy among states or as a foreign policy decision-making actor.

While intelligence activities are deeply rooted in governmental policies and national security, Western intelligence services face common transnational threats, and international intelligence relations are no longer a zero-sum game (Omand 2010). Intelligence function has a strong partnership dimension: To maintain their capabilities on priority issues, intelligence services must also use their partners' assessments, analysis, and information in addition to their own resources.

International intelligence relations—sometimes designated as a form of international cooperation, international knowledge sharing (Hoffmann

2021), a tool of influence, or a network of "liaisons" (Svendsen 2009)—are some of the most secretive parts (if not *the* most secretive part) of intelligence agencies' activities. The increase of international intelligence relations is one of the most remarkable evolutions of the intelligence realm over the last twenty years. Adam Svendsen notes: "Liaison today represents the most significant dimension of intelligence. Due to the global nature of threats and risks currently confronted, intelligence liaison has increased exponentially in all its various forms. Bilateral international intelligence liaison has grown particularly rapidly" (Svendsen 2009). Intelligence studies describe a process of globalization *of* intelligence through developing interconnected networks of formal and informal arrangements throughout the world and globalization *in* intelligence, linked to the regional or global nature of the threats (Svendsen 2012). International intelligence relations are a kind of collaboration between state bureaucracies responsible for the national intelligence cycle for defense or national security purposes. They are implemented through "liaison," which involves "liaison officers." Over the last twenty years, the function has been progressively professionalized and institutionalized (Svendsen 2012). Cooperation is another umbrella term encompassing five categories of activities: sharing of information, clandestine operational cooperation, sharing of equipment and installation sites, training, and technological cooperation. The depth and regularity vary from formal cooperation agreements to occasional or regular meetings for the exchange of analyses on specific topics or a particular type of intelligence. They can be bilateral or multilateral and can be deployed at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

The primary purpose of cooperation and sharing is, for an agency, the acquisition of information that cannot be acquired by its own means. Intelligence cooperation is rendered even more hard to capture considering that it is a multilayered activity. International relations are institutionalized relations between agencies. In today's intelligence world, international intelligence relations are one of the most important phenomena affecting intelligence agencies. International intelligence relations mimic the cooperation variables investigated in other fields of state cooperation. Intelligence is acquired at a significant expense and sometimes a great risk; sharing such treasure does not come naturally. Moreover, sharing requires a willingness to reveal one's weaknesses since you are telling someone else what you know and inferentially, at least to the initiated, what you don't know.

Yet, despite their confidential nature, international intelligence relations have been a primary topic of interest for intelligence studies over the past twenty years. While some researchers have lamented that these rela-

tions were investigated exclusively through historical case studies, globalization and the evolution of the security landscape have triggered a conceptual endeavor to bridge the gap between international relations theories, foreign policy analysis, and international intelligence relations (Crawford 2019; Born, Leigh, and Willis, 2011). The contemporary scientific literature on international intelligence relations highlights two paradoxes: while the intelligence process is both secret and rooted in national security, how can we explain that cooperation has become a "new normal" of intelligence activities? Why do states exchange so much? Is this form of cooperation unique or structurally similar to other forms of international cooperation? Another paradox: while they are now a structuring aspect of states' security policies, international intelligence relations remained the "missing dimension" of the analysis of international politics until the mid-2000s. The academic field of international relations has not paid much attention (see Jervis 2011; Yarhi-Milo 2014) due to the isolation of intelligence studies but also to the secrecy that surrounds the "liaisons." International intelligence sharing, notes one former director general of Britain's Security Service, "is something of an oxymoron," since intelligence services (perhaps more than any other arm of government) embody "individual state power and national self-interest" (Lander 2004). In theory, intelligence services collect, analyze, and disseminate information from political decision-makers in charge of defense and promote national interests. This process is fundamentally competitive and secretive, even among allies. Mainly when the international system is multipolar and fluid, "the 'friendship' between governments may not last and the convergence of interests at one time may diverge in other circumstances" (Sims 2006, 195).

This chapter addresses the following question: does the new security agenda impact international intelligence sharing within transatlantic ties? Great power competition has required shifts in the way the intelligence community does business. What is at stake here is the impact of the strategic shift on intelligence cooperation. We argue that the transatlantic intelligence relations won't be profoundly and negatively affected by the return of great power competition. Conversely, these relations might be accelerated by the reemergence of this competition and the shared perception of threats among Western nations. It does not mean that both sides of the Atlantic will adopt the same course of action in dealing with these threats but that they share the perception of their threats. Even though the intelligence liaison remains largely understudied and undertheorized, such a phenomenon must be researched, as it is an essential and significant element of the new post-9/11 reality in international relations. The coopera-

tion between the United States and European member states with strong intelligence capabilities and the EU intelligence institutions is examined.

Hidden in Plain Sight: Intelligence Cooperation at the Heart of Interstate Relations

Intelligence services share information because they perceive it to be in their interest. British intelligence historian Richard Aldrich describes intelligence cooperation as a matter of realism, not romanticism (2010). Intelligence services recognize that no state has a monopoly on intelligence collection. Whatever their funding and capabilities in human resources or technology, no intelligence agency is powerful enough to cover every topic and know everything about every issue. Consequently, international intelligence sharing is a way to fill the gap. All intelligence agreements are highly transactional, addressing what one party is getting and what the other party is giving in exchange. The parties who negotiate them are unsentimental and self-interested. Indeed, there is a consensus among intelligence scholars to say that intelligence services cooperate with foreign counterparts primarily because it benefits their work and serves their country's national interest: "Intelligence cooperation is commonly aligned with and in support of a state's foreign policy objectives" (Born, Leigh, and Willis 2015). International intelligence relations are becoming increasingly complex and necessary to national and international security (Svendsen 2016). This tendency is due to four factors: (1) the multiplication and escalation of threats, crises, and conflicts that require the intervention of national and international actors; (2) the growing importance of the precautionary principle in security; (3) the ever-increasing propensity of actors to undertake joint measures to avoid individual efforts in the face of security crises; and (4) the need for high-tech capabilities in information gathering, analysis, dissemination, and sharing. An agency or a service cannot know everything, and as Michael Herman reminds us, "The amount of information available is always greater than what an agency can collect" (1996, 204). Cooperation occurs when the cost-benefit ratio (information or capacity gain) benefits all parties.

Cooperation is also a means of influencing and evaluating the capacities of another. Conversely, cooperation is slowed down, hampered, or prevented by a difference in perception of a threat between two parties, who do not give sharing the same priority and therefore the same volume of means; by asymmetry in the distribution of power; by compliance with

certain ethical imperatives; and by legal obstacles and data protection (Elhard 2015; Richelson 1990; Aydinli and Tuzuner 2011). As Stephan Lefebvre notes: “Yet, common threat perception and shared interests necessary to fruitful relationships among intelligence agencies are not sufficient, as other factors may indeed complicate these relationships” (2003, 529). Eric Rosenbach and Aki Peritz argue that cooperation provides advantages in terms of access, speed, relevance, and the ability to carry out joint actions (2009).

However, conflicts of interest, the use of cooperation for penetration of services (the “liaison-for-spying doctrine”), and legal and moral issues can constrain the implementation of cooperation (Rosenbach and Peritz 2009). The 9/11 attacks increased intelligence cooperation not only between the “old allies” such as the United States and the UK but also, by necessity, with other states, many of them European Union (EU) member states. Following William Rosenau’s analysis, the majority of academic voices claim that “since 9/11, liaison relationships between the United States and foreign services have increased in number and, in the case of pre-existing partnerships, have grown deeper” (2004). There is no doubt that the events of 9/11 were the driving force behind the transatlantic counterterrorism partnership over the past two decades. Throughout this period, it became increasingly clear that security is collective in nature, and this intimacy of mission has reinforced the resolve in fighting violent extremism (Byman 2017). After the 9/11 attacks, the United States increased intelligence cooperation with the EU member states. There is also no doubt that most European states were willing to increase this cooperation as they saw the real threat that Islamic terrorism constituted not only for the United States but also for European states. It was the nature of both in multilateral and bilateral relationships. The level of cooperation has been different depending on the state. Usually, the biggest ally of the United States—the UK—has led in intelligence liaison. But it is now visible that the rest of the EU has not stayed behind and has tried to contribute to the liaison in many different ways. The need for intelligence cooperation has become even more urgent after 9/11, as nations on both sides of the Atlantic are facing terrorist threats and are confronting a host of other challenges posed by non-state actors, such as arms and drug trafficking as well as organized crime. The United States Intelligence Community also has close relations with non-English-speaking allies, whom it calls third-party partners. These include Germany, France, and the Nordic countries like Finland and Sweden, which are all countries of considerable technical ability and are now engaging with moving ahead with North Atlantic Treaty Organi-

zation (NATO) membership, which means, among other things, the highest level of intelligence sharing. All those facts lead to the conclusion that the future liaison between the United States and the European member states will increase even further as long as there will be a common strong threat to the security of all participating states.

Protected against Political Turmoil: The Stability of International Intelligence Networks

International intelligence relations can be an instrument of "pragmatic" competition for influence between states. For Munton and Fredj, "Agencies share when they perceive an opportunity to use the information to influence the policy of another," even more so as justification for a foreign policy decision, through the intentional publicity of the analyses. On the other hand, cooperation may have the function of providing another point of view (second opinion) and reducing cognitive biases such as groupthink and mirror imaging, identified by the sociology of organizations as a primary bias of intelligence analysis (Munton and Fredj 2013, 672). International cooperation entails a certain number of risks for the cooperators. The most obvious is the protection and secrecy of information, methods, and sources. Finally, another limit to cooperation is the organizational culture and the protection of sources by the golden rule of "need to know" that holds within the agencies and services of the same country and even more within the framework of international cooperation, sometimes going so far as to prevent domestic and international exchanges. Just as intelligence is associated with the pursuit of influence in international relations, the collection and sharing of information are associated with power and influence. In a way, its loss can be considered a loss of power by organizations. Also, cooperation presents a risk of penetration of the security system by the cooperating services through the access given to personnel. That is why trust and history also matter, even more than formal arrangements. As Walsh explains, trust can be conceptualized as the willingness to let your guard down even when this entails a risk (2009). With the "third-party rule" (information shared by actor A to actor B can be shared by actor B without the agreement of actor A), trust is generally conceived as the main basis of intelligence relationships: an enduring cooperation between partners helps build trust; conversely, no intelligence cooperation can be developed without trust. That is why the most obvious risk to transatlantic intelligence cooperation is the breach of trust among partners, as illustrated during the Trump era.

From a European perspective, this lack of trust is most likely to influence high-level bilateral intelligence sharing. First, because of the sensitive nature of the intelligence that is shared in these formats, high-level bilateral intelligence sharing is more dependent on a trusting relationship. Second, bilateral intelligence sharing relations are managed closer to the respective administrations and so are more exposed to political decisions and moods. Trust-related issues have direct consequences on intelligence sharing and cooperation: one was President Trump's carelessness with secret information and his disdain for US and allied intelligence services. During a meeting with Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov and Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak, President Trump disclosed intelligence about the Islamic State that the United States had received from Israel. The incident provoked the Israelis to adjust their intelligence-sharing protocol, which might impact the level of cooperation between the partners. Earlier in 2017, the Trump administration had given voice to the idea that the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)—the British signals intelligence agency—had spied on President-elect Trump on behalf of President Obama. This provoked a rare public reaction where British intelligence stated that these accusations were "utterly ridiculous and should be ignored."[1] To these incidents, one must add President Trump's own conflicts with various US intelligence agencies over their management of the lingering issue of Russian involvement in the US election. The net effect of this is that US intelligence allies—in Europe and elsewhere—cannot assume that their secrets are safe with the United States from administration to administration. Nor can they assume that their US partner agencies may have enough influence to discipline future presidents on intelligence modus operandi such as the third-party rule. The highly scrutinized relationship between the Trump administration and Russia aggravates this risk, especially for US allies that have intelligence activities directed toward Russia.

Restoring trust between the intelligence community and the presidency, on the one hand, and the intelligence community and its foreign partners, on the other hand, has been a primary task of President Joe Biden. President Biden has already made efforts to set priorities for foreign and security policies that are new or that tie in with those of the pre-Trump era. The key elements of Biden's program are cultivating the United States' global system of alliances, returning to active diplomacy within a multilateral framework, and defending democratic values. In this context, relations between the United States and Europe are already showing significant improvement. Biden wants to revitalize the transatlantic alliance and reas-

sert the United States' leadership role in NATO. At the same time, however, like Obama and Trump before him, Biden wants to strive for fair burden sharing between the United States and Europe and to demand higher defense expenditure from the allies despite the pandemic and the economic crisis. The Biden administration will also prioritize cooperating with the allies in dealing with global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, proliferation, and terrorism. Under President Biden, the United States seeks to revitalize its global system of alliances, multilateral diplomacy, and the defense of democracy. This shift in US foreign policy directly impacts the intelligence community. The Biden administration seeks to restore the intelligence community's credibility in the eyes of international partners (Harman 2020). While, in the conflict with Iran, the Biden administration prioritizes diplomacy, intelligence analysis is at the heart of diplomatic negotiations. With respect to the current crisis with Russia, US officials have been shuttling to Brussels to share intelligence on Russia's military buildup on Ukraine's border and have vowed to involve European partners, even if the format of the discussions seems less important in Washington than in Brussels.

The idea that political disruptions harm transatlantic intelligence relationships is overstated: "In the world of intelligence, the fish keep swimming, and pay little heed to the changing weather" (Kojm 2019). Although threat perception is not the only factor driving international intelligence relations, as we have seen before, both sides of the Atlantic still share fundamental interests and threat assessments. Ties between transatlantic partners have remained insulated against political differences. The basis for those intelligence relationships remains strong. For example, when the United States had significant differences with European allies at the time of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the impact on intelligence relations was modest. Nevertheless, intelligence cooperation continued, and France provided intelligence supporting the Bush administration's global war on terror. This cooperation on intelligence continues today—in Europe, the Sahel, and the counter-ISIS coalition. France boasts valuable intelligence collection and analysis capabilities. Because of France's insistence on its sovereignty and autonomy, it invests heavily in its ability to assess intelligence independently, which offers the United States an independent allied assessment separate from its more closely integrated Five Eyes partners.

Although intelligence relations are a form of intelligence collection and a subfield of state diplomacy, and as such are deeply rooted in governmental policies, intelligence relationships follow their own logic and, to some extent, remain insulated against political turmoil. Even when states

clash on some issues, there is a whole tapestry of relationships with interwoven threads that parties see as mutually beneficial. Governments can usually detect which relationships are worthwhile and hence need to continue. Even though international intelligence relations reflect state foreign policies priorities, these relations are deeply institutionalized and isolated against political turmoil. An example of enduring cooperation is the ongoing relations between French and US military forces in Africa, where France launched the "Barkhane" counterterrorism military operation in 2013. In September 2020, the intelligence relationships between France and the United States were illustrated by the public statement of the US Africa command leader (US AFRICOM) after a meeting with the French chief of the defense staff, following the French-led raid that killed one of al-Qaida's top commanders, Abdelmalek Droukdal, in June 2020. He acknowledged that US intelligence collection helped facilitate the mission, which targeted the head of al-Qaida in the Magreb. The United States currently provides intelligence sharing, logistics, aerial refueling, and training in West Africa. Both sides highlighted common interest in cooperation between the two countries, considering that the deterioration of the international security context reinforces the need to cooperate with our allies. In Africa, the United States is a privileged partner with whom France regularly collaborates on the ground with a common objective of stabilization and support for local forces. This cooperation is reflected in the field of intelligence and by providing aerial capabilities (in-flight refueling and tactical and strategic transport) for the benefit of the French forces deployed in West Africa. Moreover, a report published by the Atlantic Council and endorsed by the French Ministry of Defense stated that in the context of the return of great power competition, the French-US alliance, "in the medium term, create[s] greater familiarity among policymakers to provide more opportunities to dispel future misunderstandings through a structured 2+2 dialogue between the defense and foreign ministers, expanded fellowships for policymakers, and a deeper intelligence relationship at the strategic and operational level" (Lightfoot and Bel 2020, 2).

The bilateral relationship between France and the United States rests on the 2016 "Ministerial Statement of Intent," a detailed document listing key domains of cooperation. As the relationship deepened in the 2010s, the then defense minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and then secretary of defense Ashton Carter felt it was time to enshrine it in a written statement listing six priority areas: strategic assessment sharing; mutual operational support; intelligence sharing; new technologies; nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological weapons. At the strategic level, the yearly Strategic

Indo-Pacific Dialogue, organized since 2016 by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD/Policy) and its French counterpart (Directorate General for International Relations and Strategy), paved the way for a Global Strategic Dialogue launched in 2018. Since 2009, a spatial-cooperation forum also allows key policymakers to exchange perspectives, and the 2016 Lafayette Committee oversees intelligence cooperation in a cross-agency view. In 2016, the creation of the standing Lafayette Committee by President Obama's undersecretary of defense for intelligence deepened French-US intelligence cooperation. It increased the access of the French military to data and meetings relevant to military operations. In recent years, the Lafayette Committee and other exchanges have bolstered information sharing between the United States and France at the tactical and operational levels. Interactions at all levels underpin these structured relations through a network of 120 exchange and liaison officers, which fosters deeper integration. Cooperation in the cyber domain is also densifying. There is a recognized mutual interest in sharing assessments as both countries face similar, if not the same, attackers, leading to better understanding, notably in fighting organized crime and terrorism. Exchanges occur at all levels, from the specialized interdepartmental agencies to military operators and intelligence services, and discussions are often attended at high levels.

A New Security Agenda: The US Pivot toward Asia and Is Its Consequences

According to the 2018 US National Defense Strategy, "The central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition" with "revisionist powers" (US National Defense Strategy 2018, 2). The powers at hand: China and Russia. Competition with China and Russia requires effective decision-making based on predictive analysis for globe-spanning issues. The US national security focus has shifted from counterterrorism to great power competition, as China and Russia are challenging the United States around the globe. However, the terrorist threat has not gone away, so the United States must confront three distinctly different adversaries. Add Iran and North Korea, and the threat picture is even more multifaceted. The number one national security priority and particularly defense priority for the United States is no longer terrorism; rather, it is the great power competition. Violent extremist organizations around the world continue to present serious threats,

but it is now considered an enduring threat rather than an existential one. During his Senate Select Intelligence Committee confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on February 2021, CIA director Bill Burns stated that great power competition has eclipsed terrorism as the greatest threat to the United States. This suggests a shift in focus and resources to great power competition. The CIA's new China Mission Center sends a clear signal to the intelligence community that it's time to shift its focus to near-peer competitors after twenty years of tracking terrorist threats. The center is part of the administration's broader effort to pivot the national security community's focus toward competition with great powers, such as China, and away from the counterterrorism operations that dominated the past two decades, including the war in Afghanistan that ended in summer 2021.[2] With a new global threat picture, the American Defense Intelligence Agency is increasing its intelligence cooperation with other nations. For its director, General Robert Ashley, "it is a natural evolution that we have to expand beyond those traditional Five Eyes relationships. . . . In some cases, those [relationships] will be multilateral, in some cases they'll be bilateral. But really, I think we're pushing on an open door when it comes to greater sharing with our partners, and it is a clearer understanding that we cannot take on the challenges of the current environment at the United States only."[3] Intelligence capabilities must be refocused to counter the global challenges to American national security interests from a rising China and an emboldened Russia in order to give decision-makers options for addressing the nefarious activities of these two great powers. Fulfilling these missions helps ensure that the United States possesses an information advantage over an opposing force and helps strengthen military alliances and partnerships via intelligence sharing.

The Strengthening of Transatlantic Intelligence Relations in a Changing Geopolitical Environment

A look at the contemporary intelligence challenges across the Atlantic illustrates that threat assessments and major topics of interest are fundamentally shared: terrorism, Russia, Iran, nuclear proliferation, and the rise of China. One focal point of intelligence work is gathering and analyzing information on states' political, economic, and military capabilities and intentions that play a role globally or in the respective region. For example, policies on Iran currently differ on the two sides of the Atlantic. Yet a common denominator is the wish to stay informed about Iran's nuclear program and whether it continues to meet the terms of the Joint Compre-

hensive Plan of Action, as well as to curtail Iran's ballistic missile program and its support for terrorism.

Shared values and interests are powerful reasons to share intelligence and make alliances and international cooperation more cohesive and enduring. Serious commitments to collective defense and the implementation of converging policies result primarily from perceptions of a common threat. This lesson drawn from international relations is the primary factor behind international intelligence relations even if state and intelligence agencies do not share the same analysis of the capabilities and intentions of a state or a threat, as was the case between French, US, and British intelligence agencies in the month preceding the large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The use of classified intelligence by the US administration at the onset of the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops has been a remarkable demonstration of the utility of intelligence in the decision-making process and the strengthening of the Western alliance in bringing the trans-Atlantic alliance into a unified front against Moscow. According to Western officials, some of the information the United States shared with allies, beginning with a trip to NATO by Avril Haines, the CIA director, in November 2021, was initially greeted skeptically. Nevertheless, the intelligence-sharing campaign ultimately succeeded in uniting Europe and America against President Putin through a series of tough sanctions. As much as we can now demonstrate, for example, the war in Ukraine shows that intelligence cooperation is now a foreign policy tool in itself, alongside economic sanctions and support in terms of weapons systems and military equipment. Even if it is still too early to know the impact of this support, in particular US support in terms of intelligence sharing, to Ukraine, the fact that the American government makes public use of intelligence and of their cooperation underlines that this cooperation is more than ever at the heart of international politics. Although there is no public evidence that European countries provide intelligence to Ukraine, suffice it to say that, in light of recent intelligence reforms, there is strong hypothesis that European countries like France and the UK provide intelligence support as part of their foreign policies toward Ukraine.

The public disclosure of intelligence is not a novelty in international affairs. Still, the scale and depth with which the US government provided intelligence as the evidence of its clear view on Vladimir Putin's plan demonstrate the centrality of intelligence collection and sharing in a contemporary strategic context. What seems clear is that Western intelligence agencies shared the same topic of interest. In a 2021 situation report, the Switzerland intelligence service states that "combating terrorism remains a

priority for many intelligence services, but greater emphasis is increasingly being placed on intelligence gathering on state actors. This is a consequence of the more frequent use of instruments of power and the growing competition between the three 'superpowers': the USA, China, and Russia. On a more limited scale, individual regional powers are also behaving similarly, intensifying espionage activity worldwide. At the same time, this competition and conflicts arising from it are forcing other states to invest more heavily in their intelligence services."[4]

The common perception of the emerging threats fosters international intelligence relations. Even as counterterrorism continues to consume substantial policy attention and intelligence resources, fresh tensions emerge between state actors. Spy scandals and frequent attacks by Chinese and Russian hackers have convinced Western intelligence agencies of the need to refocus attention on counterespionage and information security. Furthermore, conventional intelligence collection methods, long considered outdated or unsuitable for counterterrorism, might return in a modified form. On top of the security agenda, the strategic rivalry with China will remain the focus of national security policy. The Chinese government will continue to follow its strategic plan to become the first global power by the middle of the century. The Communist Party is increasingly presenting the Chinese model of government as an alternative to liberal democracy. European governments shared this perception of China as a more assertive and challenging state willing to reshape the international order to fit its interest. In a speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the head of MI6 stated: "Russia, China and Iran, for instance, have long been 3 of what I might informally call the 'big 4' priorities within the intelligence community; the fourth being the threat from international terrorism. We have to defend ourselves as a country against a growing threat from state actors, within an international system which is not working as it should do to constrain conflict and aggression."[5] There is no mystery that espionage and intelligence are core dimensions of China's new assertiveness. On the other side, Western intelligence agencies seem more prone to publicly designate the Chinese state as a threat: "The Chinese Intelligence Services are highly capable and continue to conduct large scale espionage operations against the U.K. and our allies." In the same statement, MI6's head noted: "We and our allies and partners must stand up to and deter Russian activity which contravenes the rules-based international system." As the common enemy and the balance of threat concept suggests (Walt 1985), the return of the state-to-state international rivalry by means of espionage and intelligence is likely to foster coordinated international poli-

cies. The competition between great powers is in part being waged using intelligence. Mutual surveillance is increasing and is also being carried out in third countries. As the last threat assessment disclosed by the US director of national intelligence in February 2022 demonstrates, the focus of the American intelligence services is on gathering intelligence on strategic rivals. The top priorities are China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Then come the issues of health security, climate change, environmental degradation, and additional transnational issues (innovative use of new technology, transnational organized crime, migration, and global terrorism). Transatlantic intelligence relations might be affected by the return of great power competition and the shared perception of threats among Western nations. It means not that both sides of the Atlantic will adopt the same course of action in dealing with these threats but that they share the perception of their threats.

Toward European Intelligence?

Research on international intelligence relations should consider the presence of the EU as an organization regulating and to some extent overtaking member states' responsibilities. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that EU institutions have been and will be in the future in charge of specific intelligence activities. In exploring possible cooperation between US agencies and the EU, an evaluation of the cooperation between EU member states within EU institutions would be necessary. Five institutions within the EU are responsible for intelligence sharing: the Berne Group, the European Police Office (Europol), the Satellite Centre (SatCen), the Intelligence Division within the EU Military Staff (EUMS), and the Joint Situation Centre. Europe is experiencing a process of regionalization of intelligence through the deepening of bilateral cooperation as well as within European bodies, such as the EU Intelligence Analysis Centre (INTCEN) in Brussels (Gruszczak 2016; Prin-Lombardo 2019), Europol, SatCen, or multilateral organizations like the Club of Bern (Davis Cross 2013; Nomikos 2005, 2012). There is a consensus among scholars and practitioners that intelligence is one of several ways to reduce uncertainty about security issues. As the EU is today cornered by security problems—from Russia's aggression in the east to the mayhem caused by terrorist groups and the turbulence of North Africa—the demand for sound intelligence exists. Today, this demand is met by various units and functions within the EU's bureaucracy, with the EU INTCEN as the central hub. Despite the apparent sensitivities of the field, the EU has considerably increased these

resources for intelligence sharing and analysis in the last decade. But creating real intelligence agencies with a mandate to collect secret information is unrealistic and possibly counterproductive. Both member states and practitioners would be hesitant to support such agencies, and the public sentiment in Europe is hardly in favor of new ambitious integration projects in controversial areas. Thus, establishing new agencies is a closed route to better European intelligence.

Taking steps to boost the intelligence capacity of the EU is based on the premise that this would allow for the very existence of specific European policies implemented by the EU. While the EU members frequently struggle to unite in the foreign policy domain, this process is facilitated by joint assessment of the problems, even if it does not guarantee collective action. The question "How could the European Union be better informed" is at the heart of the potential development of European intelligence capabilities and the global strategy for foreign and security policy. The political meaning of autonomy is that Europeans should be vested with some among security policy "actorness" that is not dependent on American support. This endeavor requires material capabilities (tangible military forces and strategic enablers such as airlift and intelligence), decision-making, planning and command structures (national or centralized), and the political will for collective European action. The idea of European autonomy has long lingered in the background as initiatives to strengthen the EU as a security actor have been discussed. Access to correct and sometimes exclusive information is considered a force multiplier for any security actor. Information power helps create more targeted policy and efficient operations. For a collective actor made up of autonomous members, commonly shared information lays the ground for joint action.

European intelligence, which designates the actions and structures that are developing on a European scale, refers to two separate orders that are linked to each other if necessary: organizations *integrated* into the EU, on the one hand, and cooperation mechanisms between states of the geographical area Europe that are not necessarily all members of the EU, on the other hand. Moreover, many countries in Europe are members of NATO, which also plays a major role in mainly military intelligence. The EU has set up an integrated organization, the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC), which leads a process of merging intelligence from all sources in support of foreign policy. The context of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia at the end of February 2022 and the war that has unfolded there since have greatly mobilized this "capacity" of the EU.

Then there is what can be described as strategic (or "external") intel-

ligence: intelligence of military interest produced for diplomatic purposes. It corresponds to the challenges of planning external operations and reacting in the event of a crisis, and it is essentially a decision-making tool. However, on this point, apart from the INTCEN, which was already operating within the framework of the current treaties, the only prospective question has long been whether to consider creating a "European CIA." The war in Ukraine led to the mobilization of INTCEN and the Intelligence Division of the EUMS, which together form the SIAC. The SIAC is undoubtedly seeing its status, its role, and its action clearly strengthened during this major crisis.

To sum up, over the long term of European construction, the institutional dynamic in terms of intelligence has not gone, because of the treaties and the nature of intelligence, toward a logic of institutional integration but toward a deepening of bilateral cooperation between services. This cooperation extends beyond the members of the EU alone. The dynamic was that of a "Europeanization without Europe" of intelligence (Chopin 2015). In the European context, José Palacios, former director of INTCEN, emphasized the building of trust as an essential prerequisite for cooperation. Building trust is a fundamental dimension of cooperation because "institutions are not enough" (Walsh 2009, 88). This "construction" could be resolved by the constitution of a common European intelligence culture or the harmonization of training processes and an epistemic community. This is the meaning of the initiative taken by President Emmanuel Macron to create the Intelligence College in Europe in March 2019. This college is an independent intergovernmental entity of the EU. It is designed as "a space for reflection, sharing and outreach" and "strategic dialogue" between the intelligence communities in Europe, between the intelligence communities and the academic world, between the intelligence communities and decision-makers, both national and European, but also citizens, "in order to raise awareness of the issues and problems related to intelligence." Since 2020, the college has been providing an academic program for intelligence officers from its member countries, organizing thematic seminars enabling "exchanges between members of the intelligence services, as well as with experts from the public sphere"[6] and carrying out awareness aimed at national and European decision-makers, employees of European institutions as well as members of academic institutions."

The push toward "strategic autonomy" in EU doctrine, in this sense, depends on the production of and/or access to autonomous European intelligence. EU member states need shared intelligence to fulfill their national security responsibilities. Organized crime, terrorists, and foreign

agents of influence are transnational actors and can only be stopped with transboundary intelligence work. Current events thus suggest a strong and growing need for tighter European intelligence cooperation: "The Asian pivot launched by Barack Obama is taking shape. In the summer of 2020, after the British decision to withdraw from the EU and during the American presidential campaign, Brussels launched the work known as the 'Strategic compass'. This draft initial first White Paper on European defense, begun under the German presidency of the Council of the EU should be adopted in 2022 under the French presidency. This document should constitute a base for elaborating a strategic culture common to Europeans, laying—for the first time—the basis for a shared assessment of the strategic priorities and threats surrounding Europe. The 'compass' must, moreover, "operationalize the European capacity to act by targeting the Union's failing capability needs: intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, strategic air transport, among others" (Varma 2022). The question remains: How far can intelligence be integrated into European structure? How far can states accept sharing their intelligence analysis? Announced in Macron's September 2017 Sorbonne speech and launched by defense ministers in June 2018, the European Intervention Initiative aims to bring Europeans' "strategic culture" together. Differences in threat perceptions and strategic priorities delayed joint responses to crises. The initiative was designed to allow those countries to share intelligence and expertise, plan together, and be more prepared when the next crisis hits. The Intelligence College in Europe is part of the initiative, bringing together twenty-three member countries on an intergovernmental basis to build a common intelligence culture and community. The European Intervention Initiative, combined with previous structures such as INTCEN under the responsibility of the European External Action Service and the strengthening of bilateral relationships between European intelligence services, illustrates the institutionalization of a proper European intelligence capacity that might counterweigh US capacities. However, the impact of such an initiative on transatlantic intelligence relations is hard to assess. The contribution of the Intelligence College in Europe cannot be evaluated yet. Suffice it to say that these European intergovernmental initiatives are landmarks for European intelligence capabilities. Moreover, the overlapping of intergovernmental initiatives and EU intelligence structures like INTCEN shows that something is changing in the European intelligence culture.

European countries and the EU are more prone than ever to share intelligence and see it as a key ingredient of their strategic posture, diplomatic

negotiations, security, and defense policies. Developing proper European intelligence capabilities alongside the European states' capabilities is ongoing. There is no certainty that Europe can mimic the states' capabilities as intelligence remains deeply rooted in espionage and its secret and clandestine methodology. The future will tell us, and academic analysis might demonstrate, if intelligence will be subject to European integration, leading to a new form of intelligence as an "unidentified political object." Suffice it to say that Europe is inventing some new intelligence combination of traditional state-to-state intelligence relationships mixed with intelligence sharing through European institutions. The impact on transatlantic relations is hard to embrace and assess, yet both poles of the relationship (the United States and Europe) are internally restructuring with an eye to great power competition.

In conclusion, we can argue that transatlantic intelligence cooperation (whether it properly works or not) is an entry point to the analysis and understanding of the new security agenda structured by the return of great power competition and conventional war on European soil. What is clear is that transatlantic intelligence relations will remain strong in the forthcoming years and that these relations between intelligence services deserve further academic investigations: how do foreign policies affect intelligence orientation in terms of budgets and technical and human capabilities? How do international intelligence relations remain isolated against political turmoil, as the cooperation between British intelligence services and their European partners suggests after Brexit (Segell 2017)? How can international cooperation be subject to politicization? What goes on beneath the surface of public statements? It goes without saying that such a research project should be based on a case study and should bring together international relations and intelligence studies scholars. The war in Ukraine has proven to be an inflection point not just for the transatlantic community but also for the sharing of intelligence on both side of the Atlantic. Political will and a shared threat assessment can spur states to surge intelligence sharing.

A common understanding of global, regional, and national security risks; strategic and operational planning between allies; impact crisis response; both force and capability development and technology and industrial collaboration and competition—all these variables demonstrate that intelligence relations are and will be at the heart of transatlantic relations as long as intelligence activities reflect the changing—and unpredictable—security environment.

NOTES

1. Courtney Weaver, "White House Reassures UK It Will Not Repeat Trump Spying Claim," *Financial Times*, 17 May 2017.

2. Jacqueline Feldscher, "CIA Creates China Center to Shift to Great Power Competition," *Defense One*, October 8, 2021, https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2021/10/cia-creates-china-center-shift-great-power-competition/185977/

3. See Robert K. Ackerman, "Great Power Competition Defines Defense Intelligence," AFCEA, September 1, 2019, https://www.afcea.org/signal-media/great-power-competition-defines-defense-intelligence

4. Switzerland Security, Situation report of the federal intelligence services, 2021, 73.

5. C's speech to the international Institute for Strategic Studies, November 30, 2021.

6. Intelligence College in Europe, https://www.intelligence-college-europe.org/presentation/

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PART 5

Conclusion

THIRTEEN

Conclusion

Elie Baranets and Andrew R. Novo

In the context of rising competition with China and the rising threat from Russia, the links between Europe and the United States have become both crucial and uncertain. In this volume, we have analyzed these links from different angles in order to better understand the challenges that transatlantic actors have started to face. Amid renewed "great power" or "strategic" competition, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) continues to shape transatlantic relations, particularly in the security sphere, as it has for nearly seventy-five years. Within the context of this competition and spurred by the increased power of China and the renewed violence of Russian foreign policy, transatlantic relations are as critical for security and world peace today as they were in 1945.

As much as China's growing power and influence have been a concern on both sides of the Atlantic, it was Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 that reinvigorated the existing Atlantic security architecture, drawing Europe and the United States closer together. A major war on the European continent provided NATO with a relevance and immediacy few expected after the organization was battered during the four years of the Trump presidency. Furthermore, China's support for Russia while it has waged a war of aggression against another state has increased European uncertainty about Beijing's intentions as its power continues to grow, adding another supporting pillar for the bridge across the transatlantic divide.

Today, while the traditional realms of strategic competition—military

power, alliances, and economic growth—remain active, nations must also consider in greater depth how trade, technology, supply chains, energy politics, and information influence their national security. If we accept that an emerging bipolarity will continue to alter the logic of existing alliance structures, continued cooperation between European nations and the United States becomes even more fundamental in maintaining world peace.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been devastating at the very practical levels of physical security for Eastern Europe, of the energy security of many European nations, and of global food markets, particularly in the developing world, which depend heavily on grain from Ukraine and Russia. It reminded the world (and especially the United States) of the global dangers posed by war in Europe.

At the more abstract level, the war has challenged the broader belief in a "rules-based" internal system championed by numerous actors in Europe and the United States and specifically norms regarding the use of military force. The bloody conflict in Ukraine has reminded both the United States and Europe how important their cooperation is for maintaining peace, stability, and democracy across the world. Russia's invasion has also expanded NATO to Finland and Sweden. European nations and the United States have provided the vast majority of aid to Ukraine. By July 2023, the United States had contributed nearly $80 billion since the February 2022 invasion and the European Union more than $85 billion (Masters and Merrow 2023). This remarkable outlay of resources demonstrates not only the shared commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, but the enormous material resources possessed by the United States and European nations. In rhetoric, diplomacy, and actions, NATO is stronger in light of the war, and so is transatlantic cooperation more broadly.

In recent years, Europe has also begun to acknowledge the threat China poses to the present international order and is working with the United States to develop a more coherent policy toward Beijing. As a result of the war in Ukraine, actors on both sides of the Atlantic acknowledge that dependence on China for investment, trade, technology, and access to raw materials and energy resources presents both economic and security challenges. These ideas, for example, had a great deal to do with Italy's decision to not renew its participation in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Germany's new National Security Strategy captured the multifaceted nature of relations with China, describing the country as an important economic partner and a critical partner in solving global issues like climate change but also as a "competitor" and "rival" aiming "to remould the existing rules-based international order" and acting "counter to" the

"interests and values" of Europe and the United States (Federal Republic of Germany 2023). Walking this tightrope will be a major challenge for the United States and Europe moving forward, but it seems to be a task they are approaching in a more unified way than they were before. Transatlantic unity again proved its enduring value in a different context during the COVID-19 pandemic—which was deemed a public health emergency between January 30, 2020, and May 5, 2023—when the first, and most effective, vaccinations against the disease were jointly developed by European and American institutions.

Familiar Friends, New and Familiar Challenges

Fundamentally, the first half of the twenty-first century will be defined by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the rise of China. At the same time, novel methods of political organization, and mass communication, the rapid development of new technologies (both civilian and military), and fundamental changes to the energy sector are challenging how we think about the exercise of power.

As discussed in this volume, the United States and Europe will work across a number of issues in order to reaffirm their relationship and build security. Naturally, challenges exist within the alliance as its members confront external challenges from actors like China and Russia. The issues at play have many dimensions, which the authors of this volume approach in a number of different ways.

Some challenges are fundamentally ideational, as they have been throughout history, as Novo and Davidson argue in their chapters. Other challenges—equally consistent with the historical record—remain grounded in the enduring material processes of power competition and economic nationalism, which Novo, Baranets, Davidson, Oudet, Thompson, Béraud-Sudreau and Faure, Deschaux-Dutard and Nivet, and Haglund and Spence present in their chapters. Such enduring processes shape the nature of the transatlantic relationship but do not fully determine its course. Obtaining a comprehensive picture of transatlantic relations requires an understanding of how those structural processes are interpreted through the prism of domestic politics as articulated in the chapters of Haglund and Spence, Deschaux-Dutard and Nivet, Faure, and Pommer.

Among the most important internal challenges confronting transatlantic relations are the issues of "strategic autonomy" and management of the United States' isolationist tendencies. Several chapters engage with those

fundamental dilemmas, Davidson's from a historical perspective on NATO more broadly and Faure's on the challenges of "strategic autonomy" as they specifically relate to France under the presidency of Emmanuel Macron. The chapters of Thompson and Harrois refocus the discussion in the context of investment and British defense policy, respectively.

This volume also argues through a number of chapters, among them those by Pommer, Harrois, and Deschaux-Dutard and Nivet, that "narratives" remain extremely important to the transatlantic relationship. Narratives are essential to move from the common interests we have identified throughout the book to common measures and concrete stances. This is what provides the various actors with a common framework (in which democracy can play an important role). Also, there can also be a feedback loop, and narratives can help shape or create some of the common interests in the first place. "Great power" or "strategic" competition is also a battle of narratives, which are different from policies but play a role in shaping them.

To any student of transatlantic relations, these challenges are quite familiar. This volume deals with them from different perspectives and offers the hopeful message that their familiarity should be somewhat reassuring, although not a source for complacency. They are challenges the transatlantic alliance is familiar with addressing and overcoming. We hope that together, the nations on both sides of the Atlantic can reaffirm their alliance and direct it toward overcoming the challenges ahead together.

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