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Small Power Realities in a Great Power Realm:
American Grand Strategy and Norwegian Adaptation
since 2009

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Preface

To safeguard its territorial integrity and the well-being of its people, smaller powers are dependent on augmenting its defensive abilities through external means to deter potential adversaries. Understanding the driving forces for what informs a great power's willingness to provide security guarantees and a security importer's inclination to accept it is therefore important for any alliance member. By elucidating the factors shaping U.S. grand strategy and analyzing how Norwegian decisionmakers have adapted, I aim to contribute to the understanding of alliance behavior and state interaction.

The interest for this topic is due to a personal fascination of the transformative aptitude of NATO, the bilateral relationship of the U.S. and Norway and the latter's balancing act of integration and screening to ensure credible deterrence and reassurance. At the onset of this project in the fall of 2021, a global pandemic and the withdrawal from Afghanistan was the focal point for international observers. Whilst concluding this thesis in the spring of 2022, interstate war has since been brought back to the European continent. Attempting to include the paradigmatic events of the last year, while staying true to the overall aim of this thesis which concerns structural changes, has been a challenging, baffling and motivating exercise. It has been challenging to evaluate the long-term consequences of contemporary developments and baffling to witness the Russian government's indifference of sovereign rights, international norms and agreed upon rules. More than anything, however, it has been motivating to study structural forces to make sense of the current cacophony of international events and its implications on U.S. grand strategy and Norwegian foreign policy formulation.

Untangling this, the interviews with and insights of area experts Rolf Tamnes, Svein Efstad, Rune Jakobsen, Kai Eide and Odd-Harald Hagen has been much appreciated. I'm especially indebted to my thesis advisor Bjørn Olav Knutsen, at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment and Nord University. Thank you for your commitment to this project and valuable advice throughout. Julia, thank you for being unwaveringly caring and stepping up at home, permitting me to juggle a full-time job while completing this thesis. This project has been possible due to the help of many, but any shortcomings are my own.

Summary

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022 is a watershed moment for European security which have strengthened the transatlantic alliance, unified the European Union and restored the image of the U.S. as a responsible power and capable provider for European security. Nonetheless, this study shows that the systemic redistribution of power towards the Indo-Pacific and domestic demands at home forces U.S. decisionmakers to continue the recalibration of the overall American grand strategy. By employing neoclassical realist theory, I posit that systemic factors like the distribution of power and domestic factors like strategic culture, political institutions and soft power conflate to guide and constrain U.S. foreign policy options. This study delineates the emerging U.S. strategy as a more restrained approach anchored in the concept of offshore balancing, which calls for more equitable burden-sharing in the transatlantic security community.

As its most important ally is adjusting its course, Norwegian decisionmakers aims to meet the emerging security environment by continuing the long lines of Norwegian security politics while concurrently renovating it to accommodate increased regionalization. The former is due to the dual fears of alliance entrapment and abandonment, where investments in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities enables Norwegian presence in the High North, satiating both the U.S. need for credible intelligence and the Russian need for reassurance. The latter is a mix of aiming to bolster transatlantic security to make the alliance fit for the emerging security environment, where the rise of China constitutes the biggest factor, but also a measure to explore alternative arrangements if the U.S. disdain of multilateral institutions, increased transactional diplomacy and protectionism experienced during the Trump administration is a more lasting feature in American politics. This thesis expounds that Norwegian security objectives are best safeguarded by maintaining attention, relevance and influence in NATO, measured deterrence and reassurance vis-à-vis Russia through an interlinked integration and screening policy vis-à-vis the U.S. and by exploring the viability of intra-alliance hedging.

Delving into questions concerning the rationale of U.S. adjustment and Norwegian adaptation the thesis is both descriptive and explorative and aims to *explain* the factors shaping U.S. foreign policy, *interpret* U.S. grand strategy, *evaluate* how Norwegian decisionmakers adapt accordingly and *explore* the findings generalizability.

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Part I: The conceptual and theoretical framework

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022 is a watershed moment for European security which have strengthening the transatlantic alliance, unified the European Union and restored the image of the U.S. as a responsible power and capable provider for European security. Nonetheless, the systemic redistribution of power towards the Indo-Pacific and domestic demands at own shores forces U.S. decisionmakers to recalibrate the overall American grand strategy. This will have important ramifications on the Euro-Atlantic security architecture where more equitable burden-sharing is key to uphold transatlantic unity and resolve. Norway's geostrategic location and disproportionate small population compared to its territory makes it dependent on augmenting security by external arrangements. As a founding member of NATO and with a demonstrated will to transform, adapt and sacrifice within and together with the alliance for the past 70 years, Norwegian security is anchored to the NATO framework and American guarantees (Tamnes, 2019, p. 55-6). This willingness has produced a notion among key allies that Norway is punching above its weight, coupled with active entrepreneurship and a geostrategic position, this has secured Norwegian relevance and influence within the transatlantic security community (Black et al., 2020, p. 24).

Adapting its military to meet the security environment after the Cold War, the Norwegian Armed Forces had through the 2000s transformed from a large mobilizable invasion defense to a smaller integrated alliance defense highlighted by niche and expeditionary capabilities (Saxi, 2021, p. 191). When the Norwegian government put forth its Core Area Initiative in 2008, NATO was predominately occupied and furnished to resolve crisis management and out of area operations (St. meld. nr. 38 (2008-2009), p. 29). As a response to Russia's substantial military modernization and its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, the North Atlantic alliance have after roughly 25 years of crisis management and peacekeeping in the Balkans and Middle East returned to its main task of collective defense (Bjur et al., 2020, p. 481). Consequently, the geostrategic significance of NATO's northern flank received more attention and interest from key decisionmakers as it did during the Cold War. Albeit the current environment shares semblances to the Cold War, a weakened national autonomous resolve and increased allied dependency challenges the long lines in Norwegian security aiming to remain both a good neighbor and a good ally characterized by deterrence and reassurance vis-à-vis Russia (Holst, 1966) and integration and screening vis-à-vis the United States (Tamnes, 1986). This is

exacerbated by more structural forces of great power rivalry, shifts in the global distribution of power towards Asia and a challenging American situation at home, ultimately necessitating a reduced U.S. footprint in Europe.

To construe appropriate measures to ensure Norwegian security and foreign policy objectives, it is necessary to understand why our most important ally is altering its strategies and priorities. Especially is this true in a time when the U.S. faces increased demands from Europe precisely as it attempts to shift its priorities to Asia and remedy its problems at home (Wertheim, 2022). This thesis elucidates what informs current changes in U.S. foreign policy orientation, with one of its main consequences being a lack of leadership in international affairs, and how this influences Norwegian security and foreign policy. One way to attack this task would be to solely focus on how Norwegian foreign policy and military planning have transformed in response to American signals. However, equally interesting, and maybe more important will be to understand the underlining factors, restraints and interests initiating these changes in the first place. Untangling these issues will be of great value for powers dependent on external security, possibly enabling a roadmap for decisionmakers to navigate opportunities and challenges proactivity in a more restrictive environment. There is a lacking emphasis on the possible implications great power rivalry and U.S. adjustment will have on Norwegian security in the current discussion on Norwegian defense planning and security policy, this thesis aims to address this void.

The commitment to collective defense enshrined by NATO's Article 5 has been the bedrock of Norwegian security since 1949 and the institutionalization of the transatlantic alliance produces a uniquely robust security arrangement, where major events has been the main source for its transformations (Matlé, 2021, p. 81-84). This was evident in how the alliance responded to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. The 2021 exit of Afghanistan, coupled with a lack of U.S. leadership, ongoing eco-political shifts of power and a revisionist Russia may prove yet another pivotal moment for European security and the architecture which it rests upon. This necessitates attentiveness from Norwegian decisionmakers regarding the NATO alliance, wary of the past and bound for new functions and horizons possibly deviating from the original intentions of the Atlantic Pact and Norwegian strategic interests (Heier, 2021, p. 79). What ushers this strategic reorientation? What does it mean for Norwegian security and what constrains exists when attempting to adapt to this situation? The answers to these questions are vital for Norwegian

security and warrants further attention. A crucial tool in untangling this is to recognize that foreign policy is a resultant interplay of systemic pressures and domestic conditions and that changes in a great power's strategy directly affects its allies' realities. Following that logic, this thesis explains the rationale of American reorientation initiated during the Obama era (2009 – 2017) and how this in turn impacts Norwegian security. Essentially this thesis's main contributions are as follows. Firstly, it highlights the domestic and systemic factors explaining why and how American grand strategy is changing. Secondly, it assesses how Norwegian decisionmakers have adapted to these changes and deduces possible future challenges and opportunities. Lastly, it explores the possibilities of a generalizable and appropriate strategic concept for small states experiencing similar environments. Consequently, the thesis's research scope can be highlighted by three questions: Firstly, how does systemic and domestic pressures explain American strategic adjustment initiated during the Obama-administration? Secondly, what will the U.S. grand strategy look like? Thirdly, how are Norwegian decisionmakers adapting to meet the emerging security environment?

Thus, the research question is: *What explains American strategic adjustment initiated during the Obama-administration and how are Norwegian decisionmakers adapting to meet the emerging security environment?*

Delving into questions concerning the rationale of U.S. adjustment and Norwegian adaptation the thesis is both descriptive and explorative and aims to *explain* the factors shaping U.S. foreign policy, *interpret* U.S. grand strategy, *evaluate* how Norwegian decisionmakers adapt accordingly and *explore* the findings generalizability. By doing so, the thesis contributes both to the foreign policy analysis research paradigm and the agent-structure debate in international relations theory.

1.1 Thesis structure

The thesis confines three parts over nine chapters. Part I in addition to this introductory chapter consists of three more chapters, one theoretical, one methodological and one empirical. Chapter 2 presents the theory of neoclassical realism and why it is fitting to answer the research question. The thesis underscores that the realist assumptions of states being unitary actors in an anarchic realm, the importance of relative distribution of capabilities and the primacy of system structure makes the best argument to explain the world we live in. However, acknowledging the need to delve into the opacity of the nation-state to make sense of why states respond to similar systemic pressures in different ways, I employ neoclassical realist theory which systematizes classical realist insights to allow an analysis incorporating multiple units and levels of analysis to study

systemic and domestic factors and how it influences foreign policy and international outcomes (Rose, 1998, p. 146). The ambition of the thesis is to produce knowledge about a specific phenomenon, namely, how to explain U.S. strategic adjustment and its impact on Norwegian security. As this occurs in an inherently social and contemporary context, uses an established theory for explanatory power and aims to produce generalizable insights, an interpretative case study research strategy will be of methodical utility (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 5). Data is collected from both primary and secondary sources including textbooks, academic journals, governmental documents, interviews, speeches, transcripts and biographies. The methodological underpinnings, implications and limitations of the chosen methods will be further elaborated in Chapter 3. To understand where we're going it is necessary to convey how we got there in the first place. The purpose of chapter 4 is to illustrate the historical lessons of the transatlantic relationship to provide an accurate point of departure for the analysis. This chapter focuses on the historical lines of continuity and change in the Western security framework, detailing the ideas and drivers of transatlantic security with an emphasis on Norwegian security and NATO transformations following the end of the Cold War. The mirrors of the past illustrate how the Norwegian approach to a U.S.-backed security arrangement is best understood as a sustained dialecticism of self-imposed caveats and alliance integration in an increasingly interconnected security architecture (Tamnes, 2019, p. 55).

In part II I put forth the argument that systemic and domestic factors conflate to guide American policy (re)orientation and that the inward domestic and westward shift towards the Indo-Pacific, albeit a bit messy and slow, is a rational move. Consequently, chapter 5 employs the realist perspectives of system structure and distribution of power to interpret the emerging security environment, focusing on the polarity of central actors, setting the perimeter for American foreign policy going forward. Firstly, I describe China's growth and its rise as a strategic competitor in central domains such as political and economic power, and increasingly in the military domain as well (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2020, p. 386). The key topic of focus is the examination of the RoC's capacity to achieve parity with the U.S. in the international system and regional hegemony through the combination of hard power and soft power capabilities, opportunistic foreign policy and diplomacy. Secondly, the attention turns toward the threat of a revanchist Russia. Although Russian military modernization, highlighted by technological advances with both quantitative and qualitative features is of significant strategic importance (Bowen, 2020), independently, it is not considered the main threat in the American point of view (DNI, 2021). However, increased Russian confidence and growing

assertiveness in Eastern Europe complicates and delays the needed American reorientation. Thirdly, the chapter addresses how a currently evolving Sino-Russian rapprochement is of concern to U.S. decisionmakers as Beijing and Moscow has demonstrated a surprisingly potent resolve to enhance cooperation in political, economic, and military domains (Allison, 2018). The main argument is that shared threat perception of the U.S. and mutual interests in altering the liberal world instigates a stronger cooperative element between the two powers. Although this rapprochement should no longer merely be considered a relationship of convenience (Sutter, 2019, p. 18), I argue that the level of strategic cooperation will depict and synchronize with the level of American preponderance in the system and not evolve into a formal alliance in the current security environment. Fourthly, the chapter addresses the possibilities and limits of European strategic autonomy. Since the establishment of the Westphalian state system, the European theatre has until recently been at the nexus of where great powers cooperate and collide. Adapting to new realities stresses change in European foreign policy, but Europe going at it alone should not be the preferred option. This section describes in a Norwegian context, NATO/EU relations and the EU as a strategic autonomous actor and ally.

Although accepting the primacy of international pressures, this thesis's overall framework, separating itself from structural realism, rests on the notion that you can most accurately explain international phenomena "only by marrying the insights of structural theory to a more contextual approach" (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 88). In this regard, chapter 6 illustrates how the domestic factors of strategic culture, political institutions and soft power informs and constrains decision-making and ultimately foreign policy orientation and international outcomes. This chapter shows how neoclassical realism espouses ideational concepts found in constructivist theory and institutional behavior from liberalism to construe the theoretical eclecticism necessary to understand American foreign policy reorientation. The modality of statesmen's conduct is moored to a set of acceptable norms, assumptions and interrelated beliefs shaped by historical experiences and ideological tenets shared by political elites, its connected bureaucracy and more than often, the public as well (Johnson, 2006, p. 5). In turn, these principles which are deeply embedded in the national psyche will impact how foreign policy executives interpret and respond to international pressures (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993). This section describes how exceptionalism, techno-centric military modality, liberal democratic values and the balance of idealism and realism shapes American strategic culture. By implying that statesmen learn from past experiences, I argue that the U.S. appetite for painting the world in its own image by overseas expeditions and "forever wars" is diminished, where a reduced ability to mobilize

domestic resources requires foreign policy executives (FPE's) to prioritize U.S. security interests through an ever more parsimonious lens. A central topic in this chapter is to explain how U.S. foreign policy decision-making is affixed to its domestic institutions. I argue that the integrated mechanisms of reaching compromises and cooperation on foreign policy that have been integral to entice the notion of a liberal hegemon is under serious pressure by deep political division, causing strains on day-to-day activities, legislative issues and grand strategy planning (Walt, 2021). U.S. ascension as the top dog in the system is due to its preponderance of power, backed by hard power material capabilities, but a climb made possible by its appealing liberal value system, culture and institutions (Melby, 2017, p. 204-205). This soft power, epitomized by historical references to the U.S. as a "city upon a hill", "beacon of hope" and "the American dream", has been wobbly for a while but is now seriously undermined (Nye, 2020). One can rightfully ask why internal matters would matter for foreign policy and international politics. I argue that the coupling of hard power capabilities and soft power appeal, especially the functional quality of U.S. democracy and the ideational aspect of the American dream have made it easier for the U.S. to maintain its position as a benign hegemon in the system, furthermore I discuss if it is indeed a necessity for the maintenance of the alliance framework enabling the U.S. as a global power.

In chapter 7 I marry the theoretical bearings from chapter 2 and historical lessons from chapter 4 to the empirical insights discussed in chapter 5 and 6 to interpret the current U.S. strategy and assess its expected trajectory. This is of vital importance since it will strongly influence Norwegian foreign policy orientation. As an alternative to liberal interventionism this thesis argues that the U.S. strategic concept in the foreseeable future will be based on offshore balancing. The main justification for this strategy is composed by three arguments distilled from the broader discussion in Part I and II of the thesis, satiating both system pressures and domestic restraints. Firstly, it is suitable due to the geographic circumstances of the U.S. Secondly, it is cost-effective and frees up resources to remedy domestic issues. Thirdly, and most importantly, the systemic transition of power requires American attention and warrants a pivot towards Asia. On a more conceptual note, this chapter clears up the misperceptions regarding offshore balancing by delineating it as a dynamic and flexible, rather than a static and isolationistic strategy. Furthermore, I posit that for this to be a sustainable approach the U.S. needs to strengthen its alliances and partnerships, although in different ways, and at the same time accommodate cooperative efforts with competitors when possible.

Chapter 8 presents the main analytical segment of this thesis and examines how Norwegian decisionmakers have adapted to changing U.S. priorities and will adapt to meet the emerging security environment. Being a smaller power in an alliance architecture, dependent on great power military might to ensure its safety, is essentially a security-autonomy tradeoff. On the one hand, the aggregation of material resources and capabilities within the alliance reduces the individual state's military expenditures and strengthens its deterrence and overall security (Snyder, 1997, p. 167). On the other hand, for the smaller power's defensive posture to be credible it is now dependent on the alliance's mechanisms, capabilities and political will, especially the preponderant allied member's possession of the latter (Ringsmose, 2010, p. 325), effectively establishing a patronage between the U.S. and Norway. In this chapter I discuss the rationale behind maintaining this patron-client relationship, how to bolster the transatlantic security framework and explore alternative arrangements to meet a more multifaceted threat environment. I argue that the most optimal Norwegian foreign policy strategy, satiating both systemic pressures and domestic restraints, will be to increase regionalized security cooperation within the NATO framework, enhancing bilateral ties with the U.S. and strengthening cooperation with regional partners in Northern Europe. This includes boosting interoperability militarily and the strengthening of political ties with relevant nations. Chapter 9 works as a closing chapter summarizing the most important themes covered before discussing the generalizability and utility of the Norwegian strategy for small states facing similar environments. Finally, I point to future research endeavors and implications unearthed by this study.

Chapter 2: Theory

This chapter explains the concept of neoclassical realism and why it is fitting for the thesis question. This chapter's primary objective is twofold. Firstly, to erect a framework which clarifies that foreign policy and overall grand strategy planning is crafted somewhere between external pressures and domestic constraints. Secondly, to explicate the alliance relationship and dynamics between a smaller power and the security guarantor. This section's point of departure is a broader presentation and discussion of different strands, interpretations, and maturations within the realist school. This discussion includes a juxtaposition to other key IR-theories and elucidates how neoclassical realism, although firmly positioned in the realist tradition, utilizes both liberal institutional and constructivist insights to understand what shapes American strategic adjustment and how Norwegian decisionmakers are adapting to meet the emerging security environment.

2.1 Realism

Supported by evidence and illuminated by reason (Morgenthau, 2005, p. 4), realism claims to answer questions of continuity rather than change in international affairs. Generally, this means that realism posits to explain the world as it is, rather than how we want it to be (ibid., p. 14). More specifically, realism explains state interaction (Waltz, 1979), alliance behavior (Walt, 1987), strategic choices of great powers (Gilpin, 1988) and how those choices may impact foreign policy orientations of dependent states (Snyder, 1997). Before constructing a theoretical framework, some remarks of the advantages and limitations of theory are in order.

The goal of any IR theory should be to make the world a bit more comprehensible, usually by observing and engaging causal inferences of specific phenomenon (Kauppi & Viotti, 2019, p. 4). For instance, creating a hypothesis postulating that changes in American foreign policy will cause Norwegian decisionmakers to adapt is a theoretical inquiry attempting to make sense of complex realities. By asserting what matters, theory helps to filter the overwhelming information at hand. However, as theory tells us where to look, what to study and which structures and actors that matter, its strengths and weaknesses are two sides of the same coin. To make sense of the world, IR-theory necessarily generalizes complex realities and makes objective law-like assumptions of inherently social systems and subjective matters (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2013, p. 430). Claiming to explain the world as it is, it may seem paradoxical that realists simplify complex matters into general assumptions not always consistent with real life events. A reflexive antidote would be to include extra variables and complementary explanatory models. However, an all-encompassing theory will most likely eventually study everything under the sun, impairing its theoretical insights and overall value. Thus, explaining as much as possible, with as little as possible is a central, but not ultimately defining, element in theory building (King et al., 1994, p. 20). Researchers and policymakers alike should however employ this parsimonious yardstick as a correction tool to help organize and make sense of the world we live in. Especially is this true to the realist tradition.

So, what do realists say about the world? A central concept is the assumption of states as rational and central actors in an anarchical structure (Baylis et al., 2020, p. 135). This does not mean that there are no morals or order among states, and it certainly does not mean, without naming names, that presidents of the superpower in the system always act as you hoped they would. Put otherwise, theory should not be understood as a universal truth of the universe, but rather understood as images, or ideal types that simply helps researchers organize the world by

emphasizing certain units and levels of analysis for investigation and how these should in turn be managed (Kauppi & Viotti, 2019, p. 14). Summarily, by highlighting certain aspects, theory if it is any good, muffles the cacophony of information-overload and enables an analytically sound point of departure to describe specific phenomenon, investigate causal claims and generalize insights to make sense of the world we live in (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2013, p. 430).

The organizing principle in realism is the assumption that the world is populated by units (unitary states) wishing to survive and that the interaction between states takes place in an anarchical self-help system, lacking a supranational body to enforce order (Waltz, 1979, p. 114). Essentially, where order inside states is enforced through the monopolized legitimate use of force, usually by the police imposing agreed-upon rules and regulations of the state, no equal exists in international affairs. The absence of a competent, overarching government causes states to prioritize their own survival and well-being (Waltz, 1979, p. 111). Intuitively, security does not exist in a vacuum, but rather against something, revealing the relational dimensions of the system, where one's security is measured against another state's security. As states are perceived as rational actors it makes sense not to be completely transparent about everything in your own security toolkit, as this could be exploited by a potential adversary (Kauppi & Viotti, 2019, p. 22). The same way you can't be entirely certain of a person's intentions and the composition of states are ultimately an aggregate of many individuals, the same can be said about the behavior of states. This inherent uncertainty of other states' intentions spawns the everlasting security dilemma in international relations. By elaborating upon the work of John Herz (1950), Robert Jervis explained the security dilemma as the situation where a state's defensive efforts due to the uncertainty of another state's intentions leads to a build-up of military capabilities, spawning an action-reaction cycle between states, ultimately leaving both states better armed but less secure (Jervis, 1978, p. 167-170). Few realists posit that the security dilemma is always at the forefront of statesmen's perceptions, but most insist that it is always latently there, thus strongly influencing how statesmen perceive and act to systemic pressures.

In the international realm, all states are considered equal in that they enjoy territorial sovereignty. This does not mean that all states are considered equal in power, as states' relative material capabilities in terms of geographical size, population, wealth, technological prowess and most importantly military power creates a hierarchy among them, where the strongest powers shape the polarity of the system (Baylis et al., 2020, p. 135-137). Polarity simply means to depict the current configuration of great powers in the system. In the academic debate there has been

conducted broad scientific efforts to study polarity and examine the stability of different configurations where arguments for hegemonic (unipolar) stability and bipolar stability have dominated the field of research. Advancing hegemonic stability, Kindleberger (1973), Gilpin (1988) and Webb & Krasner (1989) have made important contributions. As counterweights both Ruggie (1982) and Keohane (1984) presents tangible alternative explanations challenging hegemonic stability theorists. For arguments of bipolar stability, the works of Waltz (1979) and Mearsheimer (2014) are recommended. As for multipolarity, Deutsch and Singer (1964) valuably makes a case for multipolarity as the most stable balance of power configuration. Perhaps the most understudied of the three, understanding the dynamics of multipolarity will serve and acclimate decisionmakers well to navigate great power politics in the 21st century.

No matter what polarity subsists, the hierarchy and power asymmetries between states necessitates, especially smaller states, to augment their security to avoid being bullied by larger powers (Posen, 2014, p. 21). Security can be achieved primarily in two ways, either by an internal build-up increasing own military capabilities or pooling resources with other states by creating, strengthening or enlarging alliances (Waltz, 1979, p. 118; Snyder 1984, p. 461). As the former cannot by default outweigh the military might of a great power, the latter is more than often a necessity. Iterating this point and relationship between alliances and polarity, Morgenthau referred to alliances as “a necessary function of the balance of power operating in a multiple state system” (Morgenthau, 2005, p. 193). As alliances are inherently against an external other (Waltz, 1979, p. 166) it is important to understand what logic drives states to ally with or against someone, altering the balance between actors. As such, alliances are a key feature in international relations and should play an important role in any foreign policy calculation (Walt, 2009, p. 86).

2.1.1 Balance against what; Walt(z)ing amidst power and threat

When explaining state interaction and the dictate of balancing behavior Kenneth Waltz, one of the most influential realist academics, stated that “balance of power politics prevail wherever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive” (Waltz, 1979, p. 121). In more practical terms, balance of power theory explains that states due to security concerns axiomatically will ally with others to create an equilibrium of power, balancing more powerful actors in the system. As for Norway, this will be especially important since smaller states tend to have limited resources at their disposal. Standing on the shoulders of historical giants as Thucydides (c.460-406 BC), Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Hobbes (1588-1679), Waltz through his theory of structural realism (neorealism) introduced

a scientific rigorous approach to explain how the structure of the international system, differential growth rates and the balance of power are defining characteristics of state interaction (Waltz, 1979; Lobell, 2014). Neorealists claim that international affairs are not the result of human nature, but rather a result of the hierarchy created by the relative distribution of power between actors in the system. In doing so, neorealists limits individual agency and stresses the interaction between, and numbers of, great powers as they constitute the defining (f)actors in the international realm and balance each other to create an equilibrium to inhibit possible bids for hegemony (Baylis, et al., 2020, p. 136-137). In an anarchic, self-help world where security and sovereignty is key to survival and the states ignoring these imperatives do so at their own peril (Waltz, 1997, p. 107;118), the pressures of the system conditions states to maintain a balance of power (Ripsman, et al., 2016, p. 17).

The intrinsic frugality of structural realism requires its proponents to separate theories of international relations and those of foreign policy. Since structural realism is a theory of international relations, neorealists claims it cannot be a theory of foreign policy as the latter includes multiple levels and units of analysis, thus becoming too complex and cluttered (Rose, 1998, p. 145). This is a commonly noted critique of structural realism as insistence on parsimony and its positivistic approach immobilizes it to tackle problems of foreign policy and how it relates to international relations. Moreover, critics claim that this causes structural realism to lack explanatory power on most issues in international affairs (Ripsman, et al., 2016, p. 3). However, an important remark regarding balance of power theory is that it never claims to stipulate how states choose to respond to systemic factors and domestic restraints. In Waltz's own words, "but by itself [it] cannot explain those reactions (...) for this you need a theory of foreign policy" (Waltz, 1979, p. 122). Arguing the need for foreign policy, Waltz clearly understood that his theory was not a crystal ball for every issue in international relations and that states does not necessarily respond as the system might direct. The ambiguity and critique might be difficult to get a real grip on. A reason for this is that Waltz contradicted himself on certain issues in subsequent papers (Walt, 2018, p. 5-6). Furthermore, John Mearsheimer remarks that the ambiguity of Waltz's work is because he rejects treating states(men) as rational actors (Mearsheimer, 2009, p. 241), which might throw off a lot of readers as it is a core pillar in realist theory. Stephen Walt suggests that this vagueness is a result of Waltz's consistent skepticism of U.S. decision-making and what he understood as unwise policy measures and grand strategies (Walt, 2018, p. 6). Albeit these shortcomings, Kenneth Waltz's structural realism still effectively

explains the influence of systemic forces, offering a sound point of departure to further discuss more clearly and elucidate what shapes and constrains state behavior.

Harvard professor Stephen Walt introduces balance of threat theory as a more comprehensive approach to explain the particularities of alliance formation and state behavior. As a theoretical descendant of balance of power theory and a student of Waltz, Walt acknowledges that the relative distribution of power shapes international structures but remarks that “although power is an important part of the equation, it is not the only one . . . it is more accurate to say that states tend to ally with or against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat” (Walt, 1987, p. 21). Balance of threat theory emerges as a more nuanced and covering theory than balance of power theory as it incorporates three key structural modifiers: geographical proximity, offensive power, and offensive intentions to explain balancing behavior. The logic behind geographic proximity is the assumption that ability to project power declines with distance, thus states closer to your own borders will pose the bigger threat. The factor of offensive power entails that offensive capabilities will increase insecurity of a state’s intentions and as a result, other states are disposed to ally against it. Offensive intentions suggest that FPE’s interpret other states’ motives and intents, where the aggressive state will likely be balanced against (Walt, 1987, p. 23-24). The former two, both geographic proximity and offensive power, are rather measurable qualities and easier to compute. The latter, offensive intentions, is more normative and difficult to distinguish and marks an important shortcoming of balance of threat theory. As Mark Duffield correctly remarks, “is it always so obvious which state will be viewed as a threat by others?” and furthermore, “threat perception may depend on much, if not more on the internal characteristics of states.” (Duffield, 2018, p. 273). This leads to the question of what internal characteristics matter in influencing state’s perceptions of whom to ally and whom is a threat. In this regard, the insights of neoclassical realism and its emphasis on how domestic variables influences state behavior will be of utility.

2.1.2 The utility of neoclassical realist theory

Neoclassical realism upholds the primacy of system structure and the general assumptions of realism, this is what makes it realist. Where it departs from structural realism is that it encompasses both external and internal variables. Because “systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level” (Rose, 1998, p. 146), neoclassical realist asserts that the dictates of system structure and existing distribution of power’s effect on foreign policy is indirect and multifaceted. In contrast to structural realist, neoclassical realism

delves into both unit and individual levels of analysis to explain decision-making, foreign policy, international outcomes and system structures (Baylis et al., 2020, p. 138), this is what makes it classical. Although neoclassical realism is eclectic and borrows insights from other theories, it is neither constructivist as it defends that the nature of the international system is fixed, and anarchy not what you make it. Nor is it liberal as it insists on the primacy of the international system (Rose, 1998, p. 150-151). Furthermore, this thesis employs it as a tool of foreign policy analysis, the significant work of Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell (2016) will be important as it is the most comprehensive attempt to remedy past shortcomings of neoclassical realism, by systematically organizing an international relations theory of neoclassical realism with specified domestic intervening variables and measuring when which variables will yield the highest explanatory power.

2.2 Domestic factors

As might be expected in the conundrum of alternative theories and explanatory models there's an array of domestic factors to consider, and many play a part in shaping international outcomes. Some of the criticism of the eclectic nature of neoclassical realism is that variables and arguments are perceived as ad-hoc and not consistent enough (Walt, 2002, p. 211). Ad-hoc meaning theorists using variables to suit their supposition, and not consistent enough pertaining to a lack of clarity of when and which variables matter the most. Some posit that these stated deficiencies undermine the parsimonious nature of realism, and with it, its overall utility (Legro and Moravcsik, 1999, p. 38). I do not necessarily disregard these concerns, nevertheless, preconditioning too positivistic ideals in the world of political science may inhibit important inferences about real world problems. In the seminal work *Designing Social Inquiry*, King, Keohane and Verba claims that the best research manages "to be directly relevant to solving real-world problems and to furthering the goals of a specific scientific literature." (King et al., 1994, p. 18). This remark works as a yardstick for this thesis, and although espousing scientific consistency, explorative eclecticism is necessary to make inferences of real-time issues. A natural implication of this argument is that we can attempt to find factual claims and casual mechanisms in international relations. Moreover, as the system and the actors that inhabit it are fundamentally social, we can never be certain of how statesmen perceive and act to systemic stimuli. Stated more crudely, we know that a bomb that hits a target will make an impact, but we cannot in advance measure exactly what impacted the decisionmakers' action to drop the bomb in the first place. Thus, relaxing rigorous objectivity is needed to allow for the interpretive and explorative nature of this thesis. Yet, as elaborated in the following methodological chapter, to balance the loss of positivistic rigor and the unattainability of certainty, we can still improve the

reliability, validity and honesty of our conclusions (King et al., 1994, p. 7). This ambition is underpinned by the selection of the variables listed below. Strategic culture, political institutions and soft power are selected as the intervening variables to best describe the domestic factors influencing American foreign policy and Norwegian adjustment, corresponding well with both theoretical insights of neoclassical realism and the existing literature on transatlantic relations.

2.2.1 Strategic culture

Strategic culture is understood as the product of beliefs, norms and assumptions that forms through socialization and institutionalizes a set of interconnected, mutual expectations informing the strategic understanding of both decision-making elites and the public (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 66). The strategic culture of the state has a restrictive effect on the choices available for political leaders as it delineates appropriate and inappropriate behavior and (hopefully) works as a moral control on military power (Johnston, 1995, p. 45). The output of these factors will inform potential allies and adversaries about the state's modus operandi, giving valuable clues to interpret and predict other states' actions and ambitions (Johnson, 2021, p. 179). Relatedly, the ideological dispositions of a regime affect how it is perceived by others. An example of this is to compare how Germany's neighboring countries perceived the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. The former boasted liberal democratic ideals, the latter not so much, depicting the fundamental importance of perception and strategic culture to understand state behavior (Baylis et al., 2020, p. 138). Similarly, democratic peace theorists predict democracies to avoid conflict and war, especially with each other, not because of a lack of weapons, but rather because its liberal qualities enforce a strategic culture of bargaining and compromise to ensure peace and stability.

2.2.2 Political institutions

The configuration of a country's political institutions and organizational processes provides specified rules and regulations that dictates policy formulation and who the legitimate players are. Therefore, one would expect that the composition and functioning of such institutions will impact how states respond to systemic stimuli. When delimitating the particulars of political institutions that matter to international affairs and foreign policy, Ripsman et al. (2016, p. 62) points to state-society relations and the composition and relationship of actors involved. These variables address "what the process looks like, including the autonomy of leaders and the constraints under which they operate, their socialization, domestic distributional competition and the mechanisms through which differences are resolved." Operationally, this can be understood

as the machinery heavily involved in shaping foreign policy and grand strategy. How these parts work together, and the consequences when they do not, will be elaborated in chapter 6 and 7. Most notably this includes a discussion of the U.S.'s Montesquieu-influenced checks and balance system, political division and how it affects strategic foreign policy adjustments.

2.2.3 Soft power

Hard power capabilities make the bid for hegemony possible, soft power appeal mitigates the risk of it being a suicide mission (Lodgaard, 2002, p. 269). Consistent with the abovementioned balance of threat concept, states tend to be inclined to accept, and in some cases welcome, the supremacy of an actor if it is not perceived as a threat (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 20). A striking example of this is the European embracing attitude of U.S. presence and integration in Europe in the aftermath of the World Wars where U.S. influence was dubbed an empire by invitation (Lundestad, 1986). Joseph Nye (2020, p. 28) explains soft power as the appeal and attraction of a state in the eyes of other's based upon its culture, values and domestic. Recognizing that soft power rarely is sufficient by itself, Nye aligns it with other prerequisites of power including natural resources, military might, economic and technological prowess. As power is ultimately convincing others to do what you want, it can be induced both by coercion, payment and attraction. In this regard, Nye adds a much needed emphasis on the element of attraction to the old carrot and stick metaphor. As hard power capabilities and payment are more readily available instruments, they are often more tempting to leaders, but as Nye notes, "a smart realist also knows about different types of power," (Nye, 2020, p. 28). Thus, a more comprehensive approach to power will enable smarter and more efficient statesmanship and alliance management. A crucial lesson for American foreign policy formulation in the 21st century.

2.3 Alliance management

Alliance theories are part of the vast literature on international relations (Matlé, 2021, p. 76). This thesis employs the term alliance with the definition UNC Professor Glenn Snyder provided in his magnum opus, *Alliance Politics* where an alliance is to be regarded as a "formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership." (Snyder, 1997, p. 4; see Fredriksen & Apalvik, 2019, for a thorough discussion of why a scrutinized concept of alliance is valuable). Consistent with neorealist school of thought, Snyder posits that alliances are formed to enhance a country's security if the benefits outweigh the costs (Snyder, 1997, p. 166). Operationalizing this, Snyder point to three factors informing statesmen and alliance politics when forming, joining or

maintaining an alliance: A state's need for security, the degree another state or alliance may fill that void and the actual terms of the alliance (Snyder, 1997, p. 45). Keeping in mind these three factors is essential to understand the current, past and future Norwegian alignment. Firstly, Norway's geographical proximity to Russia is significant. Norwegian and Russian relations are characterized by mutual respect, predictability, reassurance and deterrence resulting in considerable stability (Meld. St. 36 (2016-2017, p. 14-15). However benign a great power neighbor and historical evidence seems to be, Russia and Norway cannot operate in a vacuum outside the pressures of the system. This, coupled with the realities that Norway and Russia have entirely colliding value systems, seals the faith of Norwegian alignment with the West. As then Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Frydenlund candidly noted in 1977; If you go to bed with a bear, the bear can be courteous as could be, but if it turns in its sleep, it will still crush you (Frydenlund, 1982, p. 92). Secondly, due to its small size and need to outsource security, Norway needs a partner that can put forth a credible deterrent. In other words, a large power, preferably a great one. Which power deemed most suitable is linked with the third factor, the terms of the alliance. The two former factors define a need for security import and potential exporters, the latter asks the question: at what cost. As the two former points are most relevant prior to alliance formation, it is the third factor that is the most relevant for this thesis. However, all three factors are interesting points of reflection when considering future security arrangements for Norway.

2.3.1 Alliance dynamics between a larger and smaller power

The case of U.S. preponderance has had a profound effect on the nature of contemporary alliances, depicted by NATO, shaping allied choices and restraints (Walt, 2009, p. 86). Four broad themes encompass the literature and research inquiry on alliance dynamics between larger and smaller powers. Firstly, the questions of *burden-sharing* between powers and *band wagoning* are important to understand the nature of alliances. As research over time consistently shows (Olson & Zeckhauser, 1966; Jakobsen & Ringsmose, 2017) and NATO being a clear example, the strongest power disproportionally covers expenses and smaller allies tend to free ride, or at least devote proportionately less resources. Secondly, *alliance cohesion* and *leadership* are issues that gets a lot of attention (Mattelaer, 2016; Calmels, 2020). Typical inquires concerns unity among members and the dictates and duties of leadership. The events and controversies following NATO invoking Article 5 in response to the 9/11-terrorist attacks and subsequent out of area operations in the MENA-region are noteworthy examples. Thirdly, as alliances creates dependence on external capabilities to augment credible deterrence it spurs a degree of uncertainty, especially for smaller states. This in turn produces a dual fear of *alliance entrapment*

and *alliance abandonment* (Snyder, 1984, p. 466-468). The former due to a commitment to other state's security which could impose actions and operations in places you initially don't have any strategic interests or previous engagements. Worse, if an ally behaves recklessly, you might be dragged into an unnecessary conflict and/or other potential spillovers. The latter case of abandonment is linked, although juxtaposed, to entrapment as a state not perceived as a reliable or contributing ally may struggle to get strong reassurances from other allies. Moreover, it will make it difficult, if not impossible, to influence the development of the alliance in a way that suits your preferences and interests. Since smaller member states like Norway are dependent on allied guarantees to pose a reliable deterrent, the lack of allied guarantees may prove fateful if the state's integrity and territory was under pressure. This dual danger will therefore heavily influence national decision-making and subsequent alliance behavior. Contextualized, the Norwegian dialectic model of both integration and self-imposed restraints is a reassurance and deterrence strategy influenced by these dual fears (Saxi, 2021, p. 194). Fourthly, numerous scholars seek to explain the causes of alliance longevity, usually entailing discussions regarding the role of institutionalization and shared values versus distribution of power and external threats (Walt, 2009, p. 89-90). The abovementioned four academic inquiries effectively depict the nature of alliance management and navigation, where the positives of augmenting power and *buck passing* are intertwined with the possible impediments of alliance entrapment and (over)reliance on important allies. Thus, the balancing of these factors, especially in relation to the greatest power, constitutes the most important guidelines for alliance navigation for Norwegian decisionmakers.

2.4 Tying together a theoretical framework

Both the systemic pressures and domestic factors detailed above in a neoclassical realist framework will be used to assess the most important restraints and ramifications for U.S. foreign policy in Chapter 5 and 6. Additionally, these insights will be drawn upon, perhaps more implicitly, in Chapter 4 when describing the transatlantic relationship in a historical purview, as well as an overall backdrop to both analyses in Chapter 7 and 8. The lessons drawn from the literature of alliance management allows for easier identification of recurring patterns and expectations enabling more qualified inferences on the interplay between American strategic reorientation and Norwegian foreign policy. To guide the reader and make the connections between the different chapters and how these underpin the overall ambition of this thesis, as well as creating a theoretical framework that helps understand foreign policy formulation and the navigation guidelines for dependent allies, two conceptual models have been produced. The first

model explains how a state’s options in foreign policy and grand strategy formulation is constrained by conflating systemic and domestic pressures. Essentially, this is a model inspired by the work of Ripsman et al., (2016) adjusted to reflect this thesis’s conceptual framework. The intervening variable of soft power is connected by a dashed line since it is more of an output than an input in policymaking, but still crucial to an actor’s relations with other powers and therefore central to the formulation of the overall grand strategy. The second model combines the works of Holst (1966) and Tamnes (1987) consistent with alliance theory, illustrating the main guidelines for powers dependent on augmenting security by external means. Importantly, domestic factors will also influence the room for maneuver for smaller powers, for this the first model may be useful. However, for a power dependent on external security to deter potential foreign aggression, the relationship between deterrence and reassurance and integration and screening will mostly be impacted by systemic and not domestic stimuli.

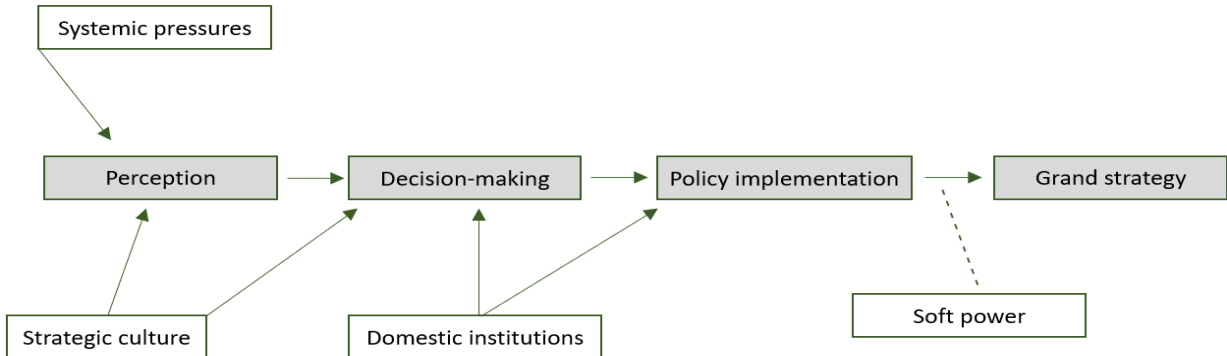


Figure 1: Factors impacting grand strategy formulation.

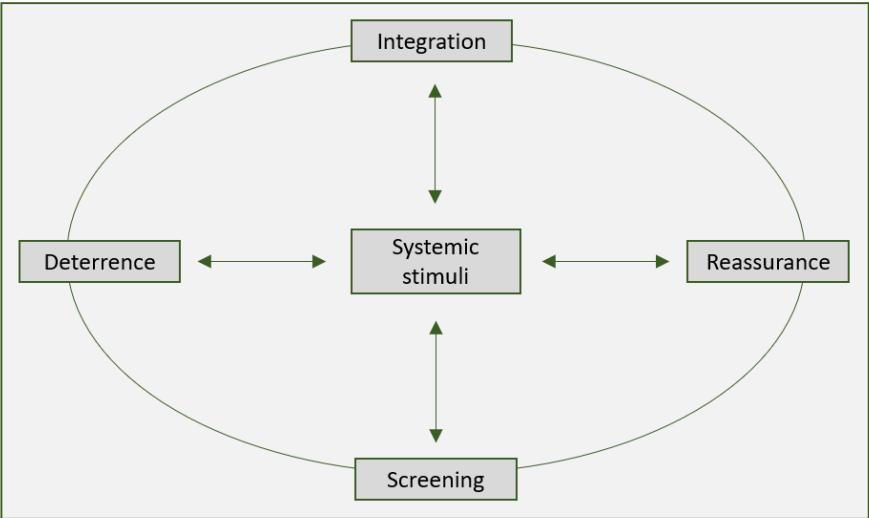


figure 2: Security policy options for responding to systemic stimuli.

Chapter 3: Methodology

As a research method informs your strategy, process, and technique to collect data, the importance of critical reflection when picking out a methodological design cannot be understated, especially is this true to political science as it innately studies social phenomena. This chapter explains the strengths and limitations of the research strategy employed, with an emphasis on the design, collection of data and the reliability and validity of the study.

3.1 Research design

A case study is typically defined by what it attempts to achieve. Its point of departure is an examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations where a usual ambition is to translate the findings to distinguishable explanations that may be generalizable to other events (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 5). Furthermore, when researchers select case studies as a method, they tend to employ existing theories to shape a sound conceptual basis and ensure connection to existing literature (King et al., 1994, p. 45). The goal of the thesis is to produce knowledge about a specific phenomenon, namely, how to explain U.S. strategic adjustment and its impact on Norwegian security. As this occurs in an inherently social and contemporary context, uses an established theory for explanatory power and aims to produce generalizable insights, an interpretative case study research strategy will be of methodical utility. Ontologically predisposed, as most IR-theorists tend to be, that identification of patterns and central tendencies unearths tangible predictions about specific phenomena and outcomes (Kauppi & Viotti, 2019, p. 7), I argue that changes in Norwegian foreign policy (the dependent variable) will in large be instigated by American strategic adjustment (the independent variable). Intuitively, this is due to Norwegian dependence on American security guarantees. When Waltz reminisced on his efforts to construct a theory of international relations, he noted that “a political theory, if any good, not only explains international outcomes, but also provides clues to situations and actions that may produce more of the desired and fewer of the undesired ones” (Waltz, 2008, VII). In this regard, it’s beneficial for Norwegian officials not only to understand *that* American grand strategy is changing, but also *why* it changes in the first place.

American adjustment and Norwegian adaptation are evolving situations, and it therefore may limit generalizable insights as there most likely will be new developments and information not readily available to the public. Bearing this in mind is exactly why it’s important to obtain more information about the situation since “good social science attempt to go beyond particulars to [produce] more general knowledge.” (King et al., 1994, p. 35). Therefore, the study describes

the particular events and developments in the transatlantic bargain to gain updated knowledge and to aggregate this information to construct a more holistic assessment. “Generalization, however, does not eliminate the importance of the particular. In fact, the very purpose of moving from the particular to the general is to improve our understanding of both” (King et al., 1994, p. 35). This legitimizes the thorough emphasis on the particulars that shapes and constrains American foreign policy formulation as it is explained in chapter 5 and 6. This thesis is naturally posed to be predictive as it aims to produce insights about American reorientation and present tangible Norwegian responses. Waiting for these changes to emanate and then recommend policy advice is a bit like suggesting closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. However, mitigating the risk of a thesis derailed by normativity and remaining in the world of horse analogies I avoid putting the cart before the horse by fusing soft process tracing of transatlantic lines of continuity and change in chapter 4 with neoclassical realism elaborated in chapter 2 to gather a sound understanding of the data collected in chapter 5 and 6 to attain reliable and valid inferences about the nature of U.S. and Norwegian foreign policies and consequent security strategies in chapter 7 and 8.

The main period under investigation is from 2009 to mid-2022, this delimitation is informed by three main considerations. Firstly, a timeframe north of ten years will likely be long enough to study how changes in American strategic adjustment impacts allied adaptation. Secondly, 2009 marks the start of the first Obama presidency crucial to understand the domestic situation in the U.S. Moreover, it was this administration that explicated the need for an American pivot to Asia, highlighted by key speeches from then Secretary of State Clinton in October 2011 and President Obama a month later. On the same note, mid 2022 will be a logical end point as NATO's new strategic concept is set to be unveiled at the NATO summit in 2022, it will also allow to include the Russian decision to launch an unprovoked war against Ukraine which has important ramifications for the research question. Thirdly, and most importantly, the selected timeframe encompasses significant events and developments greatly impacting transatlantic relations. Particularly, growing Chinese assertiveness, Russian illegal annexation of Crimea and invasion in Eastern Ukraine, NATO's recalibration to collective defense, heightened pressures on burden sharing the exit of Afghanistan and the recent 2022 Russian war of aggression towards Ukraine are important in this regard. This thesis also encompasses events and developments pre 2009 as a longer horizon on some of the topics covered is required to assess its implications on U.S. grand strategy and Norwegian adaptation. Methodologically this design fits within the frames of a theoretical and interpretive case study. By combining theoretical assumptions and retracing the

lines of transatlantic relations and its dynamics, I aim to understand *why* American grand strategy is adjusting, *what* it will look like and *how* Norwegian decisionmakers are adapting to meet these changes. Thus, a case study research strategy as described above will enable an overview of the current cacophony of international affairs and present a structured picture of what informs American grand strategy and a clearer image of the processes influencing and ultimately shaping Norwegian foreign policy.

3.2 Data collection

The empirical material is collected from both secondary and primary source materials including textbooks, academic journals, government documents, speeches, interviews, transcripts and biographies. Using secondary sources is necessary when studying such a wide and overreaching phenomenon. However, secondary sources are also prone to misrepresent original intentions (Nilssen, 2012, p. 72-73). Possible limitations regarding what type of data that is collected, or more correctly, what type of data that isn't collected should be mentioned. In the world of statecraft there exists abundantly many documents not available to the public, and thus not available to this researcher. Furthermore, some key decisionmakers will be difficult to arrange an interview with and the data collected from the interviews in this thesis will not be exhaustive. Lastly, access to Chinese and Russian documents in their original languages could further underpin the thesis legitimacy. Being aware of possible biases, differing interpretation of international affairs, language barriers and lack of direct access to key informants and classified information, I've attempted to mitigate these problems in primarily four ways. Firstly, I've strived to extract data from peer-reviewed articles and academic books as the thesis foundation, thereby strengthening the thesis' legitimacy. Secondly, using Norwegian, Chinese, American, Russian, and other nation's experts enables a more comprehensive design mitigating the chance for bias by uncovering possible opposing views. Thirdly, I've examined white papers and official statements from multiple governments to study concordance and variance from differing sources. Fourthly, I compare this to the information gathered from interviews with area experts to triangulate the data validating potential findings or detect possible discrepancies. In text, when using interview data, the citations will be marked with "P.C." abbreviated from "personal communication" to minimize space used and maintain flow.

The selected intervening variables for data collection regarding domestic factors: strategic culture, political institutions and soft power is guided by the elaborate work of Ripsman et al. (2016) and their proposed framework of a neoclassical realist theory of international relations,

which includes a set of preferred variables to explain foreign policy decision making and international outcomes. The two former, strategic culture and political institutions is a simplified and condensed version of the variables: leader images, strategic culture, domestic institutions and state-society relations as promoted by Ripsman et al., (2016, p. 9). The latter, U.S. soft power, is added as a variable since it is an inextricable component of the transatlantic relationship. Knowing this might sound like a compromise of theoretical rigor and playing it into the hands of critics of neoclassical realism, it is not a self-defeating enterprise impairing the overall goal of this thesis. Firstly, I do not aim to assess which of the variables that will have the most explanatory power alone, which a case study research design is poorly equipped to do (King et al., 1994, p. 25), but rather look at how the combination of them inform U.S. foreign policy and grand strategy planning. As Ripsman et al. (2016, p. 60-73) explains, the critical factor deciding which of the variables that are most relevant is the factor of time and sense of urgency. Simply put, if urgency is high, the FPE's enjoy more autonomy of the situation, if urgency is low, the political institutions and state-society relations will be more impactful, whereas strategic culture is a constant, independent of time. As this study tackles middle to long term phenomena as grand strategy formulation, the component of urgency will not be a pressing factor. Secondly and related, in contrast when advancing a neoclassical realist theory of international relations, positivistic rigidity is not as imperative in foreign policy analysis (FPA) which is the scope of this thesis. Certainly, a FPA with an inside-out perspective to decipher how interdepartmental differences and bargaining impacts foreign policy formulation would be a fruitful endeavor. However, as the thesis's main ambition is to explain the broad developments of *what* informs foreign policy orientations and not *how* internal bureaucratic interests shape them, the neoclassical realist perspective enabling an outside-in and holistic approach will more precisely guide this ambition.

3.3 Reliability and validity

Scientific validity refers to the degree we measure what we think we are measuring, whereas reliability implies that your results can be reproduced, especially by others, if applying the same procedure and factors in the same environment (King et al., 1994, p. 25). Results that are reproducible does not necessarily make them correct. Valid results are typically reliable, but standing by itself, not easily reproducible. This conundrum illustrates the coalesced nature of reliability and validity and how both are essential for evaluating the quality of the research conducted. As the previous section shows, multiple measures have been taken to ensure reliability to the extent that the results from this study can be reproduced under the same

conditions. Sticking to and operationalizing the intervening variables strategic culture, political institutions and soft power as they are accepted by academics in the relevant fields ensure both the reliability and validity of the variables, making it easier to replicate them for other research and by other researchers. Furthermore, since grand strategy and foreign policy formulation is a time-consuming exercise, I include a historical chapter retracing and examining the development of the transatlantic relationship. This in turn supplements the reliability of the study with a layer of consistency if the results pass the test of time. Moreover, if the results match the assumptions of an established theory, in this case neoclassical realism, it will strengthen the thesis's validity. Before moving on to the empirical section of the thesis, a remark about the epistemological implications for this research design and ambition of the study is in order. This study, which examines a social phenomenon in political science, is anchored to well-constructed theories and methods and thus informed by both the methodological strengths and constraints of case studies and IR-theory. From this point of departure, to fulfil the descriptive and explanatory ambition of the study, it must, including to be descriptive, be both explorative and interpretive as well. As King et al. (1994, p. 34) affirms, "inference, whether descriptive or causal, quantitative or qualitative, is the ultimate goal of all good social science". Thus, description and explanation are not mutually exclusive in scientific research, but rather if conducted according to valid procedures the interplay of the two will allow for qualified inferences about social phenomena. Therefore, by employing carefully selected variables and a relevant conceptual framework guided by the methodological impositions mentioned in this chapter, the research design preserves the scientific inference necessary for the ambitions of this thesis.

Chapter 4: Dependent and dependable

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has expanded its member base eastward and transformed substantially, reorienting its purpose and posture to remain floating and meet the challenges of a new era (Farrell & Rynning, 2010, p. 673). This chapter aims to retrace important transformative moments in the alliance to identify recognizable patterns which could powerfully help to understand future transformative efforts. Relying on interpretation of previous events and changes in transatlantic security cannot by itself yield definite answers to future challenges and crossroads. However, as systemic pressures remain constant and human nature the same, retracing history will help anticipate likely steps and decisions of statesmen in the future. Furthermore, historical evidence will give clues to what factors should be examined and further scrutinized to enlighten current trends and future developments. In as such, a historical recount will valuably inform how both U.S. and Norwegian decisionmakers act to the pressures confining

foreign policy strategies. This chapter focuses on and around NATO transformations because it sets the theoretical assumptions of alliance management in motion, creating an environment where we may more easily identify American reorientation and Norwegian adaptation. To comprehend Norwegian reactions and adaptations more fully it's important to understand the domestic factors influencing Norwegian decisionmakers. Therefore, as well as assessing key international events and transformations after the Cold War, to elaborate Norwegian strategic culture further, this chapter includes a brief historical overview of the beginnings of Norwegian foreign policy in the 20th century and the following westward orientation and integration.

4.1 Neutral newcomer

Until 1814 Norway was under the Danish Crown, and then, because of great power conflict and the outcomes of the Napoleonic Wars she was transferred into a Swedish-dominated union (1814-1905) where foreign policy was Stockholm's prerogative; making an independent Norwegian foreign policy a latecomer on the world stage. At the onset of the 20th century Norway was disinterested in foreign policy and maintained a strong line of neutrality, stressing economic interests and distance from continental politics (Lodgaard, 2002, p. 258). Thus, endorsement of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949 was a pivotal point in the small Northern European nation's security policy, catapulting it from neutrality to alliance partner it constituted the biggest breach of continuity in Norwegian foreign policy (Lodgaard, 2002, p. 261). Although clearly informed by the lessons of the Second World War and a faulty strategy of neutrality, as Fure (1996) elaborately conveys, this political shift was not entirely inconsistent with developments in the inter-war period where Norwegian FPE's frequently stressed its international commercial dependency and need for external guarantees. Therefore, Norway had determinedly sought implicit security assurances from Great Britain, the great power closest to Norway ideologically and economically. Perhaps it's superior navy was not insignificant to Norwegian decisionmakers' orientation either (Tamnes, 2019, p. 50).

The Second World War dismantled the longstanding European balance of power, and with it, a rude awaking for Norway. Under the auspices of WWII traumas, the trepidations of leaving a line of neutrality were not withstanding, consequently propelling Norwegian foreign policy towards a Western security framework. Although neutrality and implicit assurances were replaced by alignment and explicit guarantees, the isolationist heritage continue to influence Norwegian strategic culture (Hilde, 2019, p. 61). At its onset, NATO was meant to be a traditional military alliance serving its purpose as a deterrent, called into action if a member

state's territory or integrity was threatened. Neither Washington, nor Oslo for that reason, expressed a desire for peacetime integrated military commands (Eriksen & Pharo, 1997 p. 33). This perception was soon to be replaced by the realities of the Korean War, altering opinion in both capitals intensifying multinational defense integration. Especially did the assumed domino effect of communism propel U.S. attention towards Norway and Europe in general (Lodgaard, 2002, p. 261). To put in perspective Norwegian dependency and increased integration at the time, the U.S. financed 40% of Norwegian defense expenditures between 1950 and 1965 (Eriksen & Pharo, 1997, p. 74). Throughout the Cold War, Norwegian authorities aimed to meet new realities with a dualistic strategy of deterrence and reassurance. Deterrence through strongly promoting an integrated command structure to ensure alliance commitment, successfully lobbying the Northern Command (AFNORTH) to be headquartered on Norwegian soil (Heier, 2006, p. 18). Reassurance through self-imposed rules of engagement on Norwegian territory in times of peace (Hilde, 2019, p. 62).

4.2 Out of area or out of business

The first major NATO transformation in the Post-Cold War era was a direct result of the dispersion of the Alliance's main casus foederis. Western liberal euphoria, outcries of a unipolar order (Krauthammer, 1991) and the end of history (Fukuyama, 1989) followed the disintegration of the Soviet Union late December 1991. NATO's raison d'être and with it, American will to pay for European security, was by many experts destined to crumble along with the Soviet Union, reviving the issue of burden-sharing (Oma, 2019, p. 71), an issue that outlives the Alliance itself (Matlé, 2021, p. 29). With Europe still licking her wounds from the cataclysmic first half of the twentieth century, the Americans were both prepared and accepted to pay the heavier price. As the century progressed and the capitals of Europe recovered economically, Washington rightfully expected them to eventually carry their own weight. On behest of the Americans, Article 3 in the Washington Treaty does address the topic of burden-sharing, declaring that members must "separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack." (NATO, 2019). What Article 3 does not, nor any subsequent articles or agreements, is to establish a binding formula to chisel out member contributions (Oma, 2019, p. 73).

The closest is the joint declaration in Brussels in 2014 vowing to increase (or maintain) individual member state defense expenditures to 2% of their respective total GDP by 2024. Remarkably, U.S. defense spending have for the past decades constituted about 70% of the

overall defense expenditures of the Alliance (NATO, 2021a). An important remark is that although these are significant measurements, it doesn't necessarily measure the right stuff regarding equitable burden-sharing. As Anthony Cordesman points out, the 70% estimation is misleading and the 2% goal statistically hollow and causes an impression that the U.S. spends more on European security than Europe itself does. U.S. defense spending is the result of a global superpower serving its own interests, not only in Europe, but a worldwide commitment as well as sizeable expenditures at home (Cordesman, 2018). Thus, debates on NATO burden-sharing are important, but it is additionally important to debate what really matters. Despite that the combined European defense budgets around the new millennia tallied approximately two thirds of the U.S. defense budget, European firepower and outmoded capabilities did not amount to two thirds of the American military might (NATO, 1999; Heier 2021, p. 212). This discrepancy was duly illustrated by the Secretary-General of NATO, Lord Robertson (1999-2003) when he noted that "mighty Europe remains a military pygmy" (Robertson, 2002), underpinning the need for a European military transformation to match the new security environment and expeditionary and interoperative ambitions of NATO's Strategic Concept of 1999. Consequently, the end of the Cold War and the need to construct an alliance capable to manage a more complex security environment, the pendulum swung from quantitative to qualitative capabilities. For dependent allies this meant a shift in burden-sharing from monetary inputs to capability outputs and from collective territorial defense to crisis management and out of area operations.

4.3 The War on Terror

NATO's KFOR-operation had given a taste, albeit a bitter one, of international operations and (lacking) Allied interoperability. The intervention in Afghanistan would further test the merits of transatlantic cohesion, truly bringing the Alliance out of area (Lodgaard, 2002, p. 271). After a decade of uncertainty and indecision (Heier, 2021, p. 212), the 9/11 attacks jumpstarted the Alliance (Farrell & Rynning, 2010, p. 679), creating political impetus for the comprehensive transformation necessary "to meet the challenges to the security of our forces, populations and territory, from wherever they may come" (NATO, 2002). These political ambitions were embodied in the establishment of a new Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in Norfolk, a NATO Reaction Force (NRF) and increased efforts to develop interoperable capabilities necessary for modern warfare (Farrell & Rynning, 2010, p. 679). Perturbed by the unprecedented terrorist attacks on 9/11, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time in the Alliance's history, in solidarity with the United States. The experienced shortcomings of Allied coordination and resolve in KFOR coupled with an American wish for flexibility initially spurred American

reluctancy to involve NATO as a whole in the Afghanistan-campaign (NOU, 2016:8, p. 21). Consequently, the U.S. opted for a ‘coalition of the willing’, resulting in the by now well-known Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). This approach caused a political crisis in an already shaky NATO establishment questioning its relevance as a security organization and role as the key consulting mechanism in transatlantic affairs (Græger & Haugevik, 2009, p. 28-29).

At the time, Norwegian defense budgets were reduced in tandem with the diminished Soviet threat. With a military dimensioned for Cold War scenarios and territorial defense and a lacking political will to prioritize defense spending, Norway, as well as multiple other allies, were ill-prepared to meet the new realities of the Alliance and most importantly, U.S. expectations (Egeberg, 2017, p. 155). In an address to the U.S. Congress eleven days after the 9/11 attacks, President Bush Jr. stated that, “every nation in every region now has a decision to make; either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” (Bush, 2001). These words echoed around the world and walls of every foreign ministry, exacerbating Norwegian decisionmakers search for relevant capabilities that could be deployed to Afghanistan (NOU 2016:8, p. 21). The sense of urgency in the Norwegian foreign policy establishment is understandable, catalyzed both by the lessons of Kosovo and by an obligation and sincere wish to support an ally in a time of need, Norwegian FPE’s knew that they had to act fast (Egeberg, 2017, p. 194). Although NATO’s founding document enshrines liberal institutionalist values of consultation, deliberation and consensus, member states cannot escape the realities of power and influence. It is a poorly kept secret that members, and especially smaller powers, due to its need to position itself as a reliable ally aim to strengthen bilateral relations with the United States when possible (Heier, 2021, p. 211). True, NATO is a multinational and unique alliance framework, but it also serves its masters as the institutionalized framework of bilateral cooperation between individual member states and the United States. Thus, indebted by the conditions of alliance, the changing security environment and dependence on American military might, Norwegian officials knew they had to act fast to be considered a good ally and remain relevant to Washington D.C in a time of duress.

When NATO in 2003 assumed leadership of the peacekeeping International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) authorized by the UN two years earlier, the North Atlantic Alliance finally managed to somewhat bridge the political ambitions of the 2002 NATO Summit in Prague and the realities on the ground. The conceivably restored unity of the ISAF mission was nonetheless overshadowed by the events before, under and after the U.S.-led intervention of Iraq the same

year, splitting the transatlantic security community and severely testing alliance cohesion (Græger & Haugevik, 2009, p. 29). Accordingly, this impacted both the Norwegian domestic debate and the bilateral relationship. On February 13th, 2003 the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jan Petersen (2001-2005) in his annual address ascertained that Norway would support the UN-track of awaiting the weapon inspector report's findings regarding the rumored Iraqi WMDs before deciding to participate in the coalition of the willing (Egeberg, 2017, p. 274). As a point of reference to the Norwegian population's opinion, two days later, the biggest demonstration in Norwegian history was a fact when 115 000 Norwegians participated in anti-war protests nationwide (Egeberg, 2017, p. 275). Surveys conducted in leading Norwegian news outlets underlined this, as two out of three were against an intervention in Iraq independent of what the UN-inspection revealed (Dagbladet, 2003). Norwegians were not satisfied with awaiting the UN inspectors' findings, they simply did not want war.

Empirical expectations derived from alliance theory and neoclassical realist assumptions makes the Iraq crisis perhaps the clearest example of the complexity of Norwegian foreign policy formulation in the crossfire between systemic pressures and domestic restraints. On the one hand, Norwegian decisionmakers knew that participation in the U.S.-led Operation Iraqi Freedom would play out favorably in U.S. perceptions of Norway. Consequently, indecision or abstention would most likely have the opposite effect. Moreover, the split in the alliance where major member-states Germany and France were ardent anti-war, could potentially lead to unrepairable cracks in an already dented Alliance, further exacerbating the importance of maintaining strong U.S. relations for Oslo. On the other hand, domestic pressures were unequivocal and unmistakably clear. Months of intense discussion and uncertainty culminated when Jan Petersen March 10th, 2003 concluded that Norway could not support the U.S.-led coalition if there was no new UN-decision. The initial American response two days later was resolutely put by U.S. Ambassador to Norway, John D. Ong stating that "when a friend you've had all your life turns you down, the friendship changes and will never be the same again, and you'll not come to said friend's aid if need be." (Berthelsen, 2009 p. 17). The American ambassador's speech echoed dramatically in the Norwegian foreign policy establishment. Luckily, the ambassador's outburst was a shot from the hip and not on direct behest of Washington D.C. A telephone call between the Norwegian Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik and the U.S. president, George W. Bush the following day cooled down the situation with the U.S. President reassuring Bondevik, stating that "among friends there can be disagreements" (Egeberg, 2017, s. 282). Nonetheless, this chaotic week in March 2003 illuminates two key points in line with neoclassical realism. First,

it underpins how difficult it can be for Norwegian FPE's to balance U.S. expectations and domestic considerations. Secondly, it illustrates the neoclassical realist notion that individual's perception and beliefs play a crucial part in the shaping of – and navigating in – international affairs. Emphasizing these insights allows to identify recurring patterns throughout Norwegian foreign policy and are also evident in the overall assessment of Norwegian participation in the War on Terror.

The 2016 Godal-report, an Official Norwegian Report assessing Norwegian contributions to the Afghanistan mission (2001-2014), with the fitting caption *A Good Ally*, highlights three objectives to explain Norwegian participation in Afghanistan: 1) To be in the fight together with the U.S. and Allies. 2) To combat international terrorism. And 3) to improve the situation in Afghanistan. Importantly, the report underlines that the first objective, to support the U.S. and ensure NATO relevance, was the main objective during the entire campaign (NOU, 2016:8, p. 9). More than 45 days after Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was green-lit October 7th and 10 other NATO-allies already had offered concrete support, Norway offered niche capabilities as C-130 transport aircrafts, F-16 fighter jets, EOD-technicians and special forces for the Allied cause (NOU, 2016, p. 22). These were more or less the same capabilities that Chief of Defense, Sigurd Frisvold (1999-2005) compiled as deployable options and offered the Norwegian MoD as early as September 13th, 2001, in his own words, to avoid another Kosovo (Egeberg, 2017, p. 195). For American authorities, participation in military operations became the most important marker of support in the War on Terror and for Norwegian FPE's it was more important to appear a competent contributor, than the actual effect the relatively small Norwegian contributions had in Afghanistan itself (NOU, 2016, p. 194).

The influence of Norwegian strategic culture and especially domestic institutions were also evident during the Afghanistan campaign. Especially noticeable were the negotiations between the Labor Party and Centre Party in the new red/green coalition government of 2005 that led to self-imposed caveats on Norwegian forces and prioritization of ISAF peacekeeping missions and geographically restraining (most) Norwegian forces to the perceivably more stable Northern Afghanistan (NOU, 2016, p. 194). Four months later, on February 8th, 2006 the Norwegian-led PRT in Meymaneh came under a coordinated attack from heavily armed protesters during a demonstration spurred by the contentious cartoon controversy where the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* depicted the prophet Muhammad with a bomb-shaped turban (Ege & Akerhaug, 2012). This event shattered the political illusion that Northern Afghanistan was detached from

the realities in the Southern provinces. Nonetheless, the Norwegian government still declined Allied requests for help when opting not to deploy special forces to Southern Afghanistan in the fall of 2006 (Vinding, Ryste og Andersen, 2006). Considering alliance theory and a smaller state's need to be considered a good ally, a NUPI-report from 2009 cautioned that this kind of restrictive behavior gave a blow to the Norwegian standing in the Alliance, potentially shaving off the effect the popular special force contributions had on Allied perceptions of Norway earlier in the campaign (Græger & Haugevik, 2009, p. 39). This crossfire of domestic pressures and Allied expectations clearly depicts the dilemmas facing FPE's when formulating foreign policy. Balancing these pressures while simultaneously safeguarding national interests and values will be critical when adapting to an alliance with ambitions to tackle both collective defense and global issues.

4.4 Recalibration

The Georgian War in 2008 and especially the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea and support of separatists in the Donbas region in 2014 catalyzed a return to territorial defense in NATO planning and awareness (Hilde, 2019, p. 64). Consequently, this development reignited the traditional and sometimes uneasy balance between deterrence and reassurance vis-à-vis Russia (Bjur et al., 2020, p. 479-480). The Russian-Georgian conflict indicated that Russia was capable and willing to use military means to pursue political goals (Græger & Haugevik, 2009, p. 31), as a neighboring country this is of central importance to Norwegian security. If 2008 was a warning shot, then the Russian annexation of Crimea and following actions in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 was a smoking gun. Consequently, the Alliance "came home" putting deterrence, Russia and collective defense on the top of the agenda (Bjur et al., 2020, p. 481). Accordingly, Norwegian objectives in the Core Area Initiative launched in 2008 calling for increased attention to territorial defense and prioritization of NATO's original tasks succeeded. As Rune Jakobsen, previous commander of the Norwegian Joint Headquarters (2015-2021) explained, before the annexation most scoffed at Norway for paying that much attention to Russia. After, everybody wanted to come to Norway to watch and learn (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). This is a testament that active entrepreneurship coupled with favorable international conditions and events increases room for maneuver. It also reemphasized the strategic importance of the North, and thus reinvented great power politics and its mechanisms to the Norwegian doorstep as was the case during the Cold War. An important difference this time around is that through the Norwegian white papers St.prp no. 45 (2000-2001) *transformation of the Armed Forces in 2002-2005* and St. prp no 42 (2003-2004) *further modernization of the Armed Forces 2005-2008*, the Norwegian Armed

Forces had transformed from a mobilizable invasion defense to an integrated alliance defense. The sources for this transformation are multifaceted, including changes in the external security environment, allied expectations, internal non-material factors and economic necessities (Saxi, 2021, p. 192-202). The adaptation to a smaller and more modern military with niche, high readiness, expeditionary and interoperable capabilities has worked well as a door opener in Washington D.C. (Heier, 2018, p. 272). However, as NATO's northern flank reappears as a geostrategic location and Norway has decreased its autonomous military capacity, it exposes the increased dependency on allied guarantees, leaving Norway with the option to hedge on NATO unity and American utility or adjust to explore other means to augment security. Elaborated further in chapter 8, perhaps a combination of both is a tangible alternative.

4.5 Explaining the Norwegian approach

Norway retains a firm transatlantic orientation, and although some political quarrels, Norway is firmly committed to preserve NATO relevance and maintain strong relations with the United States. Navigating between autonomy and dependency to avoid marginalization, Norway has accepted NATO enlargement and out of area operations, but also actively works to promote territorial collective defense as NATO's *raison d'être*. Based on this brief account, is there any discernable repeating patterns when studying U.S. adjustment and Norwegian adaptation during NATO transformations? Clearly, ever since the Washington Treaty, American security guarantees have been the bedrock of Norwegian security. This dependency seems to be at the forefront of Norwegian FPE's rationale in the advent of NATO transformations, missions, posture and purpose. When American threat perception differed from Norwegian strategic interests, as it sometimes did during the out of Area epoch of NATO, Norway was inclined to more willingly meet American expectations to remain relevant, but at the same time keeping some distance to accommodate domestic factors.

From these insights two lessons applicable to the thesis's ambition can be discerned. Firstly, Norwegian FPE's are strongly conditioned to accommodate American expectations when in fear of marginalization. I do not claim that Norwegian security will in perpetuity be influenced and contingent on American foreign policy and strategies, but for the time being, it remains critical to any Norwegian calculation. Secondly, Norwegian FPE's aim to use transformative periods to either sustain the status quo or increase its own standing in the alliance. An inherent feature in this security framework is the dependence on an external other, for Norway it is the United States. Based on institutional, economic and cultural conditions this has served Norwegian foreign

policy objectives well. However, as U.S. attention increasingly diverts away from Europe the balance between integration and screening vis-à-vis the U.S. and deterrence and reassurance vis-à-vis Russia may need recalibration, at least precise evaluation. The identification of where these demarcation lines lie in an evolving security landscape will be a bone of contention going forward. Resonating well with both alliance theory and the lines of continuity and change in Norwegian security and foreign policy, these lessons will be decisive guidelines as NATO, U.S. and Norwegian decisionmakers prepares for emerging great power rivalry and a more complex threat environment. The second part of this thesis aims to enumerate the main drivers in this environment and its consequences on transatlantic relations.

Part II: Systemic pressures and domestic demands

Part II presents the most important factors influencing U.S. decisionmakers in their quest of crafting an appropriate grand strategy and illustrates that foreign policy is the result of the interplay between systemic and domestic pressures. Chapter 5 expounds the implications of a rising China, revanchist Russia, increased Sino-Russian cooperation and European autonomy. Chapter 6 takes a domestic approach detailing U.S. strategic culture, deepening political division, changes in U.S. soft power and how this impacts foreign policy formulation.

Chapter 5: Systemic pressures

5.1 Bid for hegemony

The economic growth of China is staggering. In 1980 the GDP of the U.S. was 10 times that of China measured by purchasing power parity, by 2014 the Chinese had surpassed the Americans. By this time, the Chinese files twice as many patent applications as the U.S., has become the world's biggest manufacturer of computers, semiconductors and pharmaceuticals and tops the rankings in STEM-subjects providing the competencies to make advances in the fastest growing sectors of modern economies. The causes for this are part due to the 1978 economic reforms enacted under Deng Xiaoping, part due to industrialization and urbanization and part because of globalization, foreign investment and aid (Allison, 2018, p. 16-17). The effective Chinese economic reforms in the late 1970s was coupled with Deng Xiaoping's foreign policy of hiding your strength and biding your time. Analogous to Sun Tzu's dictum to appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak, the Chinese guiding philosophy meant that the impressive economic growth initially was met by fascination more than suspicion. The unprecedented tectonic shift in the international power that followed, and Xi Jinping's ambitious

and assertive foreign policy has spurred a global competition for power and influence between Beijing and Washington (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 311). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regards the American-led liberal democratic world order as a “fundamental impediment to its external ambitions and an existential threat to its domestic rule” (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2020, p. 1). This backdrop informs nearly all Chinese diplomatic strategy and foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era. In recent years, the CCP has due to its economic growth more brazenly forecasted its autocratic political and economic model as superior to democracy and capitalism, presenting it in a speech celebrating the CCP’s 100th anniversary as a “new model for human advancement” (Xi, 2021).

In 2011 the Obama-administration signaled the need to reorient and reorganize its priorities and capabilities to meet the emerging challenges in the Indo-Pacific. Although it has resembled a tilt more than a pivot, there is a considerable and systematic resource allocation towards the region that manifests a shift in U.S. priorities (P.C., Tamnes, 2022). For instance, the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) has been reduced from \$5.9 billion in 2020 to \$3.7 billion in 2022 to give way for the newly established \$7.1 billion Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI) meant to improve current posture, capabilities and activities of U.S. Forces in the Indo-Pacific region to meet growing Chinese assertiveness and confidence (U.S. Congress, 2022). Behind this confidence the Chinese leadership is increasingly aware of possible long-term economic, social and technological challenges facing China such as sustaining economic growth, social unity and party loyalty. In turn, Beijing has acted to mitigate these challenges both domestically and internationally. Drawing lessons from the collapse of the Soviet empire, which Xi claims was due to relaxed political control, he has exerted increased internal control in Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet, while simultaneously linking Chinese private firms to the CCP to achieve CCP’s economic, social and political goals. A key objective being linking China’s success and institutions to the party system to ensure fealty and crack down on any events that might challenge the stability of the regime (Allison, 2018, p. 118-119). As such, President Xi balances on a fine line of strong and centralized leadership and curbing the aspirations of young entrepreneurs, leaders and advocates of democracy. As long as the Chinese people experience that social mobility is possible, this may be a sustainable approach for Beijing. In this regard, to maintain its impressive economic growth and accelerate China’s economic competitiveness the CCP have intensified theft of information and intellectual property through cyber-attacks directed at leading U.S. and other international companies making international cooperation more difficult (Sutter, 2019, p. 27).

As a growing superpower it is expected that China will have a global footprint and presence on every continent soon, as great powers are not either or somewhere, but a little everywhere, always (P.C., Tamnes, 2022). Externally, Beijing has expanded its regional control and global influence through both legitimate and coercive measures. Pertaining the latter, China has increased the use of economic coercion to halt foreign criticism where the Chinese repercussions towards Lithuania after they opened a de-facto Taiwan embassy proves a striking example. It is not satisfied with sanctioning smaller states like Lithuania or Norway as they did after Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. The Chinese government have also amplified their opposition to their peer competitor the United States through trade wars and regional rivals through a more assertive stance on regional territorial disputes in the South China Sea (Sutter, 2019 p. 28). Pertaining the former, its legitimate investments in European infrastructure, integration in multilateral institutions, the world economy and technological edge in key areas like artificial intelligence and 5G, the Chinese influence is creating an economic and political dependency that may limit the freedom of choice for Western nations, industries and organizations (Efjestad & Tamnes, 2020, p. 20). In the international realm, power remains the ultimate source of currency. Just like Washington's presence, influence and assertion grew in tandem with its material output in the 20th century, so will Beijing's in the 21st. Therefore, it would be imprudent to contain Chinese influence as a knee jerk reflex. Nonetheless, the matter of fact is that there exist multiple colliding values and interests between the China model and the transatlantic community's way of life, meaning that dialogue and understanding must be coupled with deterrence when addressing China. To understand how this influences decisionmakers in Washington's view on international affairs, it is useful to visit the summary of the 2021 annual report to Congress from the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (2021, p. 26) that concludes with this remark:

“The CCP is a long-term, consequential, menacing adversary determined to end the economic and political freedoms that have served as the foundation for security and prosperity of billions of people. Each decision the United States makes over the coming months and years must be taken in consultation with concerned partners and be purposefully directed at upholding an international system that has largely served us well. Otherwise, we will continue to see the slow but certain erosion of the security, sovereignty, and identity of democratic nations”

The notion of China being a serious challenger to the wellbeing of democratic nations is a rather new one. How has it come to be? And is the U.S and China destined for war? In his book, *Destined for War*, American Harvard professor Graham Allison methodically studies 16 historical cases of power transition from the last 500 years and what happens when the

predominant power is challenged by a rising power, which he labeled the Thucydides trap (Allison, 2018). Thucydides recognized 2500 years ago whilst analyzing the causes of the Peloponnesian War that a rising power's growing confidence, increased demand for respect and expectations of revised arrangements to reflect new realities often clash with the ruling power's determination to uphold the status quo. It was the rise of Athens, and the fear that this incited in Sparta, that made war inevitable. In Allison's work, he concluded that out of the 16 historical cases, 12 resulted in war. The common denominator for the four cases that did not end up in bloodshed was "only because of huge, painful adjustments in attitudes and actions on the part of challenger and challenged alike" (Allison, 2018, xvii).

The case of China's material power is not the only factor persuading the U.S. to pivot to the Indo-Pacific, the region itself is also of importance as its security architecture is characteristically a self-help system. Compared to the European continent the level of integration is far lower, and although there are some mechanisms like ASEAN and direct defense arrangements between regional powers and the United States, the Indo-Pacific remains relatively unintegrated (Melby, 2017, p. 40). This has important ramifications as there are few arrangements in place to modify state behavior. Congruent to the security dilemma, the Asian nations thus view each other with more suspicion since confidence-building mechanisms that spill over through economic integration and political dialogue so far remains underdeveloped. An implication of this is that this region is ripe for further integration. In this regard, The Chinese Belt and Road initiative (BRI), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) shows that Beijing is increasingly binding the region together to strengthen its influence. Moreover, contesting claims in the South China Sea, a divided Korean peninsula and the Taiwan issue are potential flashpoints and sources of instability (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 312). For the U.S., like its concerns in Europe, it is key to keep the region stable, essentially this means containing China's ambitions of regional hegemony. As a growing superpower, China's influence and activities will not be limited to its regional theater evidenced both through extensive use of multilateral institutions and bilateral engagements outside the usual Chinese sphere of interest. Especially is Chinese activities in Central Asian and African nations important since it reinforces Chinese influence countries rich in rare earth minerals which will become increasingly important in the fourth industrial revolution (P.C., Eide, 2022).

Corresponding with Mao Zedong's aphorism that power grows out of the barrel of a gun, Chinese confidence and economic power is spilling over to the military domain as well. In this regard, the CCP's naval strategy is changing from sea denial in the first island chain to a strategy beyond

the second island chain (Blank, 2019, p. 119). These ambitions of a blue water navy will threaten the traditional maritime dominance the U.S. have had in the region, increasing the rivalry between Beijing and Washington (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 311). A 2015 Rand corporation study indicated that by 2017 China would have an “advantage” or “approximate parity” in six of nine military areas in a U.S.-China showdown over Taiwan and a four out of nine in a South China Sea conflict (Heginbotham et al., 2015). Although Chinese strategic culture and their economic strength guides Beijing to prefer using financial instruments as both carrot and stick, the CCP understands that a strong military is essential to back its superpower ambitions. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has over the two past decades transformed into a more capable military force with strengthened A2/AD capabilities and improved force projection through a blue water navy and expeditionary forces (Allison, 2018, p. 132). As the technology gap keeps shrinking, the U.S. will have to allocate more resources and energy on containing the Chinese and limiting its sphere of influence. Why this is important and how it can be contained is described in detail in chapter 7.

5.2 Russian revanchism

Under the leadership of Putin, the Russian state has risen from its slumber, reinvigorated its military, centralized domestic power and projected power internationally to strengthen its influence in essential parts of the former Soviet empire attempting to restore its image as a major player in international affairs (Efjestad & Tamnes, 2020, p. 16). The Russian emphasis on reestablishing its bastion defense concept with aims to ensure sea control of its northern waters, sea denial into the Greenland-Iceland-UK (GIUK) gap and force projection deep into the Atlantic to disrupt SLOCs necessary for effective allied reinforcement poses a direct challenge to Norwegian and European security (Efjestad, 2018, p. 46). The modernization of early warning air bases, mobilization of advanced A2/AD capabilities, development of new weapons systems and multiple submarine platforms like the Akula II, Severodvinsk, Borei and Delta-IV classes makes the concept a credible deterrent which have redirected international interest to the High North. Although the impacts of climate change makes the region more accessible both for shipping through the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and exploitation of hydrocarbons and rare earth minerals, the main driver for the increased interest in the Arctic is the Russian nuclear second strike capability and the opening of a new body of water representing a potential corridor for strategic competition and vector both for attacks and power projection for the United States, Russia and China (DoD, 2019, p. 3-5).

After an invasion-size military build-up and unrealistic demands to the U.S. and NATO, Russia decided in February 2022 to instigate a war of aggression towards Ukraine. Most security and defense experts struggle to explain the rationale behind Putin's decision to invade the second largest country in Europe, one of the reasons being that many continues to interpret Russian rhetoric with Western logic (P.C. Jakobsen, 2022). As the fog of war slowly clears, it seems that the Russian leadership misread Ukrainian resilience, European and transatlantic unity and its own intelligence and ability. This is a gamechanger for European security. Although rebuking the legitimacy of the claimed Russian *casus belli* and condemning its actions, it is essential to try to understand the Russian rationale to be able to resolve this war and at the same time prepare for the future. Watching this from Moscow, the Ukrainian-Russian war should be unsurprising to the Alliance. The liberal-democratic project of creating a "Europe whole and free" as President Bush Sr. called it in 1989 had one vital flaw, it did not effectively involve Russia in the process. The Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide that led the OSCE-negotiations during the Istanbul-summit in 1999 where the Vienna Document was updated recalls that the Russians agreed to substantial concessions. In conversation with a Russian diplomat Eide mentioned he was surprised of how little resistance came from the Russian delegation, the diplomat replied it was difficult to muster much resistance when Boris Jeltsin was drunk throughout the talks (P.C., Eide, 2022). This is symptomatic to the state of the Russian Federation at the time, where a failed transition to market liberalist policies, illustrated by the 38% decrease in the Russian GDP from 1991 to 1994, facilitated the rise of a strongman like Putin with a mandate to reestablish Russian pride (Lundestad, 2015, p. 230-231). As a point of reference, the 2022 war of aggression against Ukraine is estimated to shave off 10-15% of the Russian GDP (Smith, 2022).

In 1999, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic joined the Atlantic alliance before Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Baltic nations joined in 2004 at the Istanbul Summit. In Moscow the eastward expansion had not gone unnoticed. In a watershed speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference Vladimir Putin warned of mounting trepidations and aggravation in Moscow caused by NATO enlargement in its traditional sphere of interest and negligent U.S. unilateralism. Furthermore, he stated that "the unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible in today's world.". Additionally, he voiced concerns of the NATO integration process as a "serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended?" (Putin 2007). This speech was, or should've at least, been a red flag for Western powers to notice the Russian intentions to reassert itself as a great power. Ironically, the only flag that seemingly raised concerns was the symbolic Russian flag

planting on the North Pole seabed in August later that year. Putin's wishes for a multipolar order and respect did not receive any tangible reciprocity from either North American or European powers. On the contrary the distance between Moscow and the Euro-Atlantic states continued to increase. The Alliance underestimated the sense of insecurity caused by the showcase of preponderant U.S. firepower during the Gulf Wars and the War in Iraq and the sense of humiliation the Russian people experienced after the disintegration of the Soviet Union (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). This humiliation was further worsened by the joint 2008 Bucharest Summit communique welcoming Ukraine's and Georgia's aspirations for NATO membership, paving the way for membership action plans (NATO, 2008). A necessary remark is that this decision was a disputed one within the alliance where U.S. and Eastern countries neighboring Russia were the main instigators for enlargement and French and German worries of Russian counterreactions slowed down the ascension process (P.C., Eide, 2022).

Hindering a successful Ukrainian adaptation of liberal democratic values and ascension to the Western security community has been and will remain a vital national interest for Moscow. This is not because Russia in particular fears European military power, but primarily for two reasons. Firstly, a successful Ukrainian transformation to a liberal and democratic society will harm the legitimacy of the Russian social paternalistic and conservative model (Heier, 2021, p. 105). Secondly, NATO integration invites U.S. military power closer to the Russian heartland through improved infrastructure and logistical capacity, prepositioned military equipment, harmonized command and control and possible extension of NATO's Aegis Ashore ballistic missile defense system. For smaller nations living in proximity to greater ones, the augmented security by external means needs to be measured so that it does not upset the existing regional balance of deterrence and reassurance. When discussing the 2008 communique, previous Norwegian Ambassador to NATO Kai Eide (2002-2006) recalled this as one of the great mistakes in NATO-Russia relations, as the consequences of it far outweighed the actual benefit and political will to grant Ukraine and Georgia membership status (P.C., Eide, 2022). The tension and increasing mistrust that followed, coupled with the Georgian President Saakashvili's push to restore South-Ossetia and Abkhazia under Georgian control was the pretext Moscow needed to initiate the Russo-Georgian War aimed to stop Georgia's accession plans. The Russian victory exposed some strategic shortcomings and military deficiencies, but it most importantly showed that Moscow was prepared to use military means to attain political goals. The lessons from the Georgian conflict and Russian trepidations of NATO expansion translated into a massive Russian military modernization program that begun in 2008 estimated to a staggering expense

exceeding \$500 billion (2021 currency) when completed in a few years' time (Bukkvold et al., 2017, p. 11).

Despite substantial military modernization and signs of Russian revisionism in 2008, the U.S. and its allies failed to react to these developments and were totally unprepared when Russian forces invaded Crimea in 2014 (Vershbow & Breedlove, 2020, p. 26). President Yanukovich's reversal of the intention to sign the EU-Ukraine association agreement in late 2013 sparked the Maidan revolution, ultimately replacing the Azarov government and President Yanukovich with the more Western oriented President Poroshenko (Lundestad, 2015, p. 232). For Russia, words like protests, integration, supranationalism and globalism are incompatible with the Russian state and the concentrated power required to uphold stability in the world's largest country comprising 190 ethnicities and 85 autonomous federal subjects partitioned into different republics, krais, oblasts, cities and regions (Heier, 2021, p. 128-9). In similar fashion to the 2008 intervention in Georgia, Moscow alleged that the West had incited and fueled the fire of a color revolution in Ukraine and used it as a pretext to invade and annex Crimea in February and March 2014 (Lundestad, 2015, p. 232). The annexation and subsequent Russian backing of separatist groups in Donbas and Luhansk has been widely condemned by Western capitals. Then Norwegian Minister of Defense, Ine Eriksen Søreide (2013-2017) stated that the conflict caused permanent changes in the European security architecture and that when the dust settles there is "no going back to some sort of normality . . . because that normality does not exist" (Søreide, 2015). This was a sentiment shared by her Allied colleagues, illustrated by previous NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow's (2012-2016) remarks that:

"Russia's aggression against Ukraine is not an isolated incident, but a game-changer in European security, it reflects an evolving pattern of behavior that has been emerging for several years, despite our efforts to reach out to Russia and build a cooperative European security system with Russia." (NATO, 2015).

Many take this argument further and claims that if the West shows compliance to Russian aggression and accepts the notion of a neutral Ukraine it would be the end of Ukrainian independence while simultaneously robbing the West of its geopolitical credibility, leading to grave consequences to global security (Romanyshyn, 2022). John Mearsheimer, a University of Chicago professor and realist scholar rebukes this claim. Rather than seeing the Ukraine Crisis as a Russian power grab and a long-standing desire to resuscitate the Soviet empire, he claims that NATO enlargement, EU expansion and liberal internationalism are the root causes of the ongoing crisis (Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 77-80; Mearsheimer 2022). The argument is that the Russian strategic culture is predisposed to perceive every expanse from the West as a probable

threat due to the incursions of Napoleonic France, Imperial Germany and Nazi Germany, especially if the historical buffer state of Ukraine is under pressure. It is of course rudimentary and unmusical to label Ukraine solely a buffer state. But for all practical purposes, keeping distance between the West and Ukraine, which literally means borderland, remains a vital national interest for Moscow to maintain the credibility of its paternalistic societal model and ensure distance between U.S. forces and its soft underbelly through the Caucasus, Rostov and Volgograd (Heier, 2021, p. 125).

While experts and media outlets are busy trying to decipher the Russian rationale behind the aggressive troop surge and the subsequent war it important to also look forward. During my interviews, the Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide cautioned that threatening to use military force to attain political goals might be a more lasting feature in the evolving security environment (P.C., Eide, 2022). To mitigate this, balancing deterrence and dialogue is key. In essence this means to cooperate when possible but to do so from a position of strength. As Rune Jakobsen, commander of the Norwegian Joint Headquarters (2015-2021) stated during my talks with him, the Russians admire strength, contempt weakness and will exploit any power vacuum to its advantage (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). The 2008 intervention in Georgia, 2014 annexation of Crimea and 2022 war against Ukraine underpins Eide's cautions and Jakobsen's perception of the Russian modus operandi. This concern is primarily a European concern, but it is in the U.S. interest, and strongly so, to make sure that Europe remains unified in its effort and maintains the deterrence necessary to confront Russia. Under the leadership of Putin, and especially since 2008 the Russians have shown an increased desire to position itself as a regional great power even at great cost. In 2022, the concept of a "whole Europe, free and at peace with itself" seems rather dim, and the Russian distaste of Western liberal democracy has brought back interstate conflict to the European continent. As relations between the West and Russia is deteriorating and seemingly so for a long while, a gradual Sino-Russian reconciliation have been underway and accelerated since the 2014 Crimean annexation (Blank, 2019, p. 120).

5.3 Sino-Russian relations: Axis of authoritarianism?

Since the End of the Cold War and especially since the 2014 annexation of Crimea, Beijing and Moscow have forged close relations economically, politically and militarily where common disdain with the current liberal world order and mutual interests in modifying it being the main drivers (Sutter, 2019, p. 20-21; Lukin 2018). However, the apparent amity between the two powers rests on a shaky historical ground. Common ideological communist dispositions

instigated a beneficial partnership in the first half of the 20th century, before that same ideology soured relations and nearly led to all-out war (Lundestad, 2015, p. 212). The Sino-Soviet split triggered by Nikita Khrushchev's policies of de-Stalinization in the 1950s, increasingly diverging interpretations and application of Marxism-Leninism where Moscow urged a doctrine of peaceful coexistence with the West, and the clashing pursuit of international leadership in the communist world drove a wedge between the two great powers in the communist bloc (Blank, 2019). This unwillingness to cooperate was further exacerbated by personal distrust between Khrushchev and Mao and it was not until the death of Mao in 1976 and Deng Xiaoping's more moderate policies that gave way for pragmatism and political normalization between the two behemoths (Wilson, 2019, p. 74). After the end of the Cold War the redolence of ideological resentment has been replaced by a budding strategic partnership between the two powers anchored at the very top echelon by an apparent bromance between Putin and Xi. In June 2019 Xi called Putin his best friend and since 2013, they have met close to 30 times (Blank, 2019, p. 21). In a joint statement during the inauguration of the 2022 Winter Olympics, China and Russia reaffirmed their wish to increase cooperation and alignment on several global and regional issues like NATO expansion and on Taiwan (Kremlin, 2022). Overall, this statement signals their common discontent with the current American-led liberal world order and their mutual ambition to alter the balance of power in the international system, which is also the main driver for the entente between China and Russia (P.C., Eide, 2022).

The gradual reconciliation and increased political, economic and military cooperation have attracted the attention of academics and policymakers in recent years. Moscow and Beijing have shown remarkably consistent voting patterns in the UN Security Council and where they might have had differences, they've exerted unusual pragmatism to avoid stepping on each other's feet (Blank, 2019, p. 102-103). After the Western-imposed sanctions following the annexation of Crimea, China has proved willing to mitigate Russian hardships by accommodating trade and investment (Lukin, 2018). Bilateral trade has surged from \$55 billion in 2008 to \$146 billion in 2021 where Russian gas and Chinese electronics and machinery constitutes a big part of the increased volumes (Chausovsky, 2022). Mutual gains have also been made through substantial Chinese investments in infrastructure projects like the LNG-plant on the Yamal Peninsula in Northern Russia and the Power of Siberia pipelines facilitating more efficient energy trade. As implied, this is not a reconciliation unaffected by the international climate, as Russian ambassador to the UK cautioned in January 2022 that the Western sanction regime since 2014 has been "pushing us to be closer" to Beijing (Chausovsky, 2022). Surprisingly, this so-called

cooperation of convenience seems to have spilled over to the military domain as well. The most notable developments being the sale of Russian Su-35 fighter jets and S-400 air defense systems, increased intergovernmental military coordination through high-level visits, academic exchange and limited joint exercises (Blank, 2019, p. 118). An example being the participation of 3200 PLA personnel in the 2018 Vostok exercise which strikingly eight years earlier simulated a conflict against China, indicating a new level of trust between the two militaries (Bin, 2019). Especially is the growing Russo-Chinese maritime collaboration of concern to U.S. decisionmakers as it challenges U.S. influence in the region (Blank, 2019, p. 120). Nonetheless, the nature of these exercises and operations, due to operational and cultural differences, is still more correct to label as two separate forces operating next to each other with lacking interoperability (P.C., Hagen, 2022).

Following the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war, China has been less vocal about its “special relationship” with Russia. As China favors a more pragmatic approach to international relations, it is probable that Beijing was taken by surprise of the Russian decision to invade Ukraine. China is also reliant on trade with the transatlantic community, therefore, offering overt support or military assistance to Russia is improbable in the current environment. At the same time, China knows that these developments are favorable as it occupies U.S. attention and it consequently makes Russia more dependent on China. For Beijing this warrants a cautious approach hedging both sides, it is thus likely that it will continue its ambiguous stance on this issue (Wertheim, 2022). If China and Russia overcome the momentary impasse due to Russian aggression there are other conditional and structural factors that may impede the fruition of a longstanding alignment and deepened cooperation. As Chinese assertiveness grows, a key question will be if the Russian’s are content playing second fiddle (P.C., Eide, 2022). Apart from the question of whom the rider and horse will be, it is also plausible that conquest for regional hegemony will unwind the current rapprochement, as it did during the Cold War (Bin, 2019). In an international environment characterized by great power competition and rivalry it is important to have trustworthy allies and friends, if Beijing and Moscow can overcome their differences and further strengthen their relations to an axis of authoritarianism it will strongly affect the global distribution of power and influence. For the U.S. it will be vital to develop partnerships in the Indo-Pacific while simultaneously maintaining and nourishing the transatlantic alliance as it is in Europe Washington finds its oldest and most trustworthy friends.

5.4 Transatlantic security or European autonomy

After the Cold War NATO's *raison d'être* was no longer in Europe and while NATO adapted to the new security situation, the gradual development of EU as an actor in security politics made the question of European cooperation within or outside the alliance more relevant (Allers, 2021, p. 265). These developments were implemented through the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 consolidating previous European treaties creating the EU comprised by the three pillars of the European Communities, Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (Lundestad, 2015, p. 189-190). Although the 1997 Amsterdam and 2007 Lisbon treaties introduced new functions strengthening the integration of a common foreign and security policy, setbacks like lacking member cohesion, will and unity as well as the global financial crisis slowed the integration process (Allers, 2021, p. 266). The attempts of creating a stronger defense within the EU looked good on paper, but the EU was still heavily militarily dependent on the U.S., both to maintain a credible deterrence but also to operate effectively (Lundestad, 2015, p. 198). Especially was this clear during the Libya campaign in 2011 where the U.S. had to carry out several critical functions including arial refueling, ammunition supply and intelligence. Although it was fronted as a European-led operation, the coalition was dependent on American strategic enablers throughout (Tamnes et al., 2015, p. 39) with the U.S. was leading from behind (Matlé, 2021, p. 49-50).

Since the 1950 Pleveln plan of creating a unified European Army organized under the command of the European ministers of defense, there have been multiple ideas and attempts to incorporate military and defense cooperation into the architecture. Recent events have elevated the ambitions of a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) ratified in the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon, from a theoretical brainchild to something more realistic. There are three primary drivers for this. Firstly, Russian revisionism and the annexation of Crimea has reminded European leaders that Europe is not impervious to interstate conflict. Secondly, uncertainty of U.S. leadership and its commitment to Europe have forced European capitals to start thinking of contingencies if the American behavior is a long-lasting trend rather than a momentary whim (Duke & Gebhard, 2017). Thirdly, the materialization of Britain's messy breakup with the was a shock to the European project. Nonetheless, while still within the EU, London favored a strong transatlantic security organization and was one of the most outspoken skeptics of strengthening the European security pillar as they did not want to risk duplicating EU/NATO roles. When the British left Brussels, a big restraining factor for further military and defense integration has been lifted. It

remains to see if other European states has free ridden behind British reluctance and if they are up to the task now that the assumingly biggest stumbling block is removed (Biscop, 2017, p. 3).

Following the recovery of the triple shocks of the Russian annexation of Crimea, Brexit and the election of Donald Trump in 2016, there are multiple auspicious signs that EU ambitions may be matched by actual measures. Following the publication of the 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS), talks of deepening security and defense arrangements have increased, especially in Berlin and Paris (Allers, 2021, p. 269-270). This is important since without backing from these two key players, any arrangement would not be credible. Notable elements are the materialization of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD) and the European Defense Fund (EDF). Which collectively aims to secure EU strategic autonomy through strategic pooling and development of interoperative defense capabilities necessary to conduct operations preferably with allies, but if need be within the EU umbrella. Making the EU not only a spectator but an actor in international affairs (Knutsen & Tvetbråten, 2021, p. 30). Moreover, the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has had a catalyzing effect on the intensification of European defense, both out of solidarity with Ukraine but also as a wakeup call from an increasingly unpredictable neighbor. As the European countries adapt to this situation, where the transition away from Russian energy is notable, it will be a challenging test for the EU, but it is likely that the European capitals will confront this challenge together, further integrating the already intertwined institution. The Europeans have become increasingly concerted, in a period where the U.S. foreign policy is more restrained and is pivoting towards Asia. This may be accelerated by the evolving domestic situation in the U.S. causing ineffective decision making and less predictable foreign policy.

Chapter 6: A house divided

The turbulent year of 2008 is significant in U.S. history where the global financial crisis and election of Barack Obama as the first African American president were crucial economic, social and political events. Obama's campaign slogan "Yes We Can" was a marker of the U.S. optimism at the time. An optimism shared internationally, perhaps best illustrated by the Nobel Peace Prize award to Obama in 2009 on the grounds of his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples" (Nobel Prize, 2009). An impressive, and in hindsight premature, feat considering he'd only been in office for ten months. A lesser told story in the process of consolidating the Republican party ticket in the 2008 election is more

insightful to understand the following decade of heightened populism and polarized political climate. When John McCain was to elect his running mate, he chose Alaskan governor Sarah Palin over his preferred choice Senator Joe Lieberman (Bumiller & Cooper, 2008). The latter was a longtime Democrat turned independent and previous nominee for Vice President on the Democratic Al Gore ticket in the infamous 2000 election where the Democratic ticket won the popular vote by a margin of more than 500,000 but lost the overall election, the first time where the winner of the popular vote did not win the election since 1888 (Melby, 2017, p. 160). Palin was a relatively inexperienced and controversial politician, but polls in 2008 showed that her background, strong persona and personal beliefs made her popular to social conservatives and religious voters alike (Zogby, 2008). The blend of her strong views and splitting personality, combined with the rise of political TV made her the locus for massive media attention. Polls taken shortly after Palin's acceptance speech for the Vice-Presidential nomination showed that Palin was slightly more popular than either Obama or McCain with a 58% favorability rating (Rasmussen, 2008). Political commentators observed that she was an inexperienced politician and not strong on policy (Krauthammer, 2008), but they failed to explain why she was popular among many different groups. Regarding the pick of Palin, a previous advisor to McCain noted with an analogy to American football that "we just threw long" (Thomas, 2008, p. 122). The political Hail Mary of choosing a far-right and poorly vetted candidate at the expense of Lieberman and a bipartisan ticket was a short-lived success boosting the Republican ticket, but it also opened the Pandora's box of populism of anti-intellectualism and polarization ultimately enabling the then inconceivable rise of divisive figures like Donald Trump.

It is difficult to grasp how the nomination of a vice presidential candidate can unravel the culture of consensus building in Washington and aggravate political division in the U.S. population. The nomination is of course a symptom and not the cause of today's deteriorating political climate. To understand this development, it is necessary to address its underlying causes and how it affects the functioning of U.S. political institutions. This chapter aims to explain how the wellbeing of U.S. democratic institutions and its people are crucial to U.S. foreign policy formulation and its role as a superpower. This includes an examination of U.S. strategic culture, its domestic institutions and resulting soft power appeal. Strategic culture establishes the rules of the game, the configuration of domestic institutions dictates how these rules are enforced and soft power illustrates how this game is perceived by others. As these factors are interrelated modification or change in one factor will likely cause change in another (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 62). As shown in the theoretical chapter, the impact of these changes may be great or

incremental but will nonetheless have the possibility to alter and shape foreign policy and state interaction. The main timeframe for this thesis is from 2009 to 2022. However, drawing historical lines of the development and continuity of these factors is necessary to appreciate why they are so crucial to understand the current U.S. political environment and the ongoing shift in American foreign policy.

6.1 Strategic culture

Although the threat environment of the 21st century is a multifaceted one, U.S. core security interests remain remarkably constant. In essence this includes the safeguarding of American sovereignty and territorial integrity, the protection of its citizens and their way of living and the political, social and economic institutions that uphold these (Posen, 2014, p. 2-3). The means and measures to ensure these interests are known as a country's strategic culture which in this thesis is defined as the acceptable norms, assumptions and interrelated beliefs shaped by historical experiences and ideological tenets shared by political elites, its connected bureaucracy and more than often, the public as well (Johnson, 2006, p. 5). A common way to describe strategic culture's impact on foreign policy decision-making is Colin Gray's point that "the security community is likely to think and behave in ways that are influenced by what it has taught itself about itself." (Gray, 2006, p. 5). For the U.S. this strategic culture is best understood as a concoction of U.S. exceptionalism and a techno-centric military doctrine.

U.S. exceptionalism and its national identity stems from the merger of British-inspired liberal democratic philosophy and Anglo-protestant values and a desire to create a more perfect union to avoid the seemingly perpetual conflicts of the European continent it once escaped (Melby, 2017, p. 104-107). A somewhat contradictory fusion of natural rights, rule of law, individualism and Christianity resulted in a dualism of realism and liberalism which in large to this day constitutes a fruitful backdrop to understand American thinking. George Washington's cautions in his farewell address, John Quincy Adams' famous words stating that America "goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy" and the Monroe Doctrine personified this normative logic and underscored U.S. strategic culture throughout the 19th century and have been used as a point of reference to justify military interventions and the promotion of American values at home and abroad ever since (Hooker, 2014, p. 2). A rapidly growing industrial economy and population protected by weak neighbors in the north and south and by two vast bodies of water east and west, facilitated for a stable security environment for the growing giant. The cataclysmic American Civil War tested the function and existence of the relatively young union. However, it

also transformed the U.S. military to a more modern and functional instrument highlighted by a professional military education, advancements in technology and more coherent central leadership, readying it for the 20th century and its rise as a great power (Hooker, 2014, p. 4).

At the onset of the First World War, the U.S. genuinely attempted to uphold a strategy of neutrality. Of course, sympathies with European democracies, unrestricted submarine warfare and the Zimmerman telegram provoked U.S. opinion, but the underlying factors pushing the U.S. out of neutrality was the need to preserve American security and prosperity by protecting trade and commerce, but most importantly hindering the rise of a European hegemon (Melby, 2017, p. 21-22). A reluctant U.S. once again found itself in need of restoring the Eurasian balance of power in the Second World War, although more complex in nature, this was still the essence of U.S. strategic thinking for committing troops in WWII. The following overwhelming U.S. industrial and logistical capacity led to unprecedented mobilization in sea, air and land domains and catapulted it to the global domain as the greatest economic and military power in the world, bound for international leadership (Hooker, 2014, p. 7). The U.S. has a self-interest in preserving the peace and a permissive security environment in Europe through curbing the renationalization of European security and defense politics by upholding the transatlantic security architecture. As traditional European great powers were unable to fulfill their roles as stabilizers on the Eurasian continent, U.S. presence was necessary and welcomed by Europeans to check Soviet influence, in many ways an empire by invitation (Lundestad, 1986). The substantial military, economic and political presence that followed underpinning the operational concept of containment, harmonized the pillars of idealism and realism in U.S. foreign policy (Melby, 2017, p. 22). The unipolar moment after the Cold War and its ensuing triumphant optimism created a springboard for further liberal interventionism as the foreign policy establishment had progressively converged on an activist grand strategy (Posen, 2014, p. 5). This was directly influenced by the American national identity from its foundational days as a proclaimed beacon of hope and shining example for the rest to follow. In the previous century this appeal had worked as a lodestone of attraction towards America, during the Cold War it was used as a mean to legitimize proxy wars against an ideological communist threat, and with the disappearing of this threat, the democratization of countries became a means to an end. Thus, the unipolar moment and interventionist agenda constituted both a continuation but also a shift in U.S. strategic culture.

The monsters America sought to chase abroad got a face on the calamitous events on September 11th, 2001 and after decades of chasing monsters abroad and especially in the Middle East and

Afghanistan the once retracted great power is now recalibrating to its own shores. Correspondingly, Obama's main foreign policy promises in his successful presidential campaign in 2008 was to end America's wars, scale down its commitments overseas and employ diplomacy over military means (Delman, 2016). He reemphasized this in his first inaugural address stating that "our power grows through its prudent use; our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint." (Obama, 2009). President Obama did indeed end Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, reduce force presence in theater and oversee a drastic decrease in U.S. overseas casualties (Delman, 2016). However, the overall DoD war-related funding still surged from \$811 billion in 2001-2009 to \$866 billion in 2009-2017 (DoD, 2015). The reasons for this increase during Obama's time in office compared to Bush Jr's two terms is a result of the longstanding tradition of a techno-centric military and rise of costly technological warfare, epitomized by drone warfare. Numbers from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism shows that the Obama-administration green lit 563 air strikes compared to the Bush-administration's 57 strikes, this increase is also due to technological maturation. The presidency of Donald Trump inherited the Drone War and expanded its area of operations delivering 41 airstrikes in the first four months of 2020 in Somalia as a point of reference (Atherton, 2020). The adaptation of the Over-the-Horizon counterterrorism strategy of the Biden administration shows a continued focus on relying on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to respond to threats worldwide without deploying American boots on the ground (Kreps et al., 2022).

As an international leader, involvement in international crisis management is required, however an increasingly interdependent global economy, the information revolution, domestic issues and rampant foreign debt undoubtedly calls for a more considered approach to interventions abroad. Furthermore, increased utility of low-cost, gray-zone and hybrid operations and more decentralized capabilities exacerbates the need to rethink strategic concepts and grand strategy (Fitton, 2016, p. 117). Although there have been variances in the applicability of drone strikes to accomplish security objectives by separate administrations, it has nonetheless established itself as an acceptable means to an end as it does not entail deploying troops in theater. This rationale is similar to the development and use of laser-guided missiles during the Gulf War, napalm in Vietnam and the atomic bomb in the Second World War. Resonating well with U.S. strategic culture this will continue to inform U.S. decisionmakers in the formulation of military doctrines going forward which will be a more decentralized and cost-effective approach.

6.2 Checks and imbalances

By examining U.S. domestic institutions and in particular political polarization, state-society relations and leader images this section explains how unit and individual levels of analysis shapes and affects foreign policy formulation. U.S. domestic political institutions affect foreign policy decision making in primarily two ways. First, it establishes who the legitimate stakeholders are and how the game is played. Secondly, effective institutions are a prerequisite for functioning foreign policy formulation (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 71-72). The three branches of U.S. government are based on Montesquieu's principles of a separation of powers. By dividing political authority into legislative (U.S. Congress), executive (Presidency) and judicial (Supreme Court) powers with mechanisms to check and balance the authority of one another it effectively limits the concentration of power. Put into practice this means that if the bicameral and politically plural U.S. Congress agrees on laws, it can still be checked by the Supreme Court's judicial review or a presidential veto. The President nominates judges to the Court, but it is the Senate that must accept the nomination. The President is the Commander in Chief, but it is Congress that can declare war and authorize use of military force. An important remark is that a formal declaration of war hasn't been declared since 1942. The Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, War on Terror and all other conflicts and operations since WWII has its legitimacy either by UN-mandate, Congressional Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) or by the authority given to the President by the War Powers Act of 1973 (National Constitution Center, 2018).

The AUMF and the Presidential war powers makes for more flexible arrangements, but it also leads to muddled boundaries between war, warlike situations and military operations as was the case earlier when discussing the applicability of armed UAVs. This is not an exhaustive summary of all checks and balances, but it shows how the U.S. political system is intricately intertwined and contains multiple mechanisms to check power which in turn makes the system relatively ineffective in times of political turmoil and division where these mechanisms effectively become weapons of a political war of attrition causing strains on day-to-day activities, legislative issues and grand strategic planning (Walt, 2021). Furthermore, this system has been crucial to unify a very heterogenous population into a nation and has functioned as a societal glue, where challenges to its unity most prevalent when parts of the demographic were suppressed or experienced a feeling of irrelevance. This is true to understand the American Civil War, the American civil rights movement and the current political crisis unfolding in the United States (Melby, 2017, p. 148). An important lesson from this is that it is not the political system and its

mechanisms that are obsolete, but rather how these are (mis)managed that constitutes the biggest threat to its survival. To grasp the shortcomings of U.S. domestic institutions it may be tempting to evaluate the system in itself and to overstate the meaning of temporary and everyday occurrences. However, it will be more fruitful, and necessary, to address the underlying explanatory factors causing political division and ultimately ineffective decision-making processes and grand strategy planning.

6.2.1 Social mobility and the American dream

The U.S. has since its beginnings been connotated to a land of opportunity, as something else. At the core of this story is the belief in the American dream, that regardless of social status, every individual has a chance to attain personal success. This belief, that social mobility is possible through grit and hard work is a core pillar in the American social fabric and national identity (Melby, 2017, p. 153). Critics note that this assertion is a euphemism concealing the truth of wealth inequality and injustice throughout American history. Founded on historical evidence of slavery, restricted voting rights, racial injustice and inequality of wealth and power, these objections have solid arguments. Thus, discussing the authenticity of the American dream by relating it to 21st century standards will leave a warranted distaste in any mouth. However, it is not the accurate point of departure, as any sound analysis of the American dream must be conducted hermeneutically. I'm not arguing that the U.S. model is perfect, but throughout time it has been the best alternative for people from all over the world in search for something better. This explains why puritans and indentured servants in the 17th century, waves of European immigrants throughout the 19th and 20th and still today one million people yearly immigrate to the U.S. for a chance to increase their quality of life (Hooker, 2014, p. 21). The story of America is one from rags to riches, but also of great wealth inequality. This warrants a discussion of the relationship between economic growth, financial disparity and social mobility.

There is little evidence that higher inequality inhibits economic growth (Winship, 2014, p. 8), however there is “no evidence that extreme inequality has produced anything but mediocre growth . . . and there is certainly no evidence that the United States shares much of its wealth with the middle class.” (Howell, 2013, p. 53). To fathom this more clearly, it is useful to distinguish social mobility into absolute and relative mobility. Absolute mobility asks the question: considering increased costs of living and size-adjusted incomes, does adults tend to have higher incomes than their parents did at the same age? While relative mobility asks the question: considering increased costs of living and size-adjusted incomes, where on the social

ladder am I compared to where my parents were at the same age (Reeves & Venator, 2014). Absolute mobility is thus related to overall economic growth and is used as an argument to claim that inequality is not a critical flaw in the American democracy since everybody ultimately accumulates more wealth. Relative mobility is better suited to explain why this dream now seem unattainable for many Americans and why this is a crucial factor to explain the current cracks in the American democratic institutions. Examining relative mobility, a 2014 study groups five equally sized quintiles by income adjusted to family size to examine how likely it is for children to end up in any given quintile as adults. For the middle quintile it showed a moderately equal distribution where 19% ended among the top fifth, 23% percent in the middle fifth and 14% in the bottom fifth. However, children starting in the bottom fifth and top fifth experienced limited change. Among the ones born poor, 43% remained there as adults and only 4% made it into the top fifth (Winship, 2014, p. 20). Other research reiterates these findings and adds to the equation that it is the families among the middle class whom financial possibilities have been most negatively affected (Chetty et al., 2014). Although those that remain in the bottom fifth are better off than their parents (absolute mobility), they still reside at the bottom of the social ladder with limited means and possibilities to move vertically in society, undermining the concept of the American dream. Here lies important implications that helps explain the growing distrust and anger among ordinary U.S. citizens. As statistics compiled by the Institute for Policy Studies illustrates in the graphs below, there has since the late 1970s been a substantial increase in the inequality of income between the rich and the overall public (Inequality.org, 2021).

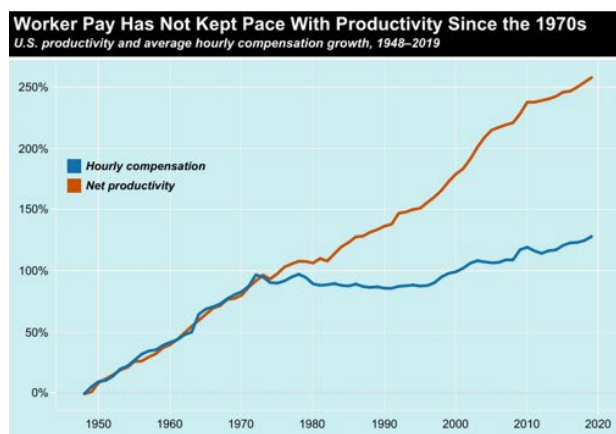


Figure 3: Worker pay vs. productivity 1925-2018.
Source: inequality.org

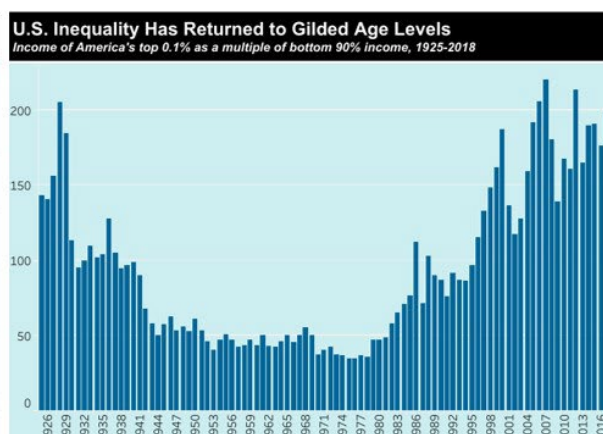


Figure 4: U.S. inequality 1925-2018.
Source: inequality.org

This stark development is commonly attributed to the grand experiment in market-friendly policy of trickle-down economics, tax cuts and market deregulation which from 1970s and up to the 2000s with goals of economic growth and job creation through entrepreneurial risk taking and

investments (Howell, 2013, p. 49-50). Significant in this is the changes in the previously interconnected variables of workers' pay and productivity which decoupled in the 1970s. There are multiple competing and complementary explanations to this phenomenon including the effects of globalization, technological progress and intentional political choices creating large corporations with considerable distance, both physically and financially between CEOs and workers as well as a large divide between skilled and unskilled labor effectively undermining the domestic middle class' influence and position in society (Melby, 2017, p. 167-168). Parallel to economic reforms and a more marginal state the ideological distance between Democrats and Republicans continued to increase. Two in-depth studies from Pew Research Center in 2014 and 2019 depicts this polarization remarkably well.

Republicans Shift to the Right, Democrats to the Left

Distribution of Republicans and Democrats on a 10-item scale of political values

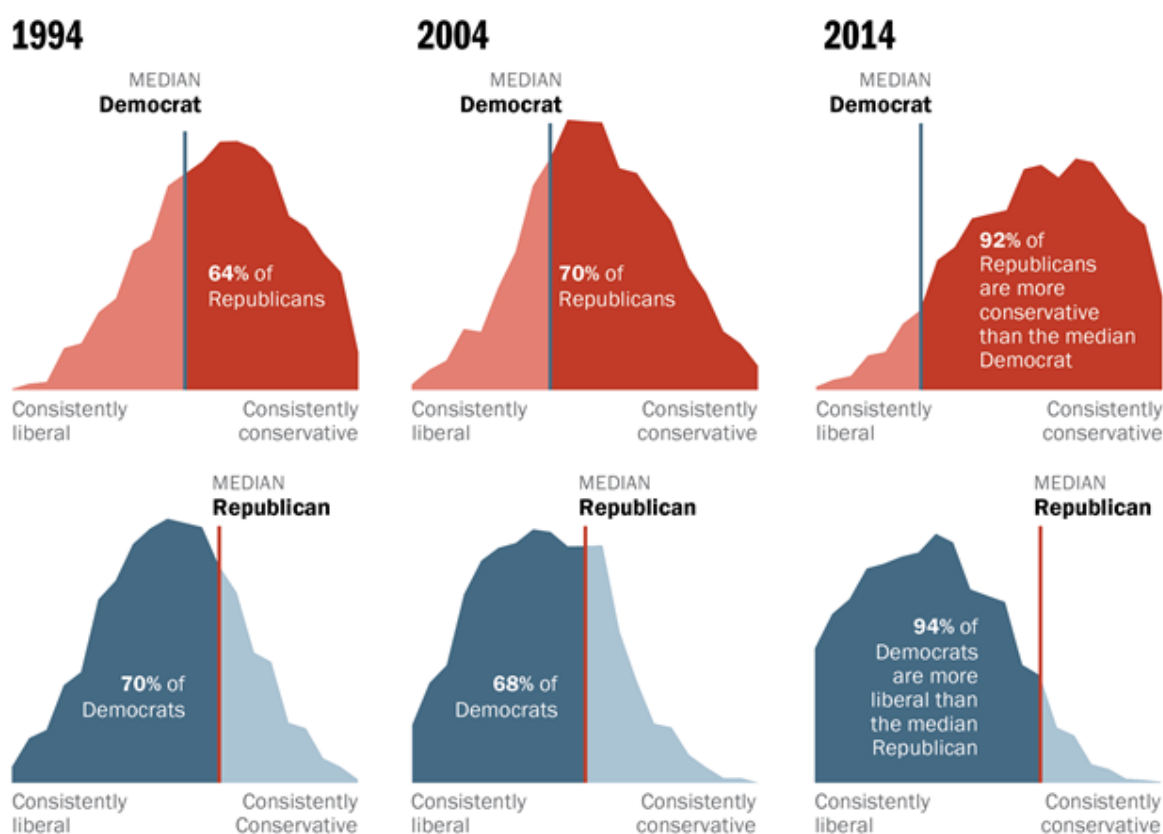


Figure 5: Partisan divide between 1994-2014. Source: Pew Research Center.

Both studies asked 10,000 Americans about their political stance on key issues in the American debate. The main findings from the 2014 study as illustrated above shows political polarization have rocketed from the first polls in 1994. As a measure, in 1994 only 8% of Democrats were consistently liberal compared to 38% in 2014. Another key finding is that it is not only an

increase of disagreement on political issues, but also an increased distrust between the two parties. In 1994, 17% of the consistently conservative Republicans had a negative view of Democrats. In 2014, this number had increased to 43%. Similarly, the Democrats negative view of Republicans had risen from 16% to 38% in the same period (Pew Research Center, 2014). The 2019 survey assesses 30 political value items and concludes that the polarization discovered in the 2014 study has persisted and one of the main findings is that partisanship remains the biggest factor in indicating the public's political values. Where value-based topics such as gun rights and race is where democrats and republicans most strongly disagree. The overall average party divide for all questions is 39 percentage points where views on gun policy differ 57 percentage points, racial attitudes 55, immigration 43, role of government 35 and foreign policy 27 percentage points (Pew, 2019). An important point is the factor of age, which is a bigger factor between Republicans than Democrats. Regarding foreign policy, 65% of younger Republicans say peace is best ensured by good diplomacy compared to the older bracket where 57% says peace is best ensured through military strength. Similarly, young Republicans are more concerned with climate change and the older Republicans more concerned with illegal immigration. Importantly, there is strong agreement between young and old Republicans on small government, that white people don't benefit a great deal from systemic discrimination and gun rights (Pew, 2019).

Based on these findings, important inferences can be made. Firstly, the generational variances, which are especially clear in the Republican party, shows that as time goes on, the political differences on topics such as same-sex marriage and environmental laws may find less staunch opposition and more plausible compromises across the aisle. However, central questions regarding the size of government, individual rights and underlying systemic discrimination will likely continue to define and confine American politics in the conceivable future as they have in the past. The implications of this increased polarization are observable through disagreement on a substantial number of questions, both serious and trivial ones, like systemic racism, educational curriculums, use of face masks (PPE's) and vaccination to tackle a pandemic, and so on, which is an indicator of a democratic society in crisis (P.C., Hagen, 2022). These issues are exacerbated by the now established partisan divide where loyalty to party is increasingly becoming more important than preserving and promoting the traditional domestic balance of power between the branches and functions of a liberal democratic government (Melby, 2017, p. 161). Nothing depicts this development more clearly than the Trump-movement and the following absolute loyalty to him in the Republican party where you either embracingly fall in line like previous

critics Marco Rubio and Lindsey Graham (Chotiner, 2019) or become ostracized from the GOP where the tarnishing of John McCain's legacy (BBC, 2018) and the more recent excommunication of Liz Cheney (The Guardian, 2021) serve as striking examples. Moreover, the increased polarization has made it nearly impossible to reach political compromises across the aisle between moderate forces in each party since it will be flagged as party disloyalty (P.C., Hagen, 2022).

In many ways, the dents in the American dream coupled with polarized politics is a perfect storm where demagogues enjoy popular support. Most Republican voters actively want Trump to run for office again in 2024. In polls from October 2021 86% favored Donald Trump and 47% of Republican voters would vote for him, no other candidate reached more than 13% (Rakich & Wilkes, 2021). With the backing of the GOP and a huge campaign war chest Donald Trump and his supporters prepare to win the 2024-election in primarily two ways. One is through justifiable political opposition where Republicans criticize the Biden's administration. The other is according to renowned scholar Robert Kagan through an illegal attack on the constitution itself. In an article in the Washington Post he argues that Republican legislatures' efforts to dismantle election certification processes and the failed coup of the January 6th insurrection is proof of a U.S. constitutional crisis foreshadowing the demise of U.S. liberal democracy (Kagan, 2021). Moreover, he posits that these actions are possible since the Trump-movement exposes and takes advantage of the insufficiency of the traditional checks and balances system which can be exploited when party loyalty exceeds loyalty to the political institutions. According to Kagan, what makes Donald Trump a special case in U.S. history is that he appeals to a broad range of citizens distrustful to the federal government and elites, people fearful of becoming irrelevant facing a more heterogenous society and financially vulnerable due to rapid technological change and globalization (Kagan, 2021). Importantly, Trump became the personification of individual groups' fight against the uncertain and the perceivably unjust society they live in. Because Trump claims he fights big tech, societal elites and other interests that his supporters believe undermines the American way of living, his support grows every time these interests criticize Trump or belittles their worries since the grievances of Trump-supporters are personified through Trump himself. Consequently, this strengthens Trump's appeal as a strong and defiant challenger and divides the public further. It is still too early to tell if this surge of populism is a lasting feature in the U.S. political system, but the enduring support to Trump even after a tremendously poorly handled pandemic, attempts to overturn a fair election and continued efforts to dismantle democratic institutions by legislating laws making it harder for Americans to vote will make the

midterm elections in 2022 a litmus test for American democracy before a crucial test in the Presidential election of 2024.

6.3 Soft power

Hard power capabilities make the bid for hegemony possible, soft power appeal mitigates the risk of it being a suicide mission (Lodgaard, 2002, p. 269). The progenitor of the term, Joseph Nye describes soft power as the role appeal and attraction of a state's culture, values and domestic institutions play in influencing the behavior of others to get the outcomes you want (Nye, 2020, p. 28). U.S. soft power includes both international and domestic factors and is the result of the combination of foreign policies, international engagement, American culture and the wellbeing of its democratic and liberal values. The aspect of soft power adds another layer to the idea of power which is frequently understood through the carrot or stick metaphor. Theorists debate the usefulness of soft power as a concept since it is neither easy to measure, easily deployable nor effective decoupled from hard power capabilities (Hooker, 2014, p. 20). Corresponding with the theoretical presumptions of balance of threat and alliance theory, a nation's soft power will help other nations decide who's a potential ally and who's a potential threat. Moreover, a benign actor will also inevitably enjoy more goodwill and room for maneuver than a perceived malign one harboring hostile intentions. Admitting that soft power is insufficient by itself is not the same as throwing away its overall utility. A smart realist knows that combining hard power capabilities with soft power attraction is an effective way to reach foreign policy objectives and interests (Nye, 2020, p. 28). This is why Theodore Roosevelt insisted on speaking easy, but at the same time carry a big stick and why Obama explains real power as "getting what you want without having to exert violence." (Obama, 2016). As the following table from a 2021 Pew Research Center study affirms, key U.S. allies have more favorable views of U.S. administrations that pledges to uphold multilateral institutions and choose diplomacy and dialogue over military force and unilateralism.

% who have a **favorable** view of the U.S.

■ Highest rating ■ Lowest rating

	Bill Clinton	George W. Bush							Barack Obama							Donald Trump				Joe Biden	'20-'21 change		
	'00	Mar		May		'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18		'19	'20
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
France	62	62	31	42	37	43	39	39	42	75	73	75	69	64	75	73	63	46	38	48	31	65	▲ 34
Germany	78	60	25	45	38	42	37	30	31	64	63	62	52	53	51	50	57	35	30	39	26	59	▲ 33
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	56	▲ 32
Japan	77	72	-	-	-	-	63	61	50	59	66	85	72	69	66	68	72	57	67	68	41	71	▲ 30
Italy	76	70	34	60	-	-	-	53	-	-	-	-	74	76	78	83	72	61	52	62	45	74	▲ 29
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	-	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65	37	34	46	30	57	▲ 27
Canada	-	72	-	63	-	59	-	55	-	68	-	-	-	64	-	68	65	43	39	51	35	61	▲ 26
Sweden	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69	45	44	45	33	57	▲ 24
UK	83	75	48	70	58	55	56	51	53	69	65	61	60	58	66	65	61	50	50	57	41	64	▲ 23
Spain	50	-	14	38	-	41	23	34	33	58	61	64	58	62	60	65	59	31	42	52	40	62	▲ 22
South Korea	58	52	-	46	-	-	-	58	70	78	79	-	-	78	82	84	-	75	80	77	59	77	▲ 18
Australia	-	-	-	59	-	-	-	-	46	-	-	-	-	66	-	63	60	48	54	50	33	48	▲ 15

Note: All differences shown are statistically significant. 2000 trend is from 1999 or 2000 and provided by the U.S. Department of State. Source: Summer 2021 Global Attitudes Survey. Q4a. "America's Image Abroad Rebounds With Transition From Trump to Biden"

Figure 6: Favorability ratings of the U.S. by administrations. Source: Pew Research Center.

Overall, key allies view the U.S. generally positive across the countries in this study, especially is this true during Obama's tenure as president. The period of 2016 to 2020 compared to earlier data shows a clear negative trend in the opinion of U.S. soft power, expressly clear is the decline among key European allies. In large this is the result of unpopular foreign and domestic policies including economic sanctions, ineffective policies on climate, immigration and inconsistent diplomacy (Pew, 2021). The downward spiral has been reduced primarily by two factors. The first being that the U.S. enjoyed favorable ratings in countries like Poland and Lithuania facing external security challenges where U.S. have increased its military presence. The second factor is rising popularity among right wing parties in most European countries (Pew, 2020, p. 35). As seen in the figure above, America's image abroad rebounds with the Biden administration and there was without a doubt widespread European optimism of a new U.S. president that signaled to bring back multilateralism and restore international agreements. Nonetheless, initial victories of restating commitments to the Paris Climate Accords and revitalizing talks on nuclear arms control was quickly overshadowed by poor statesmanship and partisan divides observed under the unilateral withdrawal from Afghanistan, the French humiliation through AUKUS and a domestic gridlock impeding U.S. leadership in tackling global challenges like the recent Covid-19 pandemic. These developments left an imprint that the U.S. was turning towards unilateralism. However, the 180 degree turnaround when managing the unfolding Russo-Ukrainian war of 2022 with strikingly close interaction with allies through a full-spectrum approach consisting of military, economic and political means have been important to restore

perceptions of the U.S. as a responsible stakeholder in international affairs (P.C., Hagen, 2022). Although the international public welcomed a new administration, there still exists serious concerns of the functioning of U.S. democracy among the advanced economies surveyed as three-in-ten say the U.S. is currently not a good example of democratic values and fewer in the global public thinks the U.S. considers other interests than their own when making foreign policy decisions (Pew, 2021). The Biden administration is attempting to repair the dents from Trump's "America first" platform, but from its Build Back Better framework at home to Kabul and Kyiv abroad, the Biden administration has met substantial obstacles to succeed with its "America is back" agenda.

Part III: Small power realities in a great power realm

Chapter 7: American grand strategy adjustment

U.S. foreign policy is strongly shaped by the unique mixture of realism and idealism fueled by both unparalleled power capabilities and American exceptionalism. Moreover, there has traditionally been broad acceptance among decisionmakers and the voting public that American interests are best secured through active leadership on the international stage (Melby, 2017, p. 282). This has been possible due to the ideational self-perception as a city upon a hill, with a duty to make the world a better place. One can hardly overstate how extensively manifest destiny and the self-imposed obligation to spread liberal values have shaped American strategic culture. With the existing difficulties facing the U.S. at home and the current transition of power, the longevity of this cannot be taken for granted (Wertheim, 2022). To assess the current and expected American strategy going forward this chapter distills the empirical insights from chapter 5 and 6 with the neoclassical realist framework erected in the second chapter. By analyzing trends and developments since the first Obama-administration and using this to make inferences about long-term strategic planning this chapter is both descriptive and explorative. To begin with this chapter addresses the last decennium's developments as described in the previous two chapters and its impacts on American strategic adjustment, where one of the main findings is that the previously stated ambition of a U.S. pivot is increasingly aligning with strategic policy papers and resource allocation. Another discovery is that the increasing costs of maintaining a modern military force and the decreased domestic will to spend vast resources abroad calls for a more retracted U.S. foreign policy. This is followed by a discussion of the possibilities and challenges with U.S. grand strategy which is best described as necessarily more constrained,

dependent on dynamic offshore balancing and effective alliances and arrangements to preserve American influence and position as the preponderant actor in the system. Before elaborating this, a clarification of the concept of grand strategy is in order.

Grand strategy is a sovereign state's enumeration and prioritization of threats and its idea about how to produce security to meet these threats by leveraging its underlying economic and technological potential including military power, intelligence capabilities and the formation of alliances (Posen, 2014, p. 1). Compatible with the theoretical point of departure for this thesis, grand strategy is understood as the "conceptual blueprint that animates all of a state's relations with the outside world (...) it is a future-oriented enterprise involving considerations of external threats and opportunities, as well as the specific material, political and ideological objectives of the state." (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 87). Of course, this does not mean that all individual actions and activities will be arithmetically analogous with the overall grand strategy. What it is meant to be is an overarching principle that effectively points out the general direction for strategic allotment and use of finite resources, based on the given systemic pressures and domestic restraints, to best ensure the interests of the state. In this endeavor neoclassical realism proves a useful tool as it effectively outlines the systemic imperatives and unit level factors influencing state actions and its capacity to mobilize resources to enact effective policies to meet the emerging security environment.

7.1 Dawning great power competition

Overall American material capabilities in terms of geographical size, population, wealth, technological prowess and its subsequent military power has enabled a global footprint through comprehensive networks of military bases and defense arrangements that have been crucial for the U.S. to maintain its (leadership) position in international affairs. Nonetheless, the snowballing costs of new technologies and modern warfighting creates a situation where the realities of military ability is in increasing discord with political ambitions (Melby, 2017, p. 250). The rapid rise of China and a revanchist Russia and subsequent great power rivalry poses the most obvious challenges, but erosion of democracy weakening multilateral institutions and the invention of new technologies like quantum computing, artificial intelligence, autonomous systems and hypersonic missiles at a time where it is necessary to solve global problems, and especially climate change, makes this a labile and highly challenging environment (Tamnes & Efstjad, 2020, p. 15). Realists assume that states are obliged to respond to changes in the relative distribution of power (Waltz, 1979, p. 121). Although a complex concept and difficult to measure

accurately, expected power can be enumerated by tallying accessible raw materials, population size, military capability and technological prowess (Posen, 2014, p. 3). As shown in chapter 5, China's impressive economic growth, demographic size, advancement in emerging technologies and its expansive military modernization program indicates that China's rise is the pacing threat for American decisionmakers (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 312).

Recent events such as the 2018 trade wars, a mounting innovation race to secure a competitive edge and the U.S. pivot to Asia corroborates this and attests the reemergence of great power competition in international affairs. As the U.S. is priming for a near peer competitor in China, the rhetoric has sharpened. This is evident through multiple U.S. government documents like the previously mentioned U.S.-China Economic and Security Review that labels the Chinese Communist Party as a "long-term, consequential, menacing adversary determined to end the economic and political freedoms that have served as the foundation for security and prosperity of billions of people". Furthermore, it warns that indecision to face this challenge will cause a "slow but certain erosion of the security, sovereignty, and identity of democratic nations." (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2021, p. 26). Predictably, similar signals are coming out of Beijing where it more brazenly has forecasted its autocratic political and economic model as superior to liberal democracy presenting it as a "new model for human advancement" (Xi, 2021). The Biden administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (INSSG) released in March 2021 underlines the perceived gravity of the situation iterating that "we are in the midst of an historical and fundamental debate about the future direction of our world." (INSSG, 2021, p. 23). To address these challenges, the same document points to both military, economic and political concerns. Regarding the former, there is a need to set clear priorities in defense spending and assess the appropriate structure and sizing of the force shifting its emphasis from unneeded legacy platforms to facilitate investments in cutting-edge technologies and capabilities to maintain the technological edge in the future. This priority resonates well with the overall techno-centric strategic culture of the U.S. emphasized in previous chapters. Corresponding with the notion of soft power, the two latter stresses the need to build back better at home, claiming that the most effective way for "America to out-compete a more assertive and authoritarian China over the long-term is to invest in our people, our economy and our democracy." (INSSG, 2021, p. 23). Intended as a blueprint to guide policymakers to chisel out an overall strategic direction for the state going forward, the INSSG is an important gauge for resource (re)allocation until the anticipated National Security Strategy (NSS) of the Biden administration is unveiled. As a superpower, any strategic reorientation will be time consuming

and may be decelerated by unanticipated events. Since the political declaration of a pivot to Asia north of a decennium ago, the U.S. has faced challenges on the international stage like a destabilizing Russia, the conception of ISIS and the more recent Covid pandemic stalling its pivot (P.C., Tamnes, 2022).

Russian great power ambitions and demand to be considered a peer to the U.S. and China will continue to influence decisionmakers in Washington D.C. This ambition is clearly reflected in the recent Russian decision to invade Europe's second largest country, both in 2014 and in 2022. When Moscow instigated the annexation of Crimea and the subsequent backing of separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine, the West was, and had for the last decade been, in large preoccupied with out of area peacekeeping operations in the Middle East. Significantly reducing both presence and awareness in Europe by neglected and outdated planning procedures, collective defense arrangements and available capabilities (P.C., Efstad, 2022). In this regard, the proclaimed Russian fears of Western encroachment seem misguided. Thus, the likely Russian rationale to launch a full-scale invasion is simply opportunism reminiscent of the realist dictum that the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must. As the Russians admire strength, contempt weakness and exploit any power vacuum to its advantage (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022), Russian assertive behavior as witnessed in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine since 2014 suggests that such actions are plausible also in the future.

By default, this means that the U.S. is forced to maintain a presence in Europe and claims that the U.S. plans to completely withdraw from Europe are erroneous since a stable and allied Europe is a prerequisite for its international standing as a superpower (P.C., Hagen, 2022). However, Russia is not the Soviet Union and the current U.S. net gain from its alliance relationships is significantly lower than during the Cold War and incommensurate to the costs (Posen, 2014, p 34). Thus, Russian aggression will agitate Washington since the demands from European allies slows the necessary pivot towards Asia. Consequently, for the U.S. the most pressing issue will be to create a bearable situation in Europe as soon as possible so that they can shift its attention towards China (Mearsheimer, 2022). This concern is aggravated by the competing and increasing costs of maintaining a contemporary military force and the increasing demands from a disgruntled American public to take care of the problems at home including crumbling infrastructure and the acute American governance crisis with ever increasing animosity and polarization between the two political parties. At the minimum, this is a hugely absorbing task for any president of the United States to deal with, hampering effective foreign

policy (Wertheim, 2022). Saying that China is the pacing threat to the U.S. is not the same as saying Europe has become inconsequential to decisionmakers in Washington. Especially, the Arctic is an important element in developing American policy formulation (P.C., Hagen, 2022). As a topic that will be further elaborated later in this chapter, both Europe, East-Asia and the Persian Gulf remains vital to the American national interests. However, compared to the last century, Europe is isolated no longer the most important of the three regions (Mearsheimer, 2022b), but still the region where the U.S. finds its most trustworthy allies (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). Moreover, without the Western security framework anchored in NATO, the U.S. is no longer a superpower, neither militarily nor politically (P.C., Efstjad, 2022). This generates a predicament for the U.S. as it needs to be an important partner to Europe but also need to free up resources to increase its presence in the Indo-Pacific. Influencing U.S. willingness and ability to sustain a visible and credible engagement in Europe, it is conceivable that U.S. capabilities in Europe will be redeployed to Asia as a response to Chinese sea power aspirations (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 312).

Nevertheless, this argument can and should be turned on its head. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has proved a robust alliance with impressive adaptive abilities to meet the existing security situation. Since the end of the Cold War, experiences have shown that the defense of the alliance does not start at its borders and close collaboration with allies like New Zealand and Australia will make European allies more lenient and adept to participate in the Indo-Pacific (P.C., Hagen, 2022). As NATO remains dependent on American military resolve and the debate of fair burden-sharing increases, allies will feel obliged to either participate in out of area operations or take more responsibility at home. It is probable that different allies will adapt a strategy partly consistent with both these demands, although in a configuration that is tailored to its domestic conditions and systemic restraints. Moreover, as the U.S.-China rivalry intensifies, the U.S. will expect more support from its allies. This is complicated by the fact that China is taking on a larger role in multilateral institutions and international affairs at the same time the U.S. have been scaling back (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 316).

Therefore, the U.S. must be able to nourish diplomatic relations and if necessary, project power over two vast bodies of water together with new and old allies. Including both military and diplomatic efforts, a crucial component to pull this off is chiseling out a strategic concept that enables rapid force movement underpinned by effective infrastructure and capabilities. In this regard, it is critical for the U.S. and European allies to ensure the transatlantic sea lines of

communication (SLOCs) and efficient troop movement and reinforcement when called upon (Meld. St. 9. 2020-2021, p. 23). The restoration of the United States 2nd fleet in 2018 with a fixed area of responsibility in the Atlantic and Arctic under the Joint Force Command Norfolk (JFC-NF) and the establishment of the Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) in Ulm, fully operational in 2021 bolsters logistical capacity, strengthens NATO credibility and signals to U.S. allies that a stable and secure Europe remains important to the U.S. The extensive efforts to enhance defense cooperation through bilateral arrangements like the 2021 Supplementary Defense Cooperation Agreement (SDCA) with Norway which facilitates increased U.S. infrastructure investment necessary to ensure efficient allied coordination and reinforcement are other examples that supports this notion (P.C., Efjestad, 2022). Nonetheless, as American decisionmakers face a more labile security environment and a challenging situation at home with less resources available, the issue of fair burden-sharing across the Atlantic, which was intensified during the Trump administration, will last and it is likely that discussions of this will intensify going forward. This is underscored by the fact that Republicans remain deeply skeptical of international security arrangements as they conceive these institutions as restrainers at critical moments. Although they value allies and believe that the U.S. must honor their word, the Republican Party and especially the Tea Party movement tend to disregard the weight and utility of institutional restraints (Posen, 2014, p. 16). Thus, the conservative forces that have grown increasingly powerful in the Republican party makes unilateralism more likely, subsequently producing a less predictable transatlantic security arrangement.

Ironically, the efforts to make European allies take more responsibility for their own security, which has been a priority for all the three previous administrations, did not garnish any discernable traction until unexpected aidance from Moscow when it decided to invade Ukraine, first somewhat covertly in 2014 and then blatantly obvious in February 2022. This has intensified European capitals' willingness to prioritize defense expenditures where the German decision to leave its traditionally reluctant stance on defense spending, pledging to commit more than 2% of its economic output and allocate £100 billion for military investments from its 2022 budget is considered a gamechanger in European security politics (Al Jazeera, 2022). Moreover, the Russian regime have been hit by unprecedented, all-encompassing restrictive measures including economic, political, cultural sanctions meant to “weaken Kremlin’s ability to finance the war and impose clear economic and political costs on Russia’s political elite.” (European Council, 2022). This upsurge in European defense spending and unified resolve is important since U.S. ability to prioritize scarce resources have been worsened by serious domestic issues paralyzing

consensus-building across the political aisle, necessary for effective policy formulation (Allison, 2018, p. 238).

A defining aspect of U.S. international prestige is its overall economic and military power, another prerequisite for this global agenda have been the bipartisan understanding that the U.S. rightfully exhausts considerable resources abroad to uphold and strengthen a liberal world order (Melby, 2017, p. 282). One of the main takeaways from chapter 6 is that the ambitious foreign policy and international engagement of the U.S. have been possible due to American exceptionalism and effective political institutions upholding these virtues. As the main pillars of this self-identity is under siege, most notably by lacking social mobility and severe political division, the belief in the American dream and exceptionalism may perish in the process. This inference is backed by the fact that younger Americans compared to their elders want the U.S. to do less overseas, are less willing to accept U.S. unilateralism, less proud to call themselves Americans and believes less that the U.S. possesses unique international leadership abilities (Beinart, 2014). Corresponding with the assumptions of strategic culture, as the U.S. public's perception alters which the abovementioned indicates, this will likely impact what political leaders delineate as appropriate and necessary behavior when responding to systemic pressures (Ripsman et al., 2016, p. 66). In turn, this may adjust the traditional value-driven foreign policy of the U.S. into one driven by narrower national interests.

Another source contributing to changes in U.S. grand strategy is the required transformation to military concepts consistent with modern warfighting. Key tenets labeled out in the National Defense Strategy (NDS) of 2018 includes the need to build a more lethal force, modernize key capabilities and evolve innovative operational concepts (DoD, 2018, p. 1-7). Although national security and defense strategies often get discredited for not being able to translate political ambitions to actual military output there is multiple indicators that this is not the case. A sign of the times is the new U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Force Design 2030 which aims to align itself with the NDS by transforming the USMC to a lighter and more flexible force fit for naval expeditionary warfare (Congressional Research Service, 2022, p. 1-5). Moreover, the U.S. Army which traditionally have been a continental land force now attempts to rewrite its strategies to be relevant in an Indo-Pacific scenario as engagement in the region have become decisive to the resource allocation calculus in Washington D.C. (P.C., Hagen, 2022; Wertheim 2022).

7.2 Balancing systemic and domestic demands

As the U.S. prepares for global strategic competition while remedying its illnesses at home, the necessity to balance finite resources to match political ambitions is best accomplished by promoting a restrained foreign policy, strengthening old and creating new alliances while toning down liberal internationalist policies as a means of preserving the liberal international order (Wilson, 2019, p. 83). This corresponds with Obama's preface to his administration's last National Security Strategy (NSS) admitting that the U.S. "will always defend our interests and uphold our commitments to allies and partners. But we have to make hard choices among many competing priorities, and we must always resist the overreach that comes when we make decisions based upon fear." (NSS, 2015). A key element to accomplish this is to utilize regional power configurations and collective institutions to implement American security objectives. The international ace of the U.S. has been its soft power appeal and notion of being a benign superpower (P.C., Tamnes, 2022). This has made other states less fearful of its intentions and helped to garner support or absolution for other less benign activities like the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the Iraqi War in 2003-2011, inspired by the National Security Strategies of Bush Sr., Clinton and Bush Jr calling for the spread of democracy and the endorsement of preemptive military force (Chivvis, 2021).

To maintain its notion as a benign superpower, it is essential that the U.S. learns from the experiences and dangers of strategic overreach while remedying its illnesses at home to restore "the bipartisan center that has been a pillar of strength for American foreign policy." (NSS, 2015, p. 29). Similarly, the Trump administration's "America First" agenda still listed the protection of the American way of life and prosperity as key tenets to preserve peace and advance American influence (NSS, 2017, p. 4). Although this is not equivalent to a nihilist shift to isolationism, it suggests that the U.S. may reduce its overseas presence. At least, it prescribes a situation where the U.S. will more rigorously demand equitable burden-sharing across the Atlantic. It is responsible American international leadership, shared liberal principles and democratic values that makes up the fundament of the transatlantic relationship. Since multiple missteps like the Iraqi-war, the failure to prevent a global financial crisis in 2008, the rise of Trumpism, the unilateral decision to withdraw from Afghanistan and a disorganized response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the perception of the U.S. as a capable global provider for security and stability have taken a blow, and some analysts posit that this has shaken the foundations of transatlantic relations (Kamp, 2018, p. 63).

Although diplomatic efforts and political relations have improved under the Biden administration, the ubiquitous polarization experienced under recent administrations have endured, making it difficult to find consensus on security and foreign policy measures. A recent example being the 2022 U.S. defense budget that was not passed until March 2022, nearly six months after the start of the fiscal year, which effectively inhibited the initiation of new projects in that period (P.C., Hagen, 2022). In a 2022 seminar about transatlantic security and the return of great power politics, John Mearsheimer cautioned that the domestic political problems the U.S. is facing at home, requires much more attention and resources to remedy, warning that if “we are not careful, we’re not going to be a liberal democracy much longer”. Furthermore, he added that “you do not want to underestimate how much trouble we are in at home, and when you’re running around trying to fix everybody’s problems, this is going to detract in good part from fixing problems at home.” (Mearsheimer, 2022). As these developments are structurally defined, it is unlikely an isolated event and will therefore continue to influence U.S. decisionmakers where a “worst-case” scenario implies a transition from an exceptional global power with a mandate to improve the world to that of a more traditional great power with narrower national priorities (Melby, 2017, p. 153). This impacts the way the U.S. conducts its diplomacy with allies and new partners in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Compared to the highly dense and collective security order in Europe, the institutionalization of the Indo-Pacific security architecture remains sparse. U.S. decisionmakers will be smart to facilitate for increased cooperation in the region. In as such, there are multiple recent developments, both bilateral, minilateral and multilateral, that supports the notion that this is already underway. Bilaterally, the U.S. have strengthened its ties and commitments to key allies like Japan and South Korea. mini- and multilaterally, the creation of both the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between the U.S., India, Japan and Australia (the Quad) and the trilateral security pact between Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. (AUKUS) are interesting (P.C., Hagen, 2022).

Essentially, the main lesson of realistic theory is reminding FPE’s of the systemic constraint anarchy imposes on states and the need to ensure your own security (Waltz, 1979, p. 111-114). Moral, cooperative efforts and mutual gains takes the backseat since statesmen cannot afford to take the risk to presume other states’ intentions as benign (Walt & Mearsheimer, 2016, p. 70). After the U.S. came out of the Cold War triumphant, the continent-sized superpower with the world’s largest economy and abundant resources were in reality more or less exempt from these restraints. Moreover, with free security gained by a physical permissive environment with no great power nearby and protected by two vast bodies of water the U.S. could afford an active

international role (Mearsheimer, 2022). Rephrasing a quote commonly attributed to Otto Von Bismarck, the French Ambassador Jean Jules Jusserand captured this natural advantage well by remarking that the U.S. “is the most favored of all nations. To the north it has a weak neighbor. To the south, another weak neighbor. To the east, fish; to the west, fish” (Walt & Mearsheimer 2016, p. 71). The same way geographical distance kept the U.S. out of continental conflicts in Europe until the cataclysmic first half of the 20th century, it also enabled the U.S. to create and uphold the transatlantic security architecture needed to balance and contain Soviet power. Although the effects of globalization, advances in technology and the introduction of intercontinental ballistic missiles and cyber threats have narrowed the operational distance, it is still a crucial advantage for the U.S. as it can operate with its back covered (Posen, 2014, p. 19).

When the Soviet Union collapsed the biggest restraint imposing U.S. room for maneuver disappeared with it. Instead of retrenching and focusing on its budding domestic problems, U.S. decisionmakers utilized this room for maneuver to export its model of democracy and liberal values to shape a liberal world order (Wertheim, 2022). Inspired by liberal interventionism and a mandate to remake the world, it was no longer deemed enough to merely function through “the force of our example” but also necessary to take a role to facilitate this by actively shaping the transformation that was underway. The following 30 years of ambitious foreign policy and the failed interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen and elsewhere exposed the shortcomings of liberal hegemony and the dangers of strategic overreach (Mearsheimer, 2022). As discussed more in detail in previous chapters, these unsuccessful campaigns and socio-economic troubles at home has had a self-reinforcing negative effect on day-to-day political activities and foreign policy formulation. With the emergence of a peer competitor in China, the U.S. can no longer afford these missteps, this entails a more restrictive and pragmatic approach to foreign policy where offshore balancing proves particularly useful as a point of departure for a grand strategy that meets the requirements of the coming decades. The main justification for this doctrine is comprised by three arguments distilled from the broader discussion in Part I and II of the thesis, satiating both system pressures and domestic restraints. Firstly, it is suitable due to the advantageous geographic circumstances of the U.S. Secondly, it is cost-effective and frees up resources to remedy domestic issues. Thirdly, and most importantly, the systemic redistribution of power requires American attention and warrants a pivot towards Asia.

7.3 Offshore balancing

In its simplest form, offshore balancing is a concept that calls for more restrained and cost-effective foreign policy were maintaining the balance of power to inhibit the rise of a dominant regional hegemon in the three key geopolitical regions of Europe, the Middle East, in particular the Persian Gulf, and the Indo-Pacific should be the main concerns of FPE's (Posen, 2014, p. 69). Realists intuitively understands security as a zero-sum game where one's security is measured against another state's security. It is the uncertainty of another state's intentions and the absence of a competent, overarching government that causes states to instigate a countervailing coalition to augment its own security against a preponderant power, typically a great power in proximity which is perceived to harbor offensive intentions and capabilities (Waltz, 1979, p. 111; Walt, 1987, p. 23). Due to U.S. power and geographic distance, regional actors in Europe and Asia may find the United States an attractive counterweight against nearby offensive states (Sutter, 2019, p. 25). When a potential regional hegemon is present, the first action for U.S. decisionmakers should be to sway local actors to initiate regional balancing. If this is insufficient then the U.S. must do more. As such, offshore balancing is not a call for a static and isolationistic strategy, but when combined with modern technology allowing rapid transfer of forces and equipment, a strategy equipping U.S. FPE's with a flexible and scalable instrument to meet a more complex security situation.

In the Middle East, the U.S. is scaling down its presence after 20 years of attempted nation-building and costly wars. As the region's natural resources remains vital to the American way of life, the U.S. will ensure that the Middle East and its energy exports remains stable. However, this does not prescribe the need for boots onshore where U.S. action only is needed if one power is growing assertively stronger than the others. Currently, there is no indication that this is a likely development. However, the U.S. will have to monitor the rivalry between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran and strengthen ties with local allies to mitigate the risk for terrorist safe havens (Mearsheimer, 2022). In Europe, there is no realistic auspices of a potential hegemon. Naturally, Russia's decision to wage war on Ukraine has stirred up fears of a revisionist state that wants its sphere of interest and image as a great power restored. Nonetheless, Russia with an aging population and stagnant economy with a GDP quarter the size of the EU cannot do this unopposed (Walt, 2018, p. 15), evident in the unified European resolve shown in response to recent Russian aggression.

Today, it is only China that has the capacity to establish itself as a regional hegemon, and it is likely that this will transpire (Wertheim, 2022; Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 311). As an emerging superpower with a population of 1,4 billion and a GDP surpassing the combined GDP of the European Union, Beijing will rightfully demand more respect from its neighbors and seek to shape multilateral institutions to be more in line with Chinese interests (Kirshner, 2012, p. 66). Similar to Athens rise and the fear it incited in Sparta; prudence is a necessity when trying to regulate the expansive influence of a growing China. The political leadership in Washington will have to accommodate its rise, while containing Chinese influence when it diverges from U.S. national interests. When encountering China, it is necessary to acknowledge its power, like Morgenthau insisted at the heyday of the Cold War rivalry that “military preparations must join hands with an accommodating diplomacy” (Morgenthau, 1951, p. 70) this will also be valuable to American decisionmakers in the current security environment. Parallel to these efforts it is therefore important to seek compromises and cooperation with China on issues where interests (somewhat) align to bolster understanding and avoid exaggerated suspicion which feeds the security dilemma, preventive defensive efforts and a subsequent action-reaction arms-race between two superpowers ultimately leaving everyone less secure (Jervis, 1978, p. 167). Congenital realist wisdom warns of war when there is close to parity in the distribution of political, economic and military power between competing states (Organski, 1958) and the probability of war is believed to be heightened if the uneven growth in power favors a rising challenger (Gilpin, 1988, p. 591-592).

The recap of Graham Allison’s elaborate work on the mounting strategic rivalry between the two superpowers and the following discussion in chapter 5 shows that the U.S. and China can escape Thucydides’ trap and avoid a hegemonic war through prudent and concerted diplomacy. As great power competition rises simultaneously with the rising challenges of climate change and its subsequent security and societal implications, constructive cooperation will be ever more important. When encountering China, it is important to bear in mind that it is not some kind of pariah state existing outside of regular international affairs and a too provocative posture will most likely heighten the risk of military confrontation and self-defeating behavior (Kirshner, 2012, p. 70). As the world’s largest trader and holder of foreign exchange and second largest recipient of foreign investment, China is a state dependent on, and politically and economically intertwined within, the liberal institutional framework and will therefore go to great lengths to avoid conflict (Sutter, 2019, p. 234). This is also what makes the rise of China a more complicated and sophisticated threat to U.S. influence and liberal democracy (Wertheim, 2022).

If this rivalry materializes, the U.S. will be dependent on real allies contributing more to common defense than was the case during the Cold War (Posen, 2014, p. 18). Inside the Western security community, it exists differing threat perceptions of China, as there are strong economic incentives for cooperation and the geographical distance have caused many European nations to traditionally not see China as a rival. Examples being the Chinese BRI where ports in Athens and Rotterdam are built, acquired and influenced by the Chinese (P.C., Hagen, 2022). Nonetheless, recent developments signal a shift in the European perception. Notably, in 2019 the EU labeled China a systemic rival and NATO have put China on its agenda due to the growing recognition that Chinese influence in the international economy and emerging technologies like 5G, artificial intelligence and automation has decreased European resilience (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 315). Therefore, continuing to consolidate a shared assessment on how to manage the rise of China will be one of the most demanding and important tasks in the Western security community and NATO's new strategic concept aimed to be launched in mid-2022.

Equal to how U.S. power and geographical distance allowed for effective balancing during the Cold War, the same can be achieved in the Indo-Pacific today. Nonetheless, as systemic stimuli are prone to the (mis)perception of decisionmakers, this instinctive balancing mechanism may not be as automatic as structural realists posit. The U.S. therefore must balance leading a countervailing coalition while finding common ground with China to tackle the global problems at hand (Walt, 2018, p. 15). To ensure this and inhibit a too dominant regional hegemon, it is adamant that the U.S. positions itself as an attractive and preferred partner by choice and not by coercion playing on its strengths as a benign great power with soft power appeal. This arrangement shares semblances to the transatlantic relationship in the aftermath of WWII and the U.S. containment strategy during the Cold War, but the gains from shared cultural and historical experiences shaping the transatlantic relationship are not as easily available across the Pacific. Thus, shrewd statesmanship encompassing economic, political and military means is a necessity. For the Asian countries it will be essential that they perceive cooperation with the U.S. as more valuable than band-wagoning with China. As Washington and Beijing cherishes completely different societal models, the U.S. will be smart to make their model the most appealing to current and prospective allies.

Decisionmakers in Washington is preparing for a more complex security environment with less resources at its disposal. This adjustment entails a pragmatic and more restrained approach to foreign policy formulation. For this to be successful, a clearheaded calculation of how to react

to the redistribution of power towards the Indo-Pacific and maintaining necessary presence in Europe, while simultaneously remedying its domestic illnesses will be crucial (Wertheim, 2022). As this thesis shows, there are stern warnings that the domestic situation in the U.S. poses a serious challenge to this undertaking. This will also influence allies' perceptions of future security arrangements as U.S. resolve and commitment to multilateral solutions and consultations is increasingly uncertain (Kamp, 2018, p. 63). Considering the constraints facing U.S. policymakers both internationally and domestically it is likely that the Biden administration's coming National Security Strategy will continue down the path of a more restrained and realistic assessment of U.S. core interests, focusing on the pivot to the Indo-Pacific, while underlining that America's domestic rejuvenation is a prerequisite for successful foreign policy. As an alternative to liberal interventionism this thesis argues that the U.S. strategic concept in the foreseeable future will be based on offshore balancing. For this to be a sustainable approach the U.S. needs to strengthen its alliances and partnerships, although in different ways, and at the same time accommodate cooperative efforts with competitors when possible.

Chapter 8: Norwegian adaptation

This chapter outlines how Norwegian decisionmakers have adapted to the changing security environment and analyzes the anticipated trajectory for Norwegian security policy and defense planning. Key findings are that through sizeable military procurements and further integration with key allies and regional actors, Norway aims to meet the emerging security environment by continuing the long lines of Norwegian security while concurrently renovating it accommodating increased regionalization. Going forward, an important task will be to implement a holistic architecture that does not fragment NATO unity, but supplements and enhances its utility, relevance and resolve. If done successfully, this will likely be a more affordable and efficient way to organize a defensive posture strengthening day to day cooperation and overall collective defense. Moreover, entrepreneurial Norwegian statecraft may increase national room for maneuver. As discussed in chapter 4, this is especially relevant in transformative periods, a valuable cue when Norwegian, U.S. and NATO decisionmakers prepares for a more global strategic concept and great power competition.

8.1 Adapting to the new security environment

To meet the requirements of the Post-Cold War era and subsequent out of area operations, considerable military reforms through the 2000s due to the diminishing Soviet threat, economic

imperatives and allied expectations transformed the Norwegian Armed Forces from a mobilization invasion defense to an integrated alliance defense with niche, high readiness and expeditionary capabilities (Saxi, 2021, p. 191). As a result, although Norwegian FPE's stressed the importance of collective defense during the 1990s, by the 2000s, defense planning processes and procedures for allied reinforcement had been downgraded and disregarded on behalf of out of area operations, which had become the Norwegian Armed Forces primary operational task (P.C., Efstjad, 2022; Oma, 2021, p. 383). Therefore, when the Norwegian government put forth its Core Area Initiative in 2008, the alliance was predominately occupied with crisis management and out of area operations, especially in Afghanistan (St. meld. nr. 38 (2008-2009), p. 29). Although the Norwegians received some acceptance for its call for a retransition to collective defense, it was not until the Russian annexation of Crimea that it resulted in any discernable change (P.C., Efstjad, 2022). As a response to a revanchist Russia, the North Atlantic alliance have after roughly 25 years of crisis management and peacekeeping in the Balkans and Middle East returned to its main task of collective defense (Bjur et al., 2020, p. 481). The Norwegian intelligence assets and expertise on Russian activity previously regarded as somewhat redundant, was now in hot commodity, with the same allies scoffing at the Norwegians for spending considerable resources on monitoring Russia, now insisting to come and learn (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022).

Although the High North is still low tension, the Russian military exercises more frequently and maintains a larger presence than earlier. Moreover, this have been accompanied with provocative actions towards its neighbors. Notable are simulated offensives directed at critical Norwegian infrastructure including the surveillance satellite Globus II in Vardø and Bodø Airbase in 2017 and the GPS jamming of large parts of Finnmark during Trident Juncture in 2018 (Norwegian Intelligence Service, 2019, p. 27). This coupled with Russian military modernization has led to increased interest from the U.S. and other allies and is translated through regular flights with strategic bombers over the Barents Sea, and in 2020, for the first time since the 1980s, surface combatant warships from American and British navies conducted operations in the area (Meld. St. 9. 2020-2021, p. 23). It is safe to say that the resurgence of an increasingly antagonistic Russia has surpassed the original intentions in the Core Area Initiative and the new security situation more than Oslo bargained for. Moreover, the possible introduction of great power politics in the Arctic challenges the conventional wisdom of the High North being a place of low tension, complicating Norwegian security goals in its most important strategic area of responsibility (Meld. St. 9. 2020-2021, p. 8). To adapt to the current security landscape, with a distinct change

since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Norwegian government is increasing its defense spending considerably. From NOK 43 billion in 2014 to an estimated NOK 69 billion (2020 currency) in 2024, approximately a 40% increase adjusted to inflation (Prop. 14 S (2020-2021)). This increase has allowed for the replacement of aging military systems where F-35 combat aircrafts is replacing the F-16 fleet, P8A Poseidon military patrol aircrafts the P3 Orion and the German type 212 submarines the Ula-class. This is an expensive undertaking continuing the adjustment from a predominately land based concept during the Cold War to a force posture favoring air and maritime domains (Tamnes, 2018, p. 15). Important to note is that Norway is increasing its presence in its northernmost region by stationing land-based forces close to the Russian border through the establishment of Finnmark Land Defense. Compared to Russian forces, this is a small number and is primarily thought to be a ‘deterrent by tripwire’, comparable to NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) in the Baltic countries.

Other than the obvious that Norwegian military reforms and investments seek to protect the sovereignty of Norway and the well-being of its citizens, these transformations and procurements seems to be coxswained by two primary concerns. Firstly, that it be interoperable with allied military forces and secondly that they fulfill a gap, or a needed capacity for key allies. A prime example is the extensive investments in modern C4ISR-capabilities to monitor the High North, satiating both Norwegian and U.S. needs for reliable intel of Russian activity. Another is the interoperability with key allies ensured through procurement of U.S.-made MPAs and combat aircrafts making joint exercises, planning and operating more efficient (Berdal, 2021, p. 293). Similarly, the Finnish decision to acquire 64 F-35’s and Danish decision to purchase 27 F-35’s, coupled with the Norwegian fleet of 52 of the same combat aircrafts makes the combined output of the Northern force a considerable one (P.C., Efstjad, 2022).

The reintroduction of the High North as a geostrategic region has direct consequences for Norwegian security and mandates a national capacity to monitor and understand the developing situation as well as intensified investments in national security and defense to maintain influence, credibility and relevance to close allies to preserve Norwegian room for maneuver (Prop. 14 S (2020-2021), p. 24). This explains the considerable investments in surveillance and control capabilities like Nansen-Class Frigates, F-35s, P8 MPA’s and maintained activity on Marjata and Eger. Moreover, the enduring focus on sustaining a robust Norwegian intelligence capacity have forged close relations between U.S. and Norwegian intelligence agencies, improving Norwegian room for maneuver and influence in Washington (P.C., Efstjad, 2022). In that

regard, these modern capabilities are useful acquisitions, but the relatively small number is a source of concern. Down to four frigates after the loss of HNoMS Helge Ingstad in 2018 may challenge the Norwegian ambition of continuous assertion of sovereignty, exercise of authority and situational awareness in the North (Meld. St. 9. 2020-2021, p. 24). If the Norwegian Armed Forces cannot maintain a stable presence and provide sufficient ISR to allies, they will likely overtake the operations themselves (Prop. 14 S (2020-2021), p. 25). If this unfolds, and British or American aircrafts and vessels routinely patrol east and north of the Kola Peninsula as a result, this will heighten tensions and the risks associated with the security dilemma (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). A logical, but misguided supposition emanating from this is that Norwegian (in)action alone plays a decisive role in the great power's military activity in the High North. Increased Norwegian presence in the North does not imply that other allies will automatically keep away. For that, the Russo-Norwegian power asymmetries are simply too large and mechanics of great power rivalry too powerful (Oma. 2021, p. 396-397). At the same time Allied activity reinforces awareness and competences which contributes to Norwegian security, it is important that it is conducted predictably and transparently to maintain the stability in the region. A Norwegian force posture that can credibly control and patrol its own areas of responsibility, together with allies, is therefore one of the most important tasks of the Norwegian Armed Forces to balance allied need for intelligence and Russian need for reassurance.

In 2016, when legislating a new Long Term Plan (2017-2020) for the Armed Forces, the Norwegian government acknowledged that its military did not have the necessary capacity to manage its most important tasks nor the necessary posture and durability to meet the current threat environment (Prop. 151 S (2015-2016), p. 5). Hence, with the return to collective defense, the Norwegian Armed Forces were unable to put forth a credible deterrence independently. This inadequacy led Chief of Defense, Admiral Bruun-Hanssen (2013-2020) in his 2015 defense review to recommend stationing allied troops on Norwegian soil in peacetime to compensate a national capacity so reduced that it was considered being at a critically low level (Norwegian Armed Forces, 2015, p. 72). Warning that political ambitions and the Armed Forces ability to fulfill these were progressively antithetical, Bruun-Hanssen's 2019 defense review offering his military advise to the new Long-Term Plan (2017-2020) consisted of four force structure alternatives ranging from A to D. Where alternative A, the Chief of Defense's recommendation requiring a NOK 3 billion increase in the defense budget annually until 2028, met the security environment and the government's ambitions of ensuring national resolve, improved situational awareness and ability to conduct operations to protect Norwegian areas of interests and continued

active participation in NATO (Norwegian Armed Forces, 2019, p. 4-6). However, when passing the new LTP the Norwegian parliament opted for what was the equivalent of an alternative D minus (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). For the Norwegian MoD it became increasingly apparent that Norway needed a unified effort by the Armed Forces, whole of the society and enhanced cooperation with allies to reinforce the total defense concept and a sound financial framework to ensure credible deterrence and necessary reassurance through improved intelligence and surveillance, robust decision-making mechanisms to manage crises, high readiness response forces and sufficient logistical support (Tamnes et al., 2015, p. 5). Critical to this effort was to strengthen national resolve, relations to key allies, especially the U.S., and bolster relevancy in and of NATO.

8.2 Strengthening ties within NATO

With a decreased autonomous military capacity and increased dependency on American guarantees, Norway was left with the option to hedge on NATO unity and American utility or adjust to explore other means to augment security (Heier, 2018, p. 272). This logic is what best explains the willingness to participate in operations out of area, as it has been regarded as the best way to ensure alliance cohesion, interoperability and most importantly a credible security guarantee (Oma, 2021, p. 384). The need to be in good standing and close to the U.S. was strongly asserted in the Godal-report stating that the main justification for Norwegian participation was to be in the fight together with the U.S. and allies, to support the U.S. and ensure NATO relevance (NOU, 2016:8, p. 9). Consistent with the fears of alliance abandonment, the willingness, or obligation to participate, became increasingly important when the centrality of Northern Europe decreased throughout the two following decades after the Cold War. The 2014 Russian annexation altered the configuration of this relationship but the necessity to keep the U.S. close remained. As fears of being forgotten was replaced by fears of great power rivalry on Norway's doorstep, the long-lasting dynamics of deterrence and reassurance vis-à-vis Russia and integration and screening vis-à-vis the U.S reemerged as central guidelines for Norwegian decisionmakers (Heier, 2021, p. 14). Due to the asymmetry between Russia and Norway, a crucial task has been to invite the U.S. in. Considering increased American activity, exercises and cooperation in the North, especially after 2014, the Norwegian ambition of anchoring the U.S. to Northern Europe have seemingly borne fruit.

Increased allied activity in Norway like the 600 man strong rotational force of U.S. marines from 2017-2020 and efforts like the bilateral Supplementary Defense Cooperation Agreement

(SDCA) signed between Norway and the U.S. in 2021 facilitating for U.S. investments in Norwegian infrastructure at key strategic locations have made training, exercises and other activities supporting maritime logistics and air patrols easier to conduct (U.S. State Department, 2021). After a respite since Exercise Strong Resolve in 2002, allied exercises have recalibrated to center around collective defense. Notably, Trident Juncture 2018, the largest NATO-led exercise since the Cold War involving 50,000 troops was hosted in Norway. Similar to the goals of 2022 Cold Response, both exercises aimed to test the alliance's defense capability, host nation support ability and capacity to retake occupied allied territory. Trident Juncture was valuable not only to increase allied awareness of Norwegian interests and territory, but it was also valuable as it enabled the Norwegian government to apply and test its total defense concept. The positive experiences of Norway's Joint Headquarters (NJHQ) role paved the way for it being integrated to NATO's command structure. As the only national HQ integrated in the structure, savvy and forward-thinking Norwegian staff officers succeeded to gain acceptance for a long-term ambition tying NATO and the U.S. to the Norwegian territory (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). Moreover, this knowledge which is unique in the Alliance, may improve Norwegian standing and influence as it becomes relevant contributing to NATO's combined situational awareness, clarifying command and control mechanisms between NATO and national structures. This coincides well with the Norwegian effort to revitalize NATO's collective defense and to maintain U.S. skin in the game. However, this invites the U.S. closer to Northern Europe, perhaps closer than Russia is comfortable with. As Allied interest and activity in the region increases, the Norwegian ability to conduct day to day operations and maintain presence in its core area will be ever more important to reassure a gradually more susceptible Russian neighbor. To maintain the long lines of Norwegian security of deterrence and reassurance, exploring regionalized concepts may be a useful to limit the effects of too confrontational deterrence.

8.3 Increased regionalization

Due to a more complex and fluid threat environment, Norway will become more dependent on allied cooperation. Across the spectrum from day to day activities, crisis management and reinforcement in case of a foreign aggressor, arrangements with close allies have become increasingly important (Prop. 14 S (2020-2021), p. 25). Therefore, a strong national defense structure with interoperability and effective reinforcement plans with regional allies will be decisive for Norwegian security. Adapting to the emerging threat environment, Norwegian FPE's seem to facilitate for operations and exercises and invest in capabilities that both strengthens the bilateral ties with the U.S. as well as interoperability and relations with key

European partners. Although Russian aggression since 2014 have increased bilateral cooperation between the U.S. and Norway and the transatlantic response to the Russo-Ukrainian war of 2022 have been resolute and unified, structural changes will increasingly in the long-term force Norwegian decisionmakers to reexamine how to best assure its territorial integrity and national sovereignty while remaining a good and trustworthy ally. Most notable are the tectonic shifts in power towards the Indo-Pacific and the question of how efficiently the U.S. can manage the rise of China, remedying its illnesses at home and be an attentive ally in Europe simultaneously.

Although worries about the Sino-Russian reproachment evolving into a full-fledged alliance seem overstated, the mutual discontent with the Western world order and strategic partnership between Moscow and Beijing allows the two to operate more freely as the border disputes between them have been replaced by increasing convergence and coordination (Sutter, 2019, p. 20). As the Russians have demonstrated a will to attain political goals by military means, a feature that may be a lasting one (P.C., Eide, 2022), a potential future conflict in the Indo-Pacific will tie up U.S. resources and may impede effective allied reinforcement in Europe if Russia were to seize the strategic momentum (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 312). This uncertainty makes Nordic and European defense more important to Norwegian security than it has been in the past (Petersson, 2021, p. 235). Accordingly, this gradual shift has caused important European powers to instigate multinational initiatives directed towards regional defense cooperation in Europe. Flexibly designed to supplement and enhance, rather than to duplicate NATO structures, these arrangements may become a cost-efficient way to tackle the issues of burden-sharing and dependence on U.S. military might.

For Norway being a non-EU member and dependent on U.S. security guarantees, it will be essential to play an active role in the development of these regional schemes. As illustrated in chapter 5, uncertainty of U.S. international leadership, Brexit and most importantly hostile Russian revisionism have propelled the ambitions of a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in the EU. Especially the triad of PESCO, CARD and EDF aims to catalyze European autonomy and the resolve and unity shown in response to the Russian war against Ukraine in 2022, makes the goals of EUGS and EU's strategic compass seem more viable. As EU's CSDP is intensifying, it will be in Norway's interests to not be too detached from these developments. Especially is it important for the Norwegian defense industry to be connected to the integrated European market, the Norwegian decision to join the EDF is important in this regard. As a non-EU member, the everlasting dilemma for Norwegian decisionmakers arises when participating

in binding EU-programs. On the one hand, increased cooperation with the EU grants more information, influence and opportunities. On the other hand, it reduces autonomy and flexibility (Allers, 2021, p. 271). As a compromise, Norwegian authorities' overall strategy has been to intensify bilateral relations with EU members considered key allies within different and overlapping cooperative schemes and arrangements. As stated in the Norwegian Armed Forces LTP, Norway will prioritize dialogue with Germany, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland and Sweden to safeguard its interests regarding EU defense cooperation (Prop. 14 S, p. 92).

8.4 Nordic defense cooperation

The five Nordic countries share similar cultural heritage, norms and liberal democratic values. This has facilitated for extensive cooperation in almost all sectors of private and public affairs (P.C., Efstad, 2022). Different security orientations where Iceland, Norway and Denmark are among the original signatories in NATO and Finland and Sweden have remained non-aligned or neutral have historically limited joint defense and security cooperation within the Nordic Area (Haugevik et al., 2022, p. 5). However, recently Nordic defense cooperation have gained traction. Against the backdrop of the Russo-Georgian conflict and global financial crisis of 2008 the Nordic countries sought to establish a more comprehensive approach to Northern security cooperation by formally creating Nordic Defense Cooperation in 2009, succeeding and combining the more fragmented structures of Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS), Nordic Armaments Cooperation (NORDAC) and Nordic Supportive Defense Structures (NORDSUP). Organized with a Political Steering Committee to coordinate efforts and exchange perceptions, coupled with a military committee overseeing projects and facilitating working groups for exercises, capabilities and operations makes NORDEFECO a broad framework for Nordic defense cooperation (P.C. Efstad, 2022). In an international environment where strategic competition is on the rise and multilateral institutions challenged, this collaboration effectively buttresses the relatively small states' security and room for maneuver, independently and collectively. In this regard, the ambitious 2018 MOU "vision 2025" stated that the Nordic countries would cooperate more closely in times of peace, crisis and conflict, with aims to draw up joint operational and defense planning and collaborate on strengthened total defense by 2025 (P.C., Hagen, 2022).

Although Nordic countries have no plans to construct a permanent organization with headquarters and staff, NORDEFECO has been tailored to become an effective consultative and cooperative structure aiming to achieve security goals collectively. In this regard, Svein Efstad,

long-serving policy director and responsible for the Norwegian MoD's Nordic portfolio accentuates that the value-added by NORDEFECO is evident through policy discussions and information exchange leading to increased commonality in policy formulation and perceptions of international security and organizations. This is underscored by technological interoperability, cross-border training like the biannual Arctic Challenge air exercise, NORDEFECO's Easy Access initiative enabling effective transport across borders and ambitions to realize joint acquisitions and development of military equipment (Efjestad, 2018, p. 41-42). Moreover, as a 2022 NUPI-report underlines, the Nordic nations have become more aligned over the past decade, marked by increasingly analogous positions and perspectives, bridging previous differences paving the way for further integration (Haugevik et al., 2022, p.32-33). The secure link between the Nordic countries, frequently used at top political, bureaucratic and defense levels to consult on every international developments of concern have been important in this regard. During Norway's chairmanship of NORDEFECO in 2022 the Norwegians have aired to integrate Nordic cooperation further by extending the ambitions of the Nordic total defense concept, pooling resources across borders and establishing comprehensive operational planning procedures for the entire Nordic area (P.C., Efjestad. 2022).

At the same time, all the Nordic governments stresses the need to continue strengthening transatlantic ties through bilateral and multilateral arrangements to meet the new security situation (Saxi & Friis, 2018, p. 2). This explains the Norwegian decisions to acquire U.S. made fighter jets and MPA's and German-made subs instead of the Swedish options that were on the table (P.C., Efjestad, 2022). Thus, neither of the Nordic capitals have an ambition to make NORDEFECO an alternative to NATO or the EU, therefore these efforts will in the foreseeable future be complementary arrangements to a broader institutional security architecture. Sweden and Finland have nourished closer ties to NATO in recent years, primarily driven by Russian aggression (P.C., Efjestad, 2022). Through participation in a wide array of NATO exercises like Trident Juncture and Cold Response, adapting NATO standards, military exchange and participation in the NATO Command structure in JFC Norfolk and Brunssum, SHAPE in Mons, and as Enhanced Opportunities Partners (EOP), they have reached a status of functional allies with full interoperability (P.C. Efjestad, 2022; P.C. Tamnes 2022). Before the Russian war of aggression towards Ukraine, Swedish and Finnish discussions of joining NATO was not a pressing issue and seen as an antagonistic move towards Russia creating an unstable situation (Tamnes, 2015, p. 46). Previously being content with a semi-alliance, the governments in Helsinki and Stockholm are getting ready for full-fledged membership status. A NATO at 32

constitutes a significant development as it removes the remaining obstacles for comprehensive Northern European defense cooperation within the NATO-framework.

8.5 Multinational European initiatives

With strengthened interoperability and coordinated perceptions the Nordic countries have facilitated for increased Nordic cooperation, but it also allows for effective participation in regional schemes like the political Northern Group, the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), German-initiated Framework Nations Concept (FNC) and the French European Intervention Initiative (EI2) (Pettersson, 2021, p. 235). The Norwegian Long-Term Plan for its Armed Forces acknowledges the trend and importance that close cooperation and integration in smaller groups is increasingly required to attain mutual operational gains and overall national security (Prop. 14 S (2020-2021), p. 91). Being a multinational rapid response force consisting of Northern European NATO members, Sweden and Finland The JEF aims to increase operational capacity in a cost-effective manner (Tamnes et al., 2015, p. 45). After the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the withdrawal from the EU, the UK has reinvigorated a strategic interest in Northern Europe where a focus on crisis-management and terrorist threats have been deliberately shifted to counter a more demanding Russia. This shift is visible politically through formal reports of parliamentary bodies highlighting the growing Russian assertion in the Northern Atlantic and the Arctic and the subsequent military adjustments to specifically counter Russian activities through the 77 Brigade, participation in the Baltic Air Policing Mission, deployment of sizeable elements of the British Royal Navy and increased training and exercises in Northern Europe (Roberts, 2018, p. 49). The U.K. stresses that the JEF is not an alternative to NATO, but a mechanism to tailor a more agile and flexible response force with a clear geographic area of responsibility that may aid what some commentators perceive as inadequate structures and decision-making bodies in an increasingly large NATO structure (Roberts, 2018, p. 51). The Northern Group, but especially JEF through its successful harnessing of high-readiness capabilities from willing and able countries underscores the overall trend of increasing regional security structures in Northern Europe.

Although Germany, due to its historical dispositions and strategic culture, likely will remain reticent when it comes to use of military power, it has in recent years showed an increased will to display leadership on NATO issues. Bouncing back from its non-participation in the NATO operation and abstaining to vote on the UNSC resolution to authorize the use of military action in Libya in 2011, speeches during the Munich Security Conference in 2014 by then Foreign

Minister Steinmeier and Defense Minister Von der Leyen promising greater German international engagement marked a turning point for Germany's security policy and role in NATO (Kamp, 2018, p. 65). An example being the German-initiated Framework Nations Concept (FNC) proposing a collaborative scheme in where groups of countries can jointly cooperate to procure, maintain and operate complementary capabilities centered around a leading nation, enhancing regionalized clusters of states with aligning threat perceptions and interests (Palmer, 2016, p. 3; Tamnes et al., 2015, p. 45). In a multifaceted threat environment, it has since the Wales Summit in 2014 become increasingly clear that differing threat perceptions among the so far 30 member strong alliance challenges alliance cohesiveness. The German FNC initiative adopted by NATO in 2014 aims to mitigate these conflicting interests by proposing a framework fit to facilitate the strategic interdependence and operational coherence necessary to maintain a credible deterrence and functional strategic concept satiating all member states' need for security through effective division of labor, burden-sharing, flexible and structured cooperation (Palmer, 2016, p. 2). Being the largest European power and located centrally on the continent, Germany is facing a continuous crossfire of competing interests from its neighbors and from within. Although Berlin has pledged a substantial increase in defense spending in the wake of the 2022 Russian war of aggression, it will likely retain its continental approach due a small navy and differing threat perception (Kamp, 2018, p. 73). This does not rule out deeper integration with Norway and the Nordic countries, where the Norwegian decision to acquire German-built submarines may be an impetus for further cooperation. Moreover, as Germany is considered a like-minded and reliable partner, most European NATO members would welcome increased German leadership as a European anchor in the transatlantic relationship. The leadership of Germany have seemed implausible, but the Russo-Ukrainian War of 2022 and the subsequent German response may very well change this perceived truth.

8.6 Complementary, not competing

The return to collective defense and reintroduction of the High North as a geostrategic region concurrently to a gradually more complex threat environment challenges Norwegian defense planning. Therefore, a strong national defense structure with interoperability and effective reinforcement plans with regional allies will be decisive for Norwegian security. Adapting to this security situation Norwegian FPE's seem to facilitate for joint operations and exercises while investing in capabilities that strengthens both bilateral ties with the U.S. and interoperability with key European partners. Resultingly, arrangements with close allies have become ever more important across the spectrum from day to day activities, crisis management and reinforcement

plans (Prop. 14 S (2020-2021), p. 25). Increased allied training and exercise in and around Norway bolsters awareness and reinforcement procedures, but it also intensifies the trepidations of an increasingly susceptible Russian neighbor. Adapting to the emerging security environment while preserving the long lines of deterrence and reassurance can be achieved through a regionalized and scalable concept within the transatlantic security architecture. For this to be effective, three objectives must be met: A Norwegian ability to ensure allied reinforcement, a credible allied security guarantee and joint force scalability. The next section elaborates why this is the best strategy to safeguard Norwegian national interests and security objectives.

To effectively deter a potential adversary, the Norwegian Armed Forces must be able to ensure allied reinforcement. In essence, this means to withstand an incursion long enough for allied forces to come to its rescue. To make this arrangement credible, Norwegian decisionmakers' task is to make reinforcement as seamless and easy as possible. In this regard, lowering the risk for allied casualties upon arrival is crucial and an essential part of this is sound air defenses. The current Norwegian NASAMs are not equipped to deal with Russian hypersonic missiles like Kinzhal and Tsirkon and may make NATO's fleets hesitant to sail into the North Atlantic while these capabilities remain effective. Although a Russian incursion is highly unlikely, additional and improved Norwegian air defenses will make the overall deterrence more credible and should therefore be a key undertaking going forward (P.C., Efstjad, 2022). In the 2019 military advice (FMR) to the new LPT the Norwegian Chief of Defense correspondingly recommended tripling the operational capacity of NASAMS III and acquire three long-range air defense systems to improve protection of critical military infrastructure, command and control functions and allied reinforcement (Norwegian Armed Forces, 2019, p. 28). To mitigate the stated air defense deficiencies, examining ways to pool resources to acquire long-range systems together with allies, for example with key ally Germany which already is exploring the Israeli-American Arrow 3 system might be a fruitful endeavor.

If push comes to shove, it is only the U.S. that makes the Article 5 guarantee credible. Therefore, the U.S. will remain Norway's most important ally (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). This is displayed through the current comprehensive list of cooperation including military exchange, joint exercises, allied contributions out of area, capability procurement, political and military dialogue and bonds created and nourished throughout the last century which have resulted in a mutual operational understanding and rock-solid relations between the U.S. and Norway (P.C., Hagen, 2022). To this extent, it has been necessary to participate in NATO's Reaction Forces

(NRF/VJTF), in Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) and deployment of a frigate in the American Carrier Strike Group 8. However, the fundamental dilemma is that Norwegian Forces deployed abroad are capacities unavailable at home. Therefore, Norwegian decisionmakers are in a daily twist between a credible national defense and participation out of area with NATO or the UN (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022). With an evolving great power rivalry, it is likely that demands from the U.S., either to take a bigger responsibility for own security or participation abroad, will increase going forward. This explains the increased emphasis on fair burden sharing across the Atlantic. Although the Trump administration had somewhat of a bulldozer approach to this issue, it is nonetheless a bipartisan request shared from previous and the sitting administration. As everyone interviewed for this thesis stated, which resonates well with the literature studied and government documents examined, the systemic transition of power and political situation of the U.S. necessitates more equitable burden-sharing and a Europe that is more willing to pay for its own security.

The drivers for the increased regionalization in European security are thus multifaceted. Firstly, it is a continuing development in the transatlantic security architecture. At three quarters of a century old and soon to be 32 members strong, NATO's overall military output is unprecedented, underpinned by a comprehensive and complex structure. Nevertheless, as small is flexible and large is slow, regional schemes have increased in numbers and vigor. This is exacerbated by that likeminded and nearby states tend to be in greater accord on security related issues and shares similar threat perceptions (Efjestad & Tamnes, 2020, p. 23). A second driver is uncertainty of the potency of U.S. international leadership and willingness to maintain a credible presence in Europe. Norwegian and European security remains dependent on U.S. power and it is in the interest of Norway and Europe to encourage a credible U.S. presence in the Euro-Atlantic area. However, the uncertain trajectory of U.S. policies coupled with a pivot to Asia poses a predicament for European allies contingent on American security guarantees. Explicitly, if America must simultaneously manage a conflict in Asia and Europe, would it be able to balance both? The U.S. no longer has a security strategy with ambitions to engage in two theater warfare and although it is not expected to emanate, it is neither improbable and if the U.S. must choose, it will prioritize the Indo-Pacific (Bekkevold & Tunsjø, 2021, p. 312; Wertheim, 2022). Thirdly, and importantly, minilateral and regional arrangements may be an instrument for effectively addressing the issue of fair burden-sharing across the Atlantic. This, coupled with bilateral agreements like the SDCA and COB will free up U.S. resources in peacetime and improve reinforcement in time of need, consolidating both European allies and the U.S. need for security

and flexibility (P.C., Tamnes, 2022). Arrangements that are more European in scope like the JEF, Northern Group, FNC, EI2 and NORDEFECO with the purpose of strengthening interoperability, coordinate on defense related issues and enhance resource allocation by smarter capability production and procurement is thus a result of multiple factors and likely to continue. Although these arrangements aim to strengthen European security, going forward it will be important to ensure that these measures do not lead to fragmentation in the alliance and duplication of capabilities, but is implemented to strengthen the overall transatlantic security architecture (Efjestad & Tamnes, 2020, p. 15). There is little evidence that this hitherto have challenged NATO unity, in fact, these regional initiatives have been welcomed by U.S. policymakers as it is perceived as a positive contribution to fairer burden sharing (P.C., Efjestad, 2022). Thus, the witnessed regionalization may be the impetus required for earnest discussions within the transatlantic alliance regarding it being a force multiplier and an asset to both sides of the Atlantic as the alliance prepares for challenges both in Europa and in Asia.

Overall, the improved allied awareness of Norwegian interests and increased level of exercises, attention, investments and interoperability in Northern Europe has enhanced Norwegian security. The fact that this is being conducted bilaterally with the U.S., but also with other key allies as members of the Northern Group and JEF makes this a robust mechanism. The layered concept where nearby allies train and fight together enables a more seamless and integrated force build-up with allied engagement from the very outset of a military conflict, mitigating Norwegian fears of having to withstand the initial phase of a defensive war alone or a conflict being too big for Norway but too small for NATO (Tamnes et al., 2015, p. 6). As this makes a potential fait accompli operation from an adversary more daunting to enact and less tangible to achieve, it constitutes a credible deterrence. Moreover, the recent war in Ukraine have shown that the perceived threat of a surprise attack has perhaps been overstated as reliable ISR gave allies a clear overview of the situation and time to prepare (P.C., Efjestad, 2022). Although inviting allies closer, and especially the U.S., independently makes Northern Europe more secure, sense of security, as stated in chapter 3, is measured against an external other. Integrating with key allies to augment power and pass the buck have been effective for Norwegian decisionmakers, but a key feature for this being a successful enterprise is the parallel process of deterrence and reassurance vis-à-vis Russia, ultimately making the region more stable. Moscow does not fear Norway, but they fear that Norwegian territory may be used as a forward operating base for U.S. forces (P.C., Jakobsen, 2022).

This is why self-imposed restrictions on Norwegian and allied activity on Norwegian soil has been an effective pacifying measure to mitigate the risks associated with the power asymmetries between Norway and Russia. This stable regime is under serious pressure not only due to the blatant Russian disregard for international norms and sovereign rights, but also because some of the self-imposed restrictions are becoming increasingly inefficient due to technological advances. An example being improved aerial refueling and modern capabilities like the unmanned, long-range RQ-4 Global Hawk. Essentially making the need for logistical points on Norwegian soil redundant and with it the self-imposed restrictions to deny allied aircrafts to take off from Norwegian bases to fly east of 24th meridian east obsolete, inhibiting Norwegian influence on allied behavior and operational patterns in the region. To meet this potential destabilizing effect from allies, the Norwegian government is leaving behind the rigid and outdated provisions in favor of increasing dialogue with allies to avoid unnecessary provocations and to show respect for legitimate Russian security concerns. In this regard, the division of labor where the Americans are flying out of Keflavik, the British from Lossiemouth and Norwegians from Andøya creates a good understanding and established operational pattern with allies which produces predictability for decisionmakers in Moscow (P.C., Efstjad, 2022).

One of the most important tasks for Norway and allies to maintain stability is to meet this security environment with resolve, transparency and predictability (P.C., Hagen, 2022). While maintaining the national capacity to monitor and control its territorial interests, Norwegian decisionmakers will also have to ensure a force structure that can contribute out of area as well as a defensive posture that ensures effective allied reinforcement. This is underpinned by tactical and operational cooperation anchored in up-to-date planning procedures and arrangements through scalable force alternatives that sustains everything from day-to-day activities like fisheries management and patrols to full-spectrum operations against an external aggressor. Moreover, this flexibility will ensure credible deterrence while simultaneously preserving required reassurance towards Russia. To demonstrate the scalability between national capacity and collective defense and connection of national and allied capabilities a conceptual model has been produced.

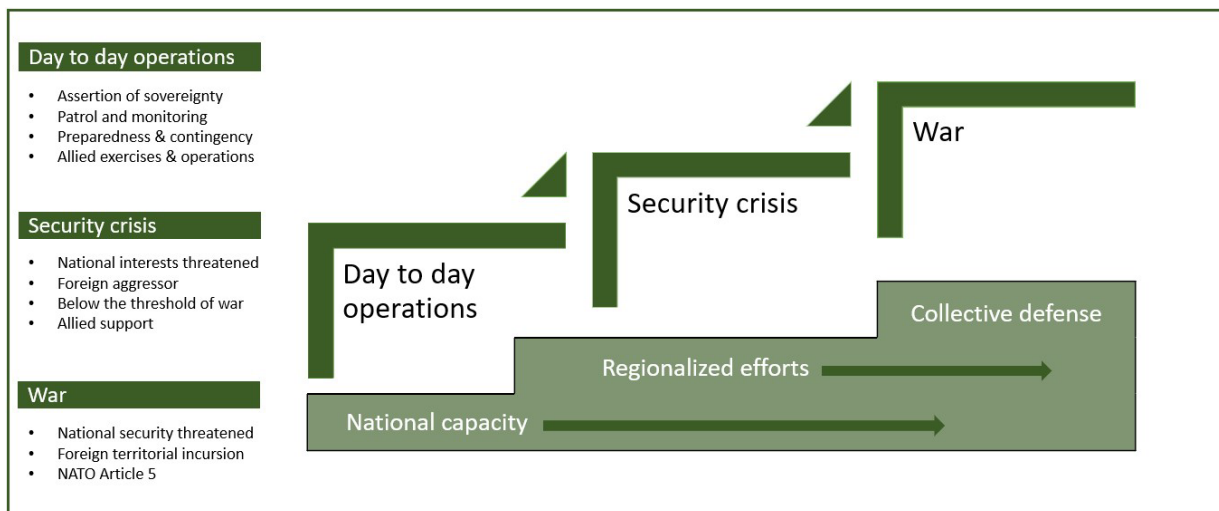


Figure 7: Alliance scalability preserving deterrence and reassurance

The logic behind this model is compounded by the previously discussed increased regionalization within the alliance and the need for Norwegian decisionmakers to maintain awareness and control of its main areas of responsibility. This framework offers a credible deterrence without being too confrontational since it is easily scalable to reflect the current security situation. Furthermore, it presents a useful point of departure for the next chapter which addresses the generalizability of the Norwegian strategy to similar states facing similar environments.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

As so far, by using the conceptual framework established (Part I), the thesis has highlighted the systemic and domestic factors influencing U.S. foreign policy (Part II) before analyzing how American grand strategy is adjusting to meet the emerging security environment and how Norway has adapted to these changes (Part III). By studying what informs changes in U.S. grand strategy and how it affects Norwegian security this thesis has been loyal to the overall research design as a case study usually starts with an “examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 5) guided by an existing theory of neoclassical realism employed to tailor a sound conceptual basis ensuring connection to existing literature (King et al., 1994, p. 45). Moreover, a usual ambition with case studies is to translate the distinct findings to distinguishable explanations “that may be generalizable to other events.” (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 5). Correspondingly, a stated ambition at the outset of this study was to explore the generalizability of the findings in this thesis. Closing this thesis, I attempt to deduce general knowledge from this single case study, in doing so, this chapter discusses Norwegian efforts to attain security and if the empirical assumptions are applicable to

make theoretical assumptions for smaller states experiencing similar environments. When generalizing complex realities into law-like presumptions, the particulars are the ones being sacrificed, but to make sense of the world we live in this is a necessary function in IR theory (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2013, p. 430). Moreover, “generalization does not eliminate the importance of the particular . . . the very purpose of moving from the particular to the general is to improve our understanding of both.” (King et al., 1994, p. 45). As the preceding chapters have focused on the particulars, this section aggregates the findings regarding the transatlantic relationship and its impacts on Norwegian policies and connects it to a broader universe explaining “as much as possible with as little as possible.” (King et al., 1994, p. 29).

Can Norwegian lessons and foreign policies explain more general behavior from smaller states in similar environments? In many ways, Norway’s characteristics are quite unique due to its proximity to the largest stockpile of Russian strategic weapons, being a non-EU member and managing vast natural resources. When using the Norwegian case to extrapolate more general assumptions, a sound starting point will be to assess it from the top-down and the constraints the international system has on state behavior. When completing this exercise, the lessons from realist theory will be useful guidelines. In this regard, similar states are states that fulfill four criteria: 1) It has allied a greater power to augment its security to maintain a credible deterrence as it cannot do so alone. 2) It cannot withstand the initial phase of an incursion from a nearby aggressor independently. 3) A potential aggressor is considerably closer in proximity than its security guarantor. 4) It has multiple allies/potential allies nearby. Thus, inferences can be made that are applicable for Asian nations, but especially European nations as it is densely integrated both economically, politically and militarily. These inferences are applicable to the current international order, but it is also a useful tool to decipher previous alliance dynamics and future ones as it rests on the foundations of the realist ambition to answer the questions of continuity in international affairs (Morgenthau, 2005, p. 14).

9.1 Maintaining attention, relevance and influence

The first assumption is that small states dependent on external capabilities to preserve its security will work hard to maintain its relevance and influence among the preponderant power(s) either bilaterally or through existing allied framework. Naturally, this can be attempted by voicing its concern if a nation’s interests are becoming marginalized, like the Norwegians did through its Core Area Initiative in 2008. To improve the chances of this effort being effective, you must be considered a relevant and contributing ally. As a smaller state with limited resources, it is

primarily two interlinked ways to ensure this. Firstly, by maintaining a credible posture and relevant capabilities in times of peace, luckily it is more of those than times of war. This corresponds well with the Norwegian MoD's emphasis on having the capacity to monitor its High North and activity in the Arctic. Another impactful method to improve influence within the alliance is to identify ways to integrate further into the alliance, both at the operational and strategic levels. The initiative from farsighted Norwegian staff officers to integrate the NJHQ, within NATO's command structure and operational planning is a good example as it increases the role and influence of the national headquarter in times of peace, crisis and conflict. Secondly, by active participation in out of area operations and crisis when called upon by the security provider. Illustrated well with the different degrees of influence Norwegian officials experienced during operations in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, if an actor possesses capabilities that the preponderant power lacks, filling this gap will likely enhance political leverage and grant strategic access to key allies. Examples being the Norwegian ISR capacity and effective use of special forces during the Afghanistan-campaign which have fostered close relations between U.S. and Norwegian intelligence communities as well as access and influence on allied decision- and policymaking processes.

9.2 Deterrence and reassurance through integration and screening

A second assumption is that efforts to invite a powerfully ally to enhance deterrence should be coupled with measures of reassurance, but not necessarily in equal amounts. Congruent with the security dilemma and the inherent uncertainty of another actor's intentions, any action to enhance security may be perceived as an offensive measure, possibly spawning an action-reaction cycle leading to a destabilizing military build-up prone to misconceptions (Jervis, 1978, p. 167-170). Although, every state is considered equal in that they enjoy territorial sovereignty, some states are perceived more threatening due to its overall material capabilities and resultant power. Consistent with balance of threat theory, small states are rarely considered threatening in the eyes of a great power. However, when seeking protection from another great power and allying with it, this will impact the original threat calculus. To avoid the pitfalls of the security dilemma small states should aim to identify and promote reassurance activities. Small states cannot retract itself from its own neighborhood. Augmenting security by external means is not mutually exclusive to cooperating with a greater nearby state on shared issues where mutual gains can be made. In example, bolstering collaboration on resource management, notification mechanisms and cross-border activities like search and rescue operations generates shared perceptions and operational transparency, ultimately creating a more stable region. Finding the right balance

between deterrence and reassurance has been, and will remain, a difficult task for decisionmakers, but a necessary one. A common assumption is that there is supposed to be an equilibrium between deterrence and reassurance where a measure of one, needs to be balanced with a measure of the other. As a guiding pillar to security for smaller states, deterrence and reassurance is not meant to be in equilibrium with each other, but rather calibrated to the situation at hand in a way that is both transparent, predictable and credible. For being able to navigate both the need to keep a security guarantee close, but distant enough for the adversary nation to feel secure, an interoperable and capable national force structure is necessary as it can be deployed to maintain distance between the two great powers.

9.3 Intra-alliance hedging

A third assumption, which serves as this section's main contribution to the academic debate, is that smaller states will instigate minilateral arrangements within the existing security community if the architecture becomes too large or the preponderant power acts unpredictably. Congruent with alliance theory and the realist idea that states are rational actors, states will work to preserve the alliance if the benefits outweigh the costs (Snyder, 1997, p. 166). Due to the benefits of buck passing and resource pooling, small states will want to remain inside the security architecture. However, as large is slow and small is flexible, an increased number of members means an increased number of possible diverging interests. Therefore, actors may seek to strengthen relations with like-minded states facing similar challenges, often leading to more regional cooperation. Some worry that regionalization will lead to fragmentation. This should not be a problem if regional schemes are clearly tailored to the overall security architecture through effective operational plans, command structures, joint exercises and training facilitating interoperability and alliance cohesion. If alliance cohesion is strong and these arrangements are anchored in the central organization, it may improve the utility and resolve of the overall alliance as it facilitates for a division of labor and fairer burden sharing. Moreover, regional approaches tend to create more bang for the buck as small states have limited ability to contribute out of area as their capabilities are predominantly tailored to fit its regional needs (Efjestad & Tamnes, 2020, p. 24). This is reinforced by domestic considerations as it will be easier for policymakers to legitimize defense expenditures that are more regional in scope to its constituents. The tendency to regionalize will intensify if the preponderant power no longer is considered a capable provider of security. The reasons for this can be both domestic, intra-alliance or international factors. In as such, regionalized cooperation works both to strengthen the alliance but also as a contingency plan if the broader alliance loses its function. Intra-alliance hedging therefore comprises an effort

to maintain the existing security arrangements as long as they are effective, but also as an alternative if the costs of the arrangement outweigh its benefits. Effective regionalization will enable more effective burden-sharing and a clearer division of labor. This will only be credible if it is anchored to a firm U.S. security guarantee. As such the gradual regionalization under the NATO framework is essentially the balance of power dynamics put in a system, underpinned by flexible offshore balancing of the preponderant power.

9.4 Future research

Emerging great power competition, redistribution of power towards Asia and a fourth industrial revolution concurrently at a time we need to tackle global problems to protect our global commons makes a daunting backdrop for decisionmakers attempting to chisel out appropriate strategic concepts. The U.S. grand strategy needs to be necessarily more restrained than what its allies has become acquainted to. As unearthed by this study, it is in Norway's and similar states' interests that the U.S. remains committed to the rules based order and maintains an international stabilizing role. Alternatively, if the U.S. becomes overwhelmed with either its domestic problems or the complex task of comprehending China's rise, contingency plans will be needed. Whatever situation emanates, fairer burden-sharing is a prerequisite and as this thesis proposes, accommodating regionalized approaches may prove the best option to preserve and strengthen the Euro-Atlantic security framework. In turn, this discovery offshoots multiple future inquiries that deserves further research, especially will topics regarding the viability of regional concepts and the impact of new technologies be important to bolster or revise the findings of this thesis.

The main argument against facilitating for increased regionalization has been the worry of it fragmenting NATO unity and diluting the commitment to collective defense. As this thesis has shown, there are strong indications that regionalization will continue as minilateral and regional arrangements are expanding both in numbers and in depth. Research on how these arrangements have or will impact the overall transatlantic security framework will be useful. Especially for researchers interested in Northern European security, the paradigmatic shifts in Swedish and Finnish foreign and security policy thinking and the subsequent impact on the Nordic balance and Nordic defense cooperation will be rewarding enquiries. Additionally, new technologies may challenge old and proven security policies and strategies. A core tenant in the Norwegian reassurance toolkit has been its self-imposed restraints on allied activity on Norwegian soil. With the technological advances in UAVs, aerial refueling and extended range of other capabilities, dependence on logistical support areas and forward operating bases may decrease. Studying how

these changes may alter the Norwegian ability to influence allied behavior and reassure Russia will be crucial. Specifically, examining if this changes operational patterns, how Norwegian decisionmakers best can accommodate this new reality and how this may be incorporated within existing or new arrangements will be fruitful endeavors.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Information letter and statement of consent

Informasjonsskriv for forskningsprosjektet:

«Small Power Realities in a Great Power Realm: Norwegian Adaptation to American Grand Strategy Adjustment from 2009.»

Tusen takk for at du setter av tid i en hektisk hverdag til å la deg intervjuet, det vil være til stor hjelp for denne masteroppgaven. Dette skrevet er ment å gi relevant informasjon om prosjektet, hvordan intervjuet gjennomføres og hvordan dine rettigheter og forskningsetiske retningslinjer ivaretas.

Oppgavens problemstilling er: *What explains American strategic adjustment initiated during the Obama-administration and how are Norwegian decision-makers adapting to meet the emerging security environment?*

Formål

Dette er en masteroppgave i internasjonale relasjoner. Prosjektets målsetting er todelt. Først ønsker jeg å forklare hva som ligger til grunn for amerikansk strategisk kursendring for å antyde hvordan denne kursen kommer til å se ut, her argumenteres det at både systemiske og innenrikske hensyn er avgjørende for å forstå amerikansk reorientering. Det andre målet er å klargjøre hvordan dette påvirker den norske sikkerhets situasjonen og hvordan beslutningstakere har tilpasset seg de nye sikkerhetspolitiske rammebetingelsene. Aktuelle hovedtemaer for intervjuene vil være hvordan amerikansk doktrine vil se ut og om dette rokker ved det transatlantiske sikkerhetsfelleskapet, hvordan Norge kan fremstå som en fortsatt relevant alliert og hvordan norske forsvarskonsept bør innrettes for å håndtere det fremtidige sikkerhetsbildet. Opplysningene innhentet under intervju vil kun brukes til dette formålet.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Student Tord Apalvik og forsker FFI/veileder Bjørn Olav Knutsen er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Hensikten med intervjuene er å innhente opplysninger fra personer som har særlig kompetanse på en tematikk i utvikling og som det ikke foreligger tilstrekkelig publisert kunnskap om. Det er en ambisjon å rekruttere deltakere fra både politisk ledelse, embetsverk, Forsvaret og UH-sektoren. Kjentegnet for samtlige deltakere er at de er autoriteter på sitt område. Det er ikke prosjektets hovedhensikt å diskutere forskjeller mellom informantene, men heller beskrive et helhetlig inntrykk av den sikkerhetspolitiske situasjonen.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Om du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer dette at du deltar på et intervju som omhandler norsk sikkerhetspolitikk, herunder alliansepolitikk, det transatlantiske samarbeidet i lys av stormaktsrivalisering og innenrikske forutsetninger. Spesielt interessant vil være tanker om hvordan det nåværende og fremtidige sikkerhetsbildet oppfattes, om og eventuelt hvordan norske beslutningstakere bør tilpasse seg dette bildet. Intervjuene er tiltenkt en maksimal varighet på en time, og planlegges digitalt for å begrense reise og sjansen for kontaktsmitte. Varighet kan selvfølgelig justeres ved behov. Det vil bli gjort lydopptak av intervjuet slik at informasjonen gjengis med best mulig presisjon, hvordan data og informanter behandles presiseres senere i dette skrevet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative

konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Om du skulle ønske å trekke deg fra prosjektet kan undertegnede kontaktes.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Jeg behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det vil bli gjort taleopptak av intervjuet slik at det kan bli transkribert på en måte som opprettholder informasjonens riktighet. For å sikre at ingen uvedkommende får tilgang til personopplysninger og data vil jeg i denne prosessen erstatte navn og kontaktopplysninger med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrig data. Ved ønske kan deltakere anonymiseres, om direktisitat benyttes vil jeg oversende forespørsel om tillatelse samt en sitatsjekk til den aktuelle deltakeren. For å sikre etterprøvbarhet og bevisekjede vil det være en navneliste av alle informanter i et vedlegg til oppgaven.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er juni 2022. Personopplysninger og innhentet informasjon destrueres etter prosjektslutt.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Nord universitet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Nord universitet ved student Tord Apalvik (+47 941 52 269/tord.apalvik@student.nord.no), veileder Bjørn Olav Knutsen (+47 957 72 805/bjorn.o.knutsen@nord.no) eller vårt personvernombud: Toril Kringen (personvernombud@nord.no)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Bjørn Olav Knutsen
(Sjeforsker FFI/Førstemanuensis II Nord universitet/veileder)

Tord Apalvik
(Masterstudent, Nord universitet)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Small Power Realities in a Great Power Realm*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju og at det gjøres taleopptak
- At opplysninger jeg gir kan brukes i tråd slik det fremkommer i dette informasjonsskrivet.
- at opplysninger jeg gir lagres og behandles frem til prosjektets slutt.

Samtykke bekreftes skriftlig via e-post.

Appendix B: Interview guide

Intervjuguide

Small Power Realities in a Great Power Realm: American Grand Strategy and Norwegian Adaptation since 2009.

Formalia

Navn:

Dato:

Stilling:

Kontaktinformasjon:

(Til intern bruk)

Samtykke

Gjenta informasjon vedr. samtykke, selv om den er blitt gitt over e-post.

Informasjon som innhentes i intervjuene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og i tråd med utsendt informasjonsskriv. Ved bruk av direktesitater vil informanter kontaktes for sitatsjekk/godkjenning.

Kontekst

For å sette rammene for et godt intervju, forklar informanten hva oppgaven omhandler, hvordan er den bygget opp og hva er formålet ved å gjennomføre intervju.

1) Oppvarmings- og kontekstsspørsmål

Hva jobber du med til daglig? Hva jobber du konkret med vedrørende norsk sikkerhetspolitikk og forholdet til USA?

Dagens situasjonsbilde

- Hvordan ville du beskrevet dagens internasjonale sikkerhetssituasjon sett med norske øyne?
- Hva synes du er det mest fremtredende og det som krever mest oppmerksomhet?
Stikkord: Kina som strategisk utfordrer, et mer fremoverlent Russland, Russisk-kinesisk samarbeid? Andre, underkommuniserte utfordringer?

2) Hoveddel

A: Amerikansk grand strategy

- Den amerikanske omdreiningen antyder endringer i amerikansk strategisk orientering, hvordan merker dere disse endringene? Hvis informanten skildrer endringer, spør når og hvordan man først la merke til det.
Stikkord: Pivot to Asia, no more forever wars, Exit-Afghanistan, forventes at Europa står mer på egne ben.
- I hvilken grad påvirker det innenrikske bildet utformingen og måloppnåelsen av amerikansk utenrikspolitikk?
- Hvordan påvirker den amerikanske innenrikssituasjonen forsvarssamarbeidet i NATO? Da tenker jeg kanskje spesielt på troverdigheten bak amerikansk garanti.
Stikkord: Politisk splittelse, strategisk kultur, soft power.

B: Norsk tilpasning

Utgangspunkt: Forsvaret av Norge, og innretningen av norsk sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitikken har siden andre verdenskrig vært basert på erkjennelsen av at sikkerhetsutfordringene Norge står overfor overgår det Norge vil være i stand til å håndtere alene, hvor det asymmetriske naboskapet med Russland den dimensjonerende enkeltfaktoren, således balansegangen mellom integrasjon og avskjerming vært en førende rettesnor i norsk forsvarsplanlegging.

- Hvordan balanserer man behovet for avskrekking og beroligelse i 2022 og fremover?
- I en verden der stormaktsrivalisering er økende blir mindre stater enda mindre?
- Hva betyr dette for Norge?
- Norge og USA har fremforhandlet en tilleggsavtale om forsvarssamarbeid («Supplementary Defence Cooperation Agreement» (SDCA), Et amerikansk initiativ. I «felles løft» fra 2015 anbefales det å investere mer i tilrettelegging for mottakelsen av alliert hjelp. Er denne tilleggsavtalen et steg i den retningen?
- Avtalen legger til grunn at den ikke skal gå på akkord med basepolitikken . . .
- Økt alliert øvingsaktivitet og tilstedeværelse i våre nærområder, samt kapasitetsstyrking som ny radar på Vardø, landforsvaret Finnmark, hvordan påvirker det balansen?
- Mtp. økt omfang av sammensatte og hybride virkemidler, er den tradisjonelle tankegangen om avskrekking og beroligelse fremdeles effektiv?
- Etter den kalde krigen ble deltakelse i internasjonale operasjoner den viktigste valutaen for å vise alliansesolidaritet og få innpass i Washington. Med et USA som ser mer til Asia, kan man anta at nordmenn og europeere deltar aktivt med bidrag der eller «holder det» om de har orden i eget hus?
- Hvordan kan man fremstå som en god alliert i 2022 og fremover?
Stikkord: Etterretningskapasitet, styrkebidrag, special competences?

C: Utvikling av det norske forsvarskonseptet

- Økt bilateralisering? Regionalisering innad i NATO, f.eks en tydeligere utvikling og formalisering av «the Northern Group», framework nations concept, JEF og lignende konstellasjoner (NATO 2030). Kan sikre deltakelse i «fornuftige utenlandsoperasjoner + tidlig alliert hjelp i en væpnet konflikt-
- Andre alternativer? (Nordisk) (Europeisk strategisk autonomi og EU compass, PESCO/NATO smart defense).
- Hva skal til for å sikre norsk forsvarsevne hvis man har en ambisjon om å bidra i internasjonal krisehåndtering samtidig?
- Tidligere erfaringer: Kosovo, Afghanistan, Irak. Hvilke lærdommer har vi lært?

3) Avslutning

Vi er straks ved veis ende, er det noen andre forhold du har tenkt på underveis eller noe du synes er viktig som du ønsker å legge til?

Tusen takk for praten! Er det anledning å ta kontakt på senere tidspunkt for å forsikre seg om man har oppfattet deg riktig, samt eventuell sitatsjekk.

*Påminn intervjuobjekt om rettigheter og fortell om veien videre

Appendix C: Respondent overview

Rolf Tamnes, professor emeritus at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. Served as Director of the Norwegian Institute of Defense Studies from 1996 to 2012 and chaired the government-appointed expert commission on Norwegian Security and Defense Policy in 2015.

Rune Jakobsen, Lieutenant General (Retired) and previous commander of the Norwegian Joint Headquarters (2015-2021), Chief of the Norwegian Army (2013-2015) and National Contingent Commander in Afghanistan (2006-2007).

Kai Eide, Norwegian diplomat. Norwegian ambassador to NATO (2002-2006) and OSCE (1998-2002). Previous U.N. Special Envoy to Kosovo, Special Representative to Afghanistan and Head of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

Odd-Harald Hagen, Major General and Defense Attaché to U.S. and Canada, at the Norwegian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Head of the Department for Defence Policy and Long Term Planning in the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Defence (2016-2021) and Chairman of the NATO Army Armaments Group (2013-2017).

Svein Efstad, Policy director, Norwegian Ministry of Defense since 2013. Director General for Security Policy at the Norwegian MoD from 1995 to 2013. Joined the Norwegian Delegation to NATO from 1986-1990.

NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

Vurdering

Referansenummer

267469

Prosjekttittel

Small Power Realities in A Great Power Realm: Norwegian Adaptation to American Grand Strategy Adjustment since 2009.

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Nord Universitet / Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap / Internasjonale relasjoner, nordområder og miljø

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Bjørn Olav Knutsen, bjorn.o.knutsen@nord.no, tlf: 95772805

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Tord Apalvik, tord.apalvik@student.nord.no, tlf: 94152269

Prosjektperiode

01.01.2022 - 20.05.2022

Vurdering (1)

06.01.2022 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 06.01.2022, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og Personverntjenester. Behandlingen kan starte.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 20.05.2022.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

Personverntjenester vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om: lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen

formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål

dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet

lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Personverntjenester vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18) og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Nettskjema.no er databehandler i prosjektet. Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til Personverntjenester ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

<https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fyll-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema> Du må vente på svar fra NSD for endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Personverntjenester vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson hos Personverntjenester: Anne Lene L. Nymoen
Lykke til med prosjektet!