Istituto Affari Internazionali

IAI TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2019

The New Great Power Game. Transatlantic Relations and Multipolar Competition

CONFERENCE ROOM: SALA NIGRA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
ROME, 28 OCTOBER 2019

IN COOPERATION WITH

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

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AGENDA

9.00-9:15 - INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Armando Barucco, Head, Policy Planning Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rome

9:15-10:30 - UNITED STATES

The session will analyse the current trajectory of US foreign policy and trace it to its domestic and international roots. It will take stock of the debate about US interests and role in the world in America's foreign policy circles. It will consider the role of Europe in US foreign policy and the possible scenarios of development of America's relations with the European countries.

Chair — **Ettore Greco**, Executive Vice-President and Head, Global Governance and Multilateralism Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Papergiver — **Ian Lesser**, Vice-President, German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels office

10:30-10:45 - COFFEE BREAK

10:45-12:00 - EUROPE

The session will analyse the foreign policy challenges confronting Europe – including both EU member states and institutions – and trace them back to domestic, institutional (e.g. at the EU level), and international factors. It will take stock of the debate about Europe's role as an international player in European foreign policy circles. It will consider the role of the US in the foreign policy of the EU and its member states and consider the degree to which Europe can achieve strategic autonomy.

Chair — **Nicoletta Pirozzi,** Institutional Relations Manager; Head, EU Politics and Institutions Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Papergiver — **Riccardo Alcaro**, Research Coordinator and Head, Global Actors Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

12:00-13:00 - Special Session: NATO

This shorter session will look at how domestic trends at the transatlantic level and systemic changes at the global level affect NATO's ability to define a common agenda and act upon that. The session will delve into the debate in the US and Europe about the interests the US and European NATO members have in the Alliance, the purpose they believe the Alliance should serve, the objective it should pursue, and the actions it should take.

Chair	**Alessandro Marrone**, Head, Defence Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome
Papergiver	**Sinan Ülgen**, Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Europe, Brussels

13:00-14:15 - Lunch

14:15-15:30 - China

The session will analyse the current trajectory of China's foreign policy and trace it to its domestic and international roots. It will take stock of the debate about China's interests and role in the world and consider China's view of both the US and Europe. It will assess the ability of the US and Europe to define common interests with regard to China and identify areas of possible transatlantic coordination and cooperation.

Chair	**Nicola Casarini**, Senior Asia Fellow, Global Actors Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome
Papergiver	**Alice Ekman**, Senior Asia Analyst at the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), Paris, and CSCAP-EU Coordinator

15:30-15:45 - Coffee break

15:45-17:00 - RUSSIA

The session will analyse the current trajectory of Russia's foreign policy and trace it to its domestic and international roots. It will take stock of the debate about Russia's interests and role in the world and consider Russia's view of both the US and Europe. It will assess the ability of the US and Europe to define common interests with regard to Russia and identify areas of possible transatlantic coordination and cooperation.

Chair	**Nona Mikhelidze**, Head, Eurasia and Eastern Europe Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome
Papergiver	**Sabine Fischer**, Co-Team Leader of the Public Diplomacy EU and Russia Project, Moscow

17:00-17:15 - CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nathalie Tocci, Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali, and Special Advisor to High Representative/Vice President of the Commission Federica Mogherini

Con contributo del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale ai sensi dell'art. 23- bis del DPR 18/1967

Transatlantic Security Symposium 2019

The New Power Game. Transatlantic Relations and Multipolar Competition

Workshop wrap-up

Background

Throughout the course of 70 years, Americans and Europeans have been able to find common ground and overcome their recurring divergences. Transatlantic resilience derives from the structural solidity of the grand bargain underlying the relationship. The European nations have accepted to enter an asymmetric alliance in which they play the role of loyal followers in exchange for the US guaranteeing the European order – mainly through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) – and supporting international regimes in which Europe enjoys a privileged position. Shared historical experiences as well as commonality of liberal-democratic regimes have turned a pragmatic partnership into a normative bond. However, recent shifts in the domestic politics of both the US and Europe and the international system have jolted the relationship and hampered the finding of common ground. On the domestic level, nationalist forces in both America and Europe espousing an exclusivist view of sovereignty and largely sceptical of long-term international commitments and alliances have gained increasing political legitimacy. On the systemic level, China depicts itself as the trailblazer of a development path independent from Western power, and Russia challenges to Western normative and geopolitical power in such areas as Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Cooperation and sponsorship

The 11th edition of the Transatlantic Security Symposium, the annual Rome forum on transatlantic security organised by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), has provided experts and officials with an off-the-record platform to discuss the main issues in the transatlantic agenda in this age of increasing multipolar competition. IAI organised the workshop in close cooperation with the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), which contributed to the definition of the agenda and the outreach to the participants, and provided one of its conference rooms as venue for the meeting. MAECI also supported the initiative financially. Other sponsoring institutions included two private foundations, the Compagnia di San Paolo and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Rome Office), as well as the Embassy of the United States to Italy. All aforementioned institutions have been regular supporters of the Transatlantic Security Symposium since its inception in 2008.

The participants

Over the years, IAI has presided over the gradual evolution of the Transatlantic Security Symposium from a conference of experts with limited participation by officials into a more traditional track 1.5 exercise involving a roughly equivalent number of scholars/think tankers and officials. The experts who attended the 11th edition came from a variety of countries, including France, Germany, Russia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. Officials included the Heads of Policy Planning within the Foreign Ministries of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, the UK, the EU, NATO, as well as a Staff Member of the Policy Planning Unit of the US Department of State, and an official from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). For further information, please check the attached list of participants.

The seminar

The Transatlantic Security Symposium 2019 discussed the nature and direction of the transatlantic relationship within the broader global picture of rising nationalism and increasing geopolitical competition. The workshop broke down into four main sessions – on the US, Europe, China and Russia – and featured a special session on NATO. In order to have the diplomats to engage in a frank and open debate, IAI applied a strict confidentiality policy. No public record of the workshop exists, with the exception of the short papers presented and discussed during the event, which are in the process of being published in IAI's various outlets.

The **first session** analysed the current trajectory of US foreign policy and traced it to its domestic and international roots. A presentation by the contributor of the background paper, **Ian Lesser**, Vice-President of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), started off the discussion. The first instinct in Brussels and elsewhere, Lesser noted, was to ask how Europe might effectively engage with a new and unconventional president. This approach rapidly gave way to a mood of frustration, resignation and a sense that European leaders (leaders in Poland and a few other capitals excepted) would do better to wait for change in Washington. This has now given rise to concern that some aspects of the Trump presidency may be structural and could outlast his term in office, however long. A Democratic victory in 2020 would surely make a difference. Yet, longer-term concerns about China and the potential for a rapid shift to Asia are likely a reality under any political scenario. The prospects for a "reset" are mixed, not least because others have adjusted their policies. A reset will need to be mirrored in Beijing, Moscow, Tehran and elsewhere. That said, the impulses of future American administrations are likely to be less instinctively unilateral, even if the need for reform of the multilateral order America built and led is now widely acknowledged. More troubling is the risk that the world has moved on to a more fragmented, nationalistic and adversarial footing in which American power is no longer the key variable in global stability.

The **second session** analyses the foreign policy challenges confronting Europe – including both EU member states and institutions – and traced them back to domestic, institutional (e.g. at the EU level), and international factors. A presentation by **Riccardo Alcaro**, Research Coordinator and Head of the Global Actors Programme at IAI, started off the debate. Alcaro concurred that even under a more forthcoming presidency than Trump's, Europe's reliance on the United States for its stability and international influence will continue to confront it with difficult trade-offs. Europe's recently stated ambition to pursue strategic autonomy has thus turned into a matter of necessity.

Autonomy does not mean detachment from the United States, but rather involves an ability to leverage diplomatic, economic, military and societal assets to seek a more balanced transatlantic relationship, whereby Washington would incur high costs in neglecting Europe's interests. Above all, it implies a global repositioning aimed at generating patterns of selective cooperation – formalised and long-term when possible, otherwise based on contingencies. In other words, Europe will need to triangulate with other powers to defend its interests in European stability, Middle Eastern security, climate change governance, global trade sustainability and the endurance of multilateral institutions even in the absence of, or in the face of opposition from, the United States.

The **special session** looked at how domestic trends at the transatlantic level and systemic changes at the global level affect NATO's ability to define a common agenda and act upon that. A presentation by **Sinan Ülgen**, Visiting Scholar with Carnegie Europe, started off the debate. Ülgen argued that the evolving external threat environment is impacting the internal political dynamics of NATO nations and is accentuating a series of already existing trends – differences in threat perceptions, burden sharing difficulties, challenges to respond to sub threshold threats and the rise of populism – which altogether affect the cohesiveness and potentially the effectiveness of the alliance. NATO's operational future over the next decades will be shaped by the ingenuity of the transatlantic leadership to develop new arrangements of institutional cooperation between the Alliance and the burgeoning forms of the "coalition of the willing". The Alliance should nonetheless remain as the main transatlantic political forum given Brexit but the rising need for a common political response to the many challenges ranging from migration to failed states.

The **third session** analysed the current trajectory of China's foreign policy and trace it to its domestic and international roots. A presentation by **Alice Ekman**, Senior Asia Analyst at the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), started off the debate. Ekman made a number of points concerning China's foreign policy. The first concerned the rapprochement between China and Russia, defined as a multi-layered partnership that has evolved well further than just a marriage of convenience, as it now involves military-to-military exchanges, cooperation within multilateral institutions, and an ideational affinity based on the opposition to Western normative discourses. The second concerned China's ambition to promote new security architectures, concepts and norms, in that it has established novel institutions in Central Asia and East Asia, attempted a redefinition of concepts such as human rights and terrorism, as well as championed opposition to the responsibility to protect norm inasmuch as it translates into regime change policies. The third regarded China's attempts to promote a rapprochement with Europe in the context of prolonged, deepening tensions with the US on trade, technological and geostrategic issues. China has reached out to Europe by emphasising the reciprocal interest in keeping global trade open and cooperating on such issues as climate change, the Iran nuclear deal and multilateral regimes. However, China may have well overreached with its ambition to extent the Belt and Road Initiative to Europe and make Chinese technology a cornerstone of Europe's 5G networks.

The **fourth session** analysed the current trajectory of Russia's foreign policy and trace it to its domestic and international roots. A presentation by **Sabine Fischer**, Co-Team Leader of the Public Diplomacy EU and Russia Project, started off the debate. She recalled that Russia's annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas pushed Russian hegemonic ambitions in the neighbourhood to the extreme, disrupted relations with the EU and the US and boosted the importance of the two other key dimensions of Russian foreign policy, the Middle East and particularly China/Asia. Russia

has shifted its attention to relations with the EU to member states it considers Russia-friendly, and to right wing populist and Eurosceptic political movements in various other member states. Moscow has extended the use of instruments previously applied to post-Soviet neighbours, such as the promotion of propaganda through Russian media, interference with election campaigns, cyber-attacks etc., to the EU. Russia's sharp turn away from the West in 2014 would not have happened, had it not been for the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the West's reaction to it. At the same time, however, the 2014 events accelerated and amplified underlying trends, which have become further engrained in Russian foreign policy since. In other words, Russia should not be expected to want to "return to the West" any time soon.

Con il contributo del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale ai sensi dell'art. 23- bis del DPR 18/196.

Europe's struggle in the fraying transatlantic order

Riccardo Alcaro

Research Coordinator and Head of the Global Actors Programme at the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) of Rome.

For almost two decades, foreign policy experts have been talking about the emergence of a world no longer characterised by the unchallenged power – hard and soft alike – of the United States. The shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world is widely regarded as the result of the growing economic prowess of non-Western countries, most notably the new economic superpower China, and the inability of America's foreign policy establishment to forge an internal consensus around a grand strategy informed with the need to adapt to and shape the systemic changes underway. US foreign policy has thus undergone a period of ever wider oscillations, which has had the effect of emboldening America's rivals and disorienting its allies. The 2016 election of Donald Trump, the first post-war president to openly question the wisdom of US global engagement and the strategic value of alliances, has added to the confusion. Before Trump, the debate revolved around how to reconfigure a US-based system of alliances. With Trump, the question has shifted to whether the US system of alliances is about to fade due to a lack of domestic support.

A shift in US global posture would massively affect Europe, which counts many of America's longest-standing allies and has for decades existed in a geopolitical order underpinned by American power.[1] The combination of disaggregating factors both on the systemic and the domestic level may indeed stretch thin the proverbially resilient transatlantic bond. The Europeans should by no means take this outcome as a given. However, the assumption that the costs of Europe's subordination to America may soon outweigh the benefits should inform a comprehensive effort at strengthening European diplomatic, security, defence and regulatory resources. Europe should still pursue a rebalanced transatlantic relationship, yet this should be part of a broader, and independent, process of bolstering the strategic autonomy it needs to play the multipolar game.

America's dual function in and for Europe

Seen from Europe, the transatlantic relationship has remained stable over the years largely because America has never stopped performing a twofold function.

First, the United States has been the guarantor of European security, as part of a broader transatlantic order, since the late 1940s.[2] 'Order' involves a system of interstate relations characterised by predictable patterns of behaviour, wherein deviance has become socially

[1] Erwan Lagadec, *Transatlantic Relations in the 21st Century. Europe, America and the Rise of the Rest*, London: Routledge. 2012; Jussi M. Hanhimäki, Benedikt Schoenborn and Barbara Zanchetta, T*ransatlantic Relations since 1945. An introduction*, London: Routledge, 2012.

[2] Luis Simon, *The Spectre of a Westphalian Europe?*, White Hall Paper 90, London: Taylor and Francis, 2018.

costly and ultimately unfeasible (if not in isolated contingencies) due to the correcting interventions by an ordering, that is, hierarchical, power.[3] As such ordering power, the United States has proved more effective than the supposedly self-correcting balance of power that preceded its involvement in Europe.[4] America's military and economic might has been critical in achieving as much, yet hard power and cash are just part of the story. The United States has undercut the logic of the European balance of power also by supporting the creation of normative-institutional frameworks that have provided for peaceful conflict resolution and joint action, most notably the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the successive iterations of what is now the European Union (EU). Encouragement of European integration and especially participation in NATO and the mutual defence clause contained therein has lent America's hegemonic position in Europe a thick layer of legitimacy.[5]

Second, the United States has been an amplifier of European international influence. The European states have long lost the capacity to project power globally and yet, courtesy of the United States, have retained significant influence through often-privileged positions within multilateral bodies and regimes set up and promoted by Washington. Attesting to this is America's acceptance of Europe's over-representation in the United Nations Security Council, with France and the United Kingdom enjoying the status of permanent members; the International Monetary Fund, where the Europeans hold disproportionate voting powers and even retain an unwritten right to appoint the director general; as well as the Group of Seven (G7), which counts four European countries plus the EU. America's championing of liberalism has been another critical source of Europe's lingering influence in international institutions and regimes. The dominance of Western normative discourse, with its emphasis on individual rights, representative democracy, secularism and free markets, has constantly forced other countries to adapt to a value-system over which the Americans and the Europeans have held almost uncontested monopoly, especially since communism, the one alternative with global reach, collapsed.[6]

Such benefits have not been cost-free, for European nations have agreed to enter an asymmetrical relationship that constrains their ability to act as fully sovereign countries. Shared historical experiences, common cultural heritage, deep societal links and convergence of political regimes have turned an interest-based pragmatic partnership into a normative bond, thereby making it easier for the Europeans to swallow their pride. This sense of common belonging, with all the strategic implications that have come with it, has been the ultimate source of the resilience of transatlantic relations, providing at the same time for the depth and elasticity necessary to endure shocks.[7]

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[3] David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations: Authority, Sovereignty, and the New Structure of World Politics*, San Diego: UCSD, 2006.

[4] Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945. From "Empire" by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[5] Ib.; Lawrence S. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United. The Evolution of an Alliance*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004.

[6] G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

[7] Jeffrey J. Anderson, G. John Ikenberry and Thomas Risse, (eds), *The End of the West? Crises and Change in the Atlantic Order*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Europe at the dawn of the multipolar age

The 'grand bargain' outlined above held quite well during the Cold War, but gradually loss in solidity in the years thereafter. With the United States looking east to Asia-Pacific, where China's rise was getting steam, and to the Middle East, especially after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, Europe lost centrality as a strategic theatre.[8] The unbalanced nature of the relationship thus became more apparent, as the Europeans were increasingly called upon to support an American foreign policy that not always served their own interests.[9] The Europeans could diverge from the United States and even clash with it occasionally, most notably over the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but were unable, and actually unwilling, to decouple from it.[10]

Attempts at re-creating a sense of reciprocal commitment were made, in particular under the Barack Obama administration. Early in his presidency Obama determined that that the best way to preserve US leadership in a world in which other 'poles' – rivals such as China and Russia but also partners such as Europe – were gaining ground involved promotion of co-ownership of global problems.[11] This had important implications for Europe. The old calculus that NATO and the EU served the purpose of preventing intra-European tensions from turning into geopolitical conflict, with an emphasis on checking German power, seemed no longer relevant. The American interest was now cast in a Europe made strong by close alignment between EU institutions and member states, especially the three main powers Britain, France and Germany. America's interest in cooperating with Europe became thus more directly proportional to what Europe could contribute to economic and multipolar stability.

The Europeans discursively embraced this view of the world and transatlantic relations. In the 2016 European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) they emphasised the need to develop Europe's 'strategic autonomy'.[12] However, transatlantic convergence continued to be central to Europe achieving, or not achieving, its most pressing goals. For instance, the Franco-German-led Normandy framework set up to broker peace in Ukraine, from which the United States was conspicuous for its absence, only produced a weak ceasefire. The Europeans were also unable to turn the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, into a platform for comprehensive engagement with Iran, largely

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[8] Ivo Daalder, "The end of Atlanticism", *Survival*, 45, 2, 2003, p. 147–165.

[9] David Pryce-Jones, "Bananas are the beginning: The looming war between America and Europe", Na*tional Review*, 5, 6, 1999, p. 34–36; Helga Haftendorn, "How Well Can Europe and the United States Cooperate on Non-European Issues?", in G. Lundestad (ed.), *Just Another Major Crisis? The United States and Europe since 2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 137-158; Lindberg 2005 Lindberg, T. (2005), "The Atlanticist Community", in T. Lindberg (ed.), Beyond Paradise and Power: Europe, America and the Future of a Troubled Relationship, London, New York: Routledge, p. 215-236; Tod Lindberg, "The Atlanticist Community", in T. Lindberg (ed.), *Beyond Paradise and Power: Europe, America and the Future of a Troubled Relationship*, London, New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 215-236.

[10] Michael Ignatieff, "The American Empire; the burden", *The New York Times*, 5 January 2003; Christopher Layne and Bradley A. Thayer, *American Empire. A Debate*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007; Patrick Porter, *A World Imagined. Nostalgia and the Liberal Order*, Policy Analysis 843, Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 5 June 2018.

[11] Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Bending History. Barack Obama's Foreign Policy*, Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2013; Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine", *The Atlantic*, April 2016.

[12] *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy*, Brussels: High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission.

because the United States did not back their efforts. Even the Paris Agreement on climate change was more the result of a US-China understanding than European action. In other words, the Europeans struggled to translate the greater leeway the Americans were willing to give them into actual autonomy. Transatlantic relations may have looked more balanced under Obama, but in fact they were simply looser. Beneath the surface the logic of European followership continued to play out. This would bode ill when domestic politics added to systemic changes to jolt the relationship.

The Obama years, especially his first term, largely coincided with two major economic shocks, the Great Recession (which had global dimensions but originated from and impacted most heavily the US economy) and the ensuing eurozone crisis. In the meantime, migration flows towards Europe, originating from or transiting through a Middle East thrown into disarray by political upheavals and civil conflicts, increased massively. This ultimately cemented the perception that governments were unable to keep control of the borders as they had been of the economy. These two broad structural phenomena created the conditions for a narrative of individual and national disempowerment by unaccountable 'globalist' elites to get centre stage in both Europe and America. Channelled through and amplified by social media, this narrative fuelled widespread resentment towards established parties, mainstream media, and expert (even scientific) opinion. Open contestation of existing orders at home and internationally, and extreme polarisation in politics, followed.

The anti-establishment wave hit Europe first, with anti-EU forces gaining ground across the continent and eventually scoring a colossal victory in the referendum that sanctioned Britain's prospective exit from the EU. Yet the Brexit referendum has so far remained an isolated success of anti-EU forces. The impact of the nationalist agenda has been diluted due to the parliamentary system of most EU countries, whereby executives rely on coalitions and individual parties rarely have the ability to shape government action as they please. Even where they have prevailed, anti-establishment forces have had to factor in their societies' broad internalisation of EU membership, as well as the negative political and economic repercussions of an abrupt break from EU institutions, the single market or the eurozone.

Of far bigger consequences has been the election of Trump, an unconventional politician championing an aggressive America First agenda, as president of such an economic, technological and military Behemoth as the United States. Instinctively persuaded that global politics is a zero-sum game, Trump contends that the United States has failed to make use of its superior power to extract better terms from its international interlocutors. He has been particularly scathing of those international arrangements that most closely follow the logic of absolute gains so dear to liberals: alliances and trade regimes. Clearly, Trump's worldviews and specifically his deep scepticism towards America's international long-term commitments bear heavily on the transatlantic relationship. Both aforementioned functions America has performed for seventy years – guaranteeing Europe's order and amplifying Europe's international influence – are in question.

The prospect of a bipolar West

The United States is unlikely to abandon Europe altogether. There is still widespread, if tepid, support for the transatlantic alliance in Congress, the Departments of State and Defence (which appreciate the alliance with the Europeans because it contributes to containing Russia

and project power into the Middle East and Africa), the media and public opinion.[13] However, no amount of lobbying from policymakers, diplomats or senior officers is likely to change Trump's mind about European free riding on US security guarantees. Trump sees alliances not as partnerships based on shared interests and values, but as transactional deals in which weak countries pay for American protection. The decades-old question of uneven burden-sharing in NATO – with the United States now accounting for around seventy percent of the alliance's cumulative defence spending – has thus turned from an inter-allied irritation into an almost existential question.

With Trump, the US calculus has apparently gone back to the old objective of keeping German power in check, although both the rationale of that objective and the related strategy have changed radically.[14] It is not Germany's long-gone ability to threaten its neighbours militarily that concerns the US president, but its trade surplus with the United States. If trade deficits are a threat in themselves, the differences between rivals and allies, such as China and Germany, get blurred, while the similarities shine out. The deforming effect of Trump's mercantilist lenses goes beyond turning the solidly Atlanticist post-war Germany into a global competitor of the United States. It also extends to what Trump sees as an instrument for amplifying German commercial power, namely the EU – 'basically a vehicle for Germany', as the US president once said.[15]

Against this backdrop, it is just natural that Trump sees no advantage in supporting Euro-Atlantic frameworks, especially the EU. On the contrary, he would have America's balancing function against the resurgence of intra-European geopolitical tensions recrafted as a way to keep the Europeans divided – and thus easier to control and play off against one another. In these terms, Trump's constant bashing of the liberal-leaning, pro-EU government of German Chancellor Angela Merkel is consistent with his view that Britain should seek a clear break from the EU, so that the United States may engage London in trade negotiations from an overwhelming position of strength.[16] Trump's recurring criticisms of Europe's management of migration flows follows the same logic, as he is aware that opposition to immigration is the greatest catalyst of voters' support for Eurosceptic forces across Europe. The more the 'populist surge' – as Trump's unofficial ideologue Steve Bannon likes to call it[17] – consolidates in such places as Austria, Hungary, Poland and even once Euro-enthusiast Italy, the more difficult EU governance becomes, and the harder it is for Europe to count internationally.

The fact that an openly anti-EU view has gained enough traction in the United States for a president to feel perfectly comfortable to espouse it publicly – in one occasion Trump said that "the EU was set up to take advantage of the US" in another he labelled it as a "foe"[18]– indicates an acceleration in the fraying of the identity links that underpin a security

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[13] Bruce Stokes, *NATO's Image Improves on Both Sides of the Atlantic*, Pew Reseaerch Center, 23 May 2017; Margaret Talev, Lyubov Pronina, Patrick Donahue, and Nikos Chrysolaras, "U.S. Congress Backs Alliance in Message to Trump", Bloomberg, 11 July 2018.

[14] Nahal Toosi, "'Why Germany?' Trump's strange fixation vexes experts", *Politico*, 11 July 2018.

[15] John Nichols, "Donald Trump Is Picking a Fight with Germany – and It Will Not End Well", *The Nation*,30 May 2017; Henry Mance, Shawn Donnan and James Shotter, "Donald Trump takes swipe at EU as 'vehicle for Germany'", *Financial Times*, 17 January 2017.

[16] Demetri Sevastopulo, Henry Mance and Jim Pickard, "Trump says Brexit blueprint likely to 'kill' any UK-US trade deal", *Financial Times*, 13 July 2018.

[17] Nicholas Farrell, "'I'm fascinated by Mussolini'", *Spectator*, 14 March 2018.

[18] Gabriela Galindo, "Trump: EU was 'set up to take advantage' of US", *Politico*, 28 June 2018; Cat Contiguglia, Contiguglia, "Trump: EU is one of United States' biggest foes", *Politico*, 15 July 2018.

community.[19] As the security community fades, the transformation of the transatlantic bond into a set of transactional relations between individual countries and the United States becomes a plausible scenario.

Trump's nationalist agenda is also hardly compatible with America continuing to perform the function of amplifying European international influence. Given the degree of economic interpenetration – with massive bilateral investment and trade – the United States has only to gain from solid growth rates in Europe.[20] This remains true even under a president whose worldviews are so crudely Hobbesian as Trump. What Trump is fixated on is not impoverishing the Europeans, as loosening the link between Europe's wealth and power. As the EU provides the Europeans with a platform from which they can engage with the United States on a more equal basis – especially on issues related to trade and regulatory standards – and speak with one voice in such bodies as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), again a confrontational approach, spiced up with a dose of divide-and-rule tactic, becomes an appealing option. This is the rationale behind Trump's decision to adopt tariffs – on national security grounds, no less – on imports of steel and aluminium from the EU, as well as the additional measures taken after the WTO authorised Washington to seek compensation for losses due to Europe's subsidies to aerospace company Airbus.

While tariffs are certainly harmful to European economies, doubts abound about their effectiveness, or even about them becoming the cornerstone of the US trade policies towards Europe. The infatuation with tariffs seems pretty much a personal fixation of Trump that the next president might set aside. More damaging for Europe in the longer term is Trump's deep-rooted hostility towards legally binding trade rules, whether they are set at the multilateral level such as the WTO or at the regional level. While support for free trade remains the majority view in the United States, scepticism is widespread enough to be a permanent feature of the national political debate.[21]

The EU benefits from trade deals because it is the one policy area where the size of its market puts it above most of its interlocutors and on a par with major players such as the United States and China. The single market allows the EU to gain better access to foreign markets in trade negotiations. Above all, it works as a powerful magnet attracting imports from all over the world, whereby other countries have an incentive to comply with EU regulatory standards. The latter are also a way to partly offset the growing influence that massive liquidity provides China with, which creates a temptation for the Europeans to welcome Chinese investments in Europe or participate in Chinese-led financial institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. If the United States loses interest in supporting multilateral trade regimes and reverts to narrow bilateralism, the EU will find it more difficult to participate in standard-setting processes from a position of strength and will also become more vulnerable to China's economic penetration.

A further problem for the Europeans is that the weakening commitment to multilateral regimes Trump's America is proudly displaying extends well beyond trade. America's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement complicates European plans in global warming

[19] Thomas Risse, "The Transatlantic Security Community: Erosion from Within?", in R. Alcaro, J. Peterson and E. Greco (eds), *The West and the Global Power Shift. Transatlantic Relations and Global Governance*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 21-42.

[20] AmCham EU, *Transatlantic Economy 2018*, http://www.amchameu.eu/publications/transatlantic-economy-2018.

[21] Robert J. Blendon, Logan S. Casey and John M. Benson, "Public Opinion and Trump's Jobs and Trade Policies", *Challenges*, 60, 3, 2017, p. 228-244.

governance. The EU's ambition to lead by example may attain very little if the world's second emitter of greenhouse gases does not play by the same rules the other countries play by, not least because that will ultimately create a general incentive to derogate from multilaterally accepted norms. The situation is even worse when it comes to security governance, an area where European assets – diplomacy, trade and economic benefits, development aid etc. – are often insufficient to effect breakthroughs in crisis management if US hard power does not complement them. The Iran nuclear deal provides an eloquent example of how the lack of transatlantic convergence undercuts European foreign policy efforts. The JCPOA, a triumph of transatlantic cooperative crisis management and to date still the EU's main foreign policy success, serves Europe's interest in Middle Eastern security and non-proliferation.[22] By leaving the nuclear, President Trump has thus done the Europeans great harm. Worse still, the US administration has forced the Europeans to fall in line by threatening to punish EU banks and companies willing to do business with Iran with fines and other restrictions to their US-based activities (the so-called 'secondary sanctions' targeting foreign companies).[23]

In the ultimate analysis, the US president is contesting the very notion of global governance and cooperative crisis management. His view is that the United States needs not coordinate its policy objectives with its traditional allies, and that ultimately governance itself is detrimental to America. As a Trump administration official put it, the US president "doesn't believe that the US should be part of any alliance at all", be it for defence or governance purposes. Rather, he is convinced that "permanent destabilisation creates American advantage".[24] The wisdom of such an assumption is very much doubtful, but certainly the United States is better positioned to navigate a world in permanent disarray than the Europeans are.[25] The EU can only thrive in a rules-based international order, and the Europeans have traditionally relied on America to provide the hard power needed for that order to function, however imperfectly and irregularly.[26] It is from this sober conclusion that the Europeans should start reconsidering their role in a multipolar world. Trump's America makes the EU's ambition to achieve strategic autonomy a more urgent and also a more fundamental task.

Europe in a multipolar world

The pursuit of strategic autonomy involves that the Europeans strive to re-balance the relationship with the United States – which remains absolutely critical, even if looser than in the past – while seeking 'triangulations', whereby Europe shifts its alignment with this or that global player depending on the issue at hand.[27] This approach involves a Europe willing and able to play the multipolar game with both partners such as the United States and systemic

[22] Riccardo Alcaro, *Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis. Lead Groups and EU Foreign Policy-Making*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

[23] *The Economist*, "The effect on European companies of American sanctions on Iran", 17 May 2018.

[24] Jeffrey Goldberg, "A Senior White House Official Defines the Trump Doctrine: 'We're America, Bitch'", *The Atlantic*, 11 June 2018.

[25] Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *America Abroad: The United States' Global Role in the 21st Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

[26] Riccardo Alcaro, "The Paradoxes of the Liberal Order. Transatlantic Relations and Security Governance", in R. Alcaro, J. Peterson and E. Greco (eds), *The West and the Global Power Shift. Transatlantic Relations and Global Governance*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 197-219.

[27] Riccardo Alcaro, "Contestation and Transformation. Final Thoughts on the Liberal International Order", *The International Spectator*, 53, 1, 2018, p. 152-167.

competitors, namely Russia and China, to safeguard its core interests: the defence of Europe, the integrity of the EU single market, a stable neighbourhood and the endurance of a rules-based multilateral system.

The greatest obstacle to Europe's strategic autonomy is the inability to provide for its own defence. There is simply no prospect, either now or in the foreseeable future, for the EU to turn itself into a military power. Europe will thus continue to rely on US security guarantees. As said above, Trump is relatively isolated in Washington in thinking that the alliance with the Europeans is a dispensable burden for the United States. The Europeans should therefore intercept America's lingering interest in the transatlantic alliance (and in keeping forces deployed overseas in friendly countries) to make the United States much more sensitive to European interests.

Greater military contributions to Europe's defence and security, specifically in the context of the EU, is key to the success of this effort. The development of greater military assets would win the Europeans credibility to make the case to key American audiences – in the administration and Congress alike – that the transatlantic relationship is worth investing in. Stronger cooperation in defence matters would also strengthen intra-EU cohesion, whereby the Europeans would gain a layer of protection from America using its military ties with individual EU member states to pursue divide-and-rule tactics. To their credit, EU leaders have recently taken decisions to improve defence cooperation within and along the EU, but the practical impact of these measures is likely to be modest. The Europeans will have to do more if they want to rebalance their relationship with the United States to carve out and cement a larger room for their strategically autonomous action.

The role of US power is also critical for the sustainability of Europe's approach towards Russia, which entails both confrontation and a binding strategy. In spite of Trump's personal inclination to seek friendly ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin, antagonism towards Moscow has grown in the United States. The Europeans can thus still count on a lingering desire by US authorities and politicians to contribute to their efforts to contain Russia's influence and counter Putin's plans to exacerbate intra-European divisions through military intimidation, cyberattacks, trade restrictions, information warfare, and support for Eurosceptic forces.[28] The Europeans have sought – and so far, obtained – firmer deterrence commitments by the United States. Trump aside, the US foreign policy establishment looks favourably at Europe's attempts to provide Ukraine with financial and diplomatic help, as well as at its continued extension of an EU-wide sanctions regime against Russia. Even if transatlantic cooperation on Russia has diminished under Trump, there remains thus much room for potential convergence.

Meanwhile, the Europeans have also sought an engagement with Russia separately from the United States, injecting an element of a binding strategy into their approach. For instance, they have managed to bring more discipline, and therefore predictability, into EU-Russia energy relations by forcing Russia's gas exporters to abide by single market competition rules, including in the highly controversial case of Nord Stream 2 (a project aimed at doubling the capacity of an offshore pipeline that links Russia to Germany while bypassing Poland and Ukraine). They have also attempted to keep Moscow diplomatically engaged on issues of both convergence (defence of Iran's nuclear deal) and divergence (Ukraine). Given Russia's critical role for Europe's security, energy supplies and Middle Eastern stability, these steps attest to

[28] Robert D. Blackwill and Philip H. Gordon, Blackwill, R.D, and P.H. Gordon (2018, January), *Containing Russia. How to Respond to Moscow's Intervention in U.S. Democracy and Growing Geopolitical Challenge*, Council Special Report No. 80, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2018.

an ability of the Europeans to leverage their transatlantic as well as national and EU assets in a critical geopolitical engagement.[29]

Europe has struggled to do as much with regard to China. In particular, Europe has not done enough to fight back against China's unfair economic practices (especially in terms of respect for intellectual property rights and market access), contain the influence that Chinese investments in the EU give Beijing, as well as protect from the potentially political use of Chinese technologies[30] Evidence of this is the utter failure of European leaders to construct the discourse around the now failed negotiation over a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership as a strategic attempt to bind China to rules set by the Europeans (in cooperation with the Americans), which would have allowed them to respond to domestic criticisms of the agreement more effectively. Only recently have the Europeans started to appreciate that President Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy initiative, the Belt and Road Initiative, ultimately aims at amassing influence over land and maritime trade routes from East Asia to Europe, and consequently over all countries affected by Beijing's infrastructure policy.[31] Europe's realisation that Chinese-supplied technologies for the development of 5G networks may give the Chinese government a way to access individual citizens' data as well as critical national security information has also come late and, to a certain degree at least, only thanks to US protests.

The somewhat belated assessment of China as a 'systemic rival' – a term first used in EU documents in spring 2019[32] – is partly a consequence of the strategic immaturity of the Europeans, who too often fail to see how overcoming their internal differences (on China but also on other matters) will in the long run better serve their own interest in maintaining a position of strength in international politics. As a result, the EU's responses to China's systemic challenges, including a blueprint for an investment screening mechanism to protect strategic economic sectors and the coordinated assessment of the risks related to imports of Chinese 5G technologies, have not been as effective in shaping national choices as needed. The fact that Germany's plan to avoid such risks falls short of EU standards is just a case in point.[33]

Containment of Russia's geopolitical sway in Europe, countering information warfare and protection from the political use of China's investment policy and technology exports are structural interests around which Europe can still hope to build a renewed partnership with the United States. This may be a tall order under a US president as hostile to the EU as Trump, yet it is a message that resonates widely in the US foreign policy establishment. The Europeans should therefore relentlessly convey it to Washington in the attempt to create more forthcoming conditions for transatlantic cooperation under the current administration (to the extent this is possible), but especially to pave the way for more sustained engagement

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[29] Sten Rynning, "The False Promise of Continental Concert: Russia, the West and the Necessary Balance of Power", *International Affairs*, 91, 3, 2015, p. 540-552.

[30] Ron H. Linden, *The New Sea People: China in the Mediterranean*, IAI Papers 18/14, Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali, August 2018.

[31] Philippe Le Corre, "Chinese Investments in European Countries: Experiences and Lessons for the "Belt and Road" Initiative", in M. Mayer (ed.), *Rethinking the Silk Road. China's Belt and Road Initiative and Emerging Eurasian Relations*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 161-175.

[32] European Commission, *EU-China – A strategic outlook*, 12 March 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf.

[33] Laurens Cerulus, "Why Germany's Huawei move irks more than just Washington", *Politico.eu*, 10 October 2019, https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-defies-us-on-huawei/.

under future presidents. The power asymmetry with Washington is no excuse for a lack of initiative, as Europe will need to strengthen its assets – including in areas outside the traditional remit of foreign policy as investment regulations – no matter of what direction this administration or the next will give to US international action. In this regard, the Europeans have been wise not to accept China's offer to forge a common trade coalition against US aggressive tariff policy and to insist with the US administration on the benefits of reducing the level of animosity and trade competition between the two shores of the Atlantic. Should US trade policy continue on the aggressive path inaugurated by Trump, however, the Europeans will have to carefully consider the merit of agreeing to China's proposal, although only after securing significant concessions in terms of market access and acquiescence to investment screening in return.

The pursuit of a rebalanced relationship with the United States – which, it is worth emphasising, is based on the strengthening of European strategic assets and not on the simple bandwagoning with Washington – is not aimed at merely containing China or Russia. Rather, its goal is to give the Europeans more options to deal with them across the full spectrum of bilateral interactions, which also include issues of possible convergence (for instance, climate change). A lack of US support would make it harder for Europe to seek successful triangulations with other powers, but it should not diminish Europe's resolve to commit diplomatic, financial and military resources to expanding the room for its autonomous action.

Nowhere is the urgency for such an autonomous action more felt than in the Middle East and North Africa, an area in which Europe has important security, energy and immigration-related interests that do not dovetail with America's. Europe's record here is mixed at best.[34] Its response to the challenges created by the great Arab uprisings of 2011 has been mostly reactive and ultimately stability-oriented.[35] After rhetorically supporting Egypt's initial transition away from autocracy, the Europeans have acquiesced to President Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi's counter-revolution. Conflicts in Syria and Libya have been handled mostly from a border control perspective, with Italy's agreements with local actors and militias to reduce the inflow of migrants into Libya replicating the logic of the 2016 German-brokered EU-Turkey deal on managing immigration from Syria. While insufficient and morally tenuous, these policies reflect a realistic assumption about Europe's limited ability to shape events on the ground and a sober assessment of the disaggregating effects that the public perception of uncontrolled migration flows has on the cohesion of EU member states and between the public and EU institutions. However, they also show the limited extent to which EU countries approach Middle Eastern issues from the standpoint of a strategic interest defined in European rather than narrow national terms.

In this light, the European involvement in the Iran nuclear dispute stands out as a rare exception. It follows that if Europe wants to have a part in the region's geopolitics, it should continue defending the promise implicitly contained in the JCPOA of a pragmatic engagement of Iran. Safeguarding this promise is not only about the nuclear deal, as on preventing the economic warfare waged by the United States against Iran from engendering an

[34] Michael Smith and Richard Youngs, "The EU and the Global Order: Contingent Liberalism", *The International Spectator*, 53, 1, 2018, p. 45-56.

[35] Riccardo Alcaro and Miguel Habrich Seco, *Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of the Arab Uprisings*, Rome: Nuova Cultura, 2012.

uncontrollable escalation into a wider conflict.[36] To the extent that Russia and China share the objective of preserving the JCPOA, the Europeans do well in seeking cooperation. They should actually go farther and insert themselves into the debate over regional security governance – which the Russians have been pushing more assertively lately – so that they can shape it as much as possible in line with their interest in regional stability, non-proliferation, the fight against jihadi groups, the safeguarding of minorities' security, as well as an expansion of trade and investment opportunities.

For the Europeans it is especially important to minimise the impact of US secondary sanctions, whose extra-territorial reach constitutes a major threat to whatever ambition for an autonomous foreign policy the Europeans cultivate. The issue transcends the JCPOA. Congress has enacted laws containing secondary sanctions not only on Iran (as well as North Korea and Syria), but also on Turkey and Russia, two countries too important for Europe to let US financial power to severely impede its relations. The lack of success to get around US sanctions on Iran is therefore no good reason for Europe to stop trying. Critical in this regard is the strengthening of the international role of the euro, which should enable the Europeans to enlarge the scope of economic interactions with third countries in the service of European foreign policy goals the United States objects to. As a matter of fact, the strengthening of the euro should be, along with greater diplomatic coordination (including in the framework of minilateral 'lead groups' such as the European trio on Iran) integration of defence and security assets, a pillar of Europe's attempts to gain strategic autonomy.

From the above it is clear that strategic autonomy is premised on the endurance and further consolidation of the EU, which is a problematic proposition in the face of the rise in popular support for nationalist forces across Europe. On surface, the nationalist agenda contains the seed of European fragmentation, especially if Eurosceptics were to gain power in critical places such as Paris or Berlin. Yet the reality is that nationalists would struggle to defend national borders, companies and jobs if intra-European cooperation breaks down. The latter would thus remain relevant even in a Europe where nationalist forces would gain the upper hand. In these terms, the pursuit of a strategic autonomy has a broader significance than that of lending more geopolitical leeway to Europe. It has fundamental implications for the sustainability of the European integration project, as the notion of strategic autonomy provides room for reconciling the nationalist agendas with the EU experiment. It is not by chance that 'strategic autonomy' has been popularised by the 2016 EU Global Strategy, a document that puts great emphasis on the hybrid nature of EU foreign policy as the combined action of EU institutions and member states. The EUGS has thus construed a discourse inextricably linking, even merging, national and European interests, national sovereignty and European autonomy.[37] Orientating Europe's policies accordingly would help recreate consensus for such key principles of Europe's post-war liberalism as open markets, open borders and pooled sovereignty, which today's European nationalists like to contest. At the very least, it should make it easier for the public opinion to grasp the advantages accruing from EU cohesion, which the Europeans cannot dismiss as casually as American nationalists do.

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[36] Riccardo Alcaro, *All Is Not Quiet on the Western Front. Trump's Iran Policy and Europe's Choice on the Nuclear Deal,* IAI Papers 18/7, Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali, April 2018.

[37] Nathalie Tocci, *A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World. Behind the Scenes of the EU Global Strategy*, London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Conclusions

Even under a more forthcoming presidency than Trump's, Europe's reliance on the United States for its stability and international influence will continue to confront it with difficult trade-offs. Europe's recently stated ambition to pursue strategic autonomy has thus turned into a matter of necessity. Autonomy does not mean detachment from the United States. It involves an ability to leverage diplomatic, economic, military and societal assets to seek a more balanced transatlantic relationship, whereby Washington would incur high costs in neglecting Europe's interests. Above all, it implies a global repositioning aimed at generating patterns of selective cooperation – formalised and long-term when possible, otherwise based on contingencies. In other words, it implies an ability by Europe to triangulate with other powers to defend its interests in European stability, Middle Eastern security, climate change governance, global trade sustainability and the endurance of multilateral institutions even in the absence of, or in the face of opposition from, the United States.

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Dimensions and trajectories of Russian foreign policy

Sabine Fischer

SWP (Berlin) and Public Diplomacy. EU and Russia (Moscow)

Russian foreign policy has four key geographical dimensions: Russia's relations with its immediate neighbourhood, its policy in the Middle East, relations with China (Asia) and with the West (the EU, NATO and the US).1 In its post-Soviet history, Moscow went from focusing exclusively on rapprochement with the West and neglect of all other dimensions in the 1990s to confrontation and isolation from the West and an (over)emphasis on relations with China and on Russia's position as a great power in a multipolar international order.This paper traces the trajectories of Russian foreign policy in and across its different dimensions since 2014. It looks at the domestic and international drivers of Moscow's external behaviour. Finally, it asks about the reversibility/irreversibility of the changes we have seen in Russia's foreign policy since 2014 and their implications for Russia's relations with the West.

Russia's neighbourhood policy

The events in Ukraine in 2014 are of key importance for Russia's relations with its neighbourhood. In this key dimension, Moscow always ascribed special importance to Ukraine. In retrospect it becomes clear that Russia never recognized Ukrainian independence. Vladimir Putin stressed repeatedly that Russians and Ukrainians are one nation, and that Ukraine was not able to develop a viable state of its own.2 Belarus is the only other state which is seen in Russia in a similar way. Ukraine, on the other hand, never reciprocated Russian ambitions to forge a closer union. Rather on the contrary, post-Soviet Ukrainian leaderships either balanced between the West and Moscow (thereby extracting benefits from both) or unequivocally strove for integration into the EU and NATO. It is not surprising, therefore, that Ukraine became the centre stage for the mounting integration competition between Russia and the West in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus (Forsberg and Haukkala 2016, pp. 192).

The story of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict cannot be recounted here. Suffice it to summarize what it tells us about Russia's policy towards its neighbours: Moscow considers Russia's immediate neighbourhood its zone of influence (or zone of privileged interests, as former President Dmitri Medvedev once put it). This implies that Russia's neighbours have only limited sovereignty; they are not free to decide either on their preferred foreign policy orientation or the nature of their political system. Moscow claims the right to interfere with the domestic and external policies of its neighbours if it sees Russian interests and national

[1] More recently, Moscow has also stepped up its engagement in Africa and Latin America, but these regions remain of secondary importance in Russia's foreign policy (Tsygankov 2018).

[2] See the famous quote ascribed to Putin by the Russian daily Kommersant in a conversation with George W. Bush at the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit: "You know, George, Ukraine is not even a state. One half of it is Eastern Europe, and the other half is given by us". Kommersant, 7 April 2008. He expressed similar views, for instance when he addressed the Russian nation on the occasion of the annexation of Crimea on 18 March 2014, or during an interview with US film director Oliver Stone broadcasted in 2018 (Stent 2019: 176).

security jeopardized by them. In such cases Moscow is ready to apply the full range of foreign policy tools at its disposal. Over the past 15 years, Moscow has provided political benefits and exerted political pressure; handed out economic rewards and imposed economic sanctions; used hybrid instruments like Russian language media, secret service operations and concealed and open military action to control neighbouring states. It exploited existing unresolved ethno-political conflicts and, ultimately, created two new conflicts in Crimea and the Donbas to steer its neighbours' policies in the desired direction (Fischer 2016 and 2019). Moscow focuses on Russia-led regional integration formats to unite and control its neighbourhood. The flag ship of this policy is the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Launched in January 2015 it includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan Armenia and Kyrgyztan. The EAEU remains dominated by Russia both politically and economically, with Russia accounting for more than 80 percent of the overall GDP of the EAEU (Eurasian Development Bank 2019). Moreover, Russia's economic difficulties have impeded intra-EAEU integration. However, the EAEU will not disappear from Moscow's political agenda and integration efforts will continue. The organisation is also building a network of external relations. It has concluded a free trade agreement with Vietnam in 2017 and is in the process of negotiating similar arrangements with more countries, among them Egypt, Iran, India, Singapore, Turkey. China and the EAEU have a non-preferential trade agreement since 2018. Other regional organisations promoted by Russia in Eastern Europe and Eurasia are the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. With the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas Moscow has made its position on the neighbourhood clear. The 2014 events sent shock waves through post-Soviet Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. It has contributed to further polarising and fragmenting the region.

Russia's Middle East Policy

The Russian intervention in the Syrian war in September 2015 marked Moscow's return to the Middle East after a long period of absence. The Middle East had been an area of priority for Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War, but Russia withdrew almost completely after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Consumed by internal difficulties and driven by rapprochement with the West, Moscow maintained only very few entry points in the region.[3] It was Vladimir Putin, who started to reach out more actively towards Middle Eastern countries in the 2000s. His efforts to re-activate Russia's engagement were amplified by Russia's economic consolidation and increasing competition with the US.

The turning point came with NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011. At the time, Russia abstained from voting on the UNSC Resolution (1973) because it was trying to mend fences with Washington in the context of the reset policy of the Obama administration. Moscow felt utterly betrayed when the intervention was followed by the end of the Gaddafi Regime and the killing of Muamar Gaddafi. From now on, Russia resolved to pursue its interests without any further consideration of Western interests; it intensified contacts with a variety of actors in the Middle East, including the Western ally and NATO member Turkey. The military intervention in the war in Syria was based on the lessons Russia had drawn from events in Libya: When the Assad regime came under existential military pressure, Moscow chose to act

[3] For instance, the supply point for the Russian naval forces in Tartus, Syria and the construction of a nuclear power plant in Busher, Iran.

- and it achieved a broad range of foreign policy goals in the Middle East and beyond: Bashar al-Assad remains in power - a fact that by now seems to be accepted even by Western actors. Moscow initiated two international negotiation tracks (Sochi and Astana) in which the US and other Western actors have no role; Russia positioned itself as a key player in the Middle East way beyond Syria. It maintains "cooperative ties with the region's main protagonists - and antagonists" (Stent 2019: 259). Moscow's increased engagement in the Middle East is often mainly attributed to its geopolitical competition with the US. While the Russian foreign policy elite is certainly fixated on its perceived rivalry with Washington, Russia's policy in the Middle East is driven by a more complex set of interests: After its long absence from the Middle East in the 1990s and 2000s Russia has rebuilt political and economic ties with different partners and intends to protect them. The region is not seen as an exclusive zone of Russian interest, like the neighbourhood. But Russia expects its interests be taken seriously. Seen from Moscow, the Arab Spring brought nothing but the breakdown of political order and control, the destabilisation of the entire Middle East and a surge of religious fundamentalism in the region. Moscow is deeply concerned about possible spill-over effects on Russia's Muslim population in the North Caucasus - including by the return of fighters from the Middle Eastern battle fields. It is equally worried about the de-stabilisation of its Southern neighbourhood and Central Asia. The Russian political elite are extremely wary of what they perceive as Western "regime change policy". They have always perceived Western democracy promotion and support for political upheavals - be it in Russia's immediate neighbourhood, in the Middle East, or elsewhere in the world - as implicitly targeted at themselves. From this perspective, Libya was a prime example of regime change policy, which was not to repeat itself. Intervention in Syria and active engagement with Middle Eastern states, including with disaffected allies of the West, helped Russia to escape isolation from the West after 2014.

Russia's China policy

Partnership with China became the key priority of Russian foreign policy from 2014. Just like engagement in the Middle East, intensified relations with China helped Russia to counterbalance sanctions and international isolation. But China is much more important because of its growing economic and political power. Russia's "turn towards China" in 2014 built upon efforts to develop relations with Russia's biggest eastern neighbour undertaken since the late 1990s (Lo 2008). Already in 2001, Russia and China concluded a Treaty on Good-Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation (which will expire in 2021). In the 2000s, the two former antagonists settled their border disputes, developed economic cooperation and coordinated certain aspects of their foreign policies. China's rapid economic development (as opposed to Russia's relative economic stagnation) created an increasingly unbalanced trade structure.4 When the EU and the US started to impose sanctions on Russia in 2014, the asymmetry in Russian-Chinese trade relations became even stronger. Overall, Russia is much more dependent on the bilateral trade relationship than China. China is of key importance for Russia as a neighbour in Central Asia. It has already become the biggest foreign investor in the Central Asian states through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Russia's initial reaction to the

[4] Russia's exports to China consist mainly of mineral products and hydrocarbons, with the notable exception of advanced weaponry. In 2014 Russia agreed to sell SU35S fighter jets and S-400 surface-to-air missiles to China. Previously Moscow had avoided such deals to protect itself from Chinese reverse engineering. China, for its part, delivers machinery, transport equipment, foodstuffs and textiles to Russia.

BRI was hesitant - not least because of fears that the BRI would thwart Russian own integration efforts in Central Asia. After 2014 Russia embraced the BRI as a possibility to bring Russia and China closer together and create synergies with the Eurasian Economic Union. However, the relationship remains very asymmetric. Its future will depend on how China's role in Central Asia will evolve. For now, the division of labour between Russia as the main security provider and China as the chief investor in the region works in both sides' interests. Should China one day aspire to become involved in securing of its investments, this constellation might become brittle. The political and economic relationship between Moscow and Beijing has clearly grown deeper and more intense, but particularly since the disruption of Russian-Western relations. However, at the societal level and culturally, Russia clearly remains oriented towards Europe. The numbers (students, holiday trips, real estate purchases, labour migrants) speak a clear language. Concerns about a "yellow peril" in the Russian Far East have waned - but not disappeared completely.

Moscow had several motives for its pivot to China:

China is the rising power of the 21st century. Like any other country, Russia started to adjust to this fact already in the 2000s. Moscow shares with Beijing the rejection of what both perceive as the Western dominated liberal order. Both base their foreign policy on the assumption of a multipolar world - with several great powers having an equal right to shape and determine international relations. Indisputable sovereignty is another key term in both Russia's and China's foreign policy discourse. Their relationship is based on strict non-interference in domestic affairs. This is also the basis for their mutual support in the UN Security Council and in other multilateral fora. Many policymakers and observers in Russia understand that their partnership with China is not equal and is bound to become less equal in the future. It has also not brought what Russia hoped in 2014. China keeps looking to Europe and the US economically, balances its partnership with Russia carefully against relations with Western actors, and refrains from and kind of support for Russia that could damage its relations with the West. Moscow reaches out to other Asian states and engages with multilateral cooperation formats in Asia in order to balance this asymmetry. However, China has become indispensable in Russian foreign policy, both in its own right, and to offset Russia's isolation from the West.

Domestic and international roots of Russian foreign policy

In the 1990s, Russia barely had a foreign policy. It was paralysed by domestic turmoil and existential economic crisis. Economic recovery and the ensuing political stabilisation in the 2000s marked the beginning of a normalisation process and enabled Moscow to take a more pro-active and self-confident stance in the international arena. Today Russia's foreign policy is determined by a set of mutually reinforcing internal and external factors.

1. Foreign policy as a continuation of domestic politics: Today's Russia is a hyper-centralised autocracy. It is dominated by a power-vertical with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the top. This applies especially to the foreign and security policy, where the decision-making process is even more personalised and centralised than other political areas. Vladimir Putin has been the key figure in Russian foreign policy since the 2000s. Since he came to power, the influence of the so-called *siloviki* (the power ministries and security services) has been

growing steadily. Informal, non-transparent patron-client networks across the political, security and economic spheres, which are the closest thing to corporate interests in today's Russia, also play a role in foreign policy making (for instance with regard to economic interests in Russia's immediate neighbourhood or in the Middle East, Marten 2013). However, Putin remains the dominant figure - not least because he has so far managed to keep competing patron-client networks in check. As a rule, Putin puts security and geopolitics above economic interests (Trenin 2019). The importance of his personality and personal ideology have grown even more after his re-election as Russian president in 2018 (Lo 2018). With the presidential elections 2024 approaching, the question about the if and when of Putin's succession becomes more and more pressing - and with it the future and the stability of the Russian political system. Two moments are important here: 1) Will the (prolonged Putin or post-Putin) political leadership be able to maintain the intra-elite balance on which the current political regime is resting? The stagnating economy (which is in itself a result of the regime's policies), might become a serious challenge - with potential implications including for Russian foreign policy. 2) How will state-society relations evolve in the future? Traditionally, society plays a subordinate role in Russian foreign policy making. Foreign policy is not a priority for ordinary Russians; societal actors are excluded from the decision-making process. The majority of Russians support the official narrative on Russia's place in the world. The annexation of Crimea in March 2014 boosted the legitimacy of the political leadership (at a moment when the regime found itself in a difficult situation). More recently, protests are erupting in different parts of the country however after five consecutive years of economic stagnation and falling incomes. While these expressions of dissatisfaction remain local, single-issue driven and do not (yet?) jeopardize the political regime, they demonstrate a changing attitude in certain parts of Russian society. The "Crimea effect", i.e. the generation of domestic legitimacy through bold foreign policy action, is wearing off quickly. While people do not question Crimea's affiliation to Russia or Russia's role in the Donbas and Syria as such, they dread the costs of foreign policy and show no appetite for any kind of new adventures.

2. Identity and foreign policy discourse: The idea of Russia in Greater Eurasia has been dominating the official Russian foreign policy discourse in recent years. Greater Eurasia signifies a space from Europe to the Pacific Ocean (Karaganov 2016). This space is characterised by horizontal (in the Russian diction: democratic) relations between equal civilisations and dynamically unfolding bilateral and multilateral political, economic and infrastructure projects. Most importantly – as opposed to the Western-dominated liberal order – no player in Greater Eurasia claims hegemony, thus allowing for equal partnerships and communities of values. Greater Eurasia is part of a multipolar world, in which great powers with equal rights determine the course of history. Russia is one of those great powers, equipped with a zone of influence, and on equal footing with other great powers (such as China, the US, the other BRICS countries etc.).

3. A changing world: Official Russia blames the West for the deterioration of mutual relations. Moscow explains the annexation of Crimea, its military intervention in Syria and other foreign policy moves with the need to defend Russia and its partners against the US's and its allies' aggressive policies towards Russia - embodied, in particular, in NATO's eastward enlargement. At the 2017 Valdai Forum, the author of this paper asked the Russian president what mistakes Russia had made in its foreign policy over the past 15 years. His answer was: "Our most

serious mistake in relations with the West is that we trusted you too much. And your mistake is that you took that trust as weakness and abused it. (Kremlin 2017)"

This reading of Russian foreign policy is one-sided and mono-causal. It claims that over the past 25 years the West has been acting (attacking Russia) and Russia has been reacting (defending itself from Western attacks). It is disputed by Putin's critics in and outside Russia. Many of those critics place a strong accent on Russian authoritarianism as the main source of Moscow's external behaviour. While domestic factors are indeed important, changes in the outside world have always had an effect on Russian foreign policy. Three developments have been particularly important:

- In the early 2000s, the enlargement of the European Union and NATO, combined with US engagement under George W. Bush, led to tectonic changes in the post-Soviet space. Particularly in Ukraine and Georgia, parts of the societies saw the accession of their Western neighbours to the EU and NATO as a model for their own future. Political leaderships had to position themselves in a radically changed regional environment, in which closer alignment with the EU and NATO had become an appealing and realistic option, and was now actively promoted by some of the new member states. Having little to offer in this new competition, Moscow reacted by reverting to coercion vis-à-vis the other post-Soviet countries.

- The US plays a much more important role in Russian foreign policy thinking than vice versa. Several consecutive American administrations treated Russia as a secondary foreign policy issue (Stent 2015). Washington's changing strategic priorities have directly affected Russia's foreign policy options and actions. American engagement or dis-engagement in certain regions or on certain matters impact directly on Russian foreign policy. The latest development in the Syrian war is but one example. Even Moscow's possibilities to expand ties with Beijing and other Asian states are to a considerable degree shaped by US-China relations and American policy in Asia.

- Last but not least, Russian foreign policy reacts ad adjusts to the structural changes in the international system caused by China's increasing power and influence.

Conclusion: Changing trajectories in Russia's foreign policy and implications for Russia's relations with the EU and the US

2014 marks a watershed in Russian foreign policy and in Russia's relations with the EU and the US. Russia's annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas pushed Russian hegemonic ambitions in the neighbourhood to the extreme, disrupted relations with the EU and the US and boosted the importance of the two other key dimensions of Russian foreign policy, the Middle East and particularly China/Asia. In 2014, Moscow clearly underestimated the scale and resolve with which the West reacted to the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas. It also misjudged the EU's ability to keep up sanctions over a longer period of time. In relations with Western actors, too, Russia's actions in Ukraine accelerated a deterioration that had started a decade earlier. Almost six years later, going back to the status quo ante no longer is an option (Liik 2019). The EU and Russia remain important economic and trade partners. In fact, Russia still realises the largest part of its external trade with the

EU.[5] The previously intense political relationship has become largely de-institutionalised and is marred by mutual mistrust. Russia has shifted its attention to relations with the EU to member states it considers Russia-friendly, and to right wing populist and Eurosceptic political movements in various other member states. Moscow has extended the use of instruments previously applied to post-Soviet neighbours, such as the promotion of propaganda through Russian media, interference with election campaigns, cyber-attacks etc., to the EU. The EU, on its part, bases its Russia policy on the five guiding principles released in 2016, which mark a clear departure from the idea of a strategic partnership with Russia, prevelant in EU rhetoric prior to 2014.[6] Relations with the US plunged even deeper into crisis with Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential elections. Because of its meddling with the US election campaign Russia ended up in the crosshairs of domestic conflict in the US, which led to a new wave of sanctions (now codified into law and therefore much more difficult to lift). Moscow was not able to reap the benefits of its support for Donald Trump. Meanwhile, important aspects of the Trump administration's foreign policy, for instance its destructive assaults against multilateral regimes, including in the area of arms control, seriously hurt Russian interests.

Russia's sharp turn away from the West in 2014 would not have happened, had it not been for the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the West's reaction to it. At the same time, however, the 2014 events accelerated and amplified underlying trends, which have become further engrained in Russian foreign policy since. The trajectories of Russia's foreign policy across the four geographic dimensions analysed in this paper are not likely to change in the foreseeable future. In other words, Russia should not be expected to want to "return to the West" any time soon. It also needs to be considered that the West itself is undergoing a potentially existential transition. This raises the question: What "West" should Russia want to return to?

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WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE UNITED STATES: A LOOK AHEAD AT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

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Abstract: The Trump presidency has brought an extraordinary measure of uncertainty to American international policy, from trade to security. The outcome of the 2020 elections may change a great deal, not least in terms of style. But there is a risk that key aspects of the Trump policy agenda may outlast his presidency. Even under a new administration, a "reset" may be hard to achieve as others international actors have adjusted their own policies. Structural shifts are also part of the equation, both domestically and internationally. In key respects, the Trump presidency has likely "given history a shove," with troubling implications for global stability.

International attitudes toward the United States have always been driven to a considerable extent by views of the incumbent president. In this sense, style and personality matter. The effects are not always straightforward. George W. Bush (2001-9) struggled to overcome global, especially European perceptions of swagger and unilateralism in Washington, even as his administration pursued many more or less mainstream policies. Barack Obama (2009-17), by contrast, enjoyed the benefit of the doubt and generally positive attitudes worldwide, against a backdrop of allied disappointment in some key policy areas. The administration of Donald Trump has taken this phenomenon to new levels. There are many reasons for this. America's partners – and competitors – value predictability in Washington. President Trump's blunt and highly idiosyncratic style have underscored a new sense of American unpredictability. All of this has been accompanied by sharp differences over policy, from trade to security. Transatlantic partners sense that they have entered uncharted territory in relations with Washington. The impeachment proceedings now underway introduce an additional and potentially transforming variable into this already complex equation.

At the same time, there are strong, structural elements driving American foreign policy, and these go well beyond the vagaries of style and election outcomes. Some of these argue for continuity. Others predate the Trump presidency and presage significant shifts. Regardless of the outcome in 2020, American foreign policy could look substantially different two or four or eight years from now.[1] And this means that the international system as a whole could look substantially different. Even if a successor administration in Washington – or indeed a second Trump administration -- wished to reset key relationships, this may prove difficult or impossible. Other powers have evolved and adjusted their policies. They may not see the value of a return to the status quo ante. By openly questioning some of the traditional tenets of America's approach to the world, President Trump has likely "given history a shove."

[1] For a variety of perspectives on President Trump's foreign policy and a look to the future, see the series of articles in "Letting Go: Trump, America and the World," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2018.

On the Edge of the Cliff?

The Trump administration has been extraordinarily lucky. It is rare for an administration to make it through three years in power without a major economic or security crisis. Apart from political crises, largely self-inflicted, this administration has not had to confront anything on the order of the 2008 financial collapse or the 9/11 attacks. Can this luck hold? Even the most vigorous opponents of the administration must hope so. But the prospects are highly uncertain. The January 2020 clashes with Iran and the ongoing brinkmanship with Tehran remind us of the risk. Relationships with powers such as China and Russia have slid from competition to barely contained confrontation. Regional conflicts involving the US are brewing in Asia and the Gulf, and possibly in places like Venezuela. The confluence of frictions over trade and geopolitics has further undermined international stability, and has arguably increased the risk of low probability-high consequence contingencies, above all with China. Alliances have frayed even as the security logic behind these relationships has become more obvious and compelling. Today, if Washington were to be confronted with crises of the kind faced by the Bush and Obama administrations, it is unclear that the same, essentially cooperative approach to crisis management would prevail. The instincts for this have weakened, and not just in the US.

Domestic Dynamics

Debate rages over the extent to which the election of President Trump was the product of unique circumstances, unlikely to be repeated, or a symptom of underlying and possibly durable forces. A prudent assessment would give due weight to the latter explanation. To be sure, the Trump victory in 2016 was a very close run thing and the election could easily have had a different outcome. But the unconventional and insurgent nature of his campaign clearly had its roots in deep-seated grievances left unaddressed by more conventional politicians. These grievances were not, by and large, about international policy *per se*. Those international issues that did feature in the Trump campaign -- and have been carried forward into the policy arena with a vengeance -- are closely tied to domestic concerns. Trade, immigration and counter-terrorism are the key examples.

The populist political wave has been described as a revolt against the elites.[2] It is also a revolt against perceived elite projects, including trade agreements and alliances. President Trump and many of his close advisors harbour deep grievances regarding the perceived abuse of the international trading system by America's economic partners. Trade disputes are hardly new on the Washington agenda, but not since the 1930s have they taken the form of a systematic attack on free trade. In particular, the Trump administration has fuelled a protectionist agenda within the Republican Party, traditionally a bastion of free trade. By contrast, Democrats have always been ambivalent, with some in the labour movement and elsewhere deeply sceptical about the benefits of open economies. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), in which the Obama administration invested considerable energy, was already in trouble before Trump came on the scene. And the trouble emanated from both sides of the Atlantic. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was questioned by Hillary Clinton on the campaign trail. It is

[2] For a leading argument along these lines, see Ivan Krastev, "The Age of Populism: Reflections on the Self-enmity of Democracy," *European View*, Vol. 10, Issue 1, June 2011.

not surprising that the Trump administration quickly disavowed both initiatives. But the key departure from past trade practice is the current tendency to see free trade as a systemic challenge to the American economy and to pursue trade objectives without reference to other strategic interests. The net effect of the "trade war" with China and the near trade war with European allies has been a general increase in global risk, and not just in economic terms. Arguably, mounting security frictions with China have been kept in check by a shared, underlying stake in an enormously important economic relationship. It is one thing to face an incident over the South China Sea or Taiwan against a backdrop of an essentially stable trade relationship. The ongoing tariff battle opens a second front in an already risky relationship with China.

Similarly, Washington's willingness to invoke national security concerns to impose steel and aluminium tariffs on European allies cuts against the long-term American interest in transatlantic partnership on a global basis. The administration may yet make good on the threat to impose heavy tariffs on European car exports and other goods. This might be portrayed as a good deal for the American worker, but the costs are likely to be felt in other areas where the US has a stake in European cooperation. The resulting risk may not be evident in a steady state, but it could become very obvious in a serious economic or security crisis. In the perception of the administration, trade interests *are* security interests. It is an approach that harks back to the interwar obsession with economic warfare, and much earlier mercantilist ideas. This new protectionist impulse could prove durable. There is a potent reservoir of protectionism across the American political spectrum, and it could well persist whatever the outcome of the 2020 election. And of course, it is a tendency that risks becoming entrenched in Europe and Asia too. On the other hand, a successor administration is likely to be more adept at "connecting the dots" between trade and security policy in a more traditional fashion.

A hawkish approach to migration issues has been another hallmark of the Trump policy agenda. This is a development with striking echoes in Europe and elsewhere. It is an approach with strong appeal to the president's political base. It could well prove less durable than the hard line trade agenda. Even the Republican political establishment shows signs of discomfort with the strident rhetoric around the asylum issue, and even more obviously with presidential attempts to circumvent Congress in order to build a "wall" on the border with Mexico. This is, at base, a domestic policy question but it has also become a core issue in relations with Mexico and Central America and encourages Washington to make common cause with hardline populists on the other side of the Atlantic.

Counter-terrorism was an early priority for the Trump administration. This too, continues to have a close connection to homeland security concerns in the post-9/11 world. It is unlikely to wane as a concern for this or a successor administration, and remains a touchstone for US policy in the Middle East. To the extent that it is possible to discern, President Trump is more attuned to intervention with a counter-terrorism logic than to potentially more consequential geopolitical demands in a regional setting. The territorial defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) was a clear priority. The drone strike against al-Quds Commander Qasem Soleimani aside, intervention to contain Iran or, for that matter, to counter Russian influence in Syria, has been less compelling. This tendency is likely to face significant challenges in a world of mounting great power competition and regional risk. The October 2019 "green-light" to Turkey

for a ground intervention in Syria, perhaps intentional, perhaps not, seems to underscore President Trump's search for exits. Questions of credibility and regional geopolitics do not seem to figure highly in this calculus.[3] The American engagement around counter-terrorism missions in Africa, a growing effort for years and important to security cooperation with France, is reportedly set to decline sharply.[4]

Some of this is in tune with preferences across the political spectrum. Towards the end of his administration, President Obama was openly critical of the conventional wisdom on offer from the foreign policy establishment, not least the inclination for intervention as a means of crisis management and the demonstration of resolve. This distaste for the use of force on a significant scale, as opposed to over the horizon and time-limited operations, is now widely shared in Congress and in public opinion. This should not, however, be confused with a desire to retreat from active international engagement, where polling suggest that the American public remains supportive. [5] All of this is easily understandable as a reaction to an extraordinary period of successive military interventions from the Balkans to Afghanistan and Iraq. Indeed, President Trump's desire to end the almost two decade long American military operation in Afghanistan is one of the few foreign and security policy initiatives from his administration enjoying substantial support in principle across the American strategic class. Sooner or later, it is likely that the US will find a way to disengage from this extraordinarily protracted and disappointing commitment. In Iraq, too, the US and its security partners may be forced to withdraw in the face of a worsening political and force protection climate. This may be seen as a strategic embarrassment in some quarters, but it would be in line with the desire for a reduced presence on the ground.

The American defence community largely shares the prevailing cautious approach to military intervention. But other aspects of American international engagement continue to enjoy strong support at the expert and political levels. Former Defence Secretary James Mattis spoke for many when he said that cuts in US foreign assistance and diplomatic spending would require the country to invest even more heavily in defence. Trump administration efforts to sharply reduce the international aid budget in 2019 met with strong opposition in the House and Senate. Beyond the White House, the commitment to maintaining the instruments of American international engagement remains strong.

A Different Kind of Burden-Sharing Debate

The demand that European allies pay and do more for their defence is hardly new. The burden-sharing argument is decades old and has been repeated in various ways by every post-war administration in Washington. NATO audiences still vividly recall the very pointed speech by

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[3] For a detailed analysis of the counter-terrorism experience in the first years of the Trump Administration, see Peter R. Neumann, *Bluster: Donald Trump's War on Terror* (London: Hurst and Company, 2019).

[4] Helene Cooper, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, Charlie Savage and Eric Schmitt, "Pentagon Eyes Africa Drawdown as First Step in Global Troop Shift," *The New York Times*, December 24, 2019.

[5] See the results of the 2019 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy, Dina Smeltz, Ivo Daalder, Karl Friedhoff, Craig Kafura and Brendan Helm, *Rejecting Retreat: Americans Support US Engagement in Global Affairs*.

then Defence Secretary Robert Gates on this theme in Brussels in 2011. The two-percent "best efforts" commitment agreed at the 2014 NATO summit in Wales predates Trump's election. But the Trump administration has brought a different and edgier discourse to the burden-sharing debate. The starting point is a deep-seated conviction that the US has been getting a "bad deal" from its alliance relationships, an unusual amalgam of trade and defence spending concerns. The prevailing rhetoric emanating from Washington implies that the American commitment to European (and to some extent Asian) defence is contingent rather than the result of shared, even independent interest. President Trump has even suggested that the US collect back payments due as a result of under-spending by NATO allies, especially Germany. The American military presence in Germany might also be on the table, ignoring the reality that any redeployment of this kind would bring substantial costs of its own and reduce the capacity for force projection beyond Europe, including the Middle East. A withdrawal of this sort is most unlikely given strong bipartisan opposition in the Pentagon and Congress. But President Trump's attachment to the idea that America's overseas military commitments are part of a strategic-commercial balance sheet could well persist in populist discourse.

American attitudes toward European defence initiatives have veered from support to scepticism and sometimes opposition. Successive administrations have stressed the importance of complementarity in NATO and EU defence efforts. But after the end of the Cold War, the foreign and security policy establishment had become more tolerant of European defence efforts of any kind that would produce greater allied capability. This seemed particularly useful in an era of coalition operations requiring a greater European capacity and willingness for power projection. Today, there is a lively debate on both sides of the Atlantic about the utility of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the EU's initiative to develop greater military capabilities, and new EU defence investment funds. Washington's view of these efforts combines a measure of traditional scepticism with a distinct emphasis on defence industrial concerns. The uncertain outlook for defence spending increases in Germany and elsewhere gives many American officials and strategists pause, reinforced by concerns about continued US access to the European defence market. These perspectives are very likely to persist beyond the Trump era, even if they take a less strident form.

From the early years of the republic, not a little of America's engagement in and with Europe has been driven by personal and social affinity, and biographical connections across the Atlantic. Until the end of the Cold War, it was common for members of the American foreign policy establishment (and there was such a thing) to have spent at least part of their university years in Europe, often in the nited Kingdom (UK), France, Germany or Italy. Today, American policy elites are just as likely to have spent time in Asia or elsewhere. For the society as a whole, the balance of interest between transatlantic relations and developments in Asia is shifting. As the final editions of the Transatlantic Trends survey revealed, there is now a marked generational difference in global attention.[6] Older generations still see developments in Europe as most important to their own interests. For those born after the Vietnam War, Asia looms larger in their personal perceptions. This does not necessarily mean that the American public feels a greater affinity with Asia. On trade and security, Asia is also a source of concern. But the

[6] www.gmfus.org/publications/transatlantic-trends

Asia-Pacific region is simply seen as increasingly consequential for their interests. It is a view closely mirrored in the Washington foreign policy debate where China and the Indo-Pacific are at the top of the agenda.

A Multi-Stakeholder World?

US international policy is more than just a question of what administrations do. Beyond the high political issues of strategy, diplomacy and defence policy per se, America's engagement with the world is complex, multi-faceted and heavily influenced by the behaviour of sub-national actors. To use the phrase now fashionable in technology debates, this is a "multi-stakeholder" environment. Classic multilateralism may be weakening, but the multi-stakeholder approach is augmenting, perhaps even supplanting it in key fields. Climate policy offers one example, where American cities and states have become leading actors both domestically and on the international scene. When Europeans want to talk to Americans on environmental policy, a stop in New York or California has become a must. Washington's attempt to roll back climate-related regulation will face stiff and protracted legal challenges in key American states. Digital diplomacy offers another example. Several states have emulated Europe's data protection regulation and pressure is building for national-level legislation along these lines. Leading American technology companies are now playing an active role in global digital diplomacy, most visibly through the "Paris Call" on digital policy championed by the Macron government.

Geography, social history and geo-economics are all drivers of a deeper tendency for America to have multiple international perspectives; multiple international policies, if not foreign policies in the classic sense. The world looks very different from Miami, Los Angeles and the American Midwest. None of these perspectives are necessarily inward looking or isolationist. Perceptions of international issues and priorities can vary substantially from the canonical inside-the-beltway worldview. Questions of global security and alliances are less prominent when viewed from America's regions. Questions of trade, migration and technology often top the agenda, alongside the tendency for cities and regions to serve as windows into areas such as the Asia-Pacific or Latin America. The scale is impressive. California itself is the world's seventh largest economy and naturally gives priority to economic connections around the Pacific Rim. Florida is a hub for travel to Central and South America and the Caribbean. There are roughly a dozen flights a day between Miami and Brazil alone. These connections can have tangible effects on America's international engagement, and not just at a commercial and societal level. Migration policy and border control are high on the foreign policy agenda, for better or worse. Concerns about increasingly severe weather affecting these regions – and the southeastern US – are likely to shape the national debate on climate policy and climate diplomacy.

The End of a Hundred Year Pivot to Europe?

Since the second term of the Obama administration, European policymakers and observers have been concerned about the sustainability of America's commitment to Europe. These concerns have been reinforced by President Trump's periodic remarks about European free-riding and his approach to the symbolic and practical meaning of NATO Article V mutual defence commitments. In political and economic terms, the transatlantic relationship will retain

enormous importance for any American administration. In terms of military presence, the US commitment to Europe has actually increased in recent years, with a larger footprint on the ground in the Baltic and with new assets deployed around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. But looking ahead, there is every reason to anticipate a continued shift to more pressing strategic demands in Asia. It would not take much to accelerate this pivot to the Indo-Pacific. Flashpoints in the region loom large in American planning and the potential for accidental military incidents is increasing, not least in the South and East China Seas. At the same time, the underlying Sino-American interest in stability based on shared economic interest is under pressure from trade frictions, if not an active trade war.

The net result of these developments could be the end of a hundred year American pivot to Europe. Since 1917, the US has been a critical player in European security and the military balance in Europe has, ultimately, turned on America's ability and commitment to a stable Europe – in it own geopolitical interest. The rise of China and the proliferation of risks in Asia raise the prospect of fundamental longer-term shifts in American presence and attention by the world's pre-eminent bi-oceanic power. This prospect – risk might be a better term – can only reinforce the logic of a stronger and potentially more autonomous European defence capability.

Conclusion: Is a Foreign Policy Reset Possible?

In the immediate aftermath of the 2016 election, the first instinct in Brussels and elsewhere was to ask how Europe might effectively engage with a new and unconventional president. This approach rapidly gave way to a mood of frustration, resignation and a sense that European leaders (leaders in Warsaw and a few other capitals excepted) would do better to wait for change in Washington. This has now given rise to concern that some aspects of the Trump presidency may be structural and could outlast his term in office, however long. There is little prospect that a second Trump administration would take a fundamentally different tack on trade, climate, Iran or other contentious issues in transatlantic relations. A Democratic victory in 2020 would surely make a difference. Yet, longer-term concerns about China and the potential for a rapid shift to Asia are likely a reality under any political scenario. The fundamental distaste for intervention may well persist. There is no shortage of hawks on trade and Iran in the Democratic Party. Many European concerns will persist even against a different political backdrop in Washington.

By contrast, the prospects for a fundamental change in style are very real. The foreign policy style of the Trump administration has been at such sharp variance with previous administrations, both Republican and Democratic, that a return to a more predictable approach is virtually certain if and when President Trump leaves office. And, to a great extent, style matters in foreign policy. Predictability, credibility and the capacity for crisis management are critical elements from the perspective of allies and adversaries alike. On substance, the prospects for a reset are more mixed, not least because others have adjusted their policies. A reset will need to be mirrored in Beijing, Moscow, Tehran and elsewhere. That said, political change in Washington would open the prospect of a return to the Paris climate accord, a less confrontational approach to trade, and possibly a return to the Iran nuclear deal in some form – if anything of the agreement remains. Above all, the impulses of future American administrations are likely to be less instinctively unilateral, even if the need for reform of the

multilateral order America built and led is now widely acknowledged. More troubling is the risk that the world has moved on to a more fragmented, nationalistic and adversarial footing in which American power is no longer the key variable in global stability.

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A RESILIENCE APPROACH TO A FAILED ACCESSION STATE: THE CASE OF TURKEY

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The concept of "building resilience" in Turkey can be defined as improving the capacity of institutions and society to withstand and eventually seek to roll back a sustained challenge to democratic norms. From the perspective of Turkish society, the threat originates from the wide disparities in regional incomes that are themselves a by-product in the equally wide disparities in educational achievements and employable skills. Nevertheless, Turkish society retains important elements of resilience. This is the end result of a flawed and yet very real experience with multi-party democracy for over seven decades. At the same time Turkey is a failed accession state and the frustrations as well as the acrimony generated by this hapless state of affairs will have implications for any other EU engagement strategy with Ankara. It is therefore necessary to build the resilience action plan as a component of the formal Turkey–EU agenda, which is broader than the accession track. The soon-to-be-launched negotiations for the modernization of the EU–Turkey Customs Union provide a timely and useful option.

I. THE TURKISH CONTEXT

The 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS) for Foreign and Security Policy, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe", identifies building "state and societal resilience to our East and South" as a central element of the EU's new foreign policy vision.[1] This paper will analyse the implications of this concept in the case of Turkey, seeking to identify both the challenges and potentially positive drivers for state and societal resilience in the country, while reflecting on the best means for the EU to engage Turkey in line with the objectives identified in the EUGS.

The application of the concept of "resilience" to Turkey requires a novel and creative frame of analysis. In contrast to all the other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Turkey is a EU accession country. In other words, Turkey remains the subject of the EU's historically most successful political transformation strategy, called enlargement. Yet in contrast to all previous candidates, the accession methodology is failing with Turkey. Initiated in 2005, membership talks have now stalled with little prospect of revitalization in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the first significant challenge of this analysis will be to realistically assess the implications of an approach focused on building "resilience" in relation to a country where the arguably stronger and more effective transformative project of accession has visibly failed.

[1] *Shared Vision*, *Common Action*: *A Stronger Europe*. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (June 2016).

A reason for the failure of the accession dynamic has been the regression in democratic standards witnessed in Turkey since the beginning of this decade. The Commission's yearly Progress Reports provide a stark reading in that respect.[2]

II. DEFINING STATE-CENTRIC RESILIENCE: DE-DEMOCRATIZATION AND WEAKENING OF INSTITUTIONS

Turkey's path to democracy has been characterized by a gradual, non-linear and difficult progress What has characterized Turkey's culture of democracy has been an absence of consensus among the political elite on the rules of democracy and a genuine commitment to inclusive institutions to uphold these rules. Turkey's process of democratization has witnessed many episodes of breakdowns, transitions, crises and restorations. The frailty of democratic norms may be related to the top-down decision by state elites with aspirations to adopt European norms and standards to introduce democracy instead of its being the outcome of a long-term struggle by social groups that came to have increasing political efficacy and asked for a more open regime. But overall the Turkish body politic has been unable to generate a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of democratic politics. Democracy in Turkey has tended to be seen as a zero-sum game to control the state. Despite a long experience with the basic structures of democracy like regular elections, political players have been unwilling to move beyond this shallow interpretation of the democratic process. Electoral wins were seen as a sufficient justification to implement majority rule in a way that has increasingly emasculated the principle of checks and balances and the protection of minority viewpoints. This winner-takes-all approach to political life is now set to be consolidated, with a shift to a new constitutional setup that concentrates power at the top in an extreme version of a presidential system that is devoid of any genuine checks and balances.

The EU has been a powerful external actor stimulating internal reform in Turkey as long as the goal of accession retained its credibility. A virtual cycle of domestic reforms fuelled by aspirations for EU membership created this uniquely effective environment for a strengthening of Turkish democracy. As the EU's credibility started to weaken—with political barriers imposed by some EU leaders, the decision by former French president Nicolas Sarkozy to unilaterally suspend selected pillars of the negotiations, and the continuing difficulties created by the ongoing division of Cyprus—this pro-democracy dynamic lost its effectiveness. Since the 2011 elections, with the AKP securing yet another landslide victory, and particularly since the Gezi protests of 2013 and the botched coup attempt of July 2016, the degradation in democratic

[2] See for instance "Commission Staff Working Document. Turkey 2016 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. 2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy". SWD(2016) 366 final. Brussels, 9.11.2016.

norms has gathered pace. Today, Turkey is mostly considered an illiberal democracy, as evidenced by a set of international indices that regularly compare governments' democratic performance.

Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index

The index measures 167 countries scored on a scale of 0 to 10 based on 60 indicators. Scores of 0–4 indicate an authoritarian regime, 4–6 a hybrid regime, 6–8 a flawed democracy and 8–10 a full democracy.

Date	Score
2010	5.73
2011	5.73
2012	5.76
2013	5.63
2014	5.12
2015	5.12
2016	5.04

Freedom in the World Index

Freedom in the World is Freedom House's flagship annual report, assessing the condition of political rights and civil liberties around the world. It is composed of numerical ratings and supporting descriptive texts for 195 countries and 14 territories.

Date	Status	Freedom Rating[3]	Civil Liberties[4]	Political Rights[5]
2010	Partly Free	3	3	3
2011	Partly Free	3	3	3
2012	Partly Free	3	3	3
2013	Partly Free	3.5	4	3
2014	Partly Free	3.5	4	3
2015	Partly Free	3.5	4	3
2016	Partly Free	3.5	3	4
2017	Partly Free	4.5	4	5

Freedom of the Press Index

Freedom of the Press, an annual report on media independence around the world, assesses the degree of print, broadcast and digital media freedom in 199 countries and territories.

[3] 1 = Most Free, 7 = Least Free
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

Date	Status	Score[6]	Legal Environment[7]	Political Environment[8]	Economic Environment[9]
2010	Partly Free	51	22	18	11
2011	Partly Free	54	22	21	11
2012	Partly Free	55	22	22	11
2013	Partly Free	56	21	24	11
2014	Not Free	62	23	26	13
2015	Not Free	65	24	27	14
2016	Not Free	71	26	30	15

World Bank Voice and Accountability Index

Reflects perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association and the free media.

Date	Estimate[10]	Rank[11]
2010	-0.12	44.55
2011	-0.16	43.66
2012	-0.23	41.78
2013	-0.26	41.31
2014	-0.33	36.95
2015	-0.37	35.47

A key dynamic in this respect has been the weakening of institutions. Turkey's institutions have increasingly become unbalanced and skewed in favour of state power, at the expense of citizens' rights and meritocracy, executive limitations, transparency and accountability. The AKP's uninterrupted rule of fifteen years and its efforts to be the sole influencer in all spheres, have amplified Turkey's institutional challenges.[12] Its parliamentary majority has enabled the passing of bills and constitutional reforms, bypassing proper scrutiny by parliamentarians, let alone public consultation or wider debate. Of particular concern is the lack of independence and impartiality of the country's judiciary combined with a political power structure that is excessively dominated by the executive branch. The infiltration of Turkey's state institutions—

[6] 0 = Best, 100 = Worst
[7] 0 = Best, 30 = Worst
[8] 0 = Best, 40 = Worst
[9] 0 = Best, 30 = Worst
[10] Estimate of governance ranges from approximately -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong) governance performance.
[11] Percentile rank among all countries ranges from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest).
[12] Izak Atiyas (2012), "Economic Institutions and Institutional Change in Turkey during the Neoliberal Era", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 14 (September) pp. 45-69. Also Isık Ozel (2015), "Reverting Structural Reforms in Turkey: Towards an Illiberal Economic Governance?", *Global Turkey in Europe Policy Brief*, No. 22 (May).

and particularly law enforcement and the judiciary—by the Gulen network, an Islamic transnational religious and social movement led by the US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen who is also widely believed to be behind the failed July 2016 coup in Turkey, has certainly undermined the institutional resilience of the country. This infiltration, it has to be said, was carried out with the full backing of the ruling party for a long number of years. Not surprisingly, the purge of the state institutions of their Gulenist members, commenced in the wake of the botched coup of July 2016 and carried out under emergency rule, has compounded the human resources challenges of the Turkish public administration and weakened institutional capabilities.

The recently adopted constitutional changes following the April 2017 referendum are due to further erode the checks and balances in the political structure. The lack of a clear separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary is therefore heightening Turkey's risk of institutional disempowerment. A similar terminology can be used to describe the relationship between the central government and local authorities, where the Turkish body politic has been resistant to reforms to delegate more power to local leadership and insistent on maintaining the heavily centralized and increasingly politicized model of state governance.

In view of the degradation of democratic standards evidenced by these different studies, the concept of "building resilience" in the specific context of Turkey can be defined as improving the capacity of Turkish institutions and Turkish society to withstand and eventually seek to roll back a sustained challenge to democratic norms in the country.

The barriers to improvements in state and societal resilience in Turkey are arguably quite considerable. The extreme centralization of power is inimical to designs for the establishment of a genuinely democratic system recognizing the role of constitutional and institutional checks and balances. The overriding internal security challenges illustrated by the Gulen network's successful drive for state capture is also a real impediment for a transition to a more balanced, inclusive and accountable framework of governance.

However, the implementation of any pro-resilience reform agenda, in a country where the centralization of power is a key trend, will inevitably depend on the willingness of these exact actors to embrace such an agenda. In other words, while it is impossible to effect change in Turkey without engaging the central government and the political leadership, it is precisely the actions/ambitions of these actors that are constraining resilience.

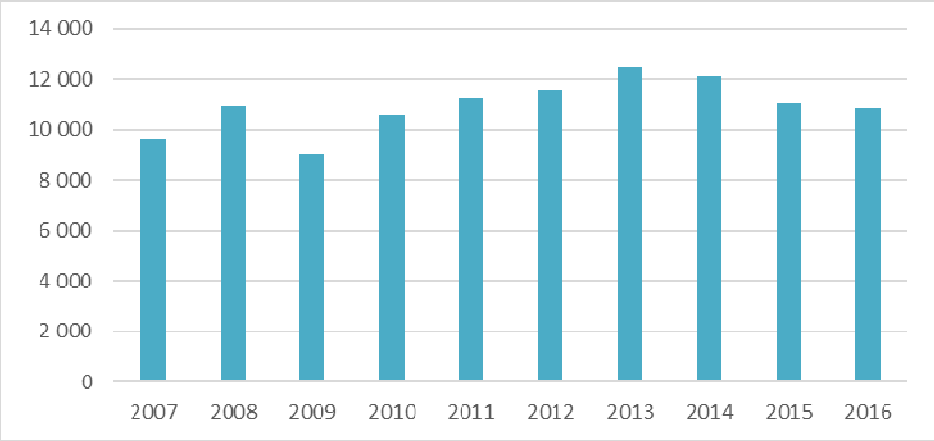
III. DEFINING SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESILIENCE: SLOWING GROWTH AND RISING DISPARITIES

From the perspective of Turkish society, the concept of "resilience" also has a very important socio-economic dimension. Economically, Turkey is categorized as a high-middle-income country by the World Bank. This means that Turkey has by and large been successful in fighting

poverty and elevating the average well being of its citizens. According to the World Bank, the poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines[13] as a percentage of the total population dropped from 30% in 2002 to 1.4% in 2014. To put it in perspective in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), this ratio was 25% for Egypt and 15.5% for Tunisia in 2010.[14]

In light of the above, the challenge from the standpoint of economic resilience is twofold. Firstly, the growth of economic affluence and convergence of per capita incomes with more developed nations has come to an end. Although the national economy is still growing at robust levels compared to European economies at a yearly average of 3%, the growth of personal incomes has stagnated. The per capita income in 2016 at $10,807 was almost the same as the per capita income almost a decade ago in 2008.

Table 1 Turkey per capita incomes (in USD)



Source: World Bank Data Tables

Secondly, Turkey has been less successful in reducing income disparities. The Gini coefficient is a widely used measure of overall income inequality.[15]

	Years									
	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Gini coefficient	0.403	0.387	0.386	0.394	0.380	0.383	0.382	0.382	0.379	0.386

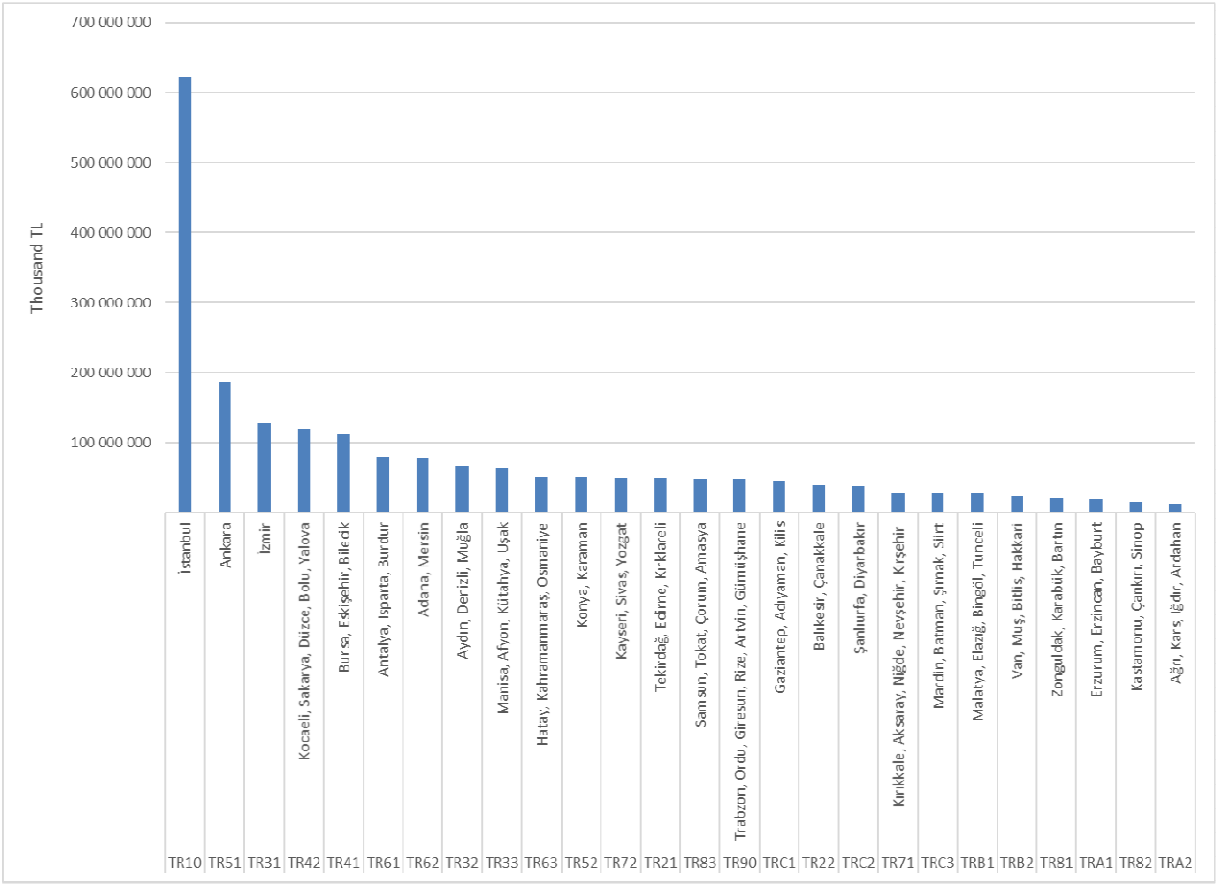
Source: Turkish National Statistics Institute

Accordingly, public policies have visibly failed to address income inequality in Turkey, with the Gini coefficient in 2015 being the same as in 2007. Corresponding Gini figures for MENA

[13] National poverty lines reflect local perceptions of the level and composition of consumption or income needed to be non-poor. See http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=TR
[14] Latest available data.
[15] The Gini coefficient is a number between 0 and 1, where 0 corresponds to perfect equality and 1 to total inequality.

countries, for instance, were estimated by the World Bank as 0.30 for Egypt in 2008 and 0.35 for Tunisia in 2010. The enduring income discrepancy in Turkey has it roots in regional disparities. Turkey has long suffered from an inequitable regional development dynamic, with the country's metropolitan Western regions (Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir) leading economic activity.

Table 2 Regional Gross Domestic Product 2014

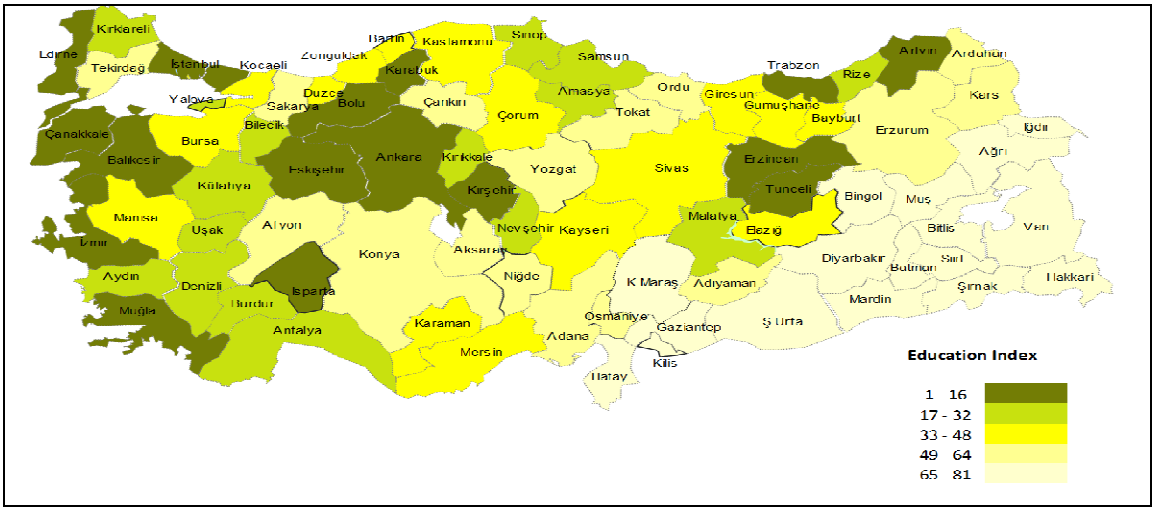


Source: Turkish National Statistics Institute

Despite long-term public policies designed to reduce regional disparities, the persistence of this gap points to more structural deficiencies in terms of human resources and educational outcomes. EDAM's recent work on regional competitiveness indicators illustrates these regional disparities.[16] The "Regional Human Capital Index" is a proxy calculated on the basis of regional figures for schooling and quantitative figures of academic standards.

Table 3 Human Capital Index Rankings

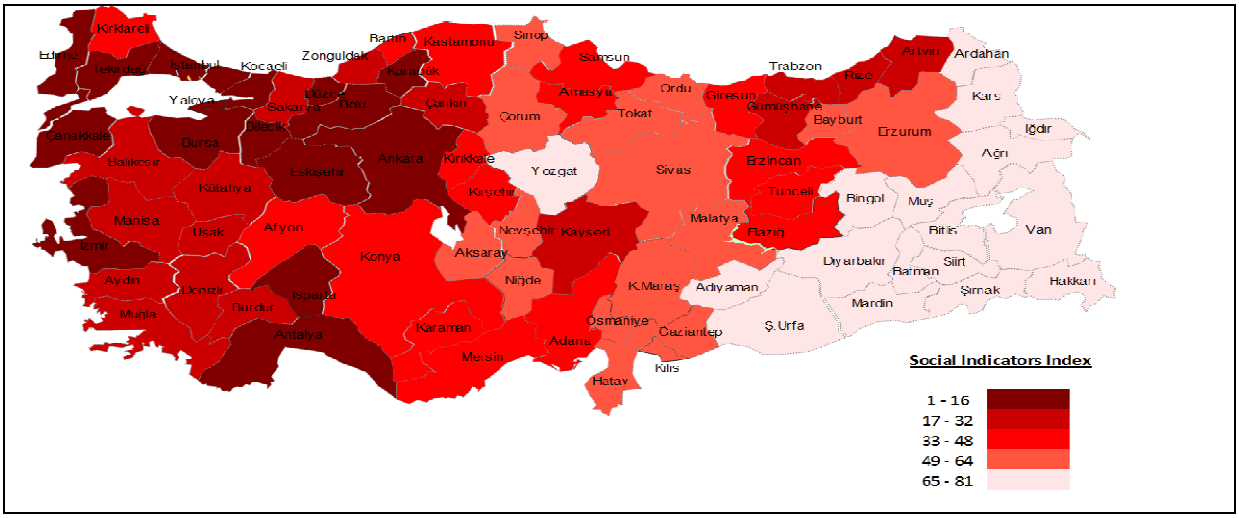
[16] See, EDAM and Deloitte Turkey, "Türkiye için bir rekabet endeksi," [Full Report Turkish], January 2009, http://edam.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/trkiye-icin-bir-rekabet-endeksi.pdf; "Executive Summary: A Competitiveness Index for Turkish Regions," EDAM and Deloitte Turkey, March 2009, http://edam.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/Competitveness-Executive-summary.pdf.



Source: EDAM Regional Competitiveness Index Study

Similarly, the "Regional Social Capital Index" is a proxy calculated on the basis of regional indicators of social engagement such as number of civil society organizations per head and health environment, as well as human capital indicators such as women's schooling rates and the literacy rate.

Table 4 Regional Social Capital Index Rankings



Source: EDAM Regional Competitiveness Index Study.

Therefore the threat to social resilience in Turkey originates from the wide disparities in regional incomes that are themselves a by-product of the equally wide disparities in educational achievements and employable skills.

IV. POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESILIENCE

Politically, despite being under pressure, Turkish society retains important elements of resilience. This is the end result of a flawed and yet very real experience with multi-party democracy for over seven decades. Firstly there has been an anchoring of a shallow but real set of democratic norms. All political actors, for instance, established a common front to resist the attempted military coup of July 2016. Today, despite having a chequered history of military intervention in democratic life, the Turkish body politic as well as society is averse to any military role in politics. Secondly, not only opposition political parties but also civic movements have in recent years improved their capacity to organize peaceful resistance movements. The Gezi protests of 2013 are the most vivid example of the vibrancy and pluralism of civil-society-led peaceful dissent. The "No" campaign during the constitutional referendum—which was managed, under heavy government pressure, by a multitude of independent actors including political parties (the main opposition CHP and the pro-Kurdish HDP) but also civil society movements like Demokratik Itiraz Hareketi (Democratic Dissent Movement)—is another indication of these remaining sources of societal resilience. Finally, the "Justice March" led by the CHP against the politicization of the judiciary, which after a 450 km walk from Ankara to

Istanbul was able to orchestrate a rally with over 1 million participants, is yet another illustration of this potential for grassroots activism.

Society

The Turkish business community and its umbrella organizations (primarily TUSIAD and TOBB) remain key societal actors in terms of resilience. The Turkish economy is quite open with the total of imports and exports reaching 40% of national income. It is also a diversified economy with growing but still relatively low levels of state control. The combination of these features has created a business class, independent of the government, that has acted as a counterweight in policy making. Their role has not been exclusively limited to the economic field. TUSIAD for instance has been in the vanguard of this trend with its agenda and publications focused also on rule of law, good governance and structural reforms.[17] Although the weight of these institutions in overall policy shaping has been diminishing due to the growing centralization of power, they remain influential and active members of the civil society universe in Turkey. Also, the ability of these business associations to engage the government should improve at a time when Turkey's growth performance is expected to come under increased strain driven by changes in the global and regional context.

Professional bodies representing liberal professions like the Turkish Bar Association (Barolar Birligi) and the Turkish Doctors Association (Türk Tabipler Birliği) have been vocal entities in the public debate on democratic rights. The size of their membership and the widespread local network of chapters have enabled these organisations to remain relevant actors at the national as well as the local levels of policy making. In addition, unlike many other civil society organizations that have been set up as associations or foundations, these professional bodies have a founding legal act that gives them added prestige and credibility in their public endeavours.

State

Although Turkey has a highly centralized state structure, it also has close to 3,000 *local authorities* ranging from metropolitan municipalities like Istanbul and Izmir to district-level municipalities. In contrast to the central government, where since 2002 a single party has been at the helm, the power distribution at the level of local government is more diverse. According to results of the 2014 local elections, the ruling AKP won municipal elections in 18 out of Turkey's 30 metropolitan municipalities. This means that Turkish opposition parties presently govern twelve metropolitan municipalities. This set includes large cities like Izmir, Edirne, Adana and Diyarbakir. Depending on the leadership skills of the mayors, some of these local governments have emerged as important hubs of resilience. Izmir, for instance, is a case in point. With a well-managed budget and a strong backing by the local population, this Aegean

[17] Some examples include a study on judicial reform entitled "Yargı Hizmetlerinde Kalite: Yargı Hizmetlerinde Kalite Talebi ve Kalite Unsurları", published in December 2014, and a policy paper on reforming the education system entitled "PISA 2012 Değerlendirmesi: Türkiye için Veriye Dayalı Eğitim Reformu Önerileri", published in April 2014.

city has launched a range of sustainable initiatives in areas like culture, women's empowerment and smart cities that have had an influence over other local governments, some of which have adopted similar initiatives.

Opposition parties are to be considered as another pillar of political resilience. For a long time now, Turkey's parliamentary opposition has been rightly branded as ineffective in the political landscape. After a series of electoral losses, however, the opposition has gradually improved its strategy and operational capabilities. Most recently, the main opposition party was able to orchestrate an ambitious example of civic activism with CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu vanguarding the 450 km march from Ankara to Istanbul that culminated in a 1 million strong rally. Even more importantly, the political opposition has become more adept at building a common platform to challenge the ruling AKP government, particularly on issues like the rule of law and the quest for justice[18].

V. Operationalizing Resilience: Modernizing the EU-Turkey Customs Union

Once the concept of "building resilience" has been defined for the specific case of Turkey, the next question relates to the operationalization of this concept. What EU-led policy instruments can be used to achieve these objectives in Turkey?

The answer will need to be contextualized for the Turkish case, which presents a unique set of challenges. Turkey is a large country with a population nearing 80 million. No external actor can directly target Turkish society as the object of its set of engagement strategies and hope to create a meaningful impact. This is not just a consequence of the size of the country. The political culture is also inimical to such large-scale bottom-up engagement strategies. The imperial Ottoman heritage and the still omnipresent trauma of the dismantling of the empire in the nation's consciousness have created a political culture deeply sceptical of foreign involvement. Turks remain suspicious of foreigners. Turkey's republican history also demonstrates that change can be triggered by a more indirect approach built around a state-led reform agenda.

Yet at the same time, Turkey is a failed accession state and the frustrations as well as the acrimony generated by this hapless state of affairs will have implications for any other engagement strategy with Ankara. This means in practice that the instruments devised for the "resilience" approach will need to operate in a political space that is still formally defined by the framework of accession. Secondly, the receptiveness on the side of the Turkish government to any element of this "resilience" focused agenda is likely to be low. All the more so since the government is essentially responsible for the backsliding in democratic norms described in the previous sections, and is therefore largely identified as the major challenge to building state

[18] Amberin Zaman. « No time for rest as Turkey's Justice March reaches Istanbul". Al Monitor. 10 July 2017. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/07/turkey-justice-march-ends

and societal resilience in the country. Finally, Turkey has a GDP of around USD 750 billion and a government budget around 220 billion, meaning that the amount of EU financial assistance that can realistically be linked to the "resilience" strategy is going to be comparatively marginal and thus of constrained effectiveness in fostering compliance. The overall challenge for the implementation of the "resilience" strategy will therefore be the design of an engagement framework that can still deliver outcomes in this constrained political environment.

Despite the envisaged difficulty of engaging Ankara, there seems to be no other viable option for the resilience approach to succeed. Turkey is just too big and too populous for an exclusively non-government-centric engagement strategy to yield concrete benefits, at least at the desired scale. This does not mean that civil society should be excluded. On the contrary an inclusive approach is indispensable for any measure of success. It does however mean that the government cannot be excluded as the focal actor in the implementation of the strategy. In other words, the different programmes and actions that will eventually be defined as part of this new framework of engagement will continue to rely on the Turkish government and its agencies as the essential implementing body. The difficulty will be to create an incentive structure for Ankara to willingly partner with the EU in the implementation of the resilience programme.

The only realistic option, in this particular case, would be to build the resilience action plan as a component of the formal Turkey–EU agenda, which is broader than the accession track. In particular, with prospects of improving the rule of law and introducing ambitious structural reforms, the soon-to-be-launched negotiations for the modernization of the customs union provide a timely and useful option for integrating the resilience approach in the Turkey–EU relationship.

The aim of this new set of negotiations will be to overhaul the existing customs union with a view to extending its scope of sectoral coverage by including service industries, agriculture and public procurement as well as modernizing the overall governance framework by designing a new dispute settlement mechanism and addressing deficiencies in trade policy convergence[19]. Viewed from the perspective of resilience, the renewed customs union can provide a strong foundation for the strengthening of the rule of law, at least in the policy areas that are to be covered by the new agreement. As opposed to the accession track where the enhancement of democratic norms and the rule of law is an explicit objective, the modernization of the customs union can have the upgrading of the rule of law as an implicit objective. In other words, the proper implementation of Turkey's commitments under the modernized customs union can indeed lead to improvements in the rule of law.

[19] Commission Staff Working Document – Executive Summary of the Impact Assessment. Accompanying the document Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations with Turkey on an Agreement on the extension of the scope of the bilateral preferential trade relationship and on the modernisation of the Customs Union. {COM(2016) 830 final}. Brussels, 21 December 2016. SWD(2016) 476 final

One key question in this context is whether Ankara can be incentivized to accept this regime of improved governance that will inevitably constrain discretionary rule in sensitive areas like public procurement practices or services deregulation. In the end, Ankara can eventually feel obliged to accept this proposition if the prospect of a failure of the customs union negotiations is perceived as a major threat for the growth prospects of the Turkish economy. In other words, Turkish policy makers may ultimately become resigned to accepting the terms of a renewed customs union incorporating changes in public procurement rules and an overhauled dispute settlement mechanism if they can be convinced that the overhauled customs union will help Turkey to overcome the peril of low growth.

Ultimately this challenge of sustaining growth, which has been a key factor driving the political popularity of the AKP leadership, may compel Turkish policy makers to review their approach to governance. In the long term, Turkey can only overcome this challenge if a more resilient framework of governance that enhances inclusiveness, accountability and the rule of law with full-fledged democratic constraints on the use of executive power can be established.

Con il contributo del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale ai sensi dell'art. 23-bis del DPR 18/196.