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The United States and De-Europeanization:
The US Impact on EU Security and Defense Policy Cooperation

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Abstract

This paper examines the US impact on European security and defense policy cooperation, and more specifically the possible consequences for European integration in this area of the Trump presidency. After briefly reviewing the US impact on European security and defense cooperation up through the Obama administration, it examines the foreign policy statements and actions of President Trump and his administration and the uncertainty they have generated about the future of NATO, the US security role in Europe, and transatlantic relations. The paper then briefly considers prominent theories of international relations to see if these offer any predictive insights into the impact of the "Trump shock" on European security and defense integration, and European unity more broadly. It then examines the considerable progress in European security and defense cooperation made in the past year, and assesses the extent to which the Trump shock and US foreign policy have contributed to this. In the Conclusion, the longer-term prospects for European security and defense cooperation are considered, along with the question of whether Trump-generated uncertainty will lead to greater European unity and independence in this area, or to disintegration and increased foreign and security policy competition among European states.

Introduction

What is the impact of the United States on European security and defense policy cooperation? Arguably, the US security guarantee after the Second World War enabled European economic and political integration, by enhancing mutual trust among European states and allowing limited resources to be directed away from security and defense purposes, while at the same time it removed the need for closer European security and defense cooperation. Successive US administrations have also discouraged closer European defense and security cooperation – some more actively than others – out of fear that it would duplicate or undermine NATO and challenge US security leadership. The dominance of NATO and Europe's security dependence on the United States also influenced the foreign policies of European states and the development of European foreign policy cooperation more broadly, at times fracturing European unity on key security issues and undermining Europe's capacity for strategic thinking and independence. However, this could all now change. The new US President, Donald Trump, has openly expressed doubts about the continued usefulness of NATO (as well as skepticism about the EU) and the desire for improved US relations with Russia. At the very least, such behavior has generated increased uncertainty about transatlantic relations and the US security role in Europe that has already had an impact on European security and defense cooperation. But if such sentiments are translated into actual policy, what might the long-term consequences be? Would the withdrawal or devaluation of the US security guarantee lead to increased EU security and defense policy integration and European strategic independence? Or might it do the opposite, and instead lead to increased EU disintegration and foreign and security policy competition?

This paper seeks to answer these questions, even if such answers can only be very tentative and highly speculative in nature. It proceeds as follows. The next section, by way of providing important historical background and context, briefly reviews the US role in the development of European security and defense cooperation up to the present. Specifically, it shows how over the years the United States, despite the varying views of different presidential administrations, has generally acted as a brake on European integration in this area and on the pursuit of European security and defense autonomy. The following section then examines the views, statements, and actions of President Trump and his administration regarding NATO, the EU, Russia, and the transatlantic relationship, as well as international affairs more broadly. In brief, these have undermined longstanding assumptions and cast a cloud of doubt and uncertainty over the future of NATO, the US security role in Europe, and transatlantic relations. The paper then briefly considers prominent theories of international relations to see if these offer any predictive insights into the impact of the "Trump shock" on European unity in general, and the prospects for security and defense integration more specifically. It finds that to the extent they do, these vary predictably. The final section before the Conclusion examines the considerable progress in European security and defense cooperation made in the past year, and assesses the extent to which the Trump shock and US foreign policy more broadly have contributed to this. In the Conclusion, the longer-term prospects for European security and

defense cooperation are considered. It is argued that while the near-term response to Trump-generated uncertainty has been movement towards greater unity and independence, we cannot be certain that this will be the long-term outcome. Instead, increased uncertainty about NATO and the US security guarantee could lead to greater disunion and foreign and security policy competition within the EU, albeit in parallel with increased integration among a smaller subset of European states.

The United States and European Security and Defense Cooperation

The US position on European defense integration since the 1950s has been ambivalent at best. While American administrations have generally supported European efforts to increase defense capacity, as a means of sharing the burden of providing for European (and later EU neighborhood) security, with the recent exception of the Obama administration they have discouraged or opposed any attempts at creating European defense autonomy, which could be viewed as threatening the predominance of NATO or US strategic leadership. According to Simon Duke (1994: 174), writing in the early 1990s, "…official statements of US support for a stronger European contribution to the common defense of the Alliance can be found from Truman to Bush. These statements are tempered by an equal concern that the European pillar may develop into a [autonomous] third force of the type advocated by de Gaulle, which Washington would be unable to influence decisively." To the extent that the United States has supported the creation of a European security and defense capacity (or "pillar," or "identity"), therefore, it has insisted that this be within the NATO framework and not an autonomous one.

The United States actually supported the doomed effort to establish a European Defense Community (EDC) in the early 1950s (Duke, 1994: 173). After rejection of the EDC treaty by the French National Assembly in 1954, the Western European Union (WEU) was created to provide an alternative forum for European defense cooperation, and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was admitted to NATO in 1955. However, the WEU remained essentially moribund for next 30 years, while NATO became the paramount institution for European security. Thus, according to Howorth (2017: 18), "The result of the EDC fiasco was that European defense became totally detached from European integration and subcontracted to NATO – in effect to the United States" (quote on p. 18). Furthermore, "Washington assumed [security and strategic] leadership simply by default," while "Europe (with a couple of exceptions) simply lost the will for and habit of thinking about its own security and defense" (Howorth, 2017: 19).

A next attempt at European defense cooperation, and autonomy, came in 1961 with French President de Gaulle's Fouchet Plan for a common foreign and defense policy. This proposed an intergovernmentalist model of cooperation, in contrast to the supranational approach of the EDC. It was rejected, however, by small European states who feared French and German domination, and by Atlanticists in the German political and security elite who feared it would undermine NATO and the US commitment to Europe's defense. De Gaulle's

initiative was also viewed negatively by the United States, and in response President Kennedy promoted, in 1962, the idea of European security "pillar" that would be firmly within NATO framework (Dembinski and Gaus, 1998: 94).

The creation in 1970 of a new intergovernmental mechanism for European foreign policy cooperation, the European Political Cooperation (EPC), also provoked US concern about Europe's growing foreign policy independence. In response, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger declared 1973 to be the "Year of Europe," an effort ostensibly to update and revitalize the transatlantic alliance, but in reality an attempt to undermine European independence and reassert US strategic leadership. As part of this initiative, Washington demanded that it be consulted prior to EPC deliberations, giving it the ability to influence European decisions. Eventually, the Europeans agreed, in the "Gymnich compromise" of April 1974, to allow the government holding the EPC's rotating presidency to hold consultations with third parties if all partners agreed (Dembinski and Gaus, 1998: 106-7).

New steps towards defense cooperation occurred in the 1980s, amid growing European concerns about American unilateralism and the Cold War hawkishness of the Reagan administration, and increased uncertainty about the reliability of the US security commitment to Europe. One measure was the decision in 1984 to reactivate the WEU as a framework for security and defense cooperation. In response, US Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Richard Burt, reminded Europeans that NATO was the proper forum for transatlantic security discussions, not a European-only organization like the WEU (Duke, 1994: 174).

Mutual concerns about the US security commitment to Europe also led to intensified Franco-German security and defense cooperation in the 1980s, under the leadership of French President Mitterrand and German Chancellor Kohl. This included the implementation in 1982 of the defense component of the 1963 Elysée Treaty, including a French commitment to forward defense of FRG, and the creation of a Franco-German Joint Committee for Security and Defense, later renamed the Joint Defense Council (JDC). There was also the 1987 agreement to create a Franco-German brigade, upgraded in 1992 to a Franco-German Corps – and later the Eurocorps, with an invitation to join extended to other WEU members – as a nucleus for an eventual common European army. The H.W. Bush administration objected to the formation of the Franco-German corps, claiming it could undermine NATO and transatlantic solidarity (Duke, 1994: 245-51). In the event, the Eurocorps remained largely moribund because of French and German disagreement about whether it should operate outside of (the French position) or within (German) NATO's integrated command structure, setting the basis for France's eventual decision in 1995 to abandon efforts to create an autonomous European defense capacity and to rejoin NATO's military structures instead (Dembinski and Gaus, 1998: 117).

Following the end of the Cold War, the Bush administration viewed French-led efforts to create a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) as a potential threat to NATO unity, while it sought to preserve US strategic leadership and predominance in European security affairs. According to a 1992 Pentagon planning paper, "It is of fundamental importance to

preserve NATO as the primary instrument of western defense and security, as well as the channel for US influence and participation in European security affairs. While the United States supports the goal of European integration, we must seek to prevent the emergence of European-only security arrangements which would undermine NATO, particularly the alliance's integrated command structure" (cited in Dembinski and Gaus, 1998: 112).

The United States also intervened in the 1991 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) negotiations – which eventually led to the signing of the 1992 Treaty on European Union (TEU), or Maastricht Treaty – to argue against efforts to establish an independent European defense capacity, centered on the WEU, claiming they posed a challenge to NATO and US (Duke, 1994: 172). As a result, and because of the objections of the United Kingdom and other Atlanticist member states, the defense integration components of the Maastricht Treaty were greatly watered down. The treaty merely stated that "the implementation of a common foreign and security policy, which might in time lead to a common defense," was an objective of the EU (Article J.4.1, TEU). Nor did it establish any new common defense institutions. Instead, rather than merging the WEU into the EU, the Maastricht Treaty declared the WEU to be the Union's defense arm, while envisioning its eventual formal incorporation into EU (Juncos, 2017: 116).

The Clinton administration, preoccupied with domestic and economic issues, was initially more positive about ESDI. At the January 1994 NATO summit in Brussels, the United States approved a declaration that voiced "full support to the development of a European Security and Defense Identity which … might in time lead to a common [European] defense compatible with that of the Atlantic Alliance" (NATO, 1994).

By the end of its first term, however, the Clinton administration's attitude had shifted to greater skepticism, with mounting concern that the development of ESDI might undermine NATO and American leadership (Dembinski and Gaus, 1998: 113-14). Washington thus resisted French proposals for NATO reform that would allow the creation of autonomous European capabilities and an independent operational command. The resulting compromise, reached at the June 1996 NATO summit in Berlin, created a mechanism for smaller groups of states, forming Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs), to borrow NATO (in other words, US) assets and facilities for EU-led operations in which the United States did not want to participate. However, Washington retained the right to approve such operations and to monitor the use of assets, giving it effective control. As result, the Berlin agreement effectively kept the emergent ESDI firmly within the NATO framework (Dembinski and Gaus, 1998: 118-121). Nevertheless, efforts at European defense integration continued, but at the June 1997 Amsterdam summit the attempt to formally merge the WEU into the EU was once again blocked by the UK and neutral member states (Juncos, 2017: 116).

A major step towards European defense integration occurred a little more than one year later, however, when British Prime Minister Blair and French President Chirac agreed, at their December 1998 summit in St. Malo, that the EU should have its own military capacity and capability for autonomous action. With the Saint Malo agreement Prime Minister Blair,

frustrated by European incapacity to act in the unfolding Kosovo crisis, and seeking to place Britain back into the center of European affairs after its abstention from Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) at Maastricht, abandoned long-standing British objections to providing the EU with an independent military capacity and decision-making capabilities (Whitman, 1999). In response, the Clinton administration did not oppose or seek to block the new initiative, but it warned the EU about anything that would de-couple Europe from the United States, duplicate NATO capacities and efforts, or discriminate against non-EU NATO members (the "three Ds") (Albright, 1998: 22).

The St. Malo declaration provided a decisive boost for the creation of a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) – later renamed the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). The plans for CSDP were mostly developed in first half of 1999, under the German presidency of the EU, and then formally adopted with 2001 Nice Treaty. The institutional structure of CSDP consists of a number of new bodies, including the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EU Military Committee (EUMC), and the EU Military Staff (EUMS). It also includes a European Defense Agency (EDA), to promote the joint development of military capabilities, and the formation of Multinational Battlegroups, deployable units of about 1,500 troops drawn from different member states and under a "lead nation." CSDP has also become operational, with the deployment of more than 35 civilian and military missions since 2003 (Juncos, 2017).

CSDP was further institutionalized by the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, which created the new position of High Representative (HR) of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a new diplomatic service, the European External Action Service (EEAS) (Juncos, 2017). The Lisbon Treaty also created possibility of "Permanent Structured Cooperation," which would allow, upon the approval of all member states, a smaller group of member states to cooperate more extensively on military and defense matters, a procedure which has become an important basis for defense integration after 2016.

Much of the development of CSDP took place during the two terms of the George W. Bush administration (2001-2009), and in the context of transatlantic conflict over US unilateralism, the Iraq war, and the Global War on Terror. Nevertheless, despite the Bush administration's broad skepticism of the EU – verging on the outright hostility of some neoconservative policy advisors – it did not attempt to block the development of CSDP. While it shared many of the same concerns about CSDP as the Clinton administration, the Bush administration adopted, in the words of one advisor, a more positive "tone," choosing "not to fight" with the EU about CSDP but instead focusing on the improvement of EU military capabilities as the United States shifted its focus to the broader war on terror (Schake, 2003: 111).

A major exception to this more benign posture was the struggle over the attempt to create an autonomous EU planning and operational capacity. In the context of transatlantic disagreement over the Iraq war, in April 2003 the leaders of France, Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg – all openly critical of the US invasion of Iraq – met in Brussels, at the so-called chocolate summit, to discuss the creation of an EU Operational Headquarters separate from

NATO, a move that was strongly opposed by both the United States and London. In the fall of 2003, however, these states accepted a British compromise that offered a more NATO-friendly solution – an EU cell in NATO headquarters (SHAPE, Supreme Headquarters of Allied Powers in Europe), along with an autonomous civil/military planning cell within the EUMS and an Operations Center that could be activated on the request of the Council on a case-by-case basis (Juncos, 2017: 118).

As this incident suggests, the United States during the Bush years was able to rely on the British "Trojan Horse" to limit the development of CSDP and prevent the emergence of a truly autonomous EU military capacity. By Bush's second term, US concern about CSDP had also waned as the limited capacity of EU to act autonomously and extent of its continued security dependence on United States became apparent (Rees, 2011: 74).

The Obama administration – less focused on Europe than most of its predecessors, preoccupied with conflicts in the broader Middle East, and preparing to make its historic strategic "pivot" to Asia – adopted a much more positive view of CSDP while also encouraging the EU to take more responsibility for security its own neighborhood. As US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Philip Gordon, testified to Congress in December 2009, "it is the policy of this administration to support a strengthened European defense capacity" (quoted in Rees, 2011: 82). European states were unable to take advantage of this more supportive US stance, however, consumed as they were by the effects of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and the Greek and Eurozone debt crisis, as well as British resistance to further defense integration, which only deepened with the formation of a more Euroskeptical Conservative-led government in 2010. This lack of progress generated increased frustration within the Obama administration which, according to one analyst, was "increasingly supportive of any initiative which might lead to stronger European defense capabilities, including EU efforts." The result was an interesting role reversal: "In stark contrast to the early years of [CSDP], when then British Prime Minister Tony Blair would try to reassure the Clinton and Bush administrations that EU defense cooperation was in the interest of the United States … officials within the Obama administration were [now] trying to convince the British Conservative Party that EU defense efforts were in the interests of the United Kingdom" (O'Donnell, 2011).

In the end, if US opposition to European security and defense integration over the years has been based on concern that it would undermine NATO or pose a challenge to US strategic leadership, then the experience of the last two decades, since the launch of CSDP in 1999, has shown these concerns to be greatly overblown, to the point where successive US administrations became either disinterested (Bush) or frustrated (Obama) about European efforts or the lack thereof. This frustration is shared by European proponents of defense integration. According to Howorth (2017: 22-24), for example, CSDP aimed at providing the EU with a) political/strategic autonomy, b) an independent military capacity, and c) operational capability, but it has thus far failed at all three objectives. As he points out, whenever genuine crises have emerged in the EU periphery – e.g. Georgia (2008), Ukraine (2014), Libya (2011),

and Mali (2013) – CSDP has proven "completely irrelevant" and the crises have been addressed by either individual member states (i.e. France) or by NATO. As a result, he concludes, "The EU today is even more dependent on the United States and NATO than it ever was when CSDP was launched."

As the above makes clear, US opposition is not the only reason for the stunted development of CSDP. Indeed, under Obama the US government was actually supportive of European defense initiatives. Much of the blame also has to be given to internal EU factors, including the intransigence of individual member states, but especially Britain, the reluctance of European governments to spend more on defense, and national sovereignty concerns. What this suggests, then, is that the most important way in which the United States has inhibited EU defense integration is through its guarantee of European security, which has produced a comfortable "addiction to American defense" that European governments have found difficult to kick (Keohane, 2017). With the election in November 2016 of Donald Trump, however, the United States may take on an entirely new role in relation to European defense integration. By sowing doubt and uncertainty about the future of NATO and the transatlantic alliance, the Trump administration, together with Brexit, may help reinvigorate and push forward efforts at defense integration. Before discussing the whether this will be so, the controversial views of President Trump on European security and transatlantic relations are briefly examined.

The Trump Shock

The unexpected election of Donald Trump as President of the United States has provided a genuine "shock" to transatlantic relations and the international system. With his populist-nationalist "America-first" views, Trump appears to be signaling an end to America's global leadership role and support for the post-WWII liberal global order based on free trade, multilateralism, and the spread of democracy and human rights which it helped build. He also appears to be turning his back on traditional allies and alliances that have been key pillars of this international order, most importantly the transatlantic alliance based on close ties between the United States and a strong and united Europe. Instead, he has called into question American support for NATO and the US promise to defend Europe in case of attack, and he appears to have little regard for the EU as an organization, seeming to prefer instead its disintegration. As a consequence of the Trump shock, there has been growing uncertainty in Europe about American intentions and reliability, coupled with an emerging determination to forge a more independent and self-reliant path in global and security affairs. As we shall see in a later section, this has led to the renewal of calls for European defense integration.

On the campaign trail, candidate Trump gave many indications of his unconventional views, which diverged sharply from the traditional positions of American foreign policy. He called NATO "obsolete" and suggested that, under a Trump presidency, the United States might not come to the defense of other NATO members if they did not "fulfill their [financial] obligations"

to the alliance, by which he appeared to mean payments in the NATO budget. He praised Russian President Putin as a strong and effective leader and called for closer US-Russian ties, while suggesting that, if elected, he might seek to undo sanctions imposed on Moscow for its annexation of Crimea and military intervention in southeastern Ukraine. He celebrated the June 2016 Brexit vote and suggested that other countries should follow the UK's example and leave the EU, and he developed an association with former UK Independence Party (UKIP) leader and Brexit proponent Nigel Farage, who appeared at Trump campaign rallies. He also criticized Europe's most prominent national leader, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, for her decision in September 2015 to open the door to an influx of Syrian and other refugees. More broadly, in interviews and statements Trump expressed considerable disdain for international institutions, multilateral trade agreements, the principle of open borders, traditional alliances and alliance commitments, and other basic elements of the existing global order, reflecting the views of prominent far-right nationalists on his campaign team like former Breitbart News executive manager Steve Bannon (Trump 2016a, b; McCammon, 2016; Diamond, 2015).

Still, Trump was not expected to win, and even after his shocking victory there was hope that he would not actually do what he said he would during the campaign, and that his views would be tempered by the realities of office and the advice of more establishment or moderate figures in his administration like his selection for Vice President, Mike Pence, the nominees for Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, and Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, and his choice for National Security Advisor, H.R. McMaster. Thus, European leaders were highly dismayed when Trump repeated many of these controversial views in an interview with European media on January 15, 2017, only five days before his formal inauguration (Euractiv.com, 2017a).

Even at this early stage, there were indications that European leaders were beginning to rethink the future of transatlantic ties. In a speech on 12 January in Brussels, Chancellor Merkel warned that there was "no eternal guarantee" of continued close cooperation between the United States and Europe, and that it would be "naive always to rely on others" to solve conflicts in the EU neighborhood like the one in Ukraine (Euractiv.com, 2017). And in his letter to EU27 leaders before an informal summit in Malta in early February, European Council President Donald Tusk listed among the main threats to the EU, "worrying declarations by the new American administration." Alluding to the Trump phenomenon as well as populist-nationalist movements in Britain and elsewhere in Europe, he asserted that "For the first time in our history, in an increasingly multipolar external world, so many are becoming openly anti-European, or Eurosceptic at best." The new leadership in Washington, he claimed, "puts the European Union in a difficult situation; with the new administration seeming to put into question the last 70 years of American foreign policy" (Tusk, 2017).

Over the next two months, however, top figures in the Trump administration sought to counter the President's rhetoric and calm European nerves about any dramatic shifts in American foreign policy. In mid-February, Secretary of Defense Mattis visited NATO headquarters in Brussels, where he expressed strong US support for NATO. He nevertheless

coupled this statement of support with a blunt warning, telling NATO partners they must increase their military spending or the United States would retreat from its commitment to the transatlantic alliance. "No longer can the American taxpayer carry a disproportionate share of the defense of Western values," he declared; adding, "Americans cannot care more for your children's future security than you do" (Herszenhorn, 2017).

At about the same time, Vice President Pence spoke at the annual Munich Security Conference and attempted to reassure Europe of the continued US commitment to NATO and the transatlantic alliance. However, European officials were left unimpressed by the lack of policy specifics, while some were also concerned about Pence's failure to make any reference in his speech to the EU (Rogin, 2017a). Pence sought to make amends for the latter misstep by visiting Brussels two days later where, in an address to the European Council, he assured his audience of the "steadfast and enduring" commitment of the United States to the European Union (White House, 2017).

Pence's reassuring words were undercut, however, by other signals coming from the Trump administration, including Trump's ties to Farage, and reports that a British-based American professor known for his Euroskeptical views, Ted Malloch, might be appointed by Trump to be the new US ambassador to the EU (Rogin, 2017b). Shortly after his inauguration, Trump had hosted British Prime Minister Theresa May, promising her a quick trade deal for UK as it leaves EU, in stark contrast to President Obama's pre-Brexit warning that Britain would be "at the back of the queue" for trade talks with the United States if it voted to leave the EU. Also, in the week before Pence's visit to Brussels key White House advisor Bannon made highly critical comments about the EU in a meeting with Germany's US ambassador, Peter Wittig, declaring that the EU was a flawed construct and that the new US administration preferred to deal bilaterally with individual European governments rather than with the EU (Barkin, 2017). It was also believed that Trump supported the candidacy of far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen, a strong critic of the EU, in upcoming elections for President of France, a position that he eventually confirmed in an interview with the Associate Press on in late April (Quigley, 2017). In view of these signals, some European officials were warning that Europe should prepare for a new US policy of "hostility toward the EU" (Barkin, 2017).

By early March, therefore, more than a month after his inauguration, there was growing uncertainty in Europe about the direction of Trump's foreign policy and his views on NATO, the EU, and the transatlantic alliance. Despite the reassurances provided by Pence and other US officials, many Europeans noted the gap between these statements and those of the President and some of his advisors (Karnitschnig, 2017). US-Europe relations were also unsettled by Trump's protectionist rhetoric and his threat to pull the United States out of the Paris agreement on climate change. With the United States now stepping back from its previous global leadership role, and with the Trump administration's apparent disdain for many of the key elements of the global liberal order, many were now hailing German Chancellor Merkel as the new leader of "free world," while an increasingly assertive China indicated its desire to step

into the leadership void to become the main defender of global free trade and efforts to combat climate change. In this context, matters were not helped by the tense, awkward meeting between Trump and Merkel on 17 March, in the German Chancellor's first visit to Washington under the new administration (Mason and Rinke, 2017)

Soon, however, more positive signals began emanating from Washington regarding NATO and the US commitment to European security. In late March, Secretary of State Tillerson attended a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels – a meeting he initially had planned to skip, to the dismay of other NATO members, before it could be rescheduled to not conflict with a visit to Washington of Chinese President Xi Jinping – where he assured his colleagues of continued strong US support for NATO and the transatlantic alliance. Tillerson also strongly reaffirmed the US commitment to NATO's Article 5 mutual defense clause, and he expressed a tough US approach to dealing with Russia over Ukraine (Herszenhorn and Paravicini, 2017). Two weeks later, in advance of the President's own visit to Brussels in May, in a Washington meeting with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, Trump reversed himself on NATO and claimed that it was "no longer obsolete." According to Trump, this was because NATO partners were now paying more and doing more to fight terrorism, changes he claimed were in response to his previous criticisms of the bloc (McCaskill, 2017).

These positive gestures were undercut, however, by Trump's turbulent visit to Brussels on 25 May. In a speech before the new NATO headquarters building, Trump refused to publicly reaffirm the Article 5 pledge, which he was widely expected to do, instead choosing to lecture other NATO leaders about the need to spend more on defense. As it later turned out, Trump chose to leave out of his speech a line reaffirming the mutual defense commitment that had been pushed for and inserted by top advisers like Tillerson, Mattis, and McMaster. The omission surprised and disappointed other NATO leaders, and was portrayed as creating a major rift in the transatlantic alliance (Glasser, 2017). Moreover, Trump's boorish and rude behavior at the Brussels summit, and at the G-7 summit in Sicily held the following two days, at which Trump rebuffed efforts by other leaders to persuade him to keep the United States committed to the Paris climate change accord, alienated the US administration from other Western governments and created new conflicts in transatlantic relations (Der Spiegel, 2017).

If this were not enough, European leaders were also disconcerted by an op-ed article co-authored by McMaster and Trump's chief economic advisor, Gary Cohn, which appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* just several days after Trump's Europe trip. In it they wrote that, "The president embarked on his first foreign trip with a clear-eyed outlook that the world is not a "global community" but an arena where nations, nongovernmental actors and businesses engage and compete for advantage ... Rather than deny this elemental nature of international affairs, we embrace it." (McMaster and Cohn, 2017). According to *Der Spiegel* (2017) the announcement of this new "Trump Doctrine" "was a clear signal to America's erstwhile Western allies that they can no longer rely on the United States as a partner." The article, which portrayed a rather bleak and transactional view of the world, characterized more by conflict

and self-interest rather than cooperation and mutual gains, also reportedly left Chancellor Merkel and her team "deeply discouraged" (Thrush and Smale, 2017).

The reaction to Trump's disastrous first visit to Europe was swift and stunning. Several days after the G-7 meeting, Merkel, at a beer tent campaign event in Munich, publicly declared that Europe could no longer count on the United States as a reliable partner. Alluding to the United States and the recent events in Brussels and Sicily, she declared that "The times in which we can fully count on others are somewhat over, as I have experienced in the past few days." Instead, she asserted, "We Europeans must really take our destiny into our own hands." While Europe would continue to have friendly relations with the United States, she declared, "we have to fight for our own future ourselves" (McGee and Parker, 2017). Merkel's view that the United States under Trump was no longer a reliable partner was also reportedly shared by the newly-elected French President Emmanuel Macron (Der Spiegel, 2017), who already in April, before he was elected, proclaimed in an interview with a French newspaper that in an increasingly dangerous world it was "naïve" for Europe to continue living under "someone else's umbrella" (Vinocur, 2017).

In the wake of this fallout, Trump moved to reassure America's NATO allies, finally reaffirming, although in an offhand way, the United States' Article 5 commitment in a press conference in early June with the visiting Romanian President (Baker, 2017). He restated this commitment in a 6 July speech in Warsaw on his second trip to Europe prior to attending the G-20 summit in Hamburg (Thrush and Hirschfeld Davis, 2017). A more positive Bastille Day visit to Paris several days later, at the invitation of President Macron, also helped to salve the wounds opened by Trump's previous statements and behavior (McAuley, 2017). Further turbulence in transatlantic relations was generated in late July by US Congressional actions to impose additional sanctions on Russia, as punishment for Moscow's meddling in the 2016 presidential elections, and to limit the President's ability to unilaterally ease existing sanctions on Russia imposed for its annexation of Crimea and military intervention in Ukraine. The US actions prompted a confused and divided response from Europe, with some member states, like Germany and France, complaining about the negative impact of the new sanctions on European firms engaged in energy projects with Russia and the illegality of US extraterritorial measures, and Commission President Juncker threatening EU retaliatory measures (Beesley and Wagstyl, 2017; Gurzu and Bayer, 2017). This angry reaction struck some commentators as strange given the previously expressed fears of some European leaders that the Trump administration might seek to ease existing sanctions on Russia – imposed by President Obama in coordinated fashion with Europe – and cut a deal with Moscow over their heads, something which the new measures make less likely (Nougayrède, 2017). In general, however, the sanctions dispute only underscored the unsettling impact of the Trump effect on transatlantic relations.

While Trump's belated affirmation of the United States' Article 5 commitment was reassuring, much damage had already been done. Europe's confidence in the United States, and President Trump specifically, had been badly shaken, and a strong note of uncertainty and

doubt had been injected into transatlantic relations. Within this new context of uncertainty, many Europeans now shared the view of Germany's powerful Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble that the EU must assume greater responsibility to defend a liberal, democratic world order as the United States appeared increasingly less willing to do so. According to Schäuble, "If the United States is starting to take a skeptical view of its role as the guardian of global order – and we've already seen hints of this in recent years – then I would see this as a call to action directed at Europe, including Germany" (Euractiv.com, 2017c). Moreover, this new European responsibility extended to security and defense, areas in which the EU should become more integrated and self-reliant. In the words of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, speaking at June 9 conference in Prague, EU members must increase their military cooperation and rely less on the United States, which was "no longer interested in guaranteeing Europe's security in our place." Europe's security "can no longer be outsourced," he claimed, and "deference to NATO can no longer be used as a convenient alibi to argue against greater European efforts" to provide for their own defense (Crosby, 2017).

What steps the EU has actually taken towards greater defense integration in the past year, since the Brexit vote and Trump's election, will be examined later in this paper. First, however, we review prominent theories of international relations and European integration to see what they might predict about the impact of the "Trump shock," and the greater uncertainty in transatlantic relations and global affairs it has introduced, on European defense cooperation.

The Impact of the Trump Shock: What does IR Theory have to Say?

As Schäuble's comments cited above indicate, European doubts about the United States' global role and its commitment to Europe predate the Trump administration. While the H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations were eager to preserve America's preeminent European security role following the end of the Cold War, since 2001 the United States seems to have lost interest in Europe as a security issue and shifted its focus elsewhere. Under the G.W. Bush administration, transatlantic relations became strained by US unilateralism, the Iraq War, and Washington's militarized pursuit of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). To the extent that the Bush administration paid attention to Europe, it was in the effort to disaggregate Europe in the search for partners in the GWOT and to weaken opposition to American policies (in Bush's first term, at least; in the second, it sought the support of a more united Europe for US anti-terrorism and democratization initiatives), or to push for democratization and NATO expansion in the former Soviet zone, a policy which itself divided and discomforted many Europeans. While transatlantic relations improved under Obama, who shared European preferences for diplomacy and multilateralism and skepticism about the use of military force, Europe also felt somewhat neglected and abandoned as the United States turned its attention to Asia and pushed Europe to take more responsibility for dealing with conflicts in its immediate neighborhood. As discussed above, however, uncertainty about transatlantic relations and the

US commitment to Europe have reached new levels, and qualitatively new dimensions, in the initial months of the Trump administration.

To help gauge the potential impact of this new atmosphere of uncertainty on European security and defense cooperation, we can refer to prominent theories of international relations (IR), which have much to say in general about conflict and cooperation between states and the conditions which make either more likely, and about the implications for Europe of America's security role more specifically. Hopefully, these theories can help provide answers to two pressing questions posed by the current uncertainty about US foreign policy and Washington's commitment to European security: First, how will Europe respond to this increased uncertainty? And second, if European states should respond by making greater efforts at security and defense cooperation in the pursuit of more self-sufficiency and strategic autonomy, what are the chances that they will succeed?

Among IR theories, neorealist or realist theories are certainly the most pessimistic about the possibility of war and conflict and the difficulty of inter-state cooperation in a dangerous world. While there are important differences between the spare, mechanistic neorealism of Kenneth Waltz (1979) and others, and the richer, more contextual traditional realism of Hans Morgenthau (1948) or the "neoclassical" foreign policy realism of Gideon Rose (1998), scholars operating within the broad realist camp share a number of key basic assumptions. First, they give prominence to sovereign states as the key actors in international politics. Second, they believe that states are essentially coherent and rational actors that define their interests primarily in military security terms; for realists, what matters most and shapes foreign policy behavior is a state's relative material power capabilities, with international relations being viewed as a zero-sum game in which one state's gain in power is another's loss. And third, they believe the defining feature of international politics is its "anarchic" character, by which they mean the absence of a common power or government to provide security and ensure order. An important outcome of anarchy is the "security dilemma," a key concept of realism which refers to the mutual suspicion of states in an uncertain international environment. According to Jervis (1978: 170), in international politics, in the absence of a common protector or enforcer of the law such as exists in domestic politics, "one state's gain in security often inadvertently threatens others." Security dilemmas thus lead to arms races, protective alliances, and the heightened possibility of conflict. While the security dilemma can be lessened, at least temporarily, by alliances, it never really goes away; in fact one prominent realist scholar of alliances, Glenn Snyder (1984, 1997), speaks of an "alliance security dilemma," characterized by uncertainty between allies, in addition to the usual security dilemma between adversaries.

When it comes to Europe and the United States, a major premise of realism is that US protection via NATO is a key factor making European cooperation and integration possible. It does this by eliminating or at least mitigating the security dilemma between European states, reducing mutual suspicion and mistrust and enabling closer cooperation on economic and social matters. An example of this viewpoint is Josef Joffe (1984: 74-75), who asserts that the US

security presence was a major precondition and catalyst for European integration after the Second World War. "Conventional [alliance] theory holds that states coalesce in order to assure their security," he argues. "In the case of NATO, however, [European states] coalesced because their security was assured – by a powerful outsider that delivered both external protection and internal order to Western Europe." "Order" provided by the "American pacifier," he concludes, "was the precondition of alliance and integration," and a clear lesson to be drawn is that without the US security presence Europe might revert to its prewar pattern of hostile interactions between states.

This general presumption that the US security guarantee is a precondition of European integration and cooperation was the basis for widespread predictions by realists after the end of the Cold War in 1989 that, without US leadership and NATO, Europe would break apart under the pressures of a renewed security dilemma. On this basis, the prominent neorealist scholar John Mearsheimer (1990: 6) argued that with the end of the Cold War the United States would inevitably withdraw from Europe, which would revert to a multipolar order, leading to his famous prediction that end of Cold War would mean disintegration of the EU. Similar predictions were made throughout the 1990s, as debate on the future of NATO and the US security role in Europe continued. According to Robert J. Art (1996: 6-8), for example, if the United States "removed [its] security blanket from Europe," increased "security competition" between European states – which had been dampened by NATO and the US security guarantee after the Second World War – would inevitably ensue. Only a continued American security presence, he argued, could provide the basis for further European economic and political integration and "prevent corrosive nationalistic backsliding" from occurring (38). Similar arguments about the negative impact of a US withdrawal from Europe were made by scholars like Michael Mandelbaum (1995) and Zbigniew Brzezinski (1997).

Liberal IR theories also come in many varieties but share some common assumptions or characteristics. Like neorealism, liberal-institutionalist theories of international relations assume that the state is a rational actor, although not necessarily a unitary or coherent one. Instead of being fixed or given, state preferences are formed through complex processes of domestic politics and bargaining among various institutional and societal interests. Nor do liberal theories presume a hierarchy of issues or interests with military security at the top; instead, states pursue a variety of goals and interests with their relative importance subject to change. Unlike realist theories, which view states as relatively self-contained and impermeable "billiard balls," liberal theories assert that states are open to international influences, and that preferences and behavior are influenced by the situation of "complex interdependence" between nations which enmeshes them in a dense web of contacts and ties at different levels (Keohane and Nye, 1977). Liberal-institutionalist theories also assume that international institutions matter, and that institutions can promote or facilitate cooperation by increasing certainty and reducing transaction costs in bargaining between states. In this manner, institutions can mitigate anarchy and provide a basis for global order beyond hegemony or balances of power (Keohane, 1984, 1989; Oye, 1986; Ikenberry, 2001). Unlike realists,

therefore, liberal theories view international relations as a positive-sum game, with mutual gains possible through cooperation between states. Liberal theories also differ from their realist counterparts in believing that the nature of national political systems matter for their international behavior, with democracies for instance tending to be less warlike and aggressive than non-democracies, or at least not likely to fight each other (Doyle, 1983).

Constructivist IR theories accept the importance of interdependence and institutions but give primary emphasis to the role of normative and ideational factors in relations between states. State interests and preferences are not fixed or objectively based in material conditions, but are the product of changing ideas, norms, meanings, and identities that are constructed through social interaction. For constructivists, therefore, anarchy is not an objective reality but a social construct that can be mitigated through changes in perceptions of interests and identities of the key actors of the international system (Wendt, 1992, 1999; Finnemore, 1996). Constructivists also accept the possibility of creating "security communities," associations of states among whom war is no longer conceivable and that are distinguished by high levels of mutual trust and responsiveness among governments. While shared interests, common institutions, and high levels of interdependence are characteristic of security communities, their decisive feature is a common identity or sense of community among members (Deutsch, 1957; Adler and Barnett, 1998; Risse-Kappen, 1995). Security communities, once established, tend to be stable. They can, however, break down or erode through the effect of such factors as external "shocks," domestic change, and normative degeneration leading to changes of identity and loss of mutual trust (Adler and Barnett, 1998; Müller, 2006; Koschut, 2016; Risse, 2016).

While liberal and constructivist IR theories differ on many points, they share the basic assumption that state interests are not given or eternal, and that states and their behavior can be changed by international context and interaction – whether through increased economic and social interdependence, being enmeshed in a growing web of international institutions and processes, or through normative and identity change driven by international interaction. This basic assumption is also characteristic of theories of European integration grounded in liberal IR theory, such as neofunctionalism (Haas, 1958; Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991; Niemann and Schmitter, 2009) and liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik, 1993, 1998; Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, 2009), as well as the study of "Europeanization," especially constructivist variants emphasizing the importance of elite socialization and normative change within the European institutional context (Cowles, Caporaso, and Risse, 2001; Graziano and Vink, 2007).

It is not surprising, therefore, that liberal and constructivist theories generate quite different views from realism on the role of the United States in European integration and the potential impact on Europe of a reduced US security presence. In contrast to the realist view that the US security umbrella was a necessary precondition and catalyst for European integration after WWII, liberal integration theories largely ignore the US factor (and external factors more broadly) and view the construction of Europe as a largely endogenous process. Liberal theories also tend to view the transformative effect of integration for European nation-

states as permanent and irreversible. Thus, in the aftermath of the Cold War liberal IR theorists made two basic claims about the impact of this systemic change on transatlantic relations and Europe. First, they argued, in contrast to many realists, that the end of the Cold War would not inevitably lead to a growing distance between the United States and Europe and a possible transatlantic divorce, because of the strength of Western and transatlantic institutions (Ikenberry, 2001), the extent of economic interdependence between the United States and Europe (Kahler, 2005), and the shared values and normative bonds underpinning the transatlantic security community (Risse-Kappen, 1995). Second, they rejected the arguments of realists that a reduced US security presence in Europe would lead to a resurgence of conflict and instability, pointing to the transformative effects of the European integration process since the 1950s. According to Duke (1994: 185), for example, the idea that a US security presence in Europe is necessary to impose peace and harmony, and to prevent a return of mistrust and conflict among old adversaries, "runs counter to the entire logic of European integration, which was to create interdependent structures, especially economic ones, that would make warfare unthinkable." Even without the US security umbrella, he argues, a return to the past is not in the cards, since "Europe in the 1990s is fundamentally different than that of 1919 or 1945."

Based on this brief review of realist, liberal, and constructivist IR theories, we can ask how each would answer the two questions posed above about the impact of increased uncertainty on European security and defense cooperation. Liberal theories tend to view alliances as another form of international institution or regime that can facilitate broader cooperation between states, beyond the defense against common threats for which they may have been initially formed (Keohane, 2003). From this perspective, increased uncertainty about the reliability of NATO and the US security guarantee is likely to promote European efforts to mend and reform the alliance to keep it a viable provider of security and a forum for cooperation on other issues. Downgrading the importance of the alliance or even exiting it would appear to make little sense. Constructivists, on the other hand, view alliances as expressions of collective identity that evolve through social interaction (Risse-Kappen, 1995). Despite increased uncertainty about US foreign and security policy under Trump, constructivists emphasize the robustness of the transatlantic identity and the importance of dialogue and discussion to enable the alliance to adapt to new circumstances and views. Both liberal and constructivist theories, in other words, predict enhanced efforts to reform and maintain the transatlantic alliance, to preserve its useful functionality or because it is an expression of a continued strong, although possibly eroding, transatlantic collective identity. However, neither perspective would preclude parallel efforts to build an independent European defense and security capacity as a precautionary move, something which is best explained by realist alliance theory.

According to realist theory, alliances between states are formed to protect against common threats; they are therefore a response by states to the persistent security dilemma that is the byproduct of international anarchy. Alliances are not permanent, however, but are affected by the extent and nature of perceived threats and the international structure or balance of power. Moreover, as Snyder (1984, 1997) has argued, there are two types of security

dilemmas: a primary security dilemma between adversaries that leads to the formation of alliances, and a secondary security dilemma within alliances stemming from uncertainty between alliance partners. According to Snyder, within existing alliances in a multipolar setting (which increasingly characterizes the global situation today), a heightened sense of insecurity leads to two possible responses by states: a recommitment to existing alliances or, if a state is dissatisfied with the security provided by the existing alliance, abandonment of the alliance in order to seek deals with others. A third, intermediate, choice is also possible and consistent with realist theory, however, and that is to maintain existing alliance commitments while also "hedging one's bets" against the possibility of abandonment by one's alliance partners by making separate preparations or arrangements (Art, 2004). For European states, a strategy of hedging against the possibility that the United States might someday abandon its commitment to European security would mean the development of a truly autonomous security and defense capacity. This would be a stark departure from the strategy of "bandwagoning" (sticking close to a stronger partner or coalition (Waltz, 1979; Walt, 2003) with the United States that has marked the previous seven decades, but which Haine (2015) and others argue is now "either hopeless or dangerous" in an emerging multipolar world (and this was before Trump!).

If realist, liberal, and constructivist theories are not necessarily in disagreement over a European strategy of hedging on security and defense, they yield divergent expectations concerning the prospects of European defense integration under conditions of heightened uncertainty and insecurity. Liberal and constructivist theories would predict higher chances of success, based on the existing extent of integration and the strong institutional and normative ties between European states. For liberals, the already dense EU institutional context should facilitate increased cooperation on security and defense, while for constructivists the strong sense of community and common identity already generated by European integration should underpin enhanced processes of elite socialization within the security and defense sector, thus helping to ensure success. Realist theory yields more pessimistic expectations, however. While hedging may be the adopted European strategy or course of action, realists would expect this to be pursued in different ways by different states or groups of states. In the context of increased uncertainty (about the US security commitment) and a heightened security dilemma (within Europe), increased cooperation on security and defense may indeed occur among some EU countries, but reawakened, historically-based, rivalries and suspicions (which liberals and constructivists see as having been banished through the transformative effects of integration) might lead other member states to hedge by making separate deals with each other or with non-EU states. The outcome, then, might be increased security and defense integration among a smaller subgroup or core of European states but disintegrative effects for the EU as a whole.

Recent Developments

The past year, beginning in June 2016, has seen significant progress on further European security and defense cooperation, with real steps taken towards the attainment of EU

independence and autonomy in these areas. This progress has been promoted by several factors, including Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine since early 2014, which have unsettled Europe's security order and revived the EU's interest in developing its hard power capabilities; the July 2016 EU-NATO cooperation agreement, which included an EU pledge to boost European defense capabilities (European Council, 2016a); and the 23 June 2016 Brexit vote, which made increased defense integration a means of demonstrating the EU's continued vitality and importance while it also removed a major traditional brake on European defense cooperation. US foreign policy under the Obama administration, which included both the "pivot" to Asia and the insistence that Europe take on greater security responsibilities in its own neighborhood, was another factor spurring increased European defense cooperation. However, the election of Trump in November 2016 and the considerable uncertainty about the US security commitment and transatlantic relations that his administration has generated have also played a key role and boosted European efforts in this regard.

An indication of growing support for renewed efforts at defense cooperation came in early March 2015, when in remarks to a German newspaper European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker called for the creation of EU army, arguing that NATO is not enough to ensure European security, and that a common European army would enable the EU to better deal with the threats posed by Russia, while it would also allow the EU to take on more responsibility in the world (Euractiv, 2015). Juncker's statement was followed in October 2015 by the call of the European People's Party (EPP) – the largest European-level political party, and one counting numerous national governing parties among its members – at its Madrid party congress for a European defense union and a common army, citing as a reason the new threat from Russia (Vincenti, 2015).

Against this backdrop, under the leadership of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (HRVP) Frederica Mogherini, the EU was working to develop a new comprehensive security strategy, to replace the European Security Strategy (ESS) adopted in 2003. The new EU Global Strategy – *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy* (European Union, 2016) – was formally presented at the June 2016 EU summit, as fate would have it only five days after the stunning Brexit vote. In approving the document, the European Council asked the HRVP to develop its proposals further, including those dealing with security and defense (European Council, 2016b: 7).

The Brexit vote gave new impetus to plans for security and defense cooperation, which were now viewed, along with further consolidation of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), as a primary means by which the EU could demonstrate its continued vitality, relevance, and importance in the face of various crisis and mounting disintegrative pressures. At the same time, Britain's prospective exit from the EU would remove a longstanding brake on closer defense cooperation, making such plans more achievable. Taking the lead was French President François Hollande, who in late July 2016 announced plans for a new French initiative for

European defense cooperation in collaboration with Germany (Barbière, 2016). Finding a receptive German government, on 12 September Paris and Berlin released a joint paper calling for more EU defense cooperation, including the establishment of an EU military headquarters (Euractiv, 2016a). The Franco-German paper was then discussed at an informal meeting of EU defense ministers in Bratislava on 27 September (Euractiv, 2016b).

On 14 November 2016, the HRVP's plan for implementing the security and defense provisions of the EU Global Strategy – the "Implementation Plan on Security and Defense" – was presented to EU foreign and defense ministers meeting in Brussels. The plan, which was adopted, featured several proposals for deepening defense cooperation, including launching a new Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) arrangement among a group of willing member states (Council of the EU, 2016). This would be one of the first uses of this mechanism, which was introduced by the 2009 Lisbon Treaty to enable smaller groups of member states meeting certain conditions to strengthen their cooperation on military matters. Prior to the meeting, the governments of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain had issued a joint letter calling for a common European defense policy that would enable the EU to act independently of the United States to deal with external crises (Euractiv, 2016c).

Another major step occurred two weeks later, on 30 November 2016, when the Commission unveiled its "European Defense Action Plan" (European Commission, 2016a). The plan, which built on work done the previous year by a group of experts convened by the Commission (EU ISS, 2016; Valášek, 2017), included the proposal for a European Defense Fund and "other actions to support Member States' more efficient spending in joint defense capabilities, strengthen European citizens' security and foster a competitive and innovative industrial base" (European Commission, 2016b).

At the heart of the Commission's Action Plan is the proposed European Defense Fund, which would use money from the EU budget to support investment in joint research and the joint development of military equipment and technologies. The Fund would have two "windows":

- A "research window" to fund collaborative research in innovative defense technologies. The Commission expects the budget allocation for this window to reach a total of €90 million by 2020, and it intends to propose a "dedicated defense research program" under the EU's post-2020 multiannual financial framework with an estimated amount of €500 million per year.

- A "capability window," which would allow participating member states to share the costs of new military hardware, such as drones or helicopters. The Commission intends to provide €500 million in co-financing in 2019 for this facility, rising to €1 billion annually from 2020. According to the Commission, this should enable member states to mobilize a total of €5 billion per year for new hardware and equipment.

Other elements of the European Defense Action Plan include efforts to foster investments in SMEs, start-ups, mid-caps and other suppliers to the defense industry using the European Structural and Investment Funds and the European Investment Bank (EIB), and measures to strengthen the Single Market for defense (European Commission, 2016a, b; Besch, 2017).

The Commission's proposals were discussed and approved at the 15-16 December 2016 European Council meeting, with EU leaders asking the Commission to develop specific proposals for establishing the Fund in the first half of 2017. In their summit Conclusions, the European Council declared that "Europeans must take greater responsibility for their security." In addition to calling on member states to spend more on defense, the European Council also called for "reinforcing cooperation in the development of required capabilities as well as committing to making such capabilities available when necessary." According to EU leaders, "The European Union and its Member States must be able to contribute decisively to collective [defense] efforts, as well as to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible" (European Council, 2016c: 3-4).

As requested by the European Council, in early June 2017 the Commission announced its initial steps to implement new European Defense Fund. In doing so, Industry Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska declared that a key goal of the fund is achieving "strategic autonomy" for the EU. Moreover, she confirmed, if only half-jokingly, that President Trump's tweets and statements had made gaining member state approval of the Commission's plans much easier (European Commission, 2017; Barigazzi and Cooper, 2017).

The Commission's announcement of its implementation plans for the European Defense Fund was preceded in mid-May by the decision of EU defense ministers to approve the creation of yet another new fund for joint military projects, the Cooperative Financial Mechanism. European governments will contribute on a voluntary basis to this fund, which will be run by the European Defense Agency and will operate in a similar way to the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), the permanent bailout fund for the Eurozone. It was announced that at least 19 countries – including France, Germany, Italy, and Spain – would begin talks on implementing the fund in June with the possibility that it could be in place by 2018 (Barigazzi, 2017).

By the summer of 2017, therefore, European defense integration was making great strides and moving into new areas. Reflecting this momentum, Commission President Juncker, speaking at a defense conference in Prague on 9 June, declared that EU member states needed to increase their military cooperation and rely less on the United States, which was "no longer interested in guaranteeing Europe's security in our place." The protection of Europe, Juncker proclaimed, "can no longer be outsourced." Moreover, he argued, "[Europe's] deference to NATO can no longer be used as a convenient alibi to argue against greater European efforts" to ensure our own security (Crosby, 2017).

In late June, less than a month after Chancellor Merkel's "beer tent" speech calling for greater European self-sufficiency, EU leaders meeting in Brussels agreed on a plan for enhanced

defense cooperation that could pave the way for a joint military force operating under an EU flag. Pushed by France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, the plan would use the PESCO mechanism enabling military cooperation among a smaller subset of EU member states. EU leaders pledged to agree within three months on a common list of criteria and commitments that member states wanting to participate in the new arrangement will have to meet, and on a set of concrete capability projects. Further details on the new cooperation initiative would be agreed at future summits. While European Council President Donald Tusk termed the agreement a "historic step" towards EU defense integration, Chancellor Merkel claimed it was "an example of … where we have moved very fast in the last couple of months and achieved significant progress" (European Council, 2017: 5; Barigazzi, 2017b).

In addition to EU initiatives, smaller groups of member states also took steps to increase their security and defense cooperation, with the goal of enhancing Europe's independent defense capabilities. On 13 July 2017, French President Macron and Chancellor Merkel announced plans to jointly develop the next generation of European fighter aircraft. According to two defense experts, the "bombshell announcement" "[preserved] the chance of building a truly autonomous defense industry in Europe" (Major and Mölling, 2017a: 1). Germany has also significantly increased its efforts to cooperate with other European countries on defense, for example through the framework nations concept (FNC), initially proposed by the German Defense Minister at a NATO meeting in 2013, which links the defense resources of smaller and larger countries under the leadership of larger "framework nations" (Major and Mölling, 2017b). Such efforts give substance to the claims of German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen, made in October 2016, that Berlin was ready to play a larger military role than in the past in the service of closer European defense cooperation (Euractiv, 2016d).

Conclusions and Future Prospects

As discussed in the previous section, the EU has made considerable progress on security and defense cooperation in the past year, taking important steps towards developing independent military capabilities and the capacity for autonomous action. Among the key drivers of this progress is Russian military aggression in Ukraine and the growing challenge posed by Moscow to the post-Cold War European security order, including military exercises, troop movements, and weapons deployments on the EU's eastern border and in the Baltic Sea, cyberattacks and interference in European elections, and the increased threat of "hybrid warfare." Another important factor is the stunning decision of British voters in June 2016 to leave the EU. While on the one hand the Brexit vote motivated EU leaders to push for further integration in areas like economic governance and defense as a means of demonstrating the EU's continued vitality, importance, and relevance (in the face not only of Brexit but also growing populist-nationalism and Euroskepticism throughout Europe), on the other it meant that progress in these areas was now more possible, as the UK's withdrawal from the EU would remove a traditional brake on integration, especially in the realm of security and defense policy. The election of an avowedly

pro-European President in France in May 2017, and one committed to reviving the Franco-German motor of European integration, has also put wind behind the sails of plans for further security and defense cooperation.

However, mounting uncertainty about the US commitment to European security has also played an important role. Doubts about the US role in Europe have grown since the 2003 transatlantic dispute over the Iraq war and increased US unilateralism under the G.W. Bush administration, and with the Obama administration's pivot to Asia, seeming loss of interest in Europe as a security issue (at least until the 2014 Ukraine crisis prompted a refocusing of US attention on NATO), and partial withdrawal from engagement in security issues in parts of the European neighborhood. Indeed, the Obama administration became the first US administration to actively push the EU to do more to develop its independent defense capabilities, while it encouraged Europe to take more responsibility for ensuring security in its own neighborhood. In this context of already existing concern about the future US security role in Europe, the unexpected election of Donald Trump in November 2016, given his critical views on NATO and the EU, apparent disinterest in transatlantic relations – and the rules, norms, and institutions of the liberal international order more generally – and his oddly sympathetic views of Moscow and Russian President Putin (not to mention other authoritarian strongmen or regimes around the world), has further disconcerted Europe and generated increased uncertainty about US foreign policy and the American security guarantee. Even the belated affirmation by Trump of the US commitment to NATO's Article 5 mutual defense clause – first voiced unambiguously in the President's July 6, 2017 speech in Warsaw, more than five months after taking office – has done little to settle European anxieties and reduce uncertainty, given Trump's demonstrated unpredictability, capriciousness, and apparent lack of interest in or knowledge of Europe. The increased uncertainty about the reliability of Europe's long-time security guarantor has thus provided additional motivation for the EU and its member states to pursue further security and defense cooperation, with the goal of attaining greater self-sufficiency and autonomy in this field.

Despite the recent progress that has been made, however, there are still significant barriers to be overcome before this goal can be attained. One is the strong resistance in most European countries to increased defense spending – in the context of slow economic growth and high unemployment, the fiscal demands imposed by relatively generous social and welfare policies, and the budgetary limits established by EU monetary union and economic governance rules – which on average falls far below the established NATO objective of 2 percent of GDP (NATO, 2017). Another is continued strong national sovereignty concerns when it comes to the sensitive area of security and defense, among not just smaller member states, which fear being dominated by larger European countries, but large states as well – especially France, which after Brexit will be Europe's predominant military power, and which has also been traditionally averse to surrendering national control of foreign and defense policy to common European authorities (see the example of the EDC). As Claudia Major (2017) argues, if European defense integration is to succeed, the idea of national sovereignty will have to be rethought and

redefined. The related issue of economic self-interest and the desire of member states to preserve the viability and market shares of national weapons manufacturers could also impede increased defense integration, which requires the consolidation of Europe's defense industry across national lines (Valášek, 2017).

Another barrier to be overcome is the still relevant "German problem," or the continued wariness or resentment of German power and fear of being dominated by Germany. In recent years this issue reasserted itself as a consequence of Germany's predominant role in addressing the Greek and Eurozone debt crisis (including resentment of German-prescribed austerity measures for debtor countries requiring bailouts from the EU), as well as the trade and balance-of-payments imbalances within the EU economy that many see as being at the root of the crisis. It has also played a role in criticism of Chancellor Merkel's September 2015 decision to welcome into Germany a massive influx of refugees and asylum seekers who had pooled in Hungary, Turkey, and other Balkan states, a unilateral decision which other member states viewed as increasing European insecurity and making the immigration problem even worse. The German problem could assert itself even more starkly in the pursuit of further security and defense integration, however. As Dembinski and Gaus (1998: 109) have argued, the question – "How should German power be contained?" – has always been a crucial one at the heart of any effort to design a European-only security architecture. Suspicions of German attempts at dominance have already emerged in response to Berlin's FNC initiative (Major and Mölling, 2017b). And as one commentator recently mused, while France and other European countries may encourage greater German military spending and activity in support of increased security and defense cooperation, how would the French President actually feel if (when?) Germany's attainment of the 2 percent of GDP spending target makes it, not France, the largest spender on defense in the EU (Vinocur, 2017)? The German problem would only take on new dimensions if the possibility of a German nuclear weapons capacity, or a German finger on a joint Franco-German or common European nuclear arsenal, became real (Kühn and Volpe, 2017; Fisher 2017).

Yet another obstacle is the continued divergence of national strategic cultures in Europe, in particular when it comes to the role and use of military force (Meyer, 206). For example, there remains a wide gap between the hard-power oriented defense and strategic focus and expeditionary tradition of France, on the one hand, and the civilian or soft-power preferences and pacifist reflexes of Germany, on the other. As Major and Mölling (2017b) point out, there are significant differences of perspective when it comes to current efforts at defense cooperation: while Germany favors building large common forces for territorial defense and deterrence, in other words hoping they will never need to be used, France and some other "combat-willing" countries like the Netherlands prefer small, more mobile forces that can actually be used in crisis situations in Europe's periphery. Without a convergence of national strategic cultures, a more effective and truly autonomous European security and defense capacity seems improbable.

These are just some of the key barriers to further European security and defense cooperation and the attainment of true autonomy in this area. For now, and the foreseeable future, Europe will continue to rely on the United States and NATO for its security, especially when it comes to defense against Russia. But increased doubts about the reliability of the US security commitment and the future direction of US foreign policy have propelled increased European efforts to be more self-sufficient and independent, as a form of collective "hedging" against the possibility of American abandonment. What are the prospects that such cooperation will continue and be ultimately successful? As discussed in a previous section, different theories of international relations yield different predictions or expectations on this score. While liberal and constructivist theories are more optimistic, on the basis of the attained level of integration within the EU context – i.e. the level of economic interdependence, the density of institutional ties, and the formation of a common identity and normative bonds – and its transformative effect on national interests and behavior, realist theory is more pessimistic, forecasting the re-emergence of mutual suspicion and mistrust among European states, perhaps along the lines of historic conflicts and rivalries, within the context of a revived European security dilemma. As the above discussion of national sovereignty concerns and the German problem make clear, a key factor affecting whether additional security and defense integration will occur is trust. Liberal and constructivist theories argue that the material self-interest, institutional, and ideational bases of mutual trust have been created through the transformative effects of European integration. To this constructivist theorists would add the important role of security and defense integration in the ongoing process of forging a common European identity. Realist theory, by contrast, argues that the lack of trust between states is an endemic feature of an international system without a "common power" (Lieber, 1988), a situation in which Europe could once again find itself if the United States decides to withdraw. If it doesn't, realists would argue, then European defense integration will only proceed to a limited extent as Europe continues to rely on the United States and NATO for its protection.

Assuming an environment of continued uncertainty about the US security commitment, or the withdrawal of that commitment altogether, three divergent long-term scenarios can be imagined which take us beyond the recent progress on European defense cooperation. In the first, liberal and constructivist theories prove correct and the EU makes dramatic advances towards security and defense integration and strategic autonomy. In the second, realist theory is accurate and efforts at European security and defense integration not only fail, but the EU as well as a dynamic of fragmentation and disintegration takes hold. In a third scenario, however, one which combines elements of the first two and partially confirms both liberal/constructivist and realist expectations, a more differentiated picture emerges, in which initial progress is followed by growing disunion, although with increased integration among a smaller core of EU member states. In this scenario, a core group of member states, centered on France and Germany, and including the Benelux countries, Spain, and Italy, move ahead with creating a defense union. Other member states, however, uncomfortable with relying on a Franco-German dominated EU for their security, engage in their own hedging behavior, forging closer

bilateral ties and reassurance agreements with non-EU states, for instance Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, and Greece with Russia; and Poland, Romania, and the Baltic States with the United States. Alternative regional groupings within the EU, for instance among Central and Eastern European countries, could also emerge and forge links with non-EU security providers. The key dynamic of this scenario would be the corrosive effect of the absence of trust among some European states (as realists would expect), but its existence among others, in sufficient quantity to enable further integration. Consistent with liberal and constructivist theories, the higher levels of trust would generally be found among those member states with the longest history of EU membership, and thus most affected by the transformative effects of integration, and the lower levels among new member states with the least experience of integration. This would be the main, but not the only, factor influencing which countries joined the EU security and defense core or remained on its periphery.

While the future is unclear, one thing is for certain, and that is the continued role of the United States as an important factor affecting European security and the EU's future as a defense and security actor (and European unity overall). As it has in the past, the United States will affect Europe directly, through its policies towards the EU and individual European states, and more indirectly, through its policies in Europe's neighboring regions and in the broader world. As in the past as well, the United States can act as either a unifier, working to promote cooperation and bring European states together, or as a divider, seeking to disaggregate the EU and create division among its member states. The last seven decades provide numerous examples of each type of behavior. A renewed and strengthened US commitment to NATO and the transatlantic relationship would be the best way for Washington to promote European unity, while enabling, with US encouragement, further progress towards the development of a stronger and more independent European defense capacity, while fostering continued uncertainty about the US commitment to NATO and European security, combined with divisive measures like Trumpian appeals to populist-nationalism (in his July 2017 Warsaw speech, for example) and US intervention in European energy policy and pipeline politics, would be the best way for the United States to exert a disintegrative effect.

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